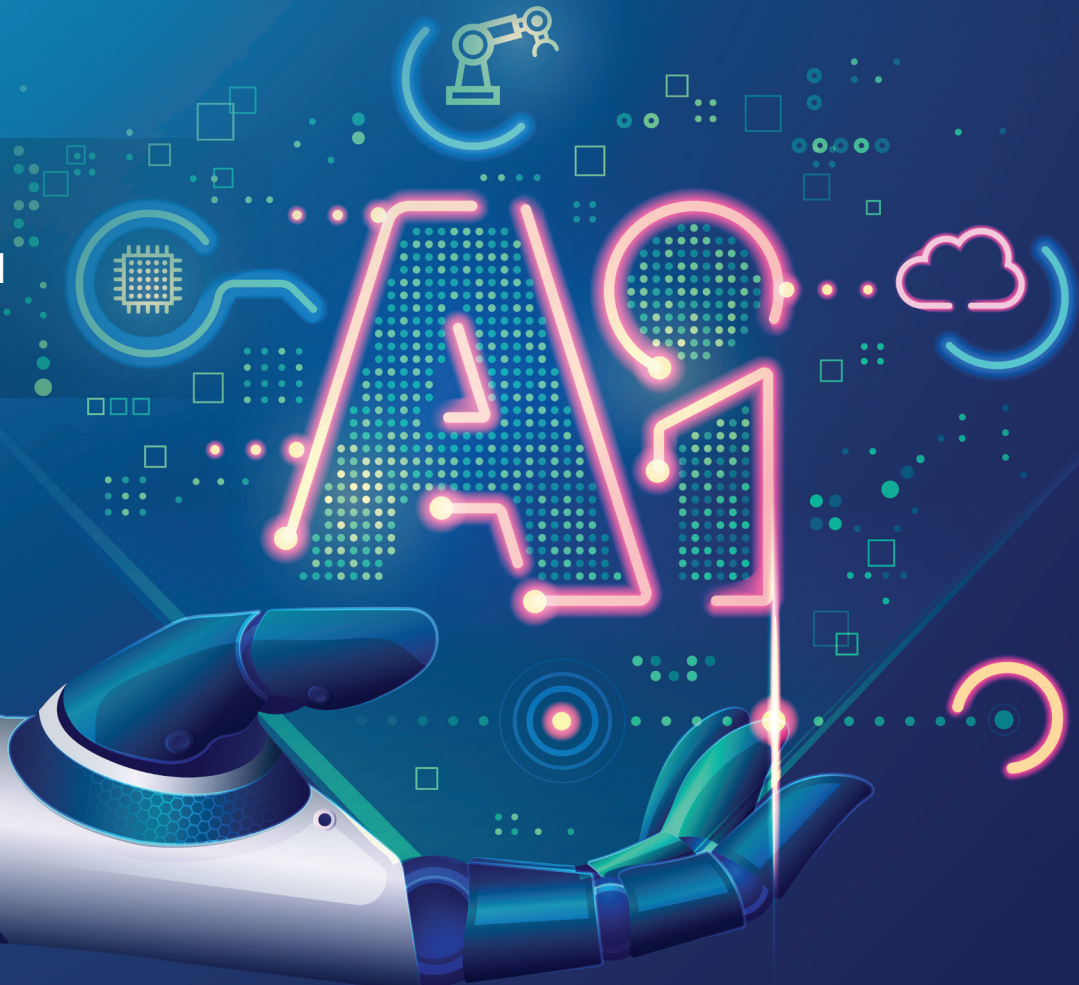


GENAI ADOPTION IN LEGAL SERVICES:


PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FOR
GENERAL COUNSEL AND LAW FIRM
LEADERS IN 2025 AND BEYOND




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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

GenAI is not just a technological innovation – it's a catalyst for systemic change in the legal profession. From productivity gains, ethical considerations, client expectations and fee models, AI is reshaping how legal services are consumed and delivered.

While its current use is focused on enhancing productivity, the long-term implications touch every corner of legal service delivery, from disclosure to document review, internal investigations, and much more. This white paper explores the current state of GenAI adoption in legal services, its economic and operational implications, and key considerations for a responsible use.

These considerations were at the heart of a recent webinar hosted by Netlaw Media in partnership with CS DISCO, where a panel of legal and technology experts examined the evolving role

of GenAI across the current legal practice. The discussion explored which use cases are generating meaningful impact and how both law firms, as well as in-house teams are responding to the practical, ethical, and regulatory implications of this shift.

As GenAI tools continue to mature, the divergence in how law firms and general counsel approach adoption is becoming more pronounced. From automation and analytics to concerns about transparency, governance, and trust, the conversation revealed key insights into the challenges and opportunities ahead.

[Click here to watch the full-length webinar featuring insights from the following experts:](#)



Professor Richard Susskind – CBE KC (Hons) (CHAIR)
Kristin Zmrhal – Vice President of Product Strategy, DISCO
Tom Frapwell – Partner, Osborne Clarke
Christian Bettley - Former Deputy-General Counsel, HSBC

GENAI & LEGAL TECH: DO LAW FIRMS AND GENERAL COUNSEL SEE THE FUTURE DIFFERENTLY? WEBINAR KEY FINDINGS

The following sections highlight the most important takeaways from the discussion — and offer a forward-looking perspective on how Generative AI is shaping legal decision-making in 2025 and beyond.



1. Productivity Gains from GenAI will Impact Quality, Volume and Ultimately Cost.

GenAI will primarily function as a productivity and efficiency tool in the short term, with long-term transformational potential. Richard Susskind, the chair of the session, emphasizes that in the next two to three years, GenAI will be used to increase efficiency and productivity through automation of existing tasks, such as drafting documents and emails, creating presentations, or summarizing meetings. However, he also strongly believes that in the long term, AI will be far more transformational, enabling organizations and individuals to undertake work that previously required external experts, the point at which AI will truly be innovative.

Productivity over Replacement

Currently, GenAI enhances efficiency, particularly in lower-level, routine tasks that clients have traditionally resisted paying premium rates for — such as first-pass document review. Instead of eliminating roles, GenAI allows attorneys to shift their focus to higher-level tasks — such as developing case strategy and data analysis.

AI as a Competitive Advantage, Not a Pricing Revolution

Rather than replacing traditional pricing models, Generative AI allows firms to offer more competitive pricing by reducing the manual workload on tasks like document review, email drafting, or research. This enables more efficient project delivery while preserving margins.

Generative AI may change the traditional pricing models of legal service delivery as the human time required to deliver the same work product is reduced.

As firms adopt GenAI — whether through licensing third-party tools or developing bespoke systems in-house - they're realising the increase in costs.

The combination of increased investment and the potential for fewer billable hours may force firms to balance the economic benefits and develop new commercial terms to maintain their margins.

2. Client Expectations and Market Pressure

The Growing Expectation to Use GenAI

While firms and in-house teams are driven to evaluate AI tools, their underlying motivations differ.

Tom Frapwell, a commercial disputes partner, states that law firms are motivated to adopt GenAI to avoid being left behind by competitors and to meet client expectations for efficient tech solutions when pitching for work. He highlights that AI allows them to offer more competitively priced services by cutting down on tasks clients didn't want to pay for anyway.

Christian Bettley, an in-house financial services lawyer, points out that for in-house teams, the primary driver for GenAI adoption is reducing the cost of running the legal function, which isn't as fierce a driver as profitability for law firms. He also stresses the significant hurdles faced when operating in a highly regulated environment and the need for Legal specific GenAI to fit within the existing, often complex, tech stacks in regulated financial institutions.

Transparency Builds Trust

Having open, honest conversations with clients about the role of GenAI is critical. Clients want to know where AI is applied, how it benefits them, and what safeguards are in place to ensure responsible use of GenAI and the secure data flow across multiple jurisdictions.

3. Use Cases and Adoption Trends in the Legal Sector

Daily GenAI Integration Is Becoming the Norm

From auto-summarising meetings to conducting overnight research, GenAI is becoming embedded in daily workflows. Tools like DISCO's Cecilia, a platform that provides a multitude of summarization, question & answer and chronology capabilities, are experiencing high demand.

Accelerating Document-Review Workflows

Prompt-based document classification is enabling law firms to review vast volumes of material in days or even hours rather than weeks. This isn't replacing lawyers but empowering them to focus on strategic, value-driven tasks.

Document Disclosure as a High-Impact Use Case

With the explosion of communications across platforms like Slack, Teams, WhatsApp, and email, the document disclosure process has become more complex. AI dramatically accelerates this process — making it an ideal area for quick, high-value wins.

Cautious Adoption in High-Stakes Areas

While not all legal departments or law firms are ready to take on using GenAI in disclosure exercises, many are adopting technology in lower risk, high volume areas like investigations, early case assessment, contract review and NDA creation. The use of this technology has expanded beyond Legal and into areas like HR and Compliance.

Beyond Efficiency to Innovation

GenAI offers benefits beyond just cost savings, enabling new types of work and better quality outcomes. While “faster, cheaper, and more accurate” is a common pitch for AI, particularly in document review and disclosure exercises, the discussion also highlights that GenAI will allow for tasks that were previously impossible or unaffordable. Richard Susskind introduces the idea that AI will enable new services, such as systems that can proactively identify early markers of legal difficulties and problems for in-house teams, which are not just automated versions of existing tasks

4. Big Wins for Smaller Firms

Agility as a Competitive Edge

Smaller firms often lack the bureaucracy of large organisations, making them ideal environments for rapid AI adoption and experimentation. As Richard Susskind advises, even a 15-minute daily engagement with general-purpose AI technology can yield substantial transformation.

“Its hard to envisage a future where we will not need critical curious thinking.”

Professor Richard Susskind CBE KC (Hon)

5. Security, Ethics, and Governance

Transparency and Governance Are Imperative

Given the sensitive nature of many legal matters, law firms and in-house counsel should come together to discuss and align on the appropriate use of GenAI. Only through collaboration and feedback from clients can law firms effectively develop their AI governance strategies.

Ethical Oversight and Policy Formation

AI steering committees, in conjunction with firm or legal leadership, are necessary to oversee the testing, implementation and adoption of these new technologies. These committees are necessary to evaluate tools for compliance, efficiency, and alignment with firm values, as well as mandating training prior to use on active legal work. These committees should not be treated as a one time event, rather, maintain ongoing responsibility for the organisation’s use of AI in perpetuity. These bodies evaluate tools for compliance, efficiency, and alignment with firm values, often mandating training before GenAI deployment.



6. Human Oversight and Critical Thinking

GenAI Cannot Yet Replace Legal Judgment

Richard Susskind asserts that it's hard to imagine a future where critical thinking won't be needed. Tom Frapwell echoes this sentiment, emphasizing that lawyers must not accept GenAI outputs at face value.

While GenAI may eliminate the need to start from a blank page, lawyers must still contextualize and validate outputs. Synthesizing complex legal insights remains a uniquely human task.

Risks of Hallucinations

There have already been instances of AI-generated case law being cited in UK and U.S. courts — cases that, in fact, never existed. This underscores the need for continued diligence and professional scrutiny. (Refer to UK and US court findings citing fictitious cases produced by AI in court filings*).

Conclusion: Strategic Adoption, Not Blind Embrace

GenAI is having a seismic impact on the future of legal services. Its proper use requires an evergreen strategy, oversight and transparency with users and clients.

The firms that thrive in this environment will not necessarily be the biggest — but the most agile, the most transparent, and the most thoughtful in their integration of technology.

“Despite the advances in legal technology, it still takes someone with sufficient legal training to synthesize and contextualize AI-generated outputs, ensuring they are accurate, relevant and ultimately provide clear, reliable advice to the client.”

Tom Frapwell – Partner, Osborne Clarke

*<https://natlawreview.com/article/lawyers-sanctioned-citing-ai-generated-fake-cases> New York lawyers sanctioned for using fake ChatGPT cases in legal brief | ReutersFake Citations. Real Consequences: When AI Misleads the Court | Fstopper

UK judge warns lawyers of consequences for misusing AI in court filings - JURIST - News

DISCO RESEARCH: GENAI AND ITS IMPACT ON THE LEGAL PROFESSION

A survey of legal practitioners across law firms, in-house legal departments, and ediscovery providers taken from 2024 found the following about key areas within the practice of law expected to be most impacted by GenAI – plus legal professionals' obstacles to and perceived benefits of adopting this new technology.

[View research](#)

HERE ARE
FOUR
KEY INSIGHTS

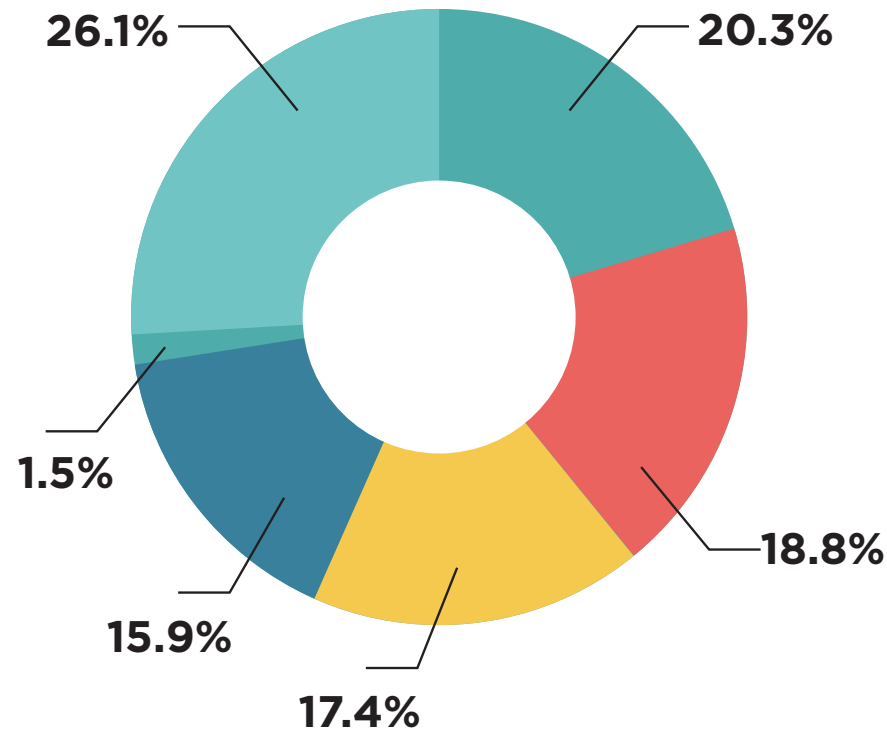


1

Expect rapid adoption of GenAI within the next two years

72.5% of legal practitioners are either already using GenAI or plan to do so within the next two years, suggesting the legal profession is on the cusp of a significant transformation.

What are the drivers? **70.8%** say the efficiency boost is a primary driver for adopting GenAI, closely followed by the benefits of AI-powered data analysis (**60.3%**) and faster time to evidence (**48.5%**).



How soon is your organization expected to integrate GenAI into its routine legal processes?

- Have already adopted 20.3%
- Less than six months 18.8%
- Six months to a year 17.4%
- One to two years 15.9%
- Three to five years 0%
- Never 7.5%
- Unsure 26.1%



2

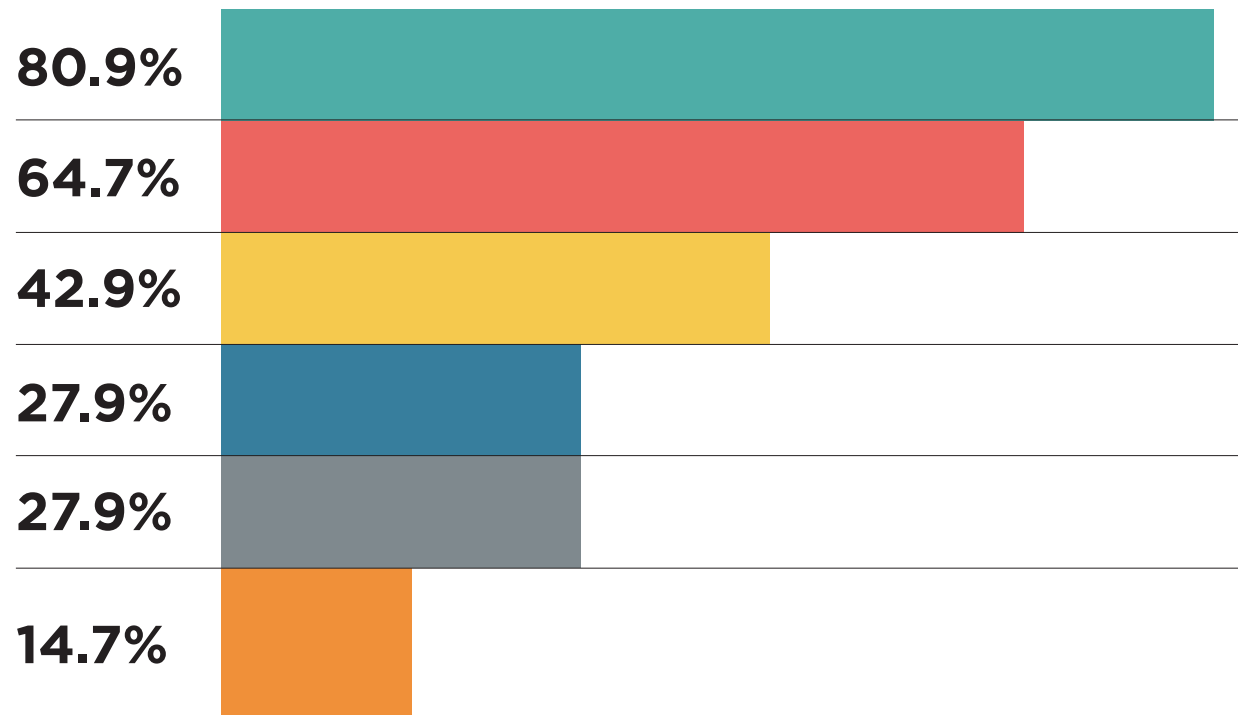
The work of lawyers & legal professionals will become both more strategic and tech-dependent

The integration of GenAI into legal practice is anticipated to alter the roles and day-to-day workflows of legal professionals significantly — and, critically, to **elevate, rather than replace, the work of legal professionals.**

80.9% of respondents predicted that streamlining routine tasks will allow legal professionals to spend more time performing the high-level legal analysis they want.

It's unsurprising, then, that **64.7%** of respondents expected the lawyer's role to evolve to become more strategic. And **42.7%** believe this change will require legal professionals of all levels to be more adept with emerging legal technology — positioning tech adopters to be change leaders in effectively leveraging GenAI to enhance their practice.

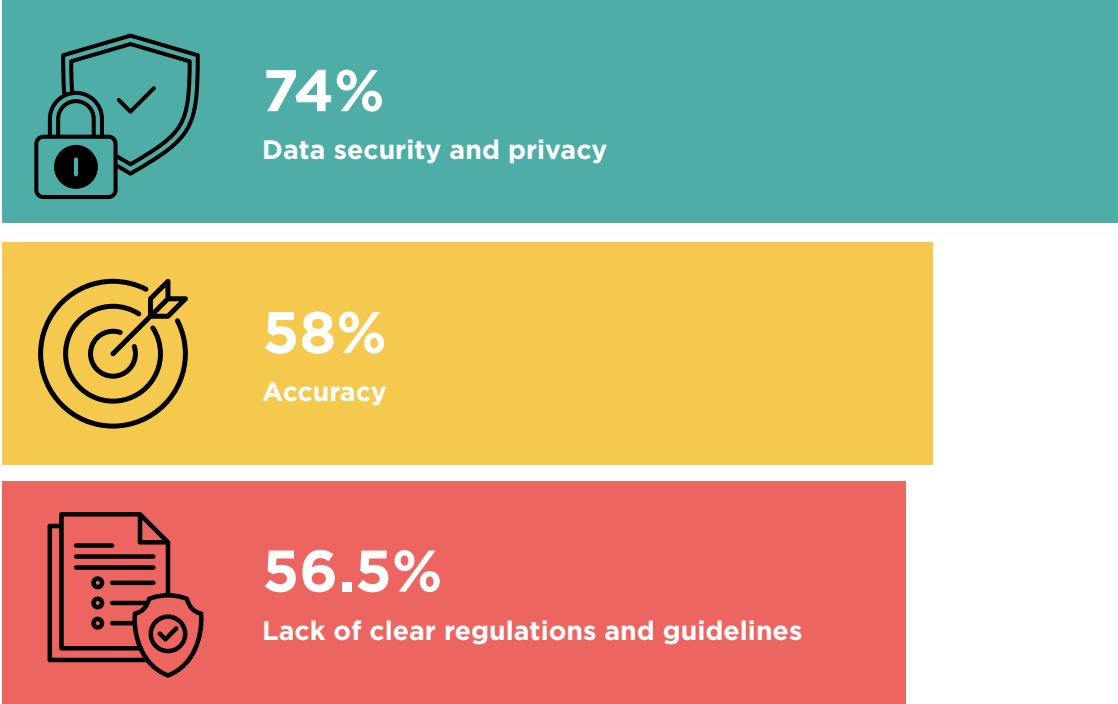
In what ways do you envision the function of legal professionals changing as GenAI becomes more prevalent in ediscovery?



3

Privacy and ethics are lawyers' biggest fears about GenAI adoption

Respondents' key obstacles to adopting GenAI include concerns about:



Additionally, respondents indicated they'd be extremely slow to adopt GenAI in workflows involving data security, privacy, and budgeting.

In short, the drive for GenAI-enhanced operational efficiency and strategic advantage in legal practice is tempered by caution, with respondents indicating a need for technical proficiency and education, and clearly defined data privacy regulations.



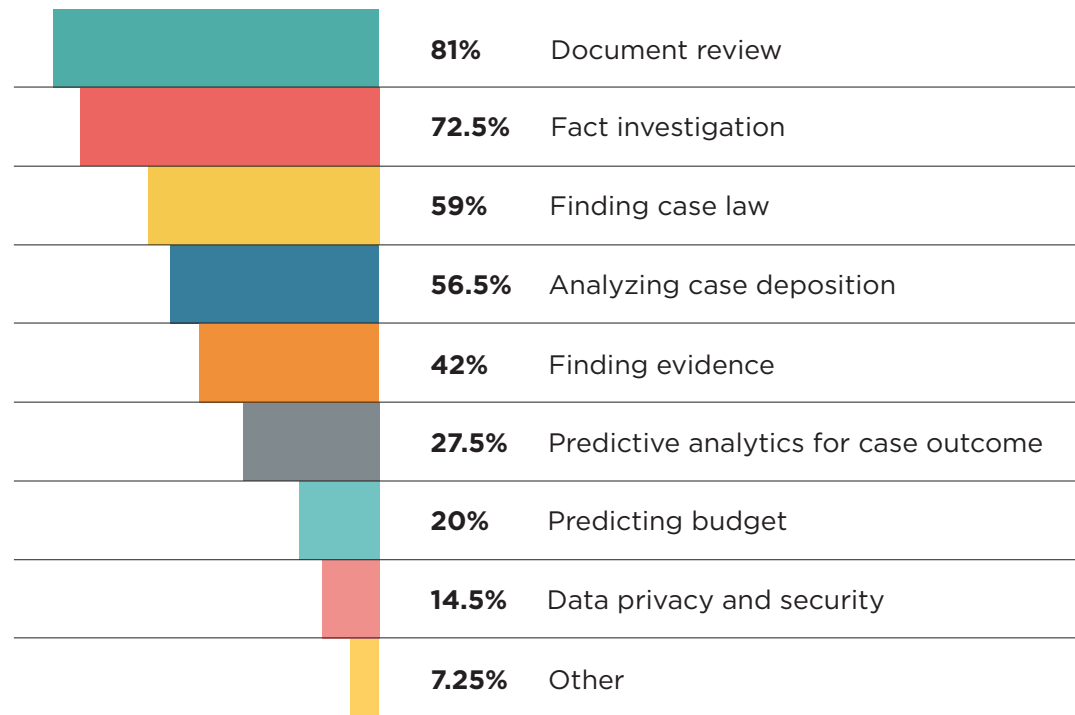
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The workflows to be most immediately affected are document review and fact investigation

The majority of responses indicated the tasks that would see the most immediate impact from GenAI are **document review (81%)**, **fact investigation (72.5%)**, and finding **relevant case law (59.5%)**.

As indicated in Key Takeaway 1, the bulk of that change is expected (by 57% of respondents) to take place within the next year — and would lead to greater efficiency and faster time to evidence.

In which areas of litigation do you think GenAI will have the most immediate impact?



HOW TO USE GENAI IN LITIGATION

According to Thomson-Reuters, **82%** of lawyers believe GenAI can be used for legal work.

That said — and we can't reiterate this enough — **GenAI will not replace human legal practitioners**. Instead, it's a powerful resource in your toolbox that allows you to improve accuracy and turnaround time for legal processes while automating manual and tedious tasks.

Humans play a critical role in getting the most out of GenAI by applying expert skills, critical thinking, and human judgment to this powerful tool.

In the following table, we'll explore how to harness this powerful tool for document review, fact analysis and investigation, and drafting briefs and other documents.

Document Review

For decades, AI has been used to maximize efficiency within the context of document review. If you've used Technology-Assisted Review (TAR 1.0 and 2.0), a court-approved mainstay of ediscovery, you're already using AI. Solicitors also leverage AI for topic clustering, sentiment analysis, and more.

At DISCO, it's been used for document review not just prioritization since 2015. Now GenAI, although relatively new to the game, is taking tech-enabled document review and discovery to another level.











82%

of lawyers believe
GenAI can be used
for legal work

How Doc Review With GenAI Differs from Human-Only Review

Now you understand the ways in which LLMs differ from human minds. Let's apply this knowledge to the process of doc review. Here's a simple breakdown:

HUMAN-MANAGED LINEAR REVIEW	GENERATIVE AI-POWERED REVIEW
 <p>You prepare a written review protocol that describes the issues in your case and train the review team on how to code documents.</p>	 <p>You provide written tagging instructions in DISCO based on the issues in the case and the types of documents you're looking for.</p>
 <p>The review team begins coding documents and a subject matter expert quality controls (QCs) the results to ensure the issues are well understood.</p>	 <p>You review sample sets to ensure that the GenAI is coding the documents correctly.</p>
 <p>You provide clarifying instructions to your reviewers to correct vague or frequently missed topics.</p>	 <p>You iteratively adjust tag descriptions based on findings from the sample set.</p>
 <p>You iteratively QC some or all of the documents in the review population until the review is complete.</p>	 <p>Once satisfied with the results, you apply the AI suggestions across the entire review population.</p>



How GenAI Benefits Document Review

Speed, efficiency, and accuracy: These are arguably the greatest benefits you'll see from GenAI.

With GenAI, **You can compress weeks of document review into days**, providing you with a more rapid understanding of the documents in your database to advise your client earlier on risk and be front-footed on case strategy.



GenAI for Fact Analysis and Investigations

Unlike document prioritization (which uses machine learning to quickly surface documents for human review) GenAI can assist lawyers by organizing information and answering questions by using natural language — for example, organizing a large set of documents into a timeline of events, or addressing a query.



How GenAI Benefits Fact Analysis and Investigation

Synthesizing information: GenAI is adept at rapidly parsing extensive datasets and synthesizing the information. It can work across entire ediscovery databases or a subset of documents, easily and precisely extracting and highlighting the desired content. This is the kind of fact identification that would normally take a **vast amount of manual work** for a human legal team.

Rapidly summarizing information: With a tool like DISCO's Cecilia Doc Summaries, you can get a summary of a long, complex document with a single click. It becomes even more powerful when you combine this with Cecilia Q&A, which allows you to ask the AI questions about an individual document or your document set to quickly grasp the overarching themes, parties, key provisions, and core subject matter of complex documents.

