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Technology in Legal Practice: Efficiency, Access to Justice, and the Rise of Artificial Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the expanding relationship between legal technology, artificial intelligence and the current practice of law, with specific reference to developments in India. A profession that was once almost wholly dependent on printed law reports, physical files, manual drafting and face-to-face procedure is shifting toward a digital, data-driven approach. Technology has become significant not merely because it accelerates legal work, but because it changes the way lawyers conduct research, prepare documents, communicate with clients, handle evidence and deliver legal services. The paper considers in more detail how artificial intelligence assists with legal research, contract review, document automation, due diligence, e-discovery, predictive analysis and case management. In the Indian context, initiatives such as the e-Courts Project, electronic filing, virtual hearings, e-SCR, SUVAS and SUPACE indicate a progressive movement toward speedier, more transparent and more accessible justice delivery, the object of which is to assist judges, lawyers, litigants and court administration by reducing procedural delay and improving access to legal information. The study also acknowledges that legal technology is not without risk: data privacy, cybersecurity, algorithmic bias, over-reliance on automation, ethical responsibility and potential changes in patterns of work remain significant concerns. The argument advanced is that technology should be treated as an assisting tool and not as a substitute for human legal judgment, and that lawyers and judges must therefore combine technological proficiency with ethical responsibility, professional reasoning and continual learning.

Keywords: legal technology, artificial intelligence, Indian judiciary, legal research, automation, e-Courts, digital transformation

I. INTRODUCTION

Legal technology exists to make the delivery of legal services faster, more organised and more consistent. For much of the profession's history, lawyers devoted a disproportionate share of their working hours to tasks that were repetitive rather than analytical: combing through case

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law, drafting standard-form documents, organising files, reviewing contracts clause by clause, and keeping clients informed of routine developments. Technology takes over much of this mechanical work, freeing lawyers to spend their time on interpretation, strategy, advocacy and client counselling, the parts of practice that genuinely call for legal judgment.

Beyond the individual law firm, technology also serves a public purpose. It can shorten delay, increase transparency and put basic legal information within reach of people who would otherwise struggle to find a lawyer or navigate a courtroom. Online legal databases, e-filing systems,¹ virtual hearing platforms² and case-status portals all reduce the profession's dependence on physical presence and paperwork, making the justice system more accessible in the process.³ Seen this way, legal technology functions as a tool of empowerment for both the profession and the public it serves.

The principal aims of technology in legal practice can be summarised as follows.

A. Efficiency and productivity

Automation tools, document-management systems and AI-based research platforms take over the mechanical parts of legal work, allowing lawyers to complete routine tasks more quickly and devote correspondingly more time to complex analysis.

B. Accuracy and consistency

Digital tools help reduce clerical slips, missed clauses, faulty citations and duplicated effort. They also make drafting, review and record-keeping more consistent across a practice, though human oversight remains essential.

C. Cost savings and better client service

Work done more efficiently tends to translate into faster responses, clearer updates and more affordable services for clients. Client portals and digital communication tools further improve transparency between lawyer and client.

¹ The Information Technology Act, No. 21 of 2000, INDIA CODE (2000), § 4 (providing that where any law requires information to be in writing or in printed form, that requirement is satisfied if the information is rendered or made available in an electronic form and is accessible so as to be usable for a subsequent reference). See also E-COMMITTEE, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA, *Model Rules for e-Filing*, <https://ecommitteesci.gov.in/document/model-rules-for-e-filing/>.

² *In re Guidelines for Court Functioning Through Video Conferencing During COVID-19 Pandemic*, Suo Motu Writ (Civil) No. 5 of 2020 (Apr. 6, 2020) (directing, in exercise of the power under Article 142, that measures adopted by the Supreme Court and the High Courts to reduce physical presence in court premises be treated as lawful, and that courts be authorised to use video conferencing technologies for judicial proceedings), https://api.sci.gov.in/supremecourt/2020/10853/10853_2020_0_1_21588_Judgement_06-Apr-2020.pdf.

³ E-COMMITTEE, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA, *National Policy and Action Plan for Implementation of Information and Communication Technology in the Indian Judiciary* (2005), <https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s388ef51f0bf911e452e8dbb1d807a81ab/uploads/2020/05/2020053162.pdf>.

D. Faster legal research

AI-assisted research tools can search large legal databases to locate relevant cases, summarise legal principles and identify patterns across judicial decisions. This can considerably speed up research, although lawyers remain responsible for checking that the results are accurate and relevant.⁴

E. Access to justice

Online dispute resolution,⁵ e-Courts services, virtual hearings and digital case-information systems let people engage with the justice system without the need to travel, complete extensive paperwork or navigate cumbersome procedure.⁶

F. Data management and security

Modern practice generates large volumes of contracts, pleadings, evidence, correspondence and confidential client information that must be stored securely. Secure cloud platforms and document-management tools allow lawyers to organise and retrieve this material while keeping it properly protected.^{7,8}

The purpose of legal technology is not to displace the lawyer but to strengthen the profession's capacity to deliver competent, timely, ethical and high-quality legal assistance.

G. What is legal technology?

Legal technology refers to the electronic devices, software, platforms and automated processes used by lawyers, judges, legal departments, law firms and litigants. It spans everything from basic capabilities such as document storage and video conferencing to more advanced tools such as artificial intelligence, predictive analytics, contract-review software and online dispute-resolution platforms.

⁴ *Mata v. Avianca, Inc.*, 678 F. Supp. 3d 443 (S.D.N.Y. 2023) (imposing sanctions under Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure where counsel filed a submission citing decisions, quotations and internal citations that had been generated by a large language model and did not exist).

⁵ NITI AAYOG, *Designing the Future of Dispute Resolution: The ODR Policy Plan for India* (Nov. 2021), <https://www.niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2021-11/odr-report-29-11-2021.pdf>.

⁶ *Anita Kushwaha v. Pushap Sudan*, (2016) 8 SCC 509 (holding access to justice to be a facet of the rights guaranteed by Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution).

⁷ The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, No. 22 of 2023, INDIA CODE (2023), § 8(5) (requiring a Data Fiduciary to protect personal data in its possession or under its control by taking reasonable security safeguards to prevent a personal data breach).

⁸ The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, No. 47 of 2023, INDIA CODE (2023), § 132 (barring an advocate, save with the client's express consent, from disclosing any communication made in the course and for the purpose of professional service, subject to the exceptions for communications made in furtherance of an illegal purpose and for facts showing that a crime or fraud has been committed since the commencement of the service).

Legal technology matters because it simplifies operations that can otherwise become unwieldy. A firm might use it to store client records, prepare drafts, manage billing, sift through large volumes of evidence, schedule hearings, track deadlines and communicate with clients. Courts, for their part, can use it to accept electronic filings, publish orders, provide online case-status information and conduct hearings virtually. Legal technology is therefore not a single product but a broader shift in how the justice system operates.

H. Common types of legal technology

The categories most commonly encountered are document-management systems, practice-management software, eDiscovery tools and case-management systems.

I. A brief history of technology in law

The history of legal technology traces a gradual shift from paper-based, manual processes to digital systems and, more recently, to intelligent automation. Lawyers once relied heavily on printed law reports, handwritten notes, physical files, typewriters and in-person meetings; legal research meant long hours in a library, and communication with clients or courts was often slow. Dictation machines, photocopiers, fax machines and word processors were among the first tools to speed up documentation and correspondence.

A major turning point came with the computerisation of legal research. Databases such as Lexis and Westlaw allowed lawyers to search judgments and legal materials electronically rather than working through shelves of reporters. The spread of personal computers through the 1980s and 1990s made drafting, editing, storing and circulating legal documents considerably easier, and email later reduced the profession's dependence on post and courier services.

Legal technology continued to develop with the arrival of electronic filing, case-management systems, online dispute resolution and e-discovery tools. Courts began accepting digital filings, parties could access case materials remotely, and law firms adopted software to track evidence and litigation records. Cloud computing and virtual practice made it possible for lawyers to work from any location while still accessing shared data securely.

Over the past decade, developments have included artificial intelligence, blockchain-based smart contracts, legal analytics, chatbots and automated contract-review tools, that is, systems capable of processing large volumes of legal text, flagging key provisions, drafting language and supporting research. The trajectory of legal technology has thus moved from tools that merely assisted clerical work toward systems that assist with analysis and decision support.

J. Applications in practice

i. Case law

Legal research is probably the most common application of legal technology. Lawyers need to identify binding precedent, persuasive authority, relevant legislation and judicial interpretation to support their arguments. AI-driven research tools can search large bodies of judgments quickly, rank results by relevance and generate summaries of the underlying legal principles. These tools should nonetheless be used carefully, since the responsibility for verifying the law ultimately rests with the lawyer.⁹

Research technology is not a substitute for legal reasoning; it is a starting point. It helps lawyers identify relevant authorities, compare them against one another and understand trends in judicial decision-making, which is especially useful in matters involving a large body of case law.

ii. Legal guidance materials

Legal-guidance tools are structured resources prepared by specialists in a given field. They may take the form of practice notes, checklists, standard templates, procedural guides or comparison tables, and are particularly useful for a lawyer entering an unfamiliar area of law or trying to get up to speed quickly on procedure, drafting conventions and common pitfalls. These typically include the following.

Toolkits: collections of related materials grouped together for convenience.

Templates: drafting formats with guidance on how each clause should be completed.

Checklists: step-by-step guidance on how to carry out a task.

Comparison tables: useful for issues that arise differently across jurisdictions.

Practice notes: short explanations of complex or technical issues.

II. LEGAL DRAFTING TECHNOLOGY

Drafting technology helps lawyers produce contracts, pleadings, legal notices, opinions, petitions and internal memoranda. Generative AI can assist with a first draft, suggest alternative phrasing and even propose a structure, but drafting still requires professional judgment: a document must reflect the client's facts, the applicable law, jurisdictional requirements and the underlying strategy.

⁹ *Christian Louboutin SAS v. M/s The Shoe Boutique*, CS (COMM) 583/2023 (Delhi High Court, Aug. 22, 2023) (declining to rely on responses generated by a large language model, observing that the accuracy and reliability of AI-generated data remains in the grey area and that such a tool may at best be used for a preliminary understanding or preliminary research).

A. Document automation

Document automation lets lawyers generate standard documents by filling in the required details within pre-built templates. This is particularly useful for contracts, notices, compliance documents, board resolutions and routine pleadings. It reduces duplicated effort, improves consistency and allows lawyers to spend more time on substance rather than retyping boilerplate provisions.

B. Contract review

AI-based contract-review tools are designed to scan agreements and flag key clauses, missing provisions, unusual language, risks, obligations, deadlines and inconsistencies. They are offered in particular for transactions involving large numbers of contracts that must be reviewed within a short time frame.

Unlike a simple keyword search, more advanced review systems attempt to identify the context and function of a clause, recognising, for example, indemnification terms, limitation-of-liability clauses, termination rights, renewal periods, confidentiality obligations and governing-law provisions. This allows lawyers to concentrate on legal analysis and negotiation rather than on the initial task of sifting through documents.

C. Knowledge and data management

Knowledge-management tools build on the standard document-management system and are designed to return answers to legal queries quickly, subject to verification by the user. Documents can be classified automatically, and users can see a document's status within the workflow, including who has reviewed, edited or signed it. Many such tools operate across a range of underlying products, so that a single query can search several databases at once.

D. Law firm growth

A wide range of applications help a law firm run more smoothly. Practice-management and operations tools support collaboration across teams by providing access to a shared pool of legal and commercial information, while business-development tools are intended to give clients a secure, configurable and easy-to-use digital channel through which to communicate and request legal assistance.

E. Due diligence

Legal due diligence once meant junior lawyers combing through boxes of documents in the office over a weekend. Today, much of that work can be done without paper at all: corporate filings, dockets and identifying records can be pulled together and reviewed from virtually

anywhere. AI-assisted tools scan the underlying data, surface the material that matters and present the results in an accessible format.

F. Due diligence in mergers and acquisitions

Technology built for due diligence in mergers and acquisitions speeds up the process considerably, allowing documents to be uploaded, screened and analysed, with the tool generating summaries and charts along the way. It might, for instance, let a lawyer quickly search a target company's records for employee non-compete agreements.

G. Case management

Corporate legal departments can use AI tools to build a central repository holding information about every matter through its life cycle, simplifying operational management and reducing cost. Automated bill review and approval speeds up the process, while audit tools catch errors and improve accuracy; departments can also track billing rates across outside counsel and compare them against their own data.

H. Monitoring outside counsel spend

One way to control the cost of outside counsel is to gain better visibility into what is actually being spent. Spend-management tools help identify savings, for instance by benchmarking a firm's rates against what comparable organisations pay for similar work, while automated billing and auditing systems help keep fees in check.

I. Managing electronic evidence

Evidence-management tools let lawyers filter and share material with everyone who needs access to it in a matter, and support research and review of documents and transcripts gathered during discovery. Many can generate a visual timeline of the relevant material, and allow remote lawyers to watch depositions as they happen and annotate the record in real time with colleagues. Material handled in this way must still satisfy the statutory conditions governing the admissibility of electronic records.^{10,11}

III. THE FUTURE OF LEGAL TECHNOLOGY

The future of legal technology will turn on how well innovation can be reconciled with professional responsibility. As law firms, corporate legal departments, courts and legal start-ups

¹⁰ The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, No. 47 of 2023, INDIA CODE (2023), § 63 (governing the admissibility in evidence of information contained in an electronic record and prescribing the accompanying certificate).

¹¹ *Arjun Panditrao Khotkar v. Kailash Kushanrao Gorantyal*, (2020) 7 SCC 1 (holding the certificate under Section 65B(4) of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, the predecessor of Section 63 of the Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023, to be a condition precedent to the admissibility of secondary electronic evidence, and issuing general directions for the preservation and production of electronic records).

increasingly adopt AI tools, the lawyer's role is likely to shift further away from routine information-processing and toward higher-level judgment, strategy, negotiation, ethical counsel and personal advocacy.

Legal practitioners can expect to rely more heavily on AI research assistants, automated drafting tools, intelligent case-management systems, online dispute-resolution platforms, virtual hearings and data-driven litigation strategy. Legal education will need to keep pace, teaching students not just doctrine but also digital literacy, data protection, technology ethics and the responsible use of AI.

At the same time, the growing use of technology raises real questions about professional independence, confidentiality, client consent, accountability, bias and unequal access.¹² Smaller practices risk being placed at a disadvantage if only large organisations can afford the most sophisticated tools. The future of legal technology will therefore depend on sound regulation, adequate training and clear ethical standards, so that technology strengthens rather than undermines the delivery of justice.

These are questions the legal profession needs to engage with directly, understanding how lawyers are responding to the challenges technology presents, what obstacles they face, and how they can make the most of these tools while managing the risks.

A. Artificial intelligence

Artificial intelligence is the branch of computer science concerned with building machines capable of tasks that would normally require human intelligence, including learning, reasoning, language processing, pattern recognition and problem-solving.¹³ In legal practice it typically appears in the form of machine learning, natural language processing, predictive analytics and generative AI: systems capable of processing large volumes of text, identifying patterns, producing summaries and assisting with drafting or classification.

AI is particularly well suited to legal work because law is, at its core, an information-heavy discipline. Lawyers and judges routinely work with statutes, judgments, contracts, pleadings, evidence, correspondence and regulatory filings. AI can help organise and analyse this material,

¹² SUPREME COURT OF INDIA, *Draft Regulations for Use of Artificial Intelligence in Courts, 2026*, published with the Notice dated June 3, 2026 inviting views and suggestions of stakeholders and the general public (prepared under the aegis of the Artificial Intelligence Committee, Supreme Court of India, and grounded in the principles of human primacy, transparency, accountability, data protection and judicial independence), <https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3ec0490f1f4972d133619a60c30f3559e/uploads/2026/06/2026060342.pdf>.

¹³ John McCarthy, *What Is Artificial Intelligence?* (STANFORD UNIV., rev. Nov. 12, 2007) (defining the field as the science and engineering of making intelligent machines, especially intelligent computer programs), <http://jmc.stanford.edu/articles/whatisai/whatisai.pdf>.

but it cannot replace the ethical reasoning, empathy, discretion and constitutional responsibility that legal decision-making demands.

B. Artificial intelligence and the legal domain

AI now has practical applications across legal research, contract analysis, due diligence, e-discovery, drafting assistance, translation, transcription and case management. It is especially relevant in the Indian context, given the scale of the country's caseloads, its linguistic diversity and its procedural delays.¹⁴ AI systems can help sort information, translate judgments, flag filing errors and help courts manage records more efficiently.

C. Benefits of artificial intelligence in the legal field

Interest in AI within the legal sector has grown as more tools become available to handle the repetitive work lawyers have traditionally had to do themselves. Some of the principal benefits include the following.

i. Legal research

Lawyers spend a great deal of time on research, and junior lawyers in particular can take a long time to learn how to do it well. Locating the authority needed to support an argument is itself time-consuming, and the thoroughness of a lawyer's research often has a direct bearing on the outcome of a case.

ii. Client counselling

Lawyers spend considerable effort verifying a client's facts and underlying circumstances, work that pays off in the long run but is time-consuming to do properly. AI tools can assist with parts of that work, drawing on precedent and on outcomes in comparable matters, although the material so produced still has to be checked before it is relied on in advising a client.

iii. Predictive tools

Questions such as whether a case should be settled, or what the chances at trial might be, are the kind of question on which AI tools are increasingly offered as an aid, including by considering how comparable matters have been decided in the past. The draft regulations proposed for Indian courts would, however, prohibit the deployment of AI systems for dispute-outcome prediction in court processes.¹⁵

¹⁴ E-COMMITTEE, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA, *Digital Courts Vision and Roadmap: Phase III of the eCourts Project* (draft, Apr. 2021), <https://ecommitteesci.gov.in/vision-document-for-phase-iii-of-ecourts-project/>.

¹⁵ *Draft Regulations for Use of Artificial Intelligence in Courts, 2026* (n 12), reg. 16(1) proviso (providing that no AI system or AI tool used for the purpose of assistance in court processes shall replace humans so far as decision-making is concerned, and shall not be deployed for dispute-outcome prediction).

iv. Legal analysis

Reviewing and evaluating the documents in a file is time-consuming, and well-organised material makes lawyers considerably more productive. AI can flag documents that carry particular risk and help firms work through case files and contracts, for instance when reviewing agreements a client has already signed, in order to identify weaknesses or risks and update the relevant provisions.

v. Contract preparation

AI allows firms to generate standard, routine contracts and to build templates that can then be adapted to a client's specific needs.

vi. Patent applications

Intellectual property lawyers read extensively to keep abreast of developments in the field, and preparing a patent application is itself labour-intensive. AI can assist with organising, drafting and reviewing patent applications.

IV. THE EFFECT OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE INDIAN JUDICIARY

The Supreme Court's own move toward digitisation has coincided with wider adoption of AI tools in legal practice. AI is likely to affect the legal industry in several ways.

A. Client-facing innovation

The way legal businesses approach their clients is likely to look quite different in the near future, including in how services are priced and how far fees can be tied to how effectively the work is done.

B. A different competitive focus

Law is a highly competitive field, and firms are constantly looking for ways to grow revenue. Increasingly, that competition is likely to focus on efficiency and value rather than simply on volume.

C. Greater attention to brand value

Firms are likely to invest more heavily in branding going forward, investment that will, in turn, drive further innovation and reshape the workplace. In India that investment operates within the limits set by the Bar Council of India Rules, which bar an advocate from soliciting work or advertising, subject to a narrow proviso permitting prescribed website information.¹⁶

¹⁶ BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA Rules, pt. VI, ch. II, § II, r. 36 (providing that an advocate shall not solicit work or advertise, whether directly or indirectly, subject to a proviso inserted in 2008 permitting an advocate to furnish website information in the prescribed form under intimation to and as approved by the BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA).

D. A critical look at artificial intelligence in legal practice

For all its advantages, AI in legal practice has real limitations. AI systems can produce inaccurate output, rely on limited data, reflect bias present in their training material, or miss the practical and human context of a dispute. A lawyer who relies on AI output without independent verification risks professional negligence, breaches of confidentiality or misleading submissions to a court.¹⁷

The use of AI also raises questions of responsibility and accountability. If an AI-assisted tool produces a flawed recommendation, responsibility could fall on the lawyer, the software provider, the institution using the tool, or some combination of the three. Courts, in turn, need to ensure that AI supports judicial administration rather than substituting for independent judicial reasoning.¹⁸ Several questions remain open.

Does the law say anything about the legal personality of AI, and could such a system ever be treated as a legal entity comparable to an advocate?

Who is accountable when something goes wrong, and what kind of liability applies?

Would a person using AI-enabled legal services qualify as a “consumer” under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019?¹⁹ That question is complicated by the Supreme Court’s holding that services rendered by an advocate to a client do not fall within the Act at all.²⁰

Taken together, the questions raised by AI in law are considerable. Used carefully, it can be a genuine asset to the legal sector; used carelessly, it risks reproducing the very biases and blind spots it has no independent capacity to recognise, since it has no true grasp of the underlying principles of law.

E. Artificial intelligence as a disruptive force in law

i. Greater convenience

Legal apps and platforms make legal processes considerably more efficient, allowing ordinary people to consult experienced lawyers without leaving home. The same tools let lawyers

¹⁷ *Mata v. Avianca, Inc.* (n 4).

¹⁸ HIGH COURT OF KERALA, *Policy Regarding the Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools in District Judiciary*, circulated by Official Memorandum No. HCKL/7490/2025-DI-3-HC (July 19, 2025) (providing that AI tools are to be used solely in an assistive capacity and that under no circumstances are they to be used as a substitute for decision-making).

¹⁹ The Consumer Protection Act, No. 35 of 2019, INDIA CODE (2019), § 2(7) (defining “consumer”, and clarifying by the Explanation that the expressions “buys any goods” and “hires or avails any services” include all offline and online transactions conducted through electronic means, telesshopping, direct selling or multi-level marketing).

²⁰ *Bar of Indian Lawyers v. D. K. Gandhi PS National Institute of Communicable Diseases*, 2024 INSC 410 (holding that the legal profession is sui generis and that services rendered by an advocate to a client do not fall within the definition of “service” under the Consumer Protection Act).

communicate with one another and with clients, provide real-time updates and carry out research, making the system more user-friendly across the board.

ii. Easier research

Improvements in technology have given lawyers access to a wide range of research tools that surface as much relevant information as possible. Online databases such as Taxmann, Westlaw and LexisNexis provide access to case law, legislation and commentary, making research faster and more straightforward. Some lawyers still rely heavily on printed sources out of habit, obtaining a physical copy of every new law or guideline and working from it case by case, an approach that takes considerably longer. Digital research tools let lawyers keep up with legal developments even away from the office.

iii. More independent workflows

Legal work once depended heavily on manual processes and on coordination with non-lawyers and other professionals. A significant share of legal work rests on facts that are, in principle, capable of being reconstructed from a documentary record, and software such as word processors and eDiscovery tools now automates parts of that work, speeding up the process and freeing lawyers to focus on more productive tasks.

iv. Fewer errors

Technology reduces the likelihood of mistakes caused by missing or misunderstood facts and data, errors that can meaningfully shape the outcome of a matter. It also gives legal professionals the analytical capacity to examine a fact or piece of evidence from multiple angles, and to do so more efficiently.

v. Greater transparency

Some lawyers still make matters more complicated than necessary for clients, and limited access to online information can leave clients wary of any lawyer they consult. Law-firm management tools are said to help address this by creating a marketplace where clients can review lawyer profiles, understand their basic legal needs and communicate with lawyers directly, helping people connect with the right professional and making the process more open. Any such platform must, in India, operate consistently with the restrictions on solicitation and advertising in the Bar Council of India Rules.²¹

²¹ BAR COUNCIL OF INDIA Rules (n 16), pt. VI, ch. II, § II, r. 36.

vi. Greater collaboration among lawyers

One significant benefit of legal technology is that lawyers can now collaborate using tools such as Slack, Google Docs and Microsoft Teams, without needing to sit in the same room to draft a petition or discuss a case. This has allowed law firms to operate remotely, serving more clients regardless of location, subject always to the professional obligation of confidentiality that attaches to client communications.²²

vii. New legal products and services

Technology also strengthens communication between lawyers and the people they serve, helping lawyers better understand the challenges clients are facing and develop solutions accordingly.

viii. Faster processing of information

Used well, legal technology is fast and genuinely useful, and a real asset to a firm. Work that once took a long time, and that nobody particularly enjoyed doing, can now be done in minutes, with complex calculations and corrections taking seconds rather than hours. Even so, it is worth weighing the long-term implications of any given tool before adopting it.

ix. Better client service

Keeping clients satisfied matters more than ever, and AI can improve that experience through more individually tailored service. It can draw on client data to build a fuller picture of client needs and support personalised communication that keeps clients engaged, provided that the data is handled in accordance with the applicable data-protection obligations.²³

x. More effective use of resources

Junior lawyers were traditionally tasked with collecting, storing, managing and processing case papers and with keeping senior lawyers updated on their schedules, work that left them less engaged and forced senior advocates to think carefully about how to deploy their expertise. Matter-administration and calendaring software now handles these tasks directly, giving everyone easy access to what needs to be done each day and freeing senior lawyers to use junior staff more effectively.

xi. Document management

Where documents were once stored only in physical form, they can now be kept digitally. Tools such as Google Drive and Microsoft Office make it simple to organise and retrieve legal

²² The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 (n 8), § 132.

²³ The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (n 7), § 8.

documents, considerably reducing the reliance on paper and the cost, in money and office space, that comes with it.

xii. Communication and virtual hearings

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the use of technology in court proceedings from 2020 onward.²⁴ Email, video conferencing and instant messaging have made it easier for lawyers to stay in touch with clients, other lawyers and judges, and courts now routinely hold hearings over video-conferencing platforms under rules framed for that purpose, saving time for courts, lawyers and clients alike.²⁵

xiii. Sharing files

Technology has also made it far easier to share information. Lawyers today have multiple channels through which to exchange case papers and collaborate on work in real time.

V. A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

A. eDiscovery and the risk of cyberattack

Nearly every dispute today involves some digital trail belonging to one of the parties, and eDiscovery cannot be done properly without the right tools. But the use of technology always carries the risk of a cyberattack. Any organisation can be targeted, and without adequate cybersecurity measures a data breach can cause damage to both clients and the firm that may be impossible to undo. A firm holding personal data is in any event under a statutory obligation to maintain reasonable security safeguards and to report a breach when one occurs.²⁶

B. Efficiency gains come with breach risk

New technology brings real benefits, but also real risks, including data breaches and the temptation to cut corners in the name of speed or cost.

C. Deepfakes and synthetic media

Whether technology helps or harms the profession depends heavily on how it is used. Misused, it can produce convincing deepfakes, make people appear to have said things they never said, or be used to select evidence that misleadingly supports a particular narrative. The statutory

²⁴ *In re Guidelines for Court Functioning Through Video Conferencing During COVID-19 Pandemic* (n 2).

²⁵ E-COMMITTEE, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA, *Model Rules for Video Conferencing for Courts* (2020) (drafted by a sub-committee of High Court judges and circulated for adoption by the High Courts), <https://ecommitteesci.gov.in/document/model-rules-for-video-conferencing-for-courts-2/>.

²⁶ The Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 (n 7), § 8(5)–(6).

conditions governing the admissibility of electronic records are the principal safeguard against material of that kind entering the record unchallenged.²⁷

D. Faster searches, new risks

On the one hand, technology has helped lawyers become more organised and efficient in areas such as document management and project planning, and makes it far easier to sift through large volumes of material to find key precedent. On the other, it raises new data-protection concerns that need to be managed carefully.

E. Productivity gains, job risk

Technology can meaningfully cut wait times and costs while raising output, but one of the more troubling aspects of AI in the legal field is its potential to displace work that has traditionally been done by people.

F. Resolving disputes without a lawyer's office

Technology has made it possible for people to resolve legal issues without ever visiting a law office, largely through the growth of online dispute-resolution services.²⁸

G. Easier for students, easier to cut corners

Technology has made it considerably easier for law students to research case law and stay current with legal developments. At the same time, it has also made it easier for some practitioners to exploit gaps in the system and behave less ethically.

H. Guarding against over-reliance

Technology helps lawyers access the information they need to do their jobs, but it can also put client privacy and lawyers' own work product at risk. Firms need to guard against becoming too dependent on any single tool, and should look for better ways to protect client data and avoid sharing more information than is necessary.²⁹

I. The risk of unfounded claims

Technology has also made it easier for people to bring baseless complaints against employers or public authorities. The risk of frivolous and vexatious proceedings is one the Supreme Court has itself recognised and has sought to check by procedural means.³⁰

²⁷ The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 (n 10), § 63.

²⁸ NITI AAYOG (n 5).

²⁹ The Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023 (n 8), § 132; HIGH COURT OF KERALA (n 18) (cautioning that information entered into cloud-based generative AI tools, including facts of a case, personal identifiers, privileged communications and uploaded litigation documents, may be accessed or used by the service provider concerned).

³⁰ *Priyanka Srivastava v. State of Uttar Pradesh*, (2015) 6 SCC 287 (directing that an application under Section 156(3) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 be supported by a sworn affidavit, so as to place a check on

J. Technology's impact on the Indian judicial system

Technology has meaningfully reshaped the Indian judicial system, improving access, transparency, speed and administrative efficiency. Virtual hearings, e-filing, digital cause lists, online case-status systems and video conferencing became core features of court operations during and after the COVID-19 period, showing that the delivery of justice can continue even when physical access to courts is constrained. Live-streaming of proceedings in cases of constitutional importance has been recognised as an aspect of the same constitutional guarantee of access to justice.³¹

i. The e-Courts Project

The e-Courts Project is among the largest digital initiatives undertaken by the Indian judiciary.³² It aims to computerise courts, provide online access to case information, support e-filing, improve case management and extend digital services to litigants and lawyers alike. The National Judicial Data Grid, in turn, publishes data on pending and disposed cases, improving transparency and helping policymakers gauge the scale of the judicial backlog.³³

ii. The electronic Supreme Court Reports

The electronic Supreme Court Reports, or e-SCR, provides free digital access to the reported decisions of the Supreme Court through a dedicated search interface, available on the Court's website, its mobile application and the judgment portal of the National Judicial Data Grid.³⁴

iii. Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software

The Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software, or SUVAS, is a machine-assisted translation tool developed for the Court to render judgments and legal documents into Indian languages, extending linguistic access to justice for litigants who do not read English.

iv. Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court Efficiency

The Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court Efficiency, or SUPACE, is an AI-assisted research and information-management tool designed to help judges process large volumes of

frivolous and vexatious applications).

³¹ *Swapnil Tripathi v. Supreme Court of India*, (2018) 10 SCC 639 (permitting the live-streaming of proceedings of constitutional importance as a pilot project and treating public access to such proceedings as an aspect of the right of access to justice).

³² E-COMMITTEE, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA, *Policy and Action Plan Document: Phase II of the eCourts Project* (approved Jan. 8, 2014), https://ecourts.gov.in/ecourts_home/static/manuals/PolicyActionPlanDocument-PhaseII-approved-08012014-indexed_Sign.pdf.

³³ E-COMMITTEE, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA, *National Judicial Data Grid*, <https://njdg.ecourts.gov.in> (last visited Aug. 27, 2026).

³⁴ E-COMMITTEE, SUPREME COURT OF INDIA, *Newly Launched Electronic Version of the Supreme Court Reports (e-SCR)*, <https://districts.ecourts.gov.in/newly-launched-electronic-version-supreme-court-reports-e-scr>.

material more efficiently. It was launched in April 2021, and the Chief Justice of India stated at the launch that the tool would be confined to the collection and analysis of data and would not extend into judicial decision-making.³⁵

Each of these tools is best understood as something that supports and strengthens judicial capacity, rather than something that replaces human decision-making.³⁶

VI. FINAL THOUGHTS

Legal technology and artificial intelligence sit at the centre of where legal practice is heading. They are already improving legal research, drafting, contract review, document management, due diligence, client communication, court administration and access to justice. India's steady adoption of e-Courts, e-filing, virtual hearings, e-SCR, SUVAS and SUPACE reflects a justice system that is gradually, if unevenly, embracing digital transformation.

That embrace needs to be a careful one. AI should not replace lawyers or judges: legal work depends on interpretation, ethical judgment, accountability, empathy and constitutional values that machines cannot supply. That position is now reflected in the regulatory material emerging from the courts themselves.³⁷ The better path is a balanced one, in which lawyers use technology to improve efficiency and access while preserving professional independence, confidentiality, fairness and human oversight. Whether legal technology ultimately strengthens the rule of law will depend on continued education, sound ethical regulation and responsible innovation.

³⁵ *Won't Let Artificial Intelligence Do Decision Making; Judges' Autonomy and Discretion Will Be Retained: CJI Bobde*, LIVELAW (Apr. 6, 2021), <https://www.livelaw.in/top-stories/supreme-court-artificial-intelligence-portal-supace-chief-justice-sa-bobde-172220>.

³⁶ *Draft Regulations for Use of Artificial Intelligence in Courts, 2026* (n 12), reg. 4 (providing that the use of artificial intelligence in court processes shall at all times remain strictly subservient to human judgment and judicial authority, that every AI system shall function solely in an assistive capacity, and that the ultimate authority to determine matters of law, fact and justice shall vest exclusively in the judicial officers of the competent jurisdiction).

³⁷ HIGH COURT OF KERALA (n 18); *Draft Regulations for Use of Artificial Intelligence in Courts, 2026* (n 12), ch. III (delineating the permissible and prohibited uses of artificial intelligence in court processes).