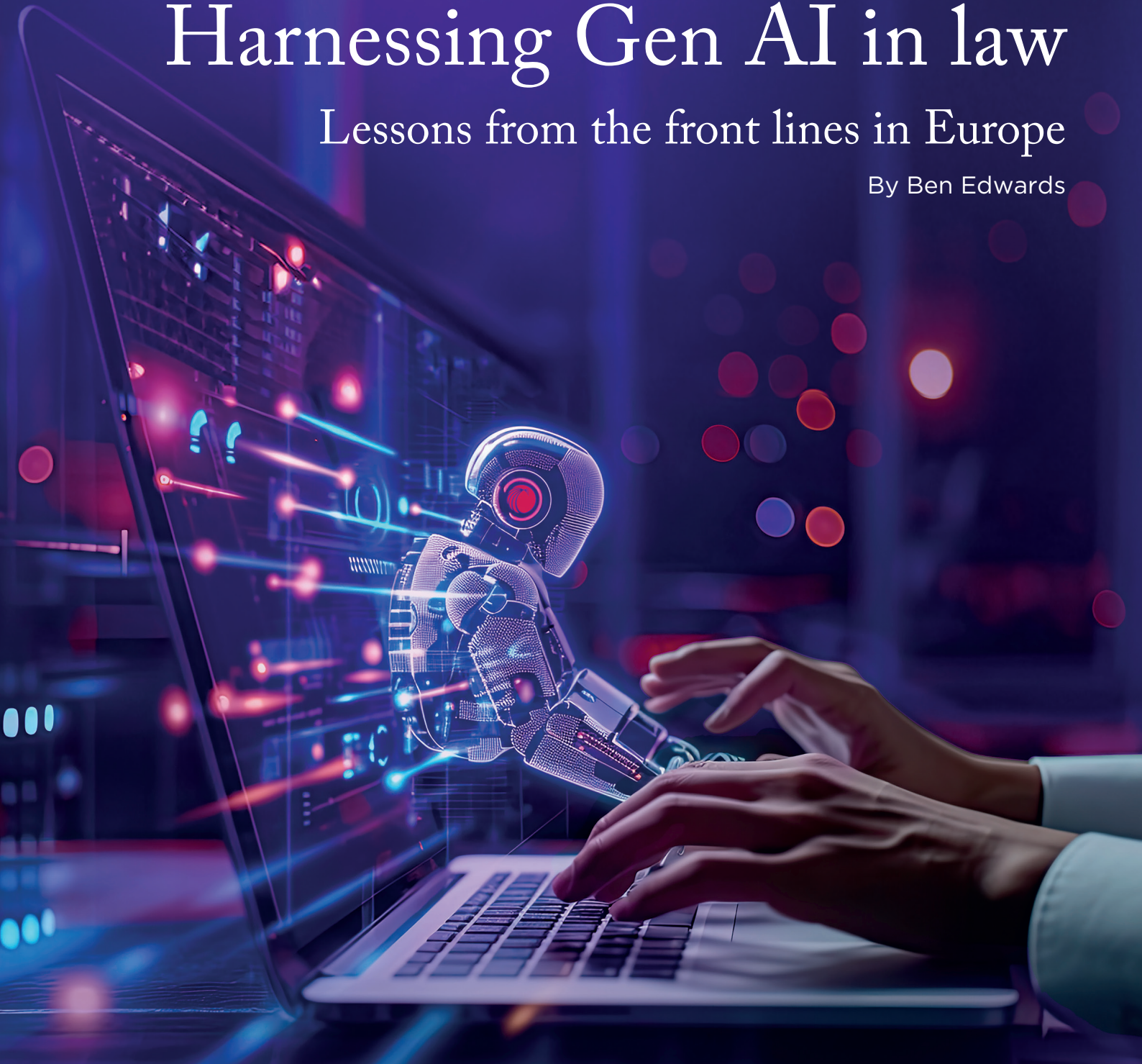


Harnessing Gen AI in law

Lessons from the front lines in Europe

By Ben Edwards



Special report in association with



Foreword by LexisNexis

Readers of this report will no doubt agree that Gen AI in law is here to stay. It is no longer a future consideration; it is a present imperative for the legal profession.

There is no shortage of quantitative research that illustrates the extent to which law firms and legal departments are embracing this transformative technology, including LexisNexis' ongoing series of surveys.

This report by The Global Legal Post, however, sharpens the focus on how leading law firms and in-house counsel in continental Europe have set about implementing Gen AI through a series of interviews with people on the front lines of this process.

The report offers real-world insights on the opportunities and challenges of Gen AI adoption, highlighting the unique complexities surrounding the integration of this exciting but multifaceted technology: from culture and workflows to compliance and client expectations.

Alongside practical advice on the best way to choose and run pilot projects and win buy-in

from users, there are some fascinating reflections on how the technology will change the way law is undertaken. For one contributor, lawyers will become more like private bankers, delivering advice to clients at a much higher level of sophistication, with the help of Gen AI.

LexisNexis is at the forefront of these developments, helping legal professionals adopt Gen AI tools responsibly and effectively. We understand that it is essential we act as strategic partners for our clients and that true integration starts with a mindset shift, supported by critical thinking, responsible use, and continuous training.

The lawyer of the future will blend legal expertise with AI fluency, taking on new roles and adopting more collaborative ways of working than we have seen up to now.

LexisNexis is committed to helping legal professionals to navigate this shift with confidence and clarity. We hope this report helps readers better understand how to turn Gen AI into a competitive advantage - for themselves, their firms, and their clients.

Integration challenges - and how to overcome them

Generative AI (Gen AI) has the potential to be a huge game-changer for law firms and in-house legal teams. The debate is no longer whether or not to embrace AI, it is how to embrace it successfully in a way that is beneficial for a firm and its clients. While most firms and in-house teams are already exploring and

experimenting with the technology - albeit at different speeds - there are several obstacles legal practitioners must overcome before they can start using Gen AI tools en masse.

First, Gen AI is radically different than previous legaltech developments, where tools tended to serve a niche dedicated purpose - due diligence automation, say - which made it clear to lawyers when to use the technology.

"Now it's a different story, because you're getting a tool with multiple potential use cases, which means you have to tell the user when to use this tool because it's not written on the product," said Pierre Zickert, Counsel and Manager for Legal Technology at German firm Hengeler Mueller.

Given the general noise around AI and the vast number of products on offer, selecting the right tools can be tricky - not least because of how fast the technology is developing and the risk of investing in something that will quickly become obsolete.



"You have to tell the user when to use this tool because it's not written on the product."

Pierre Zickert,
Hengeler Mueller



Integration challenges - and how to overcome them

Firms also have different requirements when selecting potential AI tools, meaning there is no uniform solution. Joan Roca Sagarra, Executive Chair at Spanish firm RocaJunyent, said it was important to find an AI solution that everybody at the firm could use.

“People usually think about AI in legal services as something that must help lawyers, but in a law firm there are a lot of other people – they may not need AI for fact finding or for drafting, but they might need it to help the team build more knowledge,” said Roca Sagarra. “So we had to find AI that could help 100% of our people.”

Another requirement that is top of mind for many firms is ensuring the tech is not overly complicated to use so that lawyers remain engaged.

While Gen AI has broad application, some in-house lawyers are still looking for niche offerings that can solve more discrete problems.

“When we’re procuring through that lens, it’s way easier for us to pick something up and try it, rather than feeling like we’ve got to bet the farm on a massive investment in AI,” said Andrew Cooke, Chief Legal Officer at category-defining travel and expense management platform TravelPerk.

Test phase

Most firms are currently engaged in proof of concept and pilot programmes to test out and experiment with products, either with a select groups of lawyers

“We had to find AI that could help 100% of our people.”

Joan Roca Sagarra, RocaJunyent

A portrait of Joan Roca Sagarra, Executive Chair at Spanish firm RocaJunyent. He is a middle-aged man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a grey suit, white shirt, and dark tie. He is smiling slightly and looking towards the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green foliage.

“It’s better to implement in waves. You can’t just turn on a switch and say everyone is going to use it.”

A portrait of Sebastien Bardou, VP Strategy in the CEMEA Region at LexisNexis. He is a man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit jacket over a light blue shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a blurred office setting.

Sebastien Bardou, LexisNexis

or through their dedicated legaltech teams. Italian firm BonelliErede, for example, is using its beLab alternative legal services provider unit to test AI tools to gauge suitability, as well as handle AI-related tasks for its lawyers.

“Adopting AI tools in the firm without any screening being made beforehand poses many challenges, the biggest being the reliability and quality of the results,” said Vittorio Pomarici, a Partner at BonelliErede. “There is currently a gap between expectations – everybody thinks that AI can be a magic trick to do the work with no effort, but this is not true because the tools have not yet reached the level of reliability and quality of the results.”

Once firms have completed the testing phase and selected what they want to use, the next step is planning for integration. Sebastien Bardou, VP Strategy in the CEMEA Region at LexisNexis, says there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to this step, instead it will mainly hinge on a firm’s size and culture.

“The smaller ones will be able to implement very quickly, because the disruption would be quite limited,” said Bardou. “For the larger ones, it’s better to implement in waves. You can’t just turn on a switch and say everyone is going to use it.”

Integration strategies may also depend on how the Gen AI product is going to be used – whether it is something that lawyers will be using on a day-to-day basis or something that is just going to be running in the background. If it will significantly change workflows, that tends to work better when it is introduced in stages, Bardou says.

Integration challenges - and how to overcome them

Another way to ensure successful implementation is to offer support for new users through training and access to prompt libraries to make it easier to write effective prompts. Such an approach can help foster buy-in and reduce abandonment rates.

“We really want to ensure a good user experience from the very first moment and also make sure our junior lawyers are trained from the beginning,” said Eric Wagner, a Partner at Gleiss Lutz in Germany. “If you have a situation where several people are frustrated and they’re speaking with each other, it can lead to a negative mindset towards AI usage, and this is something we really wanted to avoid.”

“We really want to ensure a good user experience from the very first moment.”

Eric Wagner,
Gleiss Lutz



Training the lawyers of the future

“You still need smart people - we are not afraid that AI will replace the human.”

Thomas Meurer,
Hengeler Mueller



As Gen AI becomes increasingly integrated into the way law firms operate, lawyers will need to build their AI fluency and learn basic AI skills such as understanding how to formulate effective prompts and how to verify and trace information to ensure that what the AI is producing is trustworthy.

“We will have to emphasise more around critical thinking when training lawyers around AI use - we have to get people used to being critical with the input and output of these tools,” said Beatriz Rodríguez Gómez, a Partner at RocaJunyent in Madrid, who is helping spearhead the firm’s Gen AI initiatives.

This underscores why firms will always need a human in the loop to provide quality assurance on any Gen AI outputs.

“You still need smart people - we are not afraid that AI will replace the human, because in our experience, it’s the user who makes the difference,” said Thomas Meurer, an M&A Partner at Hengeler Mueller. “We see it as complementary - if there are smart people who know how to use AI, it will be beneficial for the firm and for our clients.”

Given that this technology will effectively level the playing field when it comes to legal knowledge, there will be a greater need for lawyers to sharpen their soft skills such as relationship building to stand out. This will make lawyers much more akin to a private banker, says BonelliErede’s Pomarici.

“We will have to emphasise more around critical thinking when training lawyers around AI use.”

Beatriz Rodríguez Gómez,
RocaJunyent



Training the lawyers of the future

“The most repetitive tasks and the more day to day activities will be easily done with the help of AI, and so the difference will be made by how you respond to your clients’ needs,” Pomarici said.

Lawyers will also need to provide much more sophisticated advice if they want to add value in a world where everyone has access to the same AI tools.

“The capability to analyse and integrate legal and data science mindsets to provide value to our clients is going to be the key differentiator,” said Raúl Rubio, an IP and Technology Partner at Spanish firm Pérez-Llorca.

In this new world, lawyers will use AI technology to augment their strategic advice and subject matter expertise to become more tech-enabled problem solvers.

“As Gen AI becomes part of everyday legal work, the most valuable professionals will be those who can ask the right questions, interpret AI-generated output with a critical eye and use those insights to drive better outcomes,” said Mathieu Balzarini, VP Product for the CEMEA Region at LexisNexis.


The advance of AI is also creating new roles in firms, such as legal prompt engineers, AI product advisors and legal data curators, says Balzarini.

This “reflects the reality that tech-savvy legal professionals are shaping how law is practised, not just how it’s delivered”, he added.




“The difference will be made by how you respond to your clients’ needs.”

Vittorio Pomarici,
BonelliErede



“Tech-savvy legal professionals are shaping how law is practised, not just how it’s delivered.”

Mathieu Balzarini,
LexisNexis



“If you don’t [show that you are open to innovation], you will lose potential talent to your competitors.”

Stephane Criel,
Monard Law

Impact on junior lawyers

The extent to which firms are investing in AI technology is already having an impact on talent recruitment as junior lawyers who have grown up in a digital world demand modern tech to help them do their jobs.

“The trainees now and tomorrow are Gen Z – if they’d come to our office and we were to say to them ‘here is your paper and your writing tools’, they simply won’t stay,” said Stephane Criel, a Partner at Belgian firm Monard Law. “So it’s important to show that they will be working in an environment open to innovation, including working with AI, or at least getting the possibility of working with AI – if you don’t, you will lose potential talent to your competitors.”

Gen AI technology will also likely have a significant impact on skills needs in the future, particularly given much of the work currently being handled by junior lawyers will increasingly be handled by AI.

Training the lawyers of the future

“Law is traditionally an apprenticeship model, where people learn on the job and learn by doing the easy and repetitive tasks,” said Paula Gomes Freire, Managing Partner at Portuguese firm Vieira de Almeida (VdA). “If you remove that from the equation, because these tools can do that quickly for you, what kind of people and skills will you need and how do you recruit? These are the kind of challenges that we see on the horizon.”

This means the training that junior lawyers receive will need to change if they are not getting hands-on-experience during their early years – something that firms are still grappling with to solve.

“It’s difficult to get to the right experience without having been in the trenches, doing and learning,” said Gomes Freire. “So at the moment it’s the \$1m question – how do we preserve this human ability to create and to innovate and to find solutions if we are going down the road where we think we don’t need to know stuff because we can rely on AI?”

“It’s difficult to get the right experience without having been in the trenches, doing and learning.”

Paula Gomes Freire, Vieira de Almeida



Redesigning workflows - unlocking the benefits of Gen AI

While Gen AI is still very much in its infancy, many firms are already integrating the technology into the day-to-day work of their lawyers. Hengeler Mueller, for example, is already using it for first-level review in its investigations work, says Meurer.

“We have not reached the objective where we can entirely replace the human being with AI in the first-level review, but we are quite successful in assigning a substantial part of the work to AI,” he said.

Gleiss Lutz’s in-house prompt library shows lawyers are already using it frequently for tasks such as proofreading, summarising or comparing documents, says Wagner.

“Gen AI excels in these types of text analysis, document generation and document analysis use cases, and these small tasks will probably be executed hundreds of times a day, but we’re also quite keen on developing more substantial use cases that go deeper into analysis,” he said.

That could include, for example, analysis of company registry excerpts, the closing checklist in an M&A matter, or just receiving large data sets and performing a quick risk analysis, Wagner said.

“We see the possibility to delegate these text generation and document analysis tasks to Gen AI in pretty much every area of law,” he added.

As Gen AI increasingly handles repetitive manual tasks, in theory lawyers should find themselves with more time to devote to higher value activities. However, the impact so far is minimal, says BonelliErede’s Pomarici.

“In, say, a big arbitration case where we have to analyse thousands of documents, we are already seeing an improvement in our workflows and efficiency, but for other matters such as drafting contracts, we’re not seeing the impact yet,” Pomarici said.

One of the reasons firms are not yet unlocking time savings is because many are still at the stage of reviewing and verifying AI outputs to ensure they are reliable, something that will gradually fade as the tech advances and confidence in the tools grow.

Redesigning workflows - unlocking the benefits of Gen AI

Process changes

This is not just about building confidence in AI, it is also about changing the way lawyers work, which will inevitably take time to manifest.

“AI integration isn’t just about dropping in a tool – it’s about reshaping processes, mindsets and in many cases, incentives,” said LexisNexis’ Balzarini.

Ultimately, the goal of using AI tools is to free up time to focus more on client needs and interactions.

“Using these tools means I dedicate less time to things that don’t add value for my clients and I can spend more time on what they really need me to think about,” said RocaJunyent’s Rodríguez Gómez. “Any minute I can gain in thinking twice about a problem and not writing an email is going to be profitable for my clients in the long term. So for me, Gen AI is going to be a major game changer.”

Likewise for in-house teams, adopting AI tools can free up more time for lawyers to add value to the wider business.

“GCs and team leads would love to support the business more strategically, but often they just find themselves under a pile of paperwork,” said TravelPerk’s Cooke.

By using AI to ease that admin burden, this creates space for team members to engage in thinking that can help solve customer problems.



“It’s not necessarily about changing workflows per se, it’s about how effective we are at addressing those customer problems,” he said.

For some firms, integrating AI into their day-to-day workflows will dramatically change service delivery and how lawyers communicate with their clients.

“Gen AI is going to increase the capabilities and the services that we as law firms are able to offer to our clients,” said Pérez-Llorca’s Rubio. “So integrating knowledge and connecting our technology with clients – we see a lot of opportunities to integrate artificial intelligence with the rest of the technologies that we offer.”

Shifting expectations: the future of legal services



As Gen AI changes the way lawyers work on a daily basis, expectations around service delivery are also likely to evolve as the technology redraws relationships between firms and their clients. For now, there remains a diverse range of attitudes towards AI among legal services buyers, which potentially makes it more challenging for firms to roll out AI technology firmwide.

“Some clients are very much into AI themselves and so are already buying licenses for AI products, some ask us agnostically how we are using AI tools, and then there are others who just say we shouldn’t use AI tools when serving them,” said Margarida Saragoça, Business and Knowledge Director at VdA. “This means our policies have to be spread out so everybody is in tune and knows what AI tools can be used or shouldn’t be used.”

Shifting expectations: the future of legal services

Likewise in Italy, there is still some trepidation among law firm clients about AI use, particularly when it comes to how their data is processed.

“We have seen clients either asking us not to use AI tools at all or asking us not to use them unless we get prior permission and we ensure that their confidential data remains confidential and is treated with due care,” said BonelliErede’s Pomarici.

“Clients are really open for us to use AI, but they expect us to develop the use cases – they are not coming to us and saying, we want you to do x, y, z with AI and the rest should be done by human beings, they want us to integrate AI into our workflow and to become more efficient,” said Hengeler Mueller’s Meurer.

Be transparent

No matter how firms are using Gen AI, some lawyers say it is critical to be as transparent and open as possible about what this means for them.

“AI is making it easier for me to work in a faster way for my clients, so it will also be our job to help explain to people where AI comes into what we do and how it benefits the client,” said Monard Law’s Criel.

Some general counsel say they are yet to see significant AI innovation being offered by law firms, potentially because firms aren’t yet confident enough to stake out a position on it, says TravelPerk’s Cooke.

However, use of AI may change what businesses are willing to pay for legal services if they are over-billed for tasks that can be handled faster by AI.

“We were already pretty intolerant of really obvious pricing fails or antiquated service delivery where you see huge amounts of time being billed for things that ultimately have been done before,” said Cooke.

Therefore, Cooke says this is less a pricing conversation and more about value.

“I’m always happy to approve a bill if the money we spend is an investment in TravelPerk winning,” he said. “If it just means the status quo is maintained, then that is much more problematic.”

Others agree that greater AI use will shift billing conversations to focus on the value AI can deliver.

“As a client of a law firm myself, what I would be expecting is that they achieve more with AI, not to



“We were already pretty intolerant of really obvious pricing fails or antiquated service delivery.”

Andrew Cooke, TravelPerk



lower my costs but to get more quality out of it,” said LexisNexis’ Bardou.

Take a typical M&A deal, for example. In the normal due diligence process, a firm would typically look at the top 10 contracts by value and do a risk assessment. Then they might randomly select a few dozen more from the rest to check for any risk. With AI, firms can now review all the contracts instead of a random sample, helping flag any potential risks that need a human to examine more closely.

“This is the benefit – they will not charge less but they will give me so much more value for the same fees,” added Bardou.

This means alternative fee arrangements will continue to grow in popularity as the billable hour becomes less relevant in a world where legal tasks can be completed in minutes instead of hours.

“The pricing model will become more and more value based – this means that in some cases, we will be able to provide more value than the hours that we invest in a specific task,” said Pérez-Llorca’s Rubio. “Often, the market tends to put a focus on cost cutting, which is obviously part of the equation, but I think Gen AI is much more about adding value.”

Transform your legal practice with **secure AI**

Boost your productivity with
the most comprehensive legal AI
on the market—secure, ethical, and
powered by exclusive LexisNexis content.

Meet Lexis+ AI

