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EMBRACING AI: IMPLICATIONS TO LEGAL SERVICES & CLIENT VALUE



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Client-centric lawyers are committed to delivering value to clients. Emerging legal technology including artificial intelligence (AI) and large language models (LLMs) are revolutionizing industries across the board, and the legal industry is no exception. They will challenge traditional business (and billing) models and consumer expectations both internally and externally. They will also enable lawyers to enhance the quality and efficiency of their operations and thus the overall value to clients.

This article is a broad discussion on the current impact of AI and other legal tech we currently see being used for legal services, the value proposition

for clients, and possible future implications.

Will AI replace lawyers?

No one can predict the future, and many prognosticate a future full of opportunity or concern. Rather than speculate about entire professions, the current utilization of AI and other legal tech already demonstrates tremendous impact and value as well as future implications.

Indeed, AI is already automating slices of lawyers' traditional tasks—summarizing discovery, suggesting contract language, and answering first-pass research questions.¹ On the transactional side, *OneSaaS*, for instance, used AI to analyze more than a thousand SaaS contracts, discovered that 95 percent were functionally identical, and then released a free, community-drafted, “standard [agreement] for cloud services” that allows business teams to handle a first draft without outside counsel.² On the litigation side, Thomson Reuters' “CoCounsel Core” can digest a gigabyte-scale document set, surface key clauses, generate chronologies, and prepare deposition outlines in minutes, collapsing work that once justified entire associate teams into a supervised, same-day task.³

These adoptions are not confined to boutique firms. Allen Overy's (now A&O Shearman) rollout of Harvey-powered workflows put generative AI on the desktops of 3,500 lawyers across 43 offices,⁴ demonstrating that even AmLaw top-ten firms are willing to outsource routine drafting and analysis to machines so long as humans remain on the hook for final judgment.

Consumers see the same possibilities: services like DoNotPay have already generated demand letters and small-claims filings for pro-se litigants—so aggressively, in fact, that the FTC intervened this year to stop the company's “robot lawyer” marketing claims,⁵ proof that the access-to-justice upside is real, even as regulators police the line between helpful automation and unauthorized practice.

¹ See, e.g., Bloomberg Law, *AI for Legal Professionals* <<https://pro.bloomberglaw.com/insights/technology/ai-in-legal-practice-explained/#the-future-of-legal-ai>>.

² Artificial Lawyer, *Law Insider Launches oneSaaS, New Standard for Cloud Agreements* (Feb. 10, 2025) <<https://www.artificiallawyer.com/2025/02/10/law-insider-launches-onesaas-new-standard-for-cloud-agreements/>>.

³ Thompson Reuters, *How GenAI Can Enhance Your Legal Work Without Compromising Ethics* (Apr. 17, 2024) <<https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/blog/how-genai-can-enhance-your-legal-work-without-compromising-ethics/>>.

⁴ Ambrogi, *As Allen & Overy Deploys GPT-based Legal App Harvey Firmwide, Founders Say Other Firms Will Soon Follow* (Feb. 17, 2023) <<https://www.lawnext.com/2023/02/as-allen-overly-deploys-gpt-based-legal-app-harvey-firmwide-founders-say-other-firms-will-soon-follow.html>>.

⁵ Press Release, *FTC Finalizes Order with DoNotPay That Prohibits Deceptive ‘AI Lawyer’ Claims, Imposes Monetary Relief, and Requires Notice to Past Subscribers, Fed. Trade Com.* (Feb. 11, 2025) <<https://www.ftc.gov/news-events/news/press-releases/2025/02/ftc-finalizes-order-donotpay-prohibits-deceptive-ai-lawyer-claims-imposes-monetary-relief-requires>>.

Nonetheless, AI cannot replace the core of lawyering: strategic judgment, ethical accountability, and the human skill of persuasion. Strategic judgment is more than pattern-matching past cases to present facts. It requires spotting latent conflicts among statutes, reading unwritten courtroom dynamics, and weighing business, reputational, and human costs that clients themselves have not fully articulated. That is why even the most AI-forward law firms still route every machine draft through a partner who knows the judge, the industry, and the likely ripple effects five quarters out. As the ABA's Formal Opinion 512 reminds us, the duty of competence demands lawyers exercise "legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation," a standard that presumes a human actor who can synthesize law, fact, and risk in real time.⁶

Persuasion, too, depends distinctly on human capacities: empathy, storytelling, and the ability to pivot when a witness hesitates, or a juror frowns. Negotiation scholars note that AI may narrow information gaps, but in high stakes bargaining, it still stumbles over emotional cues, moral intuitions, and the creative trades that turn zero-sum positions into mutual gains.⁷ Jurors, judges, and counterparties respond to credibility, nuance, and the ineffable chemistry of live advocacy, which are qualities machines can model but not genuinely embody. The lawyer's irreplaceable value lies in wielding tools with judgment, integrity, and persuasive force—capacities rooted in human experience, not code.

How AI Enhances Service Quality and Value

Despite its inability to completely replace lawyers, AI is becoming an indispensable tool for speed and scale. The integration of AI and other legal tech not only boosts efficiency

but also elevates the quality of legal services we provide. By automating aspects of our practice, attorneys can dedicate more time to strategic planning and personalized client interactions, ensuring that we in fact do increase the value to clients. Simply stated, by automating historically manual time-consuming tasks using AI tools, attorneys are able to do more, better and faster.⁸

The reality is that adoption of AI tools is accelerating at a clip the legal sector has never seen. A Secretariat-ACEDS global survey released in March 2025 found that 80 percent of legal professionals now rate themselves as "knowledgeable" about AI and 74 percent expect to be active users within a year.⁹ NetDocuments reports a 315 percent jump in AI use by law firm staff from 2023 to 2024, with 79 percent of firms weaving AI into daily workflows.¹⁰ Law360 notes that AI tools are penetrating firms "five times faster than the cloud," showing that what once took a decade now happens in a couple of budget cycles.¹¹

The legal landscape is constantly evolving, and staying ahead requires a proactive approach to technology adoption. By integrating AI and other legal tech into our practice, we can improve operational efficiency and access greater resources without additional overhead, directly leading to more value to clients. This integration brings opportunity. Thomson Reuters calculates that AI can free four lawyer-billable-hours a week, worth roughly \$100,000 in additional annual billable capacity per U.S. lawyer.¹² A recent case study from an Am Law 100 firm shows how generative tools are collapsing hours of clerical effort into minutes of supervised review: by unleashing *Everlaw's* GenAI assistant on 126,000 documents in a government investigation, the team cut review time by 50–67 percent and needed only one-quarter of the personnel normally assigned to a matter of that size.¹³

⁶ See ABA Formal Ethics Opns., formal opn. No. 512 (2024) pp. 2–5 <https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/professional_responsibility/ethics-opinions/aba-formal-opinion-512.pdf>.

⁷ See Mirra, *What AI Can and Can't Do for Negotiation*, Aligned. (Mar. 20, 2025) <<https://www.alignednegotiation.com/insights/what-ai-can-and-cant-do-for-negotiation#:~:text=Many%20negotiations%20rely%20on%20personal,that%20extend%20beyond%20mere%20numbers>>.

⁸ Attorneys are cautioned not to rely on AI as the final answer to issues and tasks, but rather as simply another tool or resource. This is because AI responses to prompts can often be wrong, especially with more complex queries. Thus, prompt training and quality controls are critical to maximize the value of AI for clients, while mitigating potential misuse and errors.

⁹ Secretariat, *AI Adoption Surges in the Legal Industry: Key Findings from the 2025 Secretariat and ACEDS Global Artificial Intelligence Report* (Mar. 26, 2025) <<https://secretariat-intl.com/insights/ai-adoption-surges-in-the-legal-industry/>>.

¹⁰ Netdocuments, *AI-Driven Legal Tech Trends for 2025* (Jan. 7, 2025) <<https://www.netdocuments.com/blog/ai-driven-legal-tech-trends-for-2025/>>.

¹¹ Ellie Sherman, *Lawyers Are Adopting Gen AI Five Times Faster Than the Cloud*, Law360 (Sept. 10, 2024) https://www.law.com/legaltechnews/2024/09/10/lawyers-are-adopting-gen-ai-five-times-faster-than-the-cloud/?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_content=dlvrit&utm_campaign=automated_post (capitalization standardized).

¹² Thompson Reuters, *How AI Is Transforming the Legal Profession* (2025) (Jan. 16, 2025) <<https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/blog/how-ai-is-transforming-the-legal-profession/>> .blog/how-genai-can-enhance-your-legal-work-without-compromising-ethics/>.

¹³ Pasternak, *Am Law 100 Firm Slashed Doc Review Time by Two-Thirds with GenAI*, Everlaw (Apr. 17, 2025) <<https://www.everlaw.com/blog/case-studies/am-law-100-firm-slashed-doc-review-time-by-two-thirds-with-genai/>>.

AI's rapid expansion is not just a story of shiny new tech; it is an operating-model shift that lifts the administrative fog from legal practice. The firms that have already adopted the use of AI in their practices are already converting clerk-work into thinking-time, freeing lawyers to draft the winning brief, craft the creative deal structure, and build the client relationships that machines still can't replicate.

AI's Increase to Access to Justice

One of the greatest benefits to be conferred by AI will be the overall societal gain of increasing access to justice, i.e., making legal services more accessible and affordable to a greater population of people. For instance, scholars note that AI-powered tools, if made interoperable with court systems, could narrow the access-to-justice gap and reduce routine matters that reach attorneys in the first place.¹⁴ The Legal Services Corporation reports that low-income households receive inadequate or no professional help for 92 percent of their serious civil-legal problems, a gap that technology is now beginning to narrow.¹⁵ AI-enabled self-help apps are doing for everyday legal tasks what TurboTax did for tax returns. In Utah, *Rasa* uses natural-language triage to help people clear criminal record blemishes; *HelloPrenup* shepherds couples through do-it-yourself prenuptial agreements; and *LegalZoom* remains shorthand for low-cost wills, LLC formations, and trademarks.¹⁶ Even courts are joining in: British Columbia's Civil Resolution Tribunal resolves small-claims and condominium disputes entirely online, without lawyers, for filing fees that start at seventy-five dollars.¹⁷ The result is a layer of good enough justice for matters that would otherwise go unaddressed. A Stanford study, for example, found that a first-generation chatbot overturned 160,000 parking tickets in London and New York, demonstrating how machine-scale advocacy can democratize relief.¹⁸

Nonetheless, even if a startup founder can spin up *OneSaaS* and crank out a standard cloud-services contract in ten minutes, the deal is only half-done. The template still has to be stress-tested against the company's risk profile, negotiated into a commercial context, and shepherded through closing without tripping securities or export-control land mines. That is where the lawyer's enduring value lies, and why AI turns attorneys from information gatekeepers into risk-and-strategy partners. The net effect is a bar that must justify its value through insight and strategy, not information gatekeeping. Clients will still seek counsel for nuanced advocacy, but they will expect faster turnaround and proof that their lawyers can curate AI output safely.¹⁹

Ultimately, while AI is expanding the front door to the legal system, the hallway still leads to rooms where human judgment rules. By embracing a hybrid model that lets machines handle the rote work while lawyers handle the human side, firms can serve a broader audience without sacrificing the depth of legal expertise that high-stakes matters demand.

Staying Afloat and Ahead

Lawyers who thrive in the AI era will pair technical fluency with timeless professional duties. The first rule of thriving in an AI era is that technological competence is no longer a bonus skill; it is an ethical baseline. The ABA's Formal Opinion 512 makes that explicit, folding AI awareness into Model Rule 1.1's duty of competence and warning that lawyers must understand the benefits of every tool they deploy, from data-handling practices to the likelihood of hallucinated text.²⁰

Forward-thinking law firms are responding by weaving AI literacy into everyday tedious tasks, making prompt-engineering as routine as Bluebook citations. NetDocuments' 2025 Legal Tech Trends echoes this shift: 75 percent of legal employers expect to change their talent strategies within two years to adapt

¹⁴ See Simshaw, *Interoperable AI for Access to Justice* (2025) 133 Yale L.J. Forum 795, 799–800 <<https://www.yalelawjournal.org/forum/interoperable-legal-ai-for-access-to-justice>>.

¹⁵ *Id.* at p. 799.

¹⁶ *Id.* at pp. 799–800.

¹⁷ Civil Resolution Tribunal, *Solution Explorer* <<https://civilresolutionbc.ca/solution-explorer/>>; Civil Resolution Tribunal, *Fees* <<https://civilresolutionbc.ca/resources/fees/>>.

¹⁸ Simshaw, *supra* note 17, at p. 799.

¹⁹ See, e.g., *Mata v. Avianca, Inc.* (S.D.N.Y. 2023) 678 F.Supp.3d 443, 448–449, where the Southern District of New York sanctioned counsel for filing a brief laced with fictitious cases that ChatGPT had invented, underscoring that a lawyer, not a model, must vouch for accuracy and reasoning. See also Ryan et al., *Practical Lessons from the Attorney AI Missteps in Mata v. Avianca, Association of Corporate Counsel* (Aug. 8, 2023) <<https://www.acc.com/resource-library/practical-lessons-attorney-ai-missteps-mata-v-avianca>>

²⁰ ABA Formal Ethics Opns., *supra* note 6, at pp. 2–5.

to demands with AI.²¹ Law 360's 2025 AI Survey found that roughly two-thirds of Big Law attorneys have already completed firm-run GenAI training, versus 40 percent at midsize shops—a gap that tracks client perception of value.²²

The roadmap to resilience is clear: embed AI literacy in the ethics framework, erect governance that keeps humans firmly on the hook, invest in continuous training, and redeploy the time dividend toward strategic counsel that clients can see and feel.

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²¹ Netdocuments, *supra* note 8.

²² Martinson, *BigLaw Leaps Ahead in Generated AI Training*, Law360 (Mar. 4, 2025) <<https://www.law360.com/pulse/articles/2299565/biglaw-leaps-ahead-in-generative-ai-training>>.