ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, THE BAR AND THE BENCH IN NIGERIA - THE BAR PERSPECTIVE: BEING A PAPER PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF MULAN ON 17TH MAY 2025 BY PROF. YUSUF ALI SAN, 1ST KULIYA NGERI OF ILORIN EMIRATE.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly digital world, where technology and innovation have become fundamental to every walk of life, the legal profession is no different, with technology integrating into our society and gravitating to the centre of our universe. The legal profession has long been characterized by precedent, procedural rigour, and reliance on human expertise. However, the digital revolution, particularly the rise of Artificial Intelligence, is compelling legal professionals to rethink how law is practiced, delivered, and accessed. Al is no longer just a futuristic concept, it is a present-day tool being used to improve efficiency, accuracy, and responsiveness in legal work.

Technology is known as modern equipment, machines, and methods based on contemporary knowledge of science and computers. The introduction of social media, drones, smart watches, laptops and tablets, e-commerce platforms, 5G network, self-driving cars, and even more important, the invention of artificial intelligence (AI), are all a reflection of the advent of technology. Technology has impacted almost every sphere of human life in a beneficial or detrimental way.

This fact holds true for the legal profession as well. The legal landscape, comprising of the Bar and the Bench, is fast evolving as an effect of the emergence of technology. The Law has gradually

---

[1]Anubhav Singla and Ekta Gupta, "The Impact of Technology on Legal Profession' International journal of the law (2024) 10 (2) https://www.law.journals.org/assets/archives/2024/vol10issue2/10077.pdf> accessed 2nd May 2025

embraced technological innovation over the years, identifying effectiveness and efficiency in the movement from the use of telegraph, facsimile, and tele conference technologies to the use of internet, cellular, virtual conference, and artificial intelligence.

The revolutionary technological changes within the legal industry dates back to the 90s, with the rise of the internet. This shift introduced the possibility of faster communication through email, creation of digital libraries, and the emergence of early document management systems. The implementation of these technological platforms provided lawyers with essential tools to streamline and improve their daily operations. In recent years, there has been a significant increase in innovation and investment in LegalTech solutions. The legal profession known for its reliance on human reasoning, precedent, and careful interpretation is now being challenged and complemented by Al. Globally, we are witnessing Al systems that can conduct legal research in seconds, predict the outcome of court cases, review voluminous documents, and even assist in drafting legal opinions and contracts. These developments compel us to re-evaluate the traditional modes of legal service delivery. We, as lawyers, are now adopting key technologies such as client portals, electronic payments systems, email communication, document management systems, virtual hearing, Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) systems, and many more. This shift from traditional practices to modern technological practices is driven by the benefits these technological tools offer by enhancing efficiency, boosting productivity, and enabling lawyers to better address the legal needs of their clients.

Gabriel Bar, Silvia A. Carretta, and Shobana lyer, 'The Impact of Law Tech on the Future of Lawyers' (2021)
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/357804925 The Impact_of Law Tech_on the Future of Lawyers
> accessed 3rd May 2025

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered an accelerated adoption of technology by members of the bar across the legal profession. Lawyers relied on technological platforms that enable clients to securely share and sign documents electronically, held clients' meetings virtually via video conferencing platforms, and enabled electronic invoice payments for legal services rendered.

Furthermore, Virtual Hearing, conducted as a substitute for physical court hearings through technological platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams, rapidly gained ground and became a practice in our courts nationwide. Courts and Tribunals globally in all areas of practice quickly transitioned to digital proceedings, pushing judges, lawyers, and litigants beyond their usual comfort zone and into a new era of virtual legal proceedings. It is evident that our current legal reality in Nigeria is one that sees technology as a requirement for effective and efficient legal practice.

The future belongs to emerging technologies and Artificial Intelligence (Al) is at the forefront of the technological advancements transforming the legal profession in Nigeria today. Over the past few years, Al has generated significant buzz across various industries and the legal profession is no exception. Al is poised to evolve rapidly and bring transformative potential for lawyers who are open to adopting these innovative opportunities. By embracing Al, lawyers stand to gain many advantages including productivity, efficiency, and time management. However, despite the potential of Al, a common fear remains among lawyers that Al could render many traditional legal jobs obsolete. However, this shift raises critical questions for the Bar entrusted with upholding justice, protecting rights, and maintaining the integrity of the legal system. How will Al redefine the role of the Nigerian lawyer? What are the implications for ethics, confidentiality, and professional responsibility? Will Al enhance or undermine the quality of legal advocacy? And most importantly, how should the Bar respond to ensure that technological advancement aligns with the core principles of justice and the rule of law?

2.0 UNDERSTANDING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

Artificial Intelligence, a once seemingly futuristic idea is currently weaving its way into our lives, answering questions, finishing our sentences and mimicking human intelligence faster than we ever anticipated. Al has gone from a science fiction futuristic idea to a present-day reality, shaping how we interact with the world.

What is Artificial Intelligence:

AI, plainly defined, is the simulation of human intelligence by machines, particularly computer systems which enables computers perform tasks that would ordinarily require human intelligence.[3]

John McCarthy, one of the founding fathers of Al, defined it as "the science and engineering of making intelligent machines."

Merriam Webster, define it as "Artificial Intelligence is the capability of computer systems or algorithms to imitate intelligent human behaviour."[4]

Al refers to the capability of machines to imitate intelligent human behaviour. It encompasses a range of technologies including machine learning, natural language processing, robotics, and predictive analytics

---

[3]Anubhav Singla and Ekta Gupta, "The Impact of Technology on Legal Profession' International Journal of Law (2024) 10 (2) <https://www.lawjournals.org/assets/archives/2024/vol10issue2/10077.pdf> accessed 2 May 2025

[4]"Artificial Intelligence", Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, available at <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/artificial%20intelligence> accessed 4th May 2025

These tools enable machines to process large volumes of information, recognize patterns, draw inferences, and even learn from experience.
What distinguishes Al from other digital tools is its potential to perform cognitive functions once thought to be uniquely human.

2.2. Understanding Artificial Intelligence in Context

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the development of computer systems that can perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence. These tasks include reasoning, learning, problem-solving, understanding language, and recognizing patterns. In legal settings, Al tools use algorithms and vast datasets to replicate aspects of legal analysis and decision-making, often at greater speed and scale than human capacity allows.

AI in law primarily relies on technologies such as:

- Natural Language Processing (NLP): Enables machines to understand and interpret legal texts, court decisions, and statutes.
- Machine Learning (ML): Allows Al systems to learn from past legal data and improve accuracy over time.
- Robotic Process Automation (RPA): Automates routine, repetitive tasks in legal practice.

Recently, the world witnessed the rapid introduction of Al to almost every aspect of life and humans globally are taking advantage of Al and producing great results.[5]

3.0 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE LEGAL PROFESSION

[5]Enoima Burma, 'Artificial Intelligence And Its Effect On The Legal Profession In Nigeria' (2020) <https://www.academia.edu/43397758/ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ITS EFFECT ON THE LEGAL PROFESSION IN NIGERIA> accessed 4th May 2025

The legal profession is a profession of dignity, deeply rooted in tradition and lawyers have long enjoyed the flattering title of "learned persons" because it is assumed we know all the laws or at least, where to find them. This reputation is not unearned, thanks to years of rigorous legal training to sharpen our reasoning and turn us into highly intelligent individuals. For centuries, intelligence was strictly a human feature and lawyers have carved a niche for themselves in that area. With the advent of Artificial Intelligence (Al), times are changing and the traditional and conservative legal profession is not spared.

Interestingly, the idea of using machines in law, dates back centuries. Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, a German lawyer, philosopher and polymath first predicted the use of machine (Al) in law when he observed that "it is unworthy of excellent men to lose hours like slaves in the labour of calculation which could safely be relegated to anyone else if machines were used."7 Even he recognized that repetitive and mechanical tasks could be handled more effectively by machines, allowing legal mind to focus more on substantive, intellectual work. Today, that foresight finds expression in the growing role of artificial intelligence in legal practice and we live in the reality that Leibniz only dreamed of. Computers are not just doing calculations; they're analysing contracts, predicting court decisions, and even drafting legal briefs. There are now several Al tools and systems that have been developed specifically to support and transform legal practice.

3.1. Al Tools Currently in Use in Nigeria's Legal Sector

[6]Itunu Kolade-Faseyi, 'Artificial Intelligence And The Nigerian Legal Profession' AULJ (2021) 1 <https://aulawjournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/9.-AULJ-full-Text-PRINT-READY-161-175.pdf> accessed 5th May 2025

[7]Nancy NamisiStboe, 'Herald! The Era of Legal Artificial Intelligence in Legal Practice' Law Society of Kenya Advocates Magazine (2019) <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335231064 Herald The_Era_of_legal_Artificial Intelligence in Legal Practice> accessed 5th May 2025

Artificial Intelligence (Al) is beginning to take root in Nigeria's legal ecosystem, albeit gradually. While the level of Al integration is not as advanced as in jurisdictions like the United States or the UK, several innovative tools and platforms are emerging, tailored to the Nigerian legal environment. These tools are helping to bridge efficiency gaps, enhance legal research, and support legal practitioners in navigating a complex and evolving justice system.

Below are some of the notable Al-driven or Al-assisted tools currently in use or emerging within Nigeria's legal sector:

1. **LawPavilion**: At the forefront of the technological drive in Nigeria,
with their packages like Law Pavilion Prime, Law Pavilion 360, Law Pavilion Case Manager, and Law Pavilion AI Suite used for Legal research, analytics, and courtroom support platform.

AI Features:

- Prime AI: An intelligent assistant that helps lawyers with predictive analytics by analysing case law trends and judicial behavior.
- Uses natural language processing (NLP) to understand legal queries in plain English.
- Offers automated citation suggestions, precedent tracking, and judgment analytics.

Relevance:

- Widely used by lawyers, judges, and courts in Nigeria.
- Improves speed and accuracy of legal research.
- Offers insights on how a judge is likely to decide based on previous rulings.

2. LexisNexis (Lexis+); LexisNexis is one of the world's leading legal information providers. Its newer product, Lexis+, incorporates powerful Al and machine learning tools to transform traditional legal research into an intuitive, efficient experience.

Key AI Features:

- Lexis Answers™: Uses natural language processing (NLP) to answer legal questions with highly relevant case law and statutory references.
- Brief Analysis Tool: Allows users to upload a legal brief, and the Al recommends additional cases, identifies missing authorities, and highlights contradictory precedents.
- Legal Analytics: Provides empirical data on how judges, courts, and opposing counsel behave helping lawyers make data-driven decisions.
- Document Intelligence (via Lexis Create): Automates document review, contract comparison, and clause recommendation.

LexisNexis, though premium-priced, can serve as a benchmark for Nigerian platforms like LawPavilion to integrate more sophisticated Al tools.

3. Primsol (Legalpedia): Online legal research and document automation platform.

AI Features:

- Search engine optimization for legal databases using Al algorithms.
- Offers smart recommendations based on search history and previous queries.

Relevance:

- Helps lawyers draft and access laws, cases, rules, and legal opinions efficiently.
- Provides a more affordable and accessible alternative for small firms and solo practitioners.

4. Aderalabs&Aderasoft: Legaltech startup focused on practice management and compliance.

Al Features:

- Workflow automation for law firms, with Al-based tools for document management, compliance tracking, and data analytics.

Relevance:

- Useful for mid-sized law firms seeking to digitize operations and monitor regulatory obligations.
- Helps lawyers automate routine processes, reducing human error.

5. **Lawrathon Al (by Hill Al Technologies):** Legal Al chatbot and client interaction platform.

AI Features:

- Virtual legal assistant that responds to client queries and provides basic legal information.
- Uses NLP to simulate conversations and offer real-time guidance.

Relevance:

- Enhances client engagement and provides legal information to underserved populations.
- Helps solo practitioners and startups handle high-volume, low-complexity client queries.

6. Document Automation Tools (Generic/Custom): Some Nigerian law firms have started integrating contract automation tools powered by Al (either in-house or through international vendors), which:

- Auto-generate contract drafts based on input parameters.
- Review and flag problematic clauses.
- Suggest compliance-related modifications.

Examples: Some Firms partner with global platforms like DocuSign, Legito, or Juro, adapting them for local use.

7. Virtual Courtrooms and Case Tracking (e.g., NJC, Lagos Judiciary Initiatives)

While not purely Al-driven, Nigeria's judiciary is slowly incorporating Al elements into e-justice platforms, particularly:

- Voice-to-text transcription.
- Smart scheduling systems.
- Case flow management with data analytics.

Relevance: These developments signal the judiciary's openness to smarter systems, which lawyers must adapt to and work with.

Others Include:

1. **ROSS Intelligence:** Often referred to as the world's first artificially intelligent lawyer, ROSS Intelligence was developed in 2015 using IBM Watson's Al technology. While ROSS was largely unavailable in Nigeria before its closure, it demonstrated the potential of Al for transforming legal research.

2. **DoNotPay:** Primarily available in the US, UK jurisdictions. Developed by Joshua Bowder was one of the first artificial intelligence chatbots created in relation to obtaining justice. It is designed

and known for helping users solve everyday legal issues (e.g. nullifying parking tickets and helping refugees with immigration application and asylum support. DoNotPay uses Al to guide users through legal processes by asking simple questions and providing responses based on established legal frameworks. **Not available in Nigeria, however, its model of automating legal services for everyday issues is a concept that can inspire local Nigerian legal tech solutions in consumer rights and dispute resolution.**

3. **Kira Systems**: Kira Systems is a **Canadian-developed** AI platform used mostly by large law firms and in-house legal teams for due diligence, contract analysis, and compliance reviews. Kira is a form of Artificial Intelligence for lawyers used for contract review, analysis and due diligence. Through machine learning (ML) algorithms, Kira scans legal documents to extract relevant information in clauses and mitigate the risk of errors. This tool reduces the time lawyers ordinarily spend on reviewing contracts and legal documents, enabling them to focus on higher value tasks like case management strategy and client interview and counselling.

Not widely used locally due to high licensing costs and infrastructure demands. However, multinational Firms or large Nigerian Firms handling cross-border transactions may access or adapt it. Serves as an aspirational benchmark for Nigerian-developed Al tools for corporate law.

4**. LawPadi:** LawPadi provides online legal advice system, legal resources and virtual assistance on legal issues through a chatbot. With LawPadi's comprehensive technology solutions, lawyers are empowered to adjust their practice and adopt artificial intelligence tools to achieve several technological possibilities.

Finally, the integration of artificial intelligence into legal practice has already begun to reshape how lawyers' access and deliver legal services. By simplifying mountainous work speedily and effectively. these Al tools enable greater efficiency, consistency, and productivity in legal practice.

4.0. USES OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN LEGAL PRACTICE

Though a new innovation, Lawyers have adopted Artificial Intelligence (Al) unto their legal practice and are using it in many ways to increase productivity. This includes:

1. **Legal Research and E-discovery**

Legal research, the core of legal work is being transformed by the use of Al. Technological platforms like Law Pavilion and LexisNexis' Lexis+AI enable lawyers to efficiently find relevant sources of law from statues, legislations, case law, scholarly articles, and more. Al even extends to generating legal memos and briefs based on a given topic or query, bringing legal research closer to automation. E-discovery software enables the survey of several documents faster and more efficiently.

Lawyers can use legal research software to obtain data and better comprehend judicial precedent. Al-powered legal research software quickly scans and searches massive databases, including regulations and statutes, practice areas, jurisdictions, case laws, and more, resulting in faster, accurate and productive legal research.[8]

"Adeola Olufunke Kehinde, Adefisayo Oyedeji, Adebusola AWONUGA, Artificial Intelligence And The Judicial System In Nigeria: The Need For Transformation LESIU (2024) XXXI (2) <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/387019586 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE JUDICIA

2. Document Automation

Document automation is the preparation and drafting of documents automatically through generative Al. With the help of ChatGPT and other large language models, lawyers can now automate repetitive tasks such as drafting court processes, drafting lengthy contracts, analysing case files, and more rather than manually sifting through pages of precedents and clauses, Al can assist in generating first drafts of legal documents thereby saving time and minimizing errors.

3. Document Review and Due Dilligence

In Nigeria, where contractual agreements are essential to business transactions, Al software are streamlining the review process, enabling lawyers to identify potential risks more efficiently. In corporate transactions such as mergers and acquisitions, due diligence is critical. Lawyers need to go through contracts and other documents to identify risks, liabilities, and compliance issues. Al tools like Kira Systems automate this process by quickly identifying key clauses, red flags, and inconsistencies. This is especially useful in large firms handling big transactions and voluminous files reducing the time and resources traditionally required for these tasks.

4. Document Management

Lawyers and law firms continuously shift from traditional paper-based document storage systems to digital storage systems. Al powered digital storage systems require less physical space, effectively organizes legal processes and documents such as tagging and providing features.

L SYSTEM IN NIGERIA THE NEED FOR TRANSFORMATION - Adeola Olufunke KEHINDE Adefisayo OYEDEJI Adebusola AWONUGA> accessed 5th May 2025

This way of storing information makes legal documents easier to retrieve. Document management systems like GoogleDocs can also connect with other systems, allowing lawyers effortlessly exchange documents with one another.

5. Legal Analytics and Predictive Insights

AI powered legal analytics platforms are also providing lawyers with Lawyers valuable insights and predictive capabilities. By analyzing large volumes of legal data, including case outcomes, judicial decisions, and legal trends, these platforms can help lawyers anticipate potential outcomes of cases, assess litigation strategies, and make more informed decisions.

6. Client Relationship Management (CRM)

AI is used to facilitate easier client relationship and management through smart scheduling, reminders, and personalized updates. CRM platforms equipped with Al can also analyze communication patterns and client preferences in order to improve delivery of legal services.

7. Training and Legal Education

AI is used to power legal learning platforms, providing personalized learning paths, simulations, and mock trials. Law students and junior lawyers can engage with interactive Al tutors to understand complex legal principles faster.

8. Legal Compliance and Regulatory Monitoring

AI helps businesses and law firms stay compliant by monitoring changes in laws and regulations, alerting stakeholders about updates and compliance obligations. This is particularly important in heavily regulated industries like finance, health, and telecoms.

9. Client Interaction and Virtual Legal Assistants

Chatbots and virtual assistants powered by AI help law Firms engage clients 24/7. Tools like LawPàdí in Nigeria use AI to provide basic legal advice and direct clients to relevant services. Enhances access to justice and client satisfaction, particularly for routine legal matters.

10. Practice Management and Workflow Automation

AI systems are used to manage law Firm operations by task scheduling. billing, and time tracking are automated. AI assistants help lawyers stay on top of deadlines and client communications. Enhances productivity and reduces administrative overhead.

5.0. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BAR:

5.1. OPPORTUNITIES

AI offers transformative benefits to the legal profession, improving how lawyers, law Firms, and the justice system operate. By automating routine tasks and providing intelligent insights, Al empowers legal practitioners to be more efficient, precise, and client-focused.
Below are the key advantages/opportunities:.

1. Increased efficiency, productivity and speed

Legal practitioners utilize Al tools to automate routine tasks that usually take a lot of time and efforts. By assigning these tasks to Al platforms, it reduces work that would normally take days into hours or minutes. Manual tasks such as looking for a specific case, searching for a contract, or creating invoices, can be performed by Al faster and accurately.

This allows lawyers to handle more tasks within shorter timelines. Example: Al tools like LawPavilion Prime can instantly identify relevant Nigerian case law and statutes based on plain-language queries.

2. Enhance client management, experience and service

With automation and AI, lawyers can respond faster to client queries, deliver documents quicker, and provide updates in real-time. For example, a chatbot on a Firm's website can answer frequently asked questions and gather client information, freeing up lawyers to focus on substantive issues. Platforms like LawPádí enhance public legal awareness and improve legal access outside urban centers.

AI in legal practice also provides lawyers with more time, allowing them to spend more time relating with their clients enabling better understanding and delivery of legal services.

3. Improved accuracy

AI use in legal practice minimizes error by consistently applying legal rules and checking for inconsistencies. For instance, legal proofreading tools can highlight grammar, clarity, and citation errors in legal writing thereby enhancing the quality of documents and reducing the chances of filing flawed pleadings or documents.

4. Reduced Burnout

Perhaps one of the biggest problems faced by lawyers is the constant tiredness or burnout as problems result of constant work. Lawyers often suffer from long hours and high stress due to the repetitive nature of legal work. Using Al to automate certain tasks may reduce fatigue and free up time for personal rest.

5. 24/7 Availability

AI powered chatbots and virtual assistants are changing the way lawyers handle client inquiries and support. These tools are available around the clock, offering clients the ability to get quick answers to common legal questions and guidance on legal procedure at any time, even outside normal business hours. This means clients are not left waiting until office hours for basic support, which improves their overall experience and satisfaction.

6. Better case strategy

AI has proven to be a powerful tool in improving litigation strategy through data analytics. Lawyers can analyze large volumes of past case data to predict the likely outcomes of ongoing cases. Al systems can process judicial precedents, identifying trends in judgments, examining decisions made by specific judges, and even predicting a ruling's likelihood based on similar legal precedents.

7. Smarter Time Management

AI tools such as calendar and **deadline trackers** can automatically count dates and deadlines and sync them to a lawyer’s calendar thereby reducing the risk of missed dates and allowing more accurate scheduling of court appearances and meetings.

8. Language and Translation Support

In international transactions, Al powered translation tools can provide accurate translations of legal documents, making cross border legal work faster and more efficient. This is particularly useful for multinational firms who engage in transactions with clients all over the world.

9. Empowerment of Young and Solo Practitioners

AI levels the playing field by giving young lawyers access to the same research and drafting tools as large firms. Encourages innovation and entrepreneurial law practice.

10. Encourages Innovation and Legal Reform

As AI tools expose inefficiencies in legal systems, they prompt reforms in judicial procedures and legal education. Pushes the Bar and Bench toward modernization.
Al is not here to replace lawyers but to enhance their capabilities. For Nigerian legal practitioners, the benefits of adopting Al include faster delivery of services, greater client satisfaction, and better access to justice. Those who embrace Al early will likely become the leaders of a more efficient, data-driven, and responsive legal industry.

5.2. CHALLENGES

While AI offers numerous benefits to legal practitioners, it also presents significant challenges and limitations. Lawyers, firms, and regulators must be aware of these disadvantages to ensure AI is used responsibly and ethically in Nigeria's legal system.

1. Data Privacy and Security Concerns

The adoption of artificial intelligence in the legal profession raises serious concerns about data privacy and security. Legal practice deals with sensitive client information that requires strict client confidentiality and protection. Al systems often require access to large amounts of sensitive data for processing and learning which could become targets for cybersecurity threats. Unauthorized access to data can lead to breach of client confidentiality. Hence, law Firms must implement rigorous data security protocols to protect client data and information.

2. Overreliance on Technology

With artificial intelligence competently handling many aspects of legal work, there is a risk that lawyers may become overly dependent on these technologies. Over-reliance can reduce critical thinking and legal intuition, which are essential aspects of practicing law. Al can assist in legal analysis, but it cannot replace the nuanced judgment that an experienced lawyer brings to the table. Lawyers must adopt a critical approach and treat artificial intelligence as a tool rather than allow it to replace their expertise.

3. Ethical Concerns

Artificial Intelligence systems are built on algorithms and data input that reflect human biases, especially when trained on historical data that contains prejudices. This raises ethical issues, such as whether AI could inadvertently perpetuate bias in legal decisions. For instance, if an AI tool is used to predict sentencing outcomes based on past rulings, it could perpetuate racial, gender, or socio-economic biases present in the data. This makes it crucial for lawyers to exercise caution with the use of AI.

4. High Implementation Costs

While artificial intelligence can save money in the long run by automating processes, the initial setup costs can be high. Purchasing Al-powered tools, integrating them into a law Firm's existing systems, and training staff to use them can require a significant financial investment. This can be a challenge for smaller Firms or individual practitioners who may not have the resources to implement Al technologies.

5. Ethical and Professional Responsibility Concerns

Relying too heavily on AI may risk violating rules of professional conduct, particularly around client confidentiality, due diligence, and legal advice. There are no clear guidelines in Nigerian law regulating AI's ethical use in practice for now.
The implication is that lawyers remain professionally responsible for outcomes even when AI tools are used.

6. Lack of Human Judgment

AI can analyse data and make predictions based on patterns, but it lacks the human judgment necessary to consider the broader context of a legal issue. Legal practice involves more than just processing information and requires an understanding of human behaviour, emotions, and the application of legal principles in ways that AI cannot replicate. For example, AI might miss the nuances in a client's case that could be crucial to forming an effective legal strategy or Al may not fully understand culturally sensitive legal issues such as customary law or Sharia principles that are recognized in parts of Nigeria.

7. Regulatory Challenges

The use of AI in legal practice is still largely unregulated. Many countries, including Nigeria, do not have clear frameworks for the ethical use of AI in law. This can lead to uncertainty about the boundaries within which AI tools should be used, as well as concerns about the transparency and accountability of AI systems. Lawyers must navigate these regulatory gaps while ensuring compliance with local laws and ethical guidelines. Navigating these complexities necessitates that lawyers stay updated with the relevant laws and regulations governing AI use in their respective jurisdictions.

8. Accountability for Artificial Intelligence Errors

Additionally, there is the ethical dilemma of accountability for AI errors. Who is responsible if an AI system makes a mistake in legal analysis or overlooks critical information? Lawyers must define clear boundaries of responsibility and implement quality control mechanisms.

9. Job Displacement and Reduced Opportunities

Routine legal tasks (e.g., research, document review) are increasingly automated. Interns, and junior lawyers may find fewer entry-level roles or tasks to build experience.
The effect in Nigeria could worsen the already high unemployment rate among young lawyers.

10. High Cost of Adoption

Advanced Al tools (like Kira Systems, Lexis, or Relativity) are expensive and require high-quality digital infrastructure. Most Nigerian law Firms, especially outside major cities, may not afford or maintain such systems.

11. Technological Illiteracy

Many legal practitioners in Nigeria are not trained in digital tools or Al systems. There is a generational divide and reluctance to adopt new technologies in legal practice. Without structured training, even the best Al tools may go unused or misused
As the legal landscape continues to evolve with these technological advancements, it is essential for legal professionals to balance the benefits of Artificial Intelligence with an awareness of its limitations and potential drawbacks. By doing so, Al can complement and enhance the legal profession, driving innovation while preserving the human elements that are crucial to the practice of law.

5.3. REAL CHALLENGES TO INTEGRATING AI INTO LEGAL PRACTICE IN NIGERIA

While Artificial Intelligence (AI) holds great promise for transforming legal services, several practical, structural, and regulatory obstacles hinder its safe and effective integration into the Nigerian legal system. These challenges must be addressed to ensure Al benefits both legal practitioners and the justice system at large.

1. Inadequate Digital Infrastructure

Many law offices, courts, and institutions in Nigeria lack reliable internet, electricity, solar and hardware. These deficiencies limit access to cloud-based Al tools and reduce the consistency of digital adoption.

Even the most advanced AI tools become unusable without the basic infrastructure to support them.

2. High Cost of Al Implementation

Most AI legal platforms (e.g., Kira Systems, Lexis+, Relativity) are expensive to license and maintain. Nigerian firms, especially small or regional ones, may not afford premium AI services or IT support.

AI may widen the gap between large, well-funded law firms and smaller, under-resourced ones.

3. Low Level of Technological Literacy

Many legal practitioners and even judges lack training in using digital tools, let alone AI systems. There's often resistance to change due to unfamiliarity or fear of obsolescence.

Without capacity-building programs, most lawyers will remain unable or unwilling to use AI effectively.

4. Absence of Legal and Ethical Regulations

Nigeria currently has no specific regulatory framework governing AI use in the legal profession. No laws on AI transparency, malpractice, algorithmic accountability, or ethical boundaries for legal automation.
Unregulated AI use could lead to misuse, bias, privacy breaches, or unfair outcomes in legal matters.

5. Data Availability and Local Content Deficiency

AI systems require vast, structured datasets to function effectively (e.g., digitized case law, statutes, legal templates). Much of Nigeria's legal data are yet to be digitized, inconsistent, or inaccessible in machine-readable formats.
Without quality Nigerian legal data, AI systems will be less accurate and less relevant.

6. Fragmented Court Digitization Efforts

Only a few Nigerian states (e.g., Lagos, Abuja) have made strides in digitizing court records and processes. Many courts still depend on handwritten records and manual filing systems.
Inconsistent progress across jurisdictions makes full integration of Al into litigation workflows difficult.

7. Cybersecurity and Data Privacy Risks

Sensitive legal documents and client data could be compromised if Al platforms are not properly secured. Nigeria's data protection laws (e.g. NDPR) are still developing and not fully enforced in the legal sector.

Law firms could face ethical and reputational damage if client confidentiality is breached.

8. Cultural and Ethical Resistance

Legal professionals may resist Al due to fear of job loss, loss of status, or erosion of the "human touch" in law. Some view legal reasoning as too complex or sacred to entrust to machines.
Ethical debates around Al must be handled sensitively, especially in traditional or conservative legal circles.

9. Limited Local Innovation in Legal AI

Most AI tools are developed for U.S. or U.K. legal systems, not Nigerian law.
There's a lack of investment in locally built Al solutions that reflect Nigerian legal doctrines and procedures. Heavy reliance on foreign tools that may not align with domestic practice.

10. Inequality in Access to AI Tools

AI adoption may deepen inequality between urban and rural lawyers, large firms and small firms, or courts with different resources. These risks creating a "digital divide" within the legal profession.

To fully benefit from AI in legal practice, Nigeria must confront these challenges through:

- Policy development and regulatory reform
- Investment in infrastructure and legal tech
- Training for lawyers, judges, and law students
- Promotion of local AI innovations tailored to Nigerian law

Only through deliberate action can AI be integrated safely, ethically, and equitably into the Nigerian legal landscape.

6.0. THE ROLE OF THE NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION (NBA)

Championing the Legal Profession in the Age of AI

The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), as the umbrella body of legal practitioners in Nigeria, has a pivotal role in guiding the ethical, professional, and strategic integration of Artificial Intelligence into legal practice by:

1. Advocacy for Legal Tech Adoption and Regulation

Promoting policies that support AI integration into legal practice and court systems. Lobbying for a clear regulatory framework to govern Al use, protect clients, and ensure professional accountability.

2.Capacity Building and Tech Training

Organizing workshops, CLE programs, and conferences to train lawyers on AI tools and digital literacy. Providing certifications and learning resources on legal tech, cybersecurity, and ethical Al use. Example: NBA conferences could feature Al practice labs, tech showcases, and panel discussions on digital lawyering.

3. Collaboration with Tech Companies

Partnering with Nigerian and international tech firms to co-develop Al tools tailored to Nigerian law and procedure. Supporting innovation hubs and legal tech startups that align with the needs of Nigerian practitioners.

4. Reforming Legal Education

Advocating for the integration of technology law, data privacy, and Al literacy in our law Faculties and Law school curricula. Encouraging law faculties and the Council of Legal Education to modernize training and promote digital readiness among future lawyers. The goal is to equip young lawyers with both legal and digital skills for a tech-driven legal environment. To safeguard the relevance, ethics, and excellence of the Nigerian legal profession in the AI era, the NBA must serve as:

- Regulator
- Educator
- Collaborator
- Innovator

7.0 ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE- THE DEBATE

Members of the Nigerian Bar, leading law Firms and legal practitioners, both locally and globally, are recognizing the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) across various aspects of legal practice. AI is a new innovative area of practice that is developing in Nigeria and is expected to spread widely. The introduction of Artificial Intelligence into law practice in Nigeria has created a divide, with some lawyers opposing, while others have embraced it with open arms. This is understandable, as the legal profession in Nigeria is one that is deeply rooted in tradition and is slow to adopt to new innovations. Many lawyers may be slow to adopt artificial intelligence due to its unfamiliarity or skepticism about its reliability. Some lawyers may be resistant to integrating AI into their practice because they believe it undermines their expertise or because they fear it will negatively impact their client relationships. The thought of a machine being able to solve legal

problems, think and work like legal practitioners has not received a general welcome. However, this rapidly evolving field is one that has come to stay.

There is a prevailing argument that artificial intelligence is here to take the job of professionals in all professions, particularly the legal profession. However, we must learn and understand that AI is not a substitute for the human brain. Although it enjoys global use, it cannot substitute the human brain and there will forever be a need for legal practitioners. AI cannot persuade a judge with compelling argument and the strategic decisions, often taken by lawyers throughout the course of legal action cannot be overturned or imitated by technology.

The impossibility of AI replacing lawyers has also been argued by some legal practitioners who believe that artificial intelligence cannot fit into or perform tasks requiring human interaction, negotiations and trust. Certain aspects of the profession still require the application of high level 'native knowledge,' 'street sense,' human intuition and emotion, or other legal factors in decision making and not just logical reasoning. It is unlikely that an Al operated device can serve as an advocate, argue matters or adjudicate suits in courts.

The argument that AI could take a lawyer's job in Nigeria is preposterous as it is trite, in view of the existing laws that to qualify as a legal practitioner in Nigeria, a person must have a law degree from a recognized university, attend the Nigerian law school and obtain a qualifying certificate or hold a certificate of exemption.

---

[9]S.KhadeejaBeegum, Biju Anthony Thekkanath, and Suranya S Kumar, "The Impact of Artificial intelligence on Law International Journal of Research Reviews and Publication (2023) 2 <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/374053253 The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Law> accessed 5th May 2025

The Legal Practitioners Act specifies that only persons whose names appear on the Roll of Legal Practitioners kept by the Registrar of the Supreme Court shall be entitled to practice law in Nigeria. Hence, it is assumed that a legal practitioner must be a natural person and therefore conclude that an artificially intelligent robot, no matter the level of intelligence is unknown to Nigerian law and cannot practice law in Nigeria. Although AI applications can be used in case management, document automation, due diligence, and other automated tasks, it is unlikely that a robot or AI application can fit into the definition of a legal practitioner in Nigeria.

Also from the bar perspective is the observation that in Nigeria today, there is no specific legal framework regulating artificial intelligence. This absence of legislation or government issued guidelines has created an environment where developers and users of AI technologies operate without sufficient regulation. Additionally, there is no legal recognition of intellectual property rights generated by AI systems. Since Al is not considered a legal entity under Nigerian law, it cannot hold rights independently.

It is worthy of mention that although there is no enacted legislation on artificial intelligence in Nigeria, the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) has taken a proactive step by releasing the *Guidelines for The Use of Artificial Intelligence in The Legal Profession in Nigeria*.[10] These guidelines is a preliminary framework to ensure responsible and ethical use of Al tools by legal practitioners. While not legally binding, they provide direction on best practices, highlight areas of caution, and emphasize the need for human oversight in Al assisted legal tasks. It is our duty as members of

[10]Nigerian Bar Association Section on Legal Practice (NBA-SLP), 'Guidelines for the Use of Artificial (2024) <https://nbaslp.org/wp-in the Legal Profession in Intelligence Nigeria' content/uploads/2024/08/GUIDELINES-FOR-THE-USE-OF-AI-IN-THE-NIGERIAN-LEGAL-PROFESSION-signed.pdf>

the bar to play a critical role in shaping policies and facilitating the enactment of fresh legislations that balance innovation with protection. This includes drafting clear guidelines on AI accountability, and creating a legal framework that responsibly supports the integration of AI technologies. The legal profession must not only respond to these developments but proactively lead the charge in regulating the ethical and lawful use of AI in Nigeria.

AI is not here to compete with lawyers, it is here to free them from the repetitive soul crushing menial tasks that eat up billable hours. Lawyers must accept and prepare for the emergence of artificial intelligence and explore the areas where the technology will greatly improve their services to clients rather than the fear and threat of Artificial Intelligence taking their protected legal services.

8.0. THE FUTURE - THE LAWYER IN THE AGE OF AI

Redefining Legal Practice in a Digital World

As Artificial Intelligence reshapes the legal landscape, the Nigerian lawyer must evolve not replaced. The future of law is human-led but tech-empowered.

The Lawyer of Tomorrow Must:

1. Be Tech-Literate and Data-Savvy

Understand legal tech tools, digital workflows, data analytics and keep up with trends in Al, cybersecurity, and digital law. Example: Ability to use Al platforms like LawPavilion with critical understanding.

2. Leverage Al for Efficiency, Not Replacement

Use AI to augment legal work, not substitute judgment or advocacy. Automate routine tasks while maintaining oversight and legal responsibility. Play the role as curator of AI output ensuring quality, relevance, and compliance.

3. Adapt to Hybrid Roles (Law + Technology)

Combine legal expertise with digital strategy, policymaking, and innovation. Emerge as legal technologists, AI ethicists, or digital rights advocates. Explore new practice areas like tech law, AI liability, and data protection.

4. Uphold Human Values while applying the Roles of Ethics

Guide AI development and deployment with a firm commitment to justice, fairness, and the rule of law. Ensure AI systems respect human rights, dignity, and due process. The mandate for lawyers is that they must remain the ethical compass in a tech-driven system.
The lawyer of the AI era is not just a legal professional but a digital leader, ethical guardian, and innovator.

9.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

To harness the benefits of Artificial Intelligence, while safeguarding ethical and professional standards, the following key actions are recommended for stakeholders in Nigeria's legal sector:

1. Legal Education Reform

- Integrate Artificial Intelligence, technology law, and digital ethics into the curricula of law faculties and the Nigerian Law School.
- Promote interdisciplinary learning (law + technology).

2. Policy and Regulatory Reform

- Review and update the Rules of Professional Conduct (RPC) to reflect modern legal practice, including Al, data privacy, and digital communication.
- Develop policies for Al accountability, transparency, and malpractice liability.

3. Capacity Building

- Implement nationwide Continuing Legal Education (CLE) programs focused on AI literacy, digital tools, and legal tech platforms.
- Target both young lawyers and senior practitioners to bridge the generational tech gap.

8.0 Strategic Partnerships

Encourage collaboration between law firms, tech startups, legal tech companies, and academia. Support the development of localized AI solutions tailored to Nigerian law and court procedures.

5. Establish AI Regulation for Legal Practice

- Advocate for a dedicated regulatory framework to govern the use of AI in legal services.
- Ensure alignment with global standards while protecting Nigerian legal values and client rights.

The future of law in Nigeria is digital. A proactive, inclusive, and ethically guided approach will ensure that AI enhances not undermines the legal profession.

CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence is no longer a distant concept it is already reshaping the global legal landscape, and Nigeria is not exempt.

From legal research, to predictive analytics and document automation, Al offers tools that can enhance the speed, accuracy, and efficiency of legal services.

However, these benefits come with ethical, professional, and infrastructural challenges, especially in the Nigerian context. Issues of data privacy, bias, regulatory gaps, and technological illiteracy must be proactively addressed to ensure Al serves the interests of justice, not just convenience.

The Nigerian Bar both individually and institutionally must rise to the moment. Lawyers must be:

- Tech-competent professionals
- Ethical gatekeepers
- Advocates for responsible innovation

The NBA must lead in education, regulation, and partnership, while Law Faculties and law schools must train lawyers not just in law, but also in the tools that will define the future of the lawyer.

Ultimately, Al will not replace the Nigerian lawyer, but lawyers who embrace Al will certainly replace those who do not. Al is not a danger to the legal profession, but rather a chance to improve it. The future belongs to the lawyer who can combine legal judgment, with digital fluency, and who can guide the profession with integrity, innovation, and insight.

Lawyers should embrace the use of Artificial intelligence ethically, for it is only the innovative lawyer that can survive tomorrow's legal practice.

Thanks for listening.