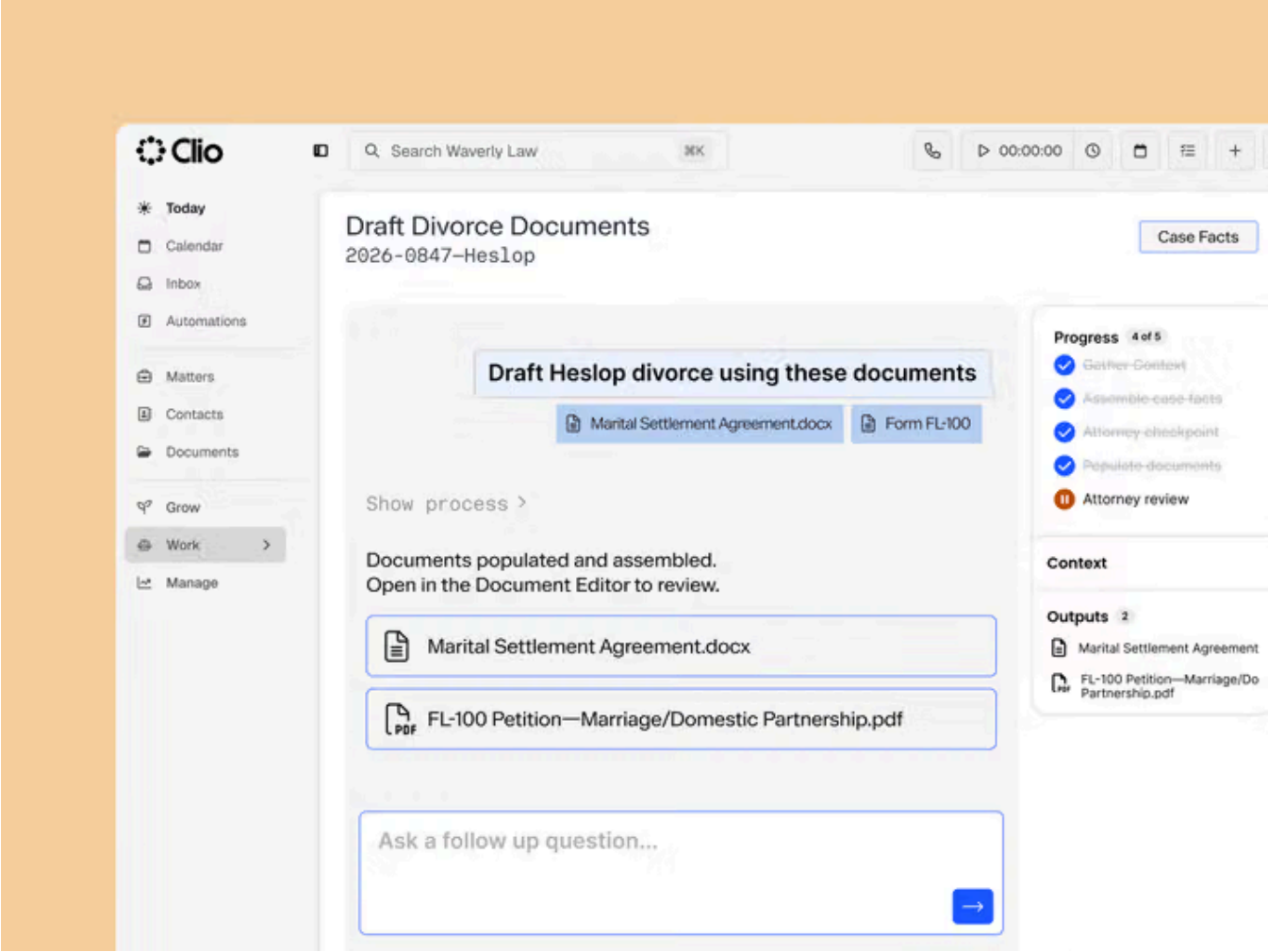


Matter-Aware AI for Lawyers: What It Is and Why It Matters

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Lawyers spend nearly one-fifth of their working hours on legal research, according to the ABA. That's one full day every week. 52 days a year. And it's not just the searching that consumes time, it's everything around it: copying citations, sifting through noisy keyword results, manually connecting findings back to the matter, and starting from scratch on the next case because none of that knowledge carries over.

The challenge isn't just inefficiency. It's fragmentation. Tools operate in isolation, research lives in silos, and valuable case context disappears the moment a matter closes. But what if your legal AI was matter-aware, if it understood both the case you're working on and the law that governs it?

This article explains what matter-aware AI is, how it works differently from other AI tools, and why it marks a turning point in how legal work gets done.

Work smarter with AI that knows your matters. Get research, analysis, and drafts tailored to your case, without the manual work. See Clio Work in Action.

What is matter-aware AI?

Matter-aware AI is legal artificial intelligence that connects directly to your practice management system and automatically understands your entire case file (—your documents, timeline, work product, and matter details) —before you even ask a question.

Most AI tools work differently: You type a question, they search a database, and return an answer. The problem? They have no idea what you're working on.

You could be researching motion to dismiss standards for a contract dispute in California, but unless you explicitly tell the AI every relevant detail in your prompt (the jurisdiction, the procedural posture, the specific contract terms, the opposing party's arguments), it's answering in a vacuum.

Matter-aware AI changes this. Instead of relying solely on what you type, it already knows the case you're working on because it maintains real-time understanding of your entire matter file.

How matter-aware AI understands your case

When you ask matter-aware AI a question, it instantly pulls from your matter file to deliver research and analysis tailored to your specific situation.

Here's what it can access:

- **Your complete document file:** Every filing, contract, email, discovery response, and piece of correspondence. The AI reads and understands them the moment they're saved to your matter. No manual uploads.
- **Your case timeline:** Key dates, deadlines, statute of limitations, procedural milestones. The AI knows exactly where you are in the lifecycle of the case and what's coming next.
- **Your work product:** Notes from client meetings, internal memos, task lists, case strategy observations. The institutional knowledge your team has built gets factored into every analysis.

- **Your jurisdiction and practice area:** Based on your matter details, the AI automatically narrows research to the laws, courts, and precedents that actually apply. No need to specify "California contract law" every time.
- **Real-time updates:** When new discovery comes in, when opposing counsel files a motion, when a judge issues a ruling, the AI's understanding evolves automatically. You're always working from current reality, not yesterday's snapshot.

This means when you ask a question, you're not starting from zero. You're starting from a foundation of everything the AI already knows about your case. The research isn't just legally accurate, it's contextually relevant to your specific matter. That shift, from prompts to context, changes what's possible.

From AI "answers" to matter-aware outcomes

For lawyers, this transforms the research-to-draft process. Instead of disconnected tools and manual integration, you get connected intelligence.

Traditional legal workflows rely on disconnected systems. Research happens in one tool, documents live in another, notes scatter everywhere. Every new task means manually rebuilding context, copying information between platforms, and redoing work already done on similar matters.

The costs compound quickly. Critical facts get overlooked when research lives separately from your case file. Work quality varies because knowledge stays with individual lawyers instead of in shared systems. Hours disappear to context-switching and redundant work. This can lead to burnout, errors, and increased risk of missed deadlines, unchecked citations, and misapplied precedent.

Matter-aware AI eliminates this fragmentation. Research, analysis, drafting, and case context connect in one system where knowledge compounds instead of disappearing. You get work product tailored to your case because the AI already knows your documents, timeline, jurisdiction, and procedural posture. Research from past matters becomes reusable. Drafts come pre-filled with your facts and relevant authority. Update your files, the AI updates its understanding.

What matter-aware AI looks like in practice

Let's say you're evaluating a motion for summary judgment in your case. Other AI tools might give you relevant case law on summary judgment standards. Matter-aware AI, on the other hand, provides an analysis identifying three potential weaknesses in opposing

counsel's argument based on the disputed facts in paragraphs 14–18 of your complaint, along with a draft framework for an opposition brief that draws on the evidence already contained in your authorized case file.

Now say you need to draft an NDA for a new partnership. Other AI tools will give you standard NDA templates. Matter-aware gives you a first draft tailored to this specific partnership, informed by the five similar NDAs in your matter files and the confidentiality concerns from your January 15 client meeting, with three clauses flagged for your review.

That's not just faster research. That's work you can build on immediately.

The foundation that makes it possible

However, context alone isn't enough. For matter-aware legal AI to deliver on this promise, you need other essential capabilities to ensure you can use the tool responsibly, trust the output, and comply with your professional duties. Five capabilities must work together: matter awareness via direct integration with your practice management system, an authoritative legal database with verified sources, citation verification with confidence scoring, workflow integration where insights flow into action, and enterprise security (SOC 2 Type 2, ISO 27001, GDPR, HIPAA). Without all five, you're back to tool sprawl. With them, your practice gets smarter with every case.

Introducing Clio Work

Clio Work is part of Clio's Intelligent Legal Work Platform and the first AI built specifically for legal practice that unites case-specific insights with comprehensive legal authority.

Drawing directly from your matters in Clio Manage—your documents, communications, notes, deadlines, tasks, and custom fields—the system updates automatically as your case evolves. This gives Clio Work a real-time, accurate understanding of your matter's context, so research and analysis always reflect the most current details.

At the same time, Clio Work is grounded in a comprehensive legal database of more than 1 billion documents across 100+ countries, encompassing primary law, secondary sources, historical statutes, procedural rules, and expert commentary.

This dual foundation means Clio Work is both legally authoritative and deeply informed about your specific case. Research is not only relevant to your jurisdiction and practice area, but also tailored to the unique details of your matters. Whether you're conducting research, reviewing documents, or preparing early drafts, Clio Work can handle the heavy lifting so you can focus on judgment, advocacy, and client strategy.

What you can do with Clio Work

From natural language querying to context-aware drafting, Clio Work transforms how legal work gets done and opens up new possibilities.

Ask questions naturally

Forget Boolean operators and rigid keyword searches that force you to think like a search engine. With Clio Work, you simply ask what you want to know—plainly, conversationally, and focused solely on the issue:

- “Tell me about current litigation involving Tesla.”
- “How have courts in my jurisdiction handled non-compete agreements for executives?”

Clio Work interprets intent, not just keywords. It identifies the legal concepts behind your question, recognizes your jurisdiction, understands procedural posture, and delivers a clear, targeted answer.

Get research that’s authoritative and matter-aware

Unlike general-purpose AI tools, Clio Work’s responses come from a vetted legal database of more than 1 billion documents. Every citation includes confidence scoring and validation through Cert, Clio’s proprietary citator, so you always understand the strength and reliability of the authority in front of you.

Because Clio Work also understands your matter, it automatically aligns results with your case details—incorporating jurisdiction, timing, and procedural context without additional prompting.

If your work spans multiple jurisdictions, Clio Work conducts multi-jurisdictional research in a single step, saving you hours of parallel searching and manual comparison.

Analyze case documents with precision

Document review often demands hours of careful reading. Clio Work shortens that process by analyzing the documents saved to your matter and surfacing the information that typically takes the longest to uncover. It can:

- Summarize filings
- Build factual timelines
- Extract claims and defenses

- Help generate early drafts

Both litigators and transactional lawyers benefit from this.

For litigators, Clio Work helps map out issues, arguments, and admissions before you step into a strategy session.

For transactional lawyers, it highlights missing definitions, ambiguous language, or liability-shifting provisions before negotiations begin.

Instead of starting with a blank page or a stack of documents, you begin with a structured, digestible understanding of the most relevant details.

Get proactive recommendations and early drafts

Staying ahead of deadlines and deliverables is one of the most challenging aspects of legal practice. Clio Work helps by preparing early, context-informed drafts based on the activity in your case.

As documents are added, notes updated, or tasks created, the platform recognizes what you're likely to need next and generates first-pass versions of defenses, clients communication summaries, and more.

These drafts give you a foundation grounded in the facts and law relevant to your matter, helping you respond faster, stay organized, and maintain momentum.

Build knowledge that compounds across matters

When research, analysis, and drafts all live in the same platform, your firm becomes smarter with every case.

Research doesn't disappear when a matter closes. It stays attached and reusable. Contract analyses and memos can evolve into templates that save the next lawyer time. Drafts can be adapted and standardized. Analyses become institutional knowledge for new team members.

Paired with Clio Draft, this knowledge becomes even more actionable. Your research and analysis can turn into ready-to-file documents that auto-populate client and matter data, support e-signatures, and strengthen your template library over time.

Work that once took hours now takes minutes. And work done once becomes reusable across your entire firm.

What are customers saying about Clio Work

"Clio Work lets me handle everything securely inside Clio without stripping data for external AI tools. In one morning it analyzed a minute order, drafted a notice of hearing, reviewed a trust consent, and researched a trust petition issue—and that was a slow day."

Melissa Hamilton
PRINCIPAL ATTORNEY, WILLIAMS & HAMILTON

"Clio Work allows me to do my tasks much faster and more thoroughly. We had a wrongful death case with thousands of pages of invoices, and I was able to quickly analyze that document production and make correlations that would have taken me quite a long time. I found specific invoices that were damning for the opposing counsel very quickly."

Jeremy Sims
SENIOR PARALEGAL, RATHBUN, CSERVENYAK & KOZOL

> “Vincent (Clio Work’s AI agent) has become integral to my practice so quickly that I use it for almost everything in my daily workflow. I upload extensive documents and tell Vincent to ‘Draft a pleading that does X, identifying any potential issues with FL law.’ It cuts through the documents to find the critical facts and quickly drafts the pleading and proposed order. The ability to refine the argument through back-and-forth conversational editing is why I now use it for all my complex drafting.”
>
> Mr. Matthew Matechik
> ATTORNEY, THE MATECHIK LAW FIRM PA

Why lawyers choose Clio Work

Clio Work succeeds where other AI tools fall short through a combination of unique capabilities built specifically for legal practice.

Matter-aware intelligence

Clio Work connects directly to Clio Manage, giving it a continuously updated view of your entire matter file—documents, emails, notes, tasks, deadlines, and more. As your case evolves, so does Clio Work’s understanding.

New discovery? Incorporated.
A ruling from the court? Understood.
A letter from opposing counsel? Analyzed.

This ensures research and analysis stay relevant, not frozen at the moment you last uploaded documents.

A trusted, authoritative legal foundation

Clio Work is built on one of the largest legal libraries in the world: over 1 billion documents from more than 100 countries.

Every answer is verifiable and grounded in primary authority. Each citation links directly to its source with confidence scoring and editorial validation. You always know where insights come from, how reliable they are, and whether they'll hold up in court.

One system of action

Since Clio Work is part of Clio's Intelligent Legal Platform, you benefit from the one platform advantage. Research flows into analysis. Analysis flows into drafts. Drafts save back to the matter.

You're not copying information between tools or losing context as work moves between platforms. Your team works from a single source of truth. Everyone sees the same information, updated in real time.

This eliminates tool sprawl, reduces duplicated effort, and means your firm's collective intelligence accumulates instead of scattering across disconnected systems, and most importantly, work moves forward.

Enterprise-grade security you can depend on

Clio Work is built to SOC 2 Type 2, ISO 27001, GDPR, and HIPAA standards and runs within Clio's secure environment. Your client data is never exported to third parties, never shared, and never used to train AI models.

Within the platform, permission-based access ensures lawyers see only the matters they're authorized to view, protecting confidentiality across your firm.

Lead the next chapter of legal work

AI alone isn't enough. What lawyers need—and what clients increasingly expect—is insight grounded in authoritative law, informed by the full context of a matter, and delivered in a way that accelerates strategy rather than slowing it down. Clio Work makes that possible by bringing together verified legal research, real-time case context, and proactive drafting in a single, connected system.

The result is a more confident, efficient, and informed practice. Legal research no longer resets with every new matter. Document review becomes strategic instead of exhausting. Drafting starts from a place of strength, not a blank page. Knowledge doesn't vanish when a case closes. It compounds.

Clio Work helps you move from managing the work to advancing it. Every insight builds on the last, every hour saved goes back to your clients, and every matter benefits from the collective intelligence of your firm.

If you're ready to transform how your practice works, and to lead the next chapter of legal work, Clio Work is ready to show you what's possible.

Book a demo today and see how your matters move forward with AI that truly understands your work.

About Clio

Clio is the global leader in legal AI, powering legal work across the profession, from law firms of every size to corporate legal teams, government agencies, and courts. Its Intelligent Legal Work Platform unites the business and practice of law, connecting the people, information, and processes behind legal work. Clio's AI brings the context together with legal sources drawn from Clio Library, a growing collection of more than one billion legal documents. Over 400,000 legal professionals in more than 130 countries rely on Clio to run their legal world. Learn more at www.clio.com.