

TRANSCRIPT Episode 12 – Julia Pazos

Jonathan Bench: Welcome to another episode of *Lawbalization*. Today I'm joined by Julia Pazos, a Brazilian lawyer and partner at Cescon Barriou Advogados, where she co-heads the Intellectual Property, Technology, and Innovation practice. Julia is a recognized voice on tech, AI, and IP. She mentors young lawyers and speaks globally about innovation and the intersection of technology and law. She's also a good personal friend of mine. Julia, thank you for being here with us.

Julia Pazos: Jonathan, thank you for having me. It's our second podcast together—I think we've spoken two or three times before. It's always a pleasure to be here with you on your podcast.

Jonathan: Thank you! Between São Paulo, Rio, Mexico City, and Washington, D.C., we've spent a lot of time together in legal circles. It's always fun to catch up—especially on deep technology—because even among lawyers, not many have the depth and breadth that you do. I love hearing your perspective, the kinds of clients you work with, and the projects you're seeing.

Julia: I feel the same.

Jonathan: Let's talk about your background. You and I were chatting before we started recording, and you said your law school story wasn't a lifelong dream—you weren't always the little girl who wanted to be a lawyer.

Jonathan: I also didn't plan to be a lawyer. It took me a long time to figure out what I was doing, and even after graduating law school at 30 and starting my first job, I still wasn't sure I'd made the right decision.

Jonathan: I'm always curious—tell me about where you grew up in Brazil, how you ended up in law school, and ultimately what you love now about practicing law.

Julia: As I was saying, my father once asked, "Why don't you become a lawyer? You love to read and you write really well." He wasn't a lawyer, but he worked with IP—and I'm an IP lawyer—so that probably influenced me. When he said that, I thought, "Okay, maybe law is something I should do." I started my career as a trainee at the Brazilian Patent and Trademark Office, then joined a big law firm here in Brazil where I stayed for 17 years. Now I'm a partner at Cescon, always working with IP and tech. I often say that if I weren't an IP/tech lawyer, I wouldn't be a lawyer. What makes me feel alive is that technology, IP, and this whole environment change every day. We're always learning new things, working with business and marketing teams, and creating innovative solutions. That's what keeps me passionate and convinced I'm doing what I'm meant to do.

Jonathan: That's great. Did you grow up as a gamer? Which part of IP do you love most—music, gaming, media? And does that connect with how young Julia spent her time?

Julia: These days, I love everything connected to the creator economy—Web3 and blockchain included. I wasn't a big gamer, but I played a lot of *Mario* and *Donkey Kong* with my father. We spent a lot of time gaming together, so maybe that's why I like it. I work a lot with gaming, but I especially love the creator economy, influencers, and marketplaces. Honestly, I love anything that brings together tech and IP—especially Web3, gaming, and the creator economy.

Jonathan: And of course, core tech like AI and blockchain—the infrastructure pieces.

Julia: Exactly.

Jonathan: Let's talk about Brazil. I'm not in Brazil, and many of our listeners aren't either. Brazil is a massive economic engine for Latin America. What are people in your circles—business or law—focused on right now?

Jonathan: I assume AI is at the top of the list, but you don't have to start there.

Julia: It is—AI is definitely a top topic. Politics as well. We're a huge country and we have issues with politicians. I'm in Rio right now—originally from Rio—but I've been based in São Paulo for over 13 years. Recently, Rio had some major incidents related to crime and the favelas, which dominated discussion. Of course, that's not all we are, but we do face some violence, and it was very present in the conversation last week. We've also been talking a lot about COP30—the environmental summit—with leaders coming to Brazil to discuss environmental, economic, and political issues. And yes, AI is a major ongoing discussion. We have an AI bill under debate; it hasn't been approved yet, so we're figuring out how we'll deal with AI over the next couple of years.

Jonathan: I assumed a big part of the AI conversation is power consumption and how to ensure sustainable power—something every country is wrestling with.

Julia: Yes, and another trending topic here is data centers because of AI and other technologies that need infrastructure. Companies are considering Brazil for data centers because we have large spaces and abundant water resources.

Jonathan: So a lot of hydropower available.

Julia: Yes, we do.

Jonathan: How about your clients—are they leaning hard into AI? Are they training models, or using existing infrastructure and fine-tuning?

Julia: We have both. Some big tech clients are developing their own models, and others use third-party AI systems integrated into their businesses. Our tech practice has been doing a lot of AI governance work, especially for companies bringing AI in as internal tools for employees and enterprise workflows. We also work with some big tech providers offering AI models in Brazil and globally.

Jonathan: Let's turn to IP and how Brazil is positioning itself in the global conversation around IP protection—especially for fast-moving tech like AI and blockchain. The EU often moves quickly to classify and regulate emerging tech; the U.S. tends to wait and see how existing laws fit. How is Brazil doing?

Julia: Great question. Brazil is in an interesting transition. We don't have specific AI laws yet, but we're moving toward a risk-based AI framework inspired by the EU AI Act—similar to how our LGPD was inspired by the GDPR. We're adapting the law to our context, which is crucial for technology. Right now we're trying to balance innovation, transparency, IP, and the interests of all stakeholders. Our AI bill is currently in the Chamber of Deputies. Meanwhile, we already have a solid IP framework. The big debates include: first, can AI-created works be protected as inventions or copyrighted works? Under Brazilian law, protection depends on human authorship, so if something is created solely by AI, it shouldn't be protected as copyright or patent. We've seen attempts to list an AI as an inventor—those are rejected. But we'll need to adapt because AI is widely used as a creative tool, and people expect protection when they use AI in the process. Second, training data: can models use copyrighted material for training? The proposed bill doesn't create new IP rights, but it requires transparency—you must disclose when training uses copyrighted material. For commercial use, it would require licensing fees, which big tech is pushing back on; there's talk of opt-out mechanisms or middle-ground solutions. Third, outputs: generated content can infringe. If you prompt for a Disney character and use that output commercially, you could be sued. Finally, on the blockchain side, Brazilian copyright protection arises automatically upon creation, so creators are using blockchain registration to timestamp works as proof of authorship. Courts have accepted blockchain records as evidence. For trademarks and patents, you still need formal registration with the Brazilian PTO, but blockchain has become a useful evidentiary tool.

Jonathan: That's fascinating—especially blockchain-based timestamps to prove authorship. In the U.S., many blockchain clients have pivoted to AI. Is that happening there too, or is blockchain still strong in your circles?

Julia: I see the same trend. We still have a blockchain community, especially for government applications—for example, Brazil's new ID uses blockchain, and our securities

regulator, the CVM, oversees crypto activity. But many founders have migrated to AI and are building there.

Jonathan: How are you and your firm using AI today—personally and generally?

Julia: Personally, I use AI a lot—travel planning, restaurant recommendations, and creating content for LinkedIn and Instagram. Professionally, our firm is very tech-forward. We use Legora, an AI platform for lawyers (a competitor to Harvey), to assist with contract review and due diligence. I personally reviewed our agreement with Legora to ensure safety and confidentiality. We also have an internal AI policy and I'm training our lawyers on it—governance, best practices, transparency. We use additional tools for due diligence review and reporting. Transparency with clients is essential: we updated our terms to say we use AI, and clients can opt out. If they do, we honor that, while carefully managing the reality that many providers have AI embedded. Data protection is key.

Jonathan: And younger attorneys? We're mid-career; we remember life before ubiquitous internet. How do you guide junior lawyers who don't have all the legal skills yet but want to use AI to learn, review, and do first passes?

Julia: Even though we have licenses, not everyone in the firm has access yet—we're phasing it. We focus on training and best practices, because even without licenses, they're likely using public AI tools. It's better to educate them on ethical use, data protection, and quality control. This is my third training for the whole firm. I'm doing it with our innovation lead—also named Julia—who used to be a lawyer and now heads innovation, and with our IT team. Cross-functional training helps younger lawyers understand why careful use matters so they'll do it the right way.

Jonathan: Zooming out, are legal frameworks keeping pace with innovation? Are they helping or hindering those on the forefront?

Julia: There's always a gap between innovation and regulation, but in Brazil that gap is getting smaller. Regulators understand the importance of innovation and want to keep technology here. Since laws take time, we're seeing self-regulation fill the gap—platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Instagram, and X have internal rules for IP, licensing, data, and image rights. It's not law, but it helps establish best practices in the digital ecosystem until legislation catches up.

Jonathan: We probably have time for one more. If you weren't a lawyer today, what would you be doing—startup, fintech, marketing?

Julia: Great question—I don't know! Probably a startup, or maybe marketing. I love advertising—both the regulatory side and the creative side inside agencies. So maybe marketing.

Jonathan: I feel the same. Technology puts everyone in front of screens, and it intersects with creativity and law. Recently I've used AI for personal projects—custom birthday experiences for my kids and their friends: city-wide scavenger hunts with puzzles and a meal in the middle. AI lets busy lawyers maximize time for clients and also be more creative. I love that.

Julia: Me too.

Jonathan: It's been so nice to catch up. I'm looking forward to seeing you again in person. We didn't get enough time to talk in D.C.—conference life.

Julia: We didn't! You were busy hosting everyone.

Jonathan: Exactly. I'll keep an eye on your creative work—LinkedIn and Instagram are where you're posting most of it?

Julia: Instagram.

Jonathan: Perfect. I want to watch how you're using AI. My assistant helps with post-production on the podcast and other projects, and I tell her, "Go talk to AI and then come back with a plan." It's been fun.

Julia: Great! It was really nice talking and catching up. As long as you want me, I'll come back.

Jonathan: Awesome. I appreciate it, Julia. Thanks so much.

Julia: Thank you.

Jonathan: Bye.

Julia: Bye.