

AI and the Legal Profession

How is generative AI changing the legal profession, and what role should lawyers play in its development and integration?

I think AI, specifically, generative AI, has fundamentally changed the legal landscape for the profession, for many good reasons, but let's first look at it more broadly. The industry 4.0, the industrialization, the fourth time we have this industrialization, is changing, not just the legal profession, but the entire landscape of the economy in the world. So lawyers, of course, need to be aware of changes in AI, changes brought along by AI, and also not only participate, but maybe contribute to the development of AI.

As a computer science graduate who studied AI, naturally, I fully embrace all forms of technology, but I know some technologies come with some limitations. But having said that, ChatGPT, the likes of ChatGPT, generative AI, they do have benefits. So even these days, I think every day, be it you're watching YouTube, or you're trying to get to the office or going to a client's place with navigation, you are using AI all the time. So you get into a client's place, if your client wants you to look at something, I would probably use the more traditional form. But I know my colleagues, younger colleagues, would probably ethically use AI, not to shortcut and not do the full work, but also to just double check to see what they've missed out on, because it doesn't take much time.

The legal profession is very competitive, so if you don't do it, don't embrace technology, someone else would. So then if you look at when first Gen AI properly popped out with ChatGPT, then a lot of lawyers are looking, "Oh, how can we use this?" But then, surprisingly, perhaps a lot of big firms issued statements to the colleagues saying, "Don't use it". Why? Because there are hidden dangers. When you ask the question to the algorithm, ask, you know, ask the machine, they learn confidential information of your client, so you breach the client's information. So then we explore. How do we work around it, or do we want to work around it, or work with it? So you could actually work with software developers and say whatever asks you those questions, they stay on my system, on-prem, on my device, doesn't go up. So we have the benefit of the processing power of the entire algorithm, but without giving up our personal data or client's confidential information. So those get a bit

interesting.

We have a range of people, we have colleagues who have access to different forms of AI platforms and some of the bigger publishers or law tech companies using Gen AI, so we subscribe to them. We actually contribute to a lot of these. And so we would, for example, look at employment law, for example, if you have a chatbot. So rather than just using it, you help to produce it. Just to give some examples. There's a retiring person who's really good at real estate conveyancing. So we got together, and we're trying to almost download that person's consciousness into the computer so that, you know, even when that person retires, that system named after that person is effectively that person, is able to, you know, give the best advice, always trusted by landlords in Hong Kong, how to efficiently renew leases. You'll be able to extract information to see how others are doing, so that you are in the right zone, so that you are not too unreasonable. Or, you know. You will get things done, and people would continue, and you create value. It's about serving justice and also serving the clients' interests. So these are important areas that people should not forget.

And, rather than just having a tech person develop the tech without the legal knowledge of the lawyers trying to play, you know, with it, it's best to get people to team up. And lawyers, we're good at helping people. We solve problems, and why not do it ourselves and work with people? Work with the university, for example.