

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

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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.



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."



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





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



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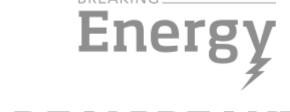
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