



TECHNOLOGY

Beware The #RobotLawyer Invasion

Should lawyers resist the robot lawyer invasion and does it actually pose a threat to the legal profession as we know it?

By NICOLE BLACK

Oct 17, 2019 at 10:01 AM

28
SHARES



The robot invasion is bound to happen any day now, and when the robots get here, I plan to be on their good side. That's why I make it a point to [welcome each and every potential robot overlord](#) on Twitter. Better safe than sorry, I always say.



MENU

will be as accepting. You see, lawyers don't always embrace change and innovation, and robot lawyers — well, they represent a whole lot of both.

Of course, this begs the question: Should lawyers resist the robot lawyer invasion and does it actually pose a threat to the legal profession as we know it? Those are heady questions and rather than tackle them myself, I've decided to hand off the task to a bunch of law professors. Specifically, the ones who wrote chapters on the impact of artificial intelligence on the legal profession in a recently released book on disruption in the legal industry: [New Suits – Appetite for Disruption in the Legal World](#).

I was pleasantly surprised when this book unexpectedly arrived on my doorstep, since it's a topic that's right up my alley. It turns out that Michele DeStefano, one of the book's editors, was kind enough to send me a complimentary review copy of this book. I previously reviewed another book of hers on innovation in the legal profession [here](#), and you'll find two chapters written by her on that same topic in this new book, too.

But given my peculiar obsession with robots, it was the chapters on the impact of artificial intelligence on the legal industry that caught my eye as I skimmed over the table of contents.

This topic was first tackled in Chapter 11, "Lawyer Bots: Rise of the Machines," written by Dr. Christian Öhner and Dr. Silke Graf. I read that chapter with interest and was nodding in agreement by the end of the chapter, when the authors reached this conclusion:

“

We are convinced that Lawyer Bots will revolutionize many aspects of law and much of the legal industry. And if the established legal industry will not deploy them, sooner or later somebody else will. But these changes are, in the opinion of the authors, not to be dreaded. At least, not by those who are focussing on their creative potential. Lawyer Bots will help us getting rid of much of the mundane work, which is not desirable to do anyway, truth be told.”



MENU

practice of law truly be automated? Or are the higher-level analytical tasks performed by lawyers inexorably intertwined with the more routine transactional tasks that could arguably be automated?

While pondering this issue, I moved onto another AI-focused chapter, Chapter 21 written by Luis Ackerman entitled “Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Legal Systems.” In that chapter, I found the Holy Grail: A handy chart that broke down legal tasks and predicted which ones were most likely to be impacted by automation (obtained from [a law review article](#) authored by Dan Remus and Frank Levy).

According to Remus and Levy, those legal tasks deemed to have the potential to be heavily impacted by AI are: Document review, document drafting, case administration and management, legal research, document management, and legal writing. Those predicted to be moderately impacted by AI are: Due diligence, legal analysis and strategy, and other communications/interactions. Finally, the tasks that would likely be least impacted by AI are: Fact investigation, advising clients, court appearances and preparation, and negotiation.

So, now that you know what to expect and which tasks you’ll have to hand over when the lawyer robots take over, you might be wondering: What’s a forward-thinking lawyer to do?

No need to waste precious time pondering that question, dear readers! I’ve got you covered. At the conclusion of the chapter, the authors tackled that very query and made this dire prediction: The lawyer robots are coming; adapt or die.

Okay, that’s not really what they said. But it’s awfully close:

“

(Legal) professionals who refuse to adapt to technological progress will continue to have a job in the foreseeable future, but they will soon be playing in a different league than their digitally augmented competitors.

The shift to Advanced Legal Systems is going to require quite some time and resources, but the competitive advantage will pay off quickly—especially for early



MENU

strategy, free from preconceptions, and be bold enough to not only consider radical change but actually realize it.

In other words, ready or not, here they come! And, I don't know about you, but I, for one, welcome our new robot lawyer overlords. #robotlawyer #robotoverlord #robotinvasion



***Nicole Black** is a Rochester, New York attorney and the Legal Technology Evangelist at [MyCase](#), web-based law practice management software. She's been [blogging](#) since 2005, has written a [weekly column](#) for the Daily Record since 2007, is the author of [Cloud Computing for Lawyers](#), co-authors [Social Media for Lawyers: the Next Frontier](#), and co-authors [Criminal Law in New York](#). She's easily distracted by the potential of bright and shiny tech gadgets, along with good food and wine. You can follow her on [Twitter @nikiblack](#) and she can be reached at niki.black@mycase.com.*

28

SHARES

**TOPICS**

Artificial Intelligence, Nicole Black, Robot Lawyers, Technology

EVOLVE THE LAW DIRECTORY



MENU

Schools, Small Law Firms, Solo Practitioners



Capterra of Concordance

Small Law Firms, Solo Practitioners



Facebook

—ADVERTISEMENT—

SPONSORED BY CONNATIX



AD

SKIP AD >

ABOVE THE LAW - DAILY HIGHLIGHTS



Love ATL? Let's make it official. Sign up for our newsletter.

Your email address

Subscribe

- News (daily updates)
- Partner Issues
- Small Law Firms
- In-House Counsel

- Legal Technology
- Law Schools
- ATL Trivia



MENU

We will never sell or share your information without your consent. See our [privacy policy](#).

FROM THE ABOVE THE LAW NETWORK

Focus on the Bigger Picture
THOMSON REUTERS

Exploring Artificial Intelligence and the Law – Webinar
BLUE J LEGAL

Get On The Cloud: Here’s How And Why
CLIO

How Successful Small Law Firms Get Ahead Of The Game | Webinar 8/21
ABOVE THE LAW AND PWC

Eight Tips To Improve Your Networking Skills
LAWLINE CLE

Track Your KPIs Efficiently with the Right Technology. Learn How. Webinar 10/17/19
ABOVE THE LAW AND ROCKET MATTER

Understanding Legal Client Needs
THOMSON REUTERS

The Status Quo Could Be Hindering Your Efficiency – There Is A Solution
THOMSON REUTERS

NEWSLETTER SIGNUP

Subscribe and get breaking news, commentary, and opinions on law firms, lawyers, law schools, lawsuits, judges, and more.



MENU

We will never sell or share your information without your consent. See our privacy policy.

Advertise About Newsletter

OUR SITES

ABOVE
THE LAW

ATL HOW
APPEALING

BREAKING
DEFENSE

BREAKING
Energy

BREAKING
GOV FASHIONISTA

DEALBREAKER
MedCity News

© 2019 Breaking Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Registration or use of this site constitutes acceptance of our Terms of Service and Privacy Policy.