Whither Argumentation Tools? I have my suspicions.

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There is a busy, dynamic, driven academic community producing theory, tools and techniques of argumentation which by and large are having no impact on the world. Why not? Let's examine the SUSPECT.

- **Scale**. There is a general challenge for work transitioning from the academic lab to the real world: where in the lab a technique may work for a toy example of ten or twenty parts, it needs to work for ten or twenty thousand; ten or twenty million. We need to face up to the fact that this scaling up is not just a minor engineering problem -- in some cases it may be as big a problem as the one we initially set out to solve.

- **Users**. It is encouraging to see a few examples of people working with users to develop tools they actually want -- but it's still rare. Working with practising lawyers, for example, can give insights that can't come from the lab alone.

- **Seductive**. The tool must be one that users want to use and go on using..

- **Pushmepullyou**. In a similar vein, there may be philosophically pleasing theory, or mathematically elegant proofs, but for delivering tools it has to be a case of (at least some) end-user pull, not just technology push. We have to be solving the problems people have, not the problems we'd like them to have.

- **Entrepreneurship**. To really make tool deployment fly we need committed entrepreneurs -- not necessarily people in it for the money (witness the Debategraph team, for example), and not necessarily people outside the academic sphere (withness the OU group, for example), but people who can commit to getting things in to the hands of users.

- **Crowd**. The last two are more about tech trends. The first is that silo-ed argumentation -- a single user using some tool as they might use Word -- is on the wane. Argumentation in all its guises is increasingly a digital social activity. I don't mean it's all about arguing on facebook: sharing rulings with other law makers; sharing the decisions of cases with other case-deciders; sharing procedure with other followers of procedure: this social interaction is a core part of what the law is about, and our tools should reflect that.

- **Text**. Lawyers and the law, perhaps even as much as academics, are driven by text. Our tools, though, are typically boxes and arrows, propositions and such. As argumentative text processing starts to climb on the academic agenda, it will be exciting to see tools in this space starting to become available.