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Transforming Legal Research: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Shaping Contemporary Legal Practice

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the legal field has undergone a profound transformation, driven by the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies into its core practices. This research paper explores the pivotal role of AI in reshaping contemporary legal practice through the lens of legal research. Focusing on the evolution of AI-powered tools and their impact on legal professionals, access to justice, and ethical considerations, this study sheds light on the multifaceted implications of this technological revolution.

Keywords: *Artificial Intelligence, Legal Research, Contemporary Legal Practice, Technology, Legal Professionals, Access to Justice, Ethical Considerations, AI-Powered Tools, Legal Innovation.*

I. INTRODUCTION

The legal field, which has long been associated with tradition and following cases is experiencing changes, in the era of digital technology. This transformation is primarily driven by the progress of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies. In today's world AI is not a term; it plays a crucial role in reshaping the way legal professionals conduct research and practice law.

Artificial intelligence (AI)-driven tools and algorithms are quickly replacing the conventional methods of legal research, which are characterized by repetitive manual searches through enormous amounts of legal texts and case law. This conceptual shift, which is improving the effectiveness, accuracy, and accessibility of legal research, is not just an evolution but a revolution³. With its ability to handle enormous volumes of data and produce insights at an unparalleled movement, AI is quickly emerging as an essential tool for legal practitioners attempting to negotiate a complicated legal landscape⁴.

The complicated connection between AI and legal study is thoroughly explored in this research

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³ AI 100 STUDY, supra note 1, at 43 (“Effective governance requires more experts who understand and can analyze the interactions between AI technologies, programmatic objectives, and overall societal values.”)

⁴ ibid

article. We want to clarify the scope of this transition by closely examining the historical evolution of AI in the legal sector and offering a thorough analysis of the present AI-powered tools and technology⁵. We also explore the many ways that AI is affecting the legal industry, including how it affects lawyers themselves, how it might help close the justice gap by facilitating greater access to legal resources and services, and the ethical questions it raises.

This study aims to offer a comprehensive viewpoint on the integration of AI in legal research through an eclectic technique that includes literature reviews, case studies, surveys, and interviews with legal experts.

II. THE DIGITAL PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION BILL, 2023

- The Bill will be applicable to the processing of digital personal data in India, whether the data is digitalized after being collected offline or online. If such processing is done outside of India to supply goods or services in India, it will also be covered.
- Only with an individual's consent and for a legitimate reason may personal data be handled. Certain lawful uses, such as an individual's voluntary data sharing or the State's processing of data for licenses, permits, benefits, and services, may not require consent.
- Data fiduciaries will have a duty to ensure data accuracy, store data securely, and remove it after it has served its purpose.
- Individuals are given specific rights under the Bill, such as the ability to access information, request deletion and rectification, and file grievances.
- For certain reasons, such as maintaining public order, state security, or deterring crime, the central government may waive the Bill's obligations for government entities.
- The Data Protection Board of India will be established by the national government to make decisions regarding noncompliance with the Bill's requirements.

(A) Key Issues and Analysis:

- Data collection, processing, and retention beyond what is necessary may result from exemptions to the State's right to handle data based on things like national security. The fundamental right to privacy might be violated by this.
- The Bill does not control the dangers that could result from processing personal data.

⁵ Frank H. Easterbrook, *Cyberspace and the Law of the Horse*, 1996 U. CHI. LEGAL F. 207, 208 (1996) (“Develop a sound law of intellectual property, then apply it to computer networks.”) https://www.law.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Artificial-Intelligence-An-Introduction-to-the-Legal-Policy-and-Ethical-Issues_JXD.pdf

- The right to data portability and the right to be forgotten are not granted to the data principal by the bill.
- The Bill permits the transfer of personal data outside of India, apart from nations that the federal government notifies. It's possible that this process won't provide a sufficient assessment of data protection laws in the nations where personal data transmission is permitted.
- The terms of the appointments to the Data Protection Board of India are two years, after which they can be renewed. The Board's ability to operate independently may be impacted by the short term with room for reappointment.

(B) Literature review:

1. **Historical Development of Legal Research:** Ancient civilizations like Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Greece, where legal codes and manuscripts were painstakingly copied, have a long history of legal studies. The invention of printed legal writings during the Renaissance democratized access to legal information⁶. Legal journals and digests started to appear in the 19th century, facilitating the organization and retrieval of legal knowledge. Digitalization and online databases changed the environment in the 20th century, improving accessibility and efficiency of legal research.
2. **Emergence of AI in the Legal Field:** A fundamental shift has occurred with the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI) into the legal profession. The introduction of AI can be dated to the second part of the 20th century, when databases began to digitize legal archives. However, it wasn't until the twenty-first century that AI started to significantly transform legal research⁷. Tasks like document inspection, legal analysis, and predictive legal research that were formerly manual and time-consuming can now be automated thanks to the computational power of AI and machine learning algorithms.
3. **AI-Powered legal research tools:** A new generation of legal research tools has been created using AI. These tools quickly search through large legal datasets by combining machine learning, data analytics, and natural language processing (NLP). They provide legal practitioners with remarkably accurate assistance in locating pertinent statutes,

⁶ Rabindra Pathak, *Historical approach to legal research* (2019) https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336676844_Historical_Approach_to_Legal_Research

⁷ Mirza Aslam Beg, *Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Indian Legal System* <https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-631-impact-of-artificial-intelligence-on-indian-legal-system.html#:~:text=AI%2Dbased%20software%20and%20programmes,automated%20assisting%20tools%20and%20software.>

case law, and precedents. Additionally, AI-powered technologies have predictive powers that help attorneys foresee legal outcomes and create more successful legal tactics.

4. **Previous studies and Gaps in literature:** In recent years, academic investigation of AI in legal study has exploded, exposing both its potential and its difficulties. Studies already published have emphasized the advantages of AI in terms of accuracy and efficiency. However, there are still significant gaps in our knowledge of AI's potential effects on access to justice, particularly for underserved areas, as well as its ethical and societal implications. Additionally, more investigation is required to determine the entire scope of AI's impact on the duties of legal practitioners and its incorporation into legal education.

(C) Methodology

a. Research design-

1. **Exploratory Design:** In order to thoroughly explore the complex interaction between AI and legal research, this work uses an exploratory research design. This approach enables a deeper knowledge of the subject by examining various aspects of AI's impact on legal study.
2. **Data Collection methods-**
 - **Case studies:** The research incorporates multiple case studies of legal firms, institutions, or organizations that have adopted AI-powered legal research tools. These case studies provide real-world examples and insights into the practical implementation of AI in legal research.
 - **Surveys:** Surveys are conducted among legal professionals, including lawyers, paralegals, and legal researchers, to gauge their experiences and perceptions regarding AI-assisted legal research tools. The surveys collect quantitative data, allowing for statistical analysis.
 - **Interview:** In-depth interviews are conducted with legal experts, including AI developers, legal technology specialists, and experienced legal professionals. These interviews provide qualitative data, offering a deeper understanding of the nuances and challenges associated with AI in legal research.
3. **Data analysis techniques:** Statistics are used to statistically analyze survey data to find trends, patterns, and correlations. A quantitative evaluation of the effect of AI on legal

research and professionals is possible with quantitative data analysis. The analysis of themes is used to examine qualitative data from case studies and interviews. Through coding and content analysis, themes and patterns are discovered that offer deep insights into the experiences, difficulties, and opportunities associated with using AI in legal research.

4. **Ethical considerations:** Ethical considerations are integral to this research. The study acknowledges the potential ethical dilemmas associated with AI, such as algorithmic bias, data privacy, and accountability. Ethical guidelines are followed throughout the research process to ensure the responsible handling of data and findings.

III. AI IN LEGAL RESEARCH: CURRENT LANDSCAPE

- **Overview of AI Technologies in legal research⁸:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies have a substantial impact on the present environment of legal research. AI in legal study includes data analytics, machine learning, and Natural Language Processing (NLP). These technologies make it possible to automate and optimize a variety of research processes, giving lawyers cutting-edge tools for navigating the world of legal knowledge as it continues to grow.
- **Prominent AI-Powered Legal Research Tools:** The way legal practitioners' access and analyze legal information has been revolutionized by the emergence of many noteworthy AI-powered legal research tools. Westlaw Edge, Lexis Advance, ROSS, and Case text are a few examples. The efficiency and accuracy of legal research are improved by these tools' use of AI algorithms to simplify legal searches, give predictive analytics, and provide user-friendly interfaces.
- **Benefits and advantages:**
 1. **Efficiency and Speed:** AI-powered legal research tools significantly reduce the time required to search for legal information. They can quickly sift through extensive databases, providing relevant results in seconds, thereby expediting the research process.
 2. **Precision and Accuracy:** AI tools excel in retrieving precise legal information, minimizing the risk of missing critical cases or statutes. Their algorithms can identify

⁸ Md. Shahin Kabir and Mohammad Nazmul Alam, *The Role of AI Technology for Legal Research and Decision Making* (2023) <https://www.irjet.net/archives/V10/i7/IRJET-V10I7148.pdf>

relevant documents with a high degree of accuracy⁹, reducing human error.

3. **Predictive Analytics:** AI-enhanced tools offer predictive capabilities, helping legal professionals anticipate legal outcomes based on historical data and trends. This assists in crafting more informed and successful legal strategies.
 4. **Cost-Effective:** By automating repetitive tasks like document review and data extraction, AI reduces the need for extensive manual labor, resulting in cost savings¹⁰ for legal practices.
 5. **Enhanced Access:** AI tools democratize access to legal information by providing easy and affordable access to a wide range of legal materials, leveling the playing field for small firms and solo practitioners.
- **Limitations and challenges:**
 1. **Algorithmic Bias:** AI systems can inherit biases present in the training data, potentially perpetuating systemic biases in legal outcomes. This raises concerns about fairness and equity in the legal system.
 2. **Data Privacy:** Legal documents often contain sensitive and confidential information. Using AI to analyze such data raises privacy concerns, necessitating robust data protection measures.
 3. **Complexity and Learning Curve:** Some legal professionals may find AI tools complex to use initially, requiring training and adaptation. This learning curve can hinder their immediate integration into legal practices.
 4. **Lack of Human Judgment:** While AI excels in data processing and retrieval, it lacks the nuanced legal judgment¹¹ and contextual understanding that human legal professionals possess. AI should be seen as a complementary tool rather than a replacement.
 5. **Ethical Considerations:** The use of AI in legal research raises ethical questions about the responsible use of technology. Legal professionals must navigate issues related to transparency¹², accountability, and the ethical implications of relying on AI-generated

⁹ Aditya Tyagi, *The Pros and Cons of AI-powered Legal research* (2023) <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/pros-cons-ai-powered-legal-research-aditya-tyagi>

¹⁰ *Artificial Intelligence for the legal industry: a boon or bane* (2021) <https://blog.ipleaders.in/artificial-intelligence-legal-industry-boon-bane/#Benefits>

¹¹ *Artificial Intelligence for the legal industry: a boon or bane* (2021) <https://blog.ipleaders.in/artificial-intelligence-legal-industry-boon-bane/#Benefits>

¹² Aditya Tyagi, *The Pros and Cons of AI-powered Legal research* (2023) <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/pros-cons-ai-powered-legal-research-aditya-tyagi>

insights.

IV. IMPACT ON LEGAL PROFESSIONALISM

- **Enhancing Efficiency in Legal Research:** Efficiency is where AI's effects on legal professionals are most noticeable. Artificial intelligence-powered tools significantly cut the time and effort needed for legal research tasks. Legal professionals can quickly access a wide variety of legal resources, conduct more accurate searches for pertinent statutes, cases, and precedents, and automate the time-consuming task of document review¹³. This effectiveness translates into time savings, allowing legal practitioners to devote more time to higher-value tasks like legal analysis, developing business strategies, and interacting with clients.
- **Changes in Legal Research Roles:** Roles in legal research have changed because of AI integration. No longer are legal practitioners limited to manual data retrieval and analysis activities. Instead, they take on more strategic roles in analyzing insights produced by AI, confirming outcomes, and applying their knowledge to challenging legal situations. This change from information gatherers to strategic analysts shows how the practice of law is changing in the age of artificial intelligence.
- **Ethical and Professional Implications:** AI's use in legal studies raises several ethical and professional questions. Legal experts must deal with concerns about openness, responsibility, and the ethical use of AI-generated suggestions. The integrity of the legal profession, upholding client confidentiality, and ensuring that AI systems are bias-free are of utmost importance. To handle these fresh difficulties, legal ethics norms might need to be updated.
- **Perspectives from Legal Practitioners:** Getting insights from individuals who work on the front lines of legal practice is necessary to comprehend the influence of AI on legal professionals¹⁴. Legal professionals provide useful insights into their experiences, difficulties, and opportunities in using AI-powered products through surveys and interviews. Their viewpoints offer a broad insight of how AI is reshaping positions in legal research and determining the future of the legal profession.

¹³ *How will AI impact the legal profession?* (2020)

<https://www.exigent-group.com/blog/how-will-artificial-intelligence-impact-the-legal-profession/>

¹⁴ Arghya Mondal, *Impact of AI on Indian Legal System*

<https://www.legalserviceindia.com/legal/article-10548-impact-of-artificial-intelligence-on-indian-legal-system.html#:~:text=With%20the%20vast%20amounts%20of,just%20approach%20to%20the%20law.>

V. AI AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

Legal research could be transformed by artificial intelligence (AI), which would also increase access to justice. Here are a few ways AI can be useful:

- Supporting the provision of legal services: To help cases be resolved more quickly, AI can help with legal research and document preparation. For instance, a chatbot may be designed to look up pertinent statutes or legal precedents and present summaries of the information it discovers¹⁵.
- In place of legal professionals: Access to justice would no longer be in the hands of a profession with a financial interest in maintaining a monopoly on legal services if the legal reasoning process could be automated. The greatest influence in this field¹⁶ can be expected from recent advances in AI.
- AI and related technologies have the potential to democratize access to legal services, including applications like online dispute settlement¹⁷.
- Accessible legal information: Pitt professors Kevin Ashley and Diane Litman are developing a framework using artificial intelligence that summarizes the key terms used in cases to make legal knowledge more accessible. With the aim of releasing the finished tool in the open-source Canadian Legal Information Institute (CanLII)¹⁸, they are creating a tool employing information from digital compendiums of legal statutes and court decisions.

However, there are also concerns that AI might hinder access to justice. Some experts warn that the current trajectory of AI development runs the risk of exacerbating existing disparities¹⁹. Despite these concerns, AI has the potential to provide a more responsive and more accessible justice system than ever before²⁰.

¹⁵ Kristen Sunday, *Forum: there's potential for AI chatbots to increase access to justice* (2023) <https://www.thomsonreuters.com/en-us/posts/legal/forum-spring-2023-ai-chatbots/>

¹⁶ Joel Tito, *How AI can improve access to Justice* (2017) <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/insights/joel-tito-ai-justice>

¹⁷ Hassan Kanu, *Artificial intelligence poised to hinder, not help, access to justice* (2023) <https://www.reuters.com/legal/transactional/artificial-intelligence-poised-hinder-not-help-access-justice-2023-04-25/>

¹⁸ Kevin Ashley and Diane Litman, *AI tools help increase access to justice* (2021) <https://www.research.pitt.edu/ai-tools-help-increase-access-justice>

¹⁹ Hassan Kanu, *Artificial intelligence poised to hinder, not help, access to justice* (2023) <https://www.reuters.com/legal/transactional/artificial-intelligence-poised-hinder-not-help-access-justice-2023-04-25/>

²⁰ Joel Tito, *How AI can improve access to Justice* (2017) <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/insights/joel-tito-ai-justice>

VI. CONCLUSION

In this research paper, we examine how AI is changing legal practice, how it can affect people's access to justice, and the ethical issues that need to be considered. We offer suggestions for legal experts, legislators, and educators on how to take advantage of AI's advantages while handling its challenges legally and ethically based on these implications.

We consider how AI is transforming the legal profession, how legal practitioners' roles are changing, and what this means for the industry. We examine how AI will continue to influence modern legal practice and what efforts may be made to make sure AI contributes favorably to the pursuit of justice and the development of the legal profession.

This also provides a thorough knowledge of how AI is impacting legal research, legal professionals, and the larger legal environment. It provides information on the current state of AI in the legal sector as well as views on potential future directions and difficulties. In the end, it shows the significance of ethical and responsible AI integration in legal practice and emphasizes how dynamic the legal profession is in the age of technological progress.
