

AI: Advice for Law Students

With respect to the use of AI tools, what are the specific skills and competencies that you would look for in a fresh graduate wanting to work in law?

With Generative AI these days, there's a problem of biasness, logical flaws sometimes. It might not be obvious, but students, law students particularly, must understand not just the benefit of using Gen AI or AI, but also the con, the potential downside of using it. So, I think you still need to grind and have grit to learn the fundamentals. But with Gen AI, often it's really garbage in, garbage out sometimes. If you learn from very biased material, one-sided material, at the end of the day, the computer, the algorithm would say, "That is a fact".

Myself, I studied AI on top of law, so I find it really beneficial to have sort of interdisciplinary knowledge and to fully embrace it. And if your clients appreciate that you understand this area, chances are they want to use you and as they grow this space in AI. Fresh graduates who enter the legal profession, I would highly recommend them to first understand how AI works and maybe start with at least doing some prompt engineering, how to ask the AI the right questions and appreciate what you ask would affect the output, and which programs you use will affect the output. So learn different systems and appreciate their nuances and the differences in each of them, and perhaps get involved in identifying gaps and needs.

For instance, when clients invest in companies, we always look at markets, markets and markets. Today, if you look at the United States, the research shows for every \$200 companies spend, \$1 is spent on the legal profession. So at least you know there's a certain size market. So within that market space, then you might drill down and say, which are the growing areas, and how can you make AI, use AI effectively, properly, ethically, so that you could maybe help save time and make it more cost-effective. So you're more competitive, or you just earn more. You can earn money while you sleep.

So, I think law students, young graduates, you understand technology more than most of us. You grew up in this era, and if you could teach us how we could improve, how we could do better, and how we could serve our clients better, you would be well sought after within the law firm.

Are there any skills and competencies that you think won't change as a result of generative AI?

Some core competencies lawyers will still need to have would be ability to have critical thinking, ability to communicate, and have empathy and appreciation of bigger things. Read the news, see how things are going every day, try to apply your knowledge. But nothing replaces hard work, be it studying cases, or be it learning about AI. Learning prompt engineering or more, these are things that don't change. I think the core is understanding the client's industry. You can't be a good lawyer if you don't understand their needs and wants. And also be a team player and keep a positive attitude and a good work-life balance.

What advice do you have for novice lawyers who want to learn to use AI in effective, critical and ethical ways?

Use of AI for law students, young graduates, I would say what you learn now may become outdated when you come out of law school, but it's okay. You learn more about the process, the thinking behind it. Ethical issues are certainly important. You don't want to ever breach client confidentiality. It's not fair for the client. It also might affect your ability to practice law. So don't give out your client's confidential information to third parties. It's always on a need-to-know basis. Don't hide from your partners, you know, that you use AI. Look at the use-of-AI policy in law school, also in the law firm. I think you find it most embracing this technology, but they remind us to be ethical. I think generally, the rules are not prescriptive, but more general. They don't exactly dictate how you use it, but don't use the wrong technology.