AI Use Cases in Law: What Lawyers Can Actually Use AI for Today

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Think about last week. How many hours did you spend searching through case law, tracking deadlines, or writing routine correspondence?

How much of that work actually required your legal expertise?

Today, AI use cases in law span everything from legal research to document drafting to deadline management. With your oversight, AI becomes your powerful assistant and gives you back hours for the work that actually requires your judgment, from strategy and client counsel to complex legal analysis.

Ninety-five percent of Canadian legal professionals are already using AI in their work, according to Clio's*Legal Trends for Canadian Law Firms* report, and 66% say that it's increased their firm's revenue. Firms that adopt AI broadly also report benefits such as improved work quality, better client responsiveness, increased work capacity, and higher profitability.

Below, we break down practical ways to use AI in your practice today and how to implement it safely, so you can capture these same benefits and grow your practice without compromising accuracy, ethics, or client trust.

Discover what AI can actually do for your firm.

Clio's secure, legal-specific AI is built to support research, drafting, and everyday legal workflows.

Explore Clio Work

Top AI use cases in law across the legal workflow

Here's how AI supports lawyers in both the practice of law and the business of running a firm.

AI in the practice of law

Legal practice requires thorough research, careful drafting, and detailed analysis. It's demanding work, and the volume often keeps increasing. More matters, tighter deadlines, higher client expectations.

Over time, this can create cognitive overload that affects your effectiveness and mental well-being. AI can help. Regardless of your practice area, the most impactful AI use cases for lawyers involve supporting you across tasks so that instead of starting from scratch, you start from structured outputs you can review and refine.

Here are the workflows where AI can have the biggest impact.

Legal research

AI-powered legal research in Clio Work.

Legal research is one area where Canadian firms are adopting AI. Clio's *Legal Trends for Canadian Law Firms* found that 28% of mid-to-large firms—and 21% of smaller firms—use legal-specific research tools. AI cuts that time significantly by searching vast libraries of case law, statutes, regulations, contracts, and secondary sources to surface the most relevant authorities faster.

Modern AI tools understand plain-language queries, so you can move beyond rigid keyword searches and focus on substantive analysis.

This means faster insights, improved accuracy, and less risk of overlooking critical authorities. Matter-aware, legal-specific AI likeClio Work takes it further by using information already stored in your case management system to deliver results tailored to your specific matter.

Unlike general-purpose AI tools such as ChatGPT that can introduce fabricated or unreliable citations, legal-specific AI grounds answers in verified sources, with links to citations you can independently verify, which matters given that Canadian courts have already sanctioned lawyers over hallucinated case law (more on that below).

> ""Before AI, I had to guess what keywords would trigger the right cases. Even then I wasn't always confident that we were getting it all. I would spend an hour or two searching, trying to find relevant cases, going down rabbit holes. Now it takes literally five minutes and my first two hours of research are done." — Pierce, lawyer at a small business and real estate law firm"

Drafting and document generation

AI-powered template creation in Clio Draft.

AI tools can convert your existing Word documents into reusable templates to enable automated drafting for similar matter types. That means the structure, standard clauses, and formatting are already there the next time you need a similar document. This locks in best practices that might otherwise remain undocumented. When new associates join your team, they gain access to your firm's drafting standards and institutional knowledge from day one.

Client information gathering becomes more efficient too. With tools likeClio Draft, AI collects client information through online questionnaires and automatically populates your templates with their answers. No manual data entry. No transcription errors across multiple documents.

Contract review and risk analysis

AI-powered contract analysis in Clio Work.

Comparing contract versions manually is tedious and error-prone. It's easy to miss a critical change buried in pages of revisions. AI-assisted contract review surfaces risks, non-standard clauses, missing terms, and deviations from templates quickly and consistently. This is particularly valuable in commercial transactions, corporate deals, procurement, M&A, real estate, and regulatory reviews.

Redline analysis works in a similar way. AI compares document versions, identifies changes, flags material revisions, and summarizes what's different, so you can see what changed without manual comparison. When you're reviewing the third or fourth draft of a complex agreement, AI shows you exactly what changed and why it matters.

By flagging inconsistencies and potential issues, AI improves accuracy and consistency across your team. Rather than replacing your judgment, AI ensures you spend time on substantive analysis instead of line-by-line comparison.

Litigation support & case preparation

AI-powered case preparation in Clio Work.

AI helps you build stronger arguments by exploring legal propositions and finding sources to support or challenge them. Need to test a theory or find authority for your position? AI searches case law and statutes to show you what supports your argument and what opposes it.

This gives you a clearer picture of your case's strengths and vulnerabilities before you commit to a strategy. You can evaluate legal theories faster and make better-informed decisions about how to proceed.

Document analysis

AI-powered document analysis in Clio Work.

Sifting through hundreds of pages of discovery materials, deposition and examination transcripts, and pleadings to extract key dates and information is time-intensive. It's also where critical details can get overlooked as a result.

AI-assisted document analysis automatically builds chronologies from your case files. Instead of manually constructing timelines from discovery, the system pulls key dates and events into an organized sequence you can verify and refine.

When analyzing pleadings, AI reviews statements of claim and raises possible defences with regard to key arguments, weaknesses, and strategic opportunities. It highlights what matters most so you can focus your response where it counts.

In examination for discovery review, the technology extracts key facts, identifies inconsistencies in testimony, and organizes recorded objections for court arguments. This helps you prepare trial exhibits and examination outlines for testifying witnesses more efficiently.

Court calendaring

AI-powered deadline extraction in Manage AI.

AI reads court documents, extracts deadlines automatically, and creates suggested calendar events with the source attached for verification. No more manually combing through filings or tracking dates across multiple systems.

You maintain final approval, but the system catches what manual processes might miss, giving you confidence that critical dates are captured and more time for substantive legal work.

> ""The more we bring in technology and get more efficient, the less stressed I am. It's because I know nothing will fall through the cracks. I know everybody is getting great service." — Leah, managing partner at a small law firm dealing in trusts"

AI in the business of law

In parallel, running a successful law firm requires more than excellent legal work. You need responsive client communication, accurate billing, reliable deadline tracking, and efficient workflows. It's essential work, but it's also time-consuming.

AI can automate part of the operational work that slows you down. Think client communications, calendar management, and billing workflows, for example.

Client communications

AI-powered client messaging in Manage AI.

One of the most frequent client complaints is lack of communication. AI makes it easier to both notice when communication is missing and speeds up getting the right message sent.

When a task completes, a document uploads, or a hearing is scheduled, AI drafts client emails and updates for your review. You're not drafting every email manually. You're reviewing and sending, saving time on each communication that can add up to hours each week.

The time savings compound into something more valuable too: capacity for higher-value client work. When you're not buried in routine updates, you can focus on strategy sessions, proactive counsel, and the relationship-building that drives client satisfaction and

referrals. Clients notice the difference when their lawyer is responsive without being rushed.

Billing workflows

AI-powered billing in Manage AI.

Billing can easily consume hours of your week, but it doesn't have to. AI transforms invoicing from a manual, time-consuming process into an automated workflow that runs in the background and only prompts you at critical steps for review.

Once you log any remaining time, AI generates draft invoices automatically, pulling expense entries from uploaded receipts and populating time records you've already logged. From there, it routes bills to designated approvers with automatic reminders to keep the process moving.

Tools likeManage AI get you back to what matters, serving clients and growing your firm.

Firmwide efficiency & operational improvements

Efficiency gains from AI compound when standardized across your practice.

According to Clio's *2025 Legal Trends* research, firms that have adopted AI report tangible benefits across multiple dimensions:

- **65%** report improved work quality
- **63%** report improved client responsiveness
- **54%** report increased work capacity
- **36%** report increased profitability
- **34%** report improved client satisfaction
- **29%** report increased competitiveness

Clio's Canadian-specific research tells a similar story: 66% of Canadian legal professionals who use AI say it has directly improved their firm's revenue.

When standardized firmwide, marginal gains in individual processes multiply into meaningful operational improvements. Many firms track time saved per workflow to measure ROI in legal AI implementation. Whether you're a solo practitioner or a multi-lawyer firm, these compounding benefits scale with your practice.

How to adopt AI strategically in 2026

From legal research to drafting to practice management, you see the possibilities. Now comes the practical part: actually implementing it safely at your firm. Successful AI adoption requires understanding where it fits based on your firm size, recognizing common mistakes to avoid, and building an approach that scales with your practice.

Understand how AI benefits law firms by size

AI delivers value across firms of all sizes, with benefits that scale based on your practice and matter mix.

	HOW LEGAL AI HELPS
Solo/Small firms	Complete legal research faster without sacrificing accuracy Handle more matters without extending your workday Reduce time spent on non-billable administrative tasks Respond to clients faster and more consistently
Mid-size firms	Standardize processes as you grow Maintain quality while handling more matters Help junior lawyers produce higher-quality work from day one Handle multi-jurisdictional matters more efficiently
Large firms	Preserve and extend knowledge management across practice groups Ensure consistent work quality firmwide Support AI adoption with integrated user administration, role-based controls, and IT and partner oversight

Avoid common AI mistakes lawyers make

While the growing list of AI use cases for lawyers brings many potential benefits, it doesn't come without risk, and understanding where AI adoption typically goes wrong helps you avoid these pitfalls.

Relying on general-purpose AI for legal work product

Tools like ChatGPT are powerful, but they weren't designed for legal work. They can hallucinate citations, misstate law, and create confidentiality risks. General-purpose AI lacks the verification mechanisms and authoritative grounding that legal-specific tools provide.

Canadian courts have already dealt with the fallout: in *Zhang v. Chen*, 2024 BCSC 285, a lawyer was ordered to pay costs personally after filing materials that cited two cases fabricated by ChatGPT, and a similar pattern played out in Ontario in *Ko v. Li*, 2025 ONSC 2965.

How to avoid it: Use legal-specific AI like Clio Work that grounds answers in verified sources with links to citations you can independently verify. When you're researching case law or drafting motions, that difference matters.

Assuming AI outputs are accurate without verification

AI-generated content always requires human review. Whether it's a contract clause, research memo, or case summary, you remain responsible for accuracy. Skipping verification steps can damage your credibility and create legal risks, as the cost awards in *Zhang v. Chen* and *Ko v. Li* make clear.

How to avoid it: Build verification workflows into AI-assisted tasks to catch errors before they become problems. Check sources, verify reasoning, and confirm facts against a source likeCanLII.

Copying confidential data into unsecured systems

Client confidentiality isn't guaranteed with every AI tool. Some platforms can store inputs indefinitely, use them for model training, or lack proper encryption, creating ethical violations and malpractice exposure. Provincial law societies, including theLaw Society of British Columbia, have specifically flagged this risk, advising lawyers to understand how a system collects, stores, and uses data before entering client information into it.

How to avoid it: Before inputting matter information, verify how the tool stores data, whether it uses your inputs for training, and what privacy controls exist. Legal AI tools like Clio Work are built specifically for legal work, with security designed around supporting solicitor-client privilege, SOC 2 Type 2 certification, and data handling that keeps your matter information protected.

Skipping firmwide policies or training

Without documented processes, AI adoption becomes inconsistent and risky. Different lawyers using different tools in different ways creates compliance gaps, quality issues, and security vulnerabilities.

How to avoid it: Establish clear policies on which tools to use, what verification steps are required, and when human oversight is mandatory. Train your team on both capabilities and limitations.

AI evaluation toolkit: How to choose the right tools for your practice

Not allAI tools built for lawyers offer the same level of reliability. Use these criteria to identify tools that strengthen your practice and avoid unnecessary risk.

Factors to evaluate when choosing AI tools

1. Verify the tool is legal-specific

AI hallucinations, where AI generates plausible-sounding but false information, pose serious risks in legal work. A fabricated case citation or misstatement of law can damage your credibility and expose you to sanctions, as Canadian courts have already demonstrated.

Legal-specific AI is trained on authoritative legal materials and designed for how lawyers actually work. General-purpose AI may be helpful for brainstorming, but it lacks the precision and grounding required for professional legal work.

Ask these questions:

- Is it trained on authoritative legal materials, including Canadian case law and legislation? How often are the materials updated?
- Does it link directly to verified primary sources and legal databases so I can verify every citation?
- Can I verify that the legal analysis follows from the authorities cited?
- Does it clearly distinguish between primary sources and secondary materials?
- Does it reduce hallucinations compared to general-purpose AI?

2. Check security and data protection standards

You remain responsible for protecting client data regardless of which tools you use. This means conducting thorough due diligence on any AI platform that will handle matter information, including where that data is stored and whether foreign access laws could apply to it.

Ask these questions:

- How does the tool use my data (training, storage, retention)?
- Where is data stored, and who can access it?
- Does the tool agree to comply with solicitor-client privilege requirements?
- Can I delete data permanently when a matter closes?
- Is data encrypted both in transit and at rest?
- Does the vendor have SOC 2 certification or equivalent security validation?
- Does the vendor use my inputs to train their models?

3. Confirm ethical and regulatory compliance support

Law societies and courts across Canada are rapidly developingguidance on AI use. Your duty of competence now includes understanding the AI tools you deploy, which means that you have to supervise AI outputs the same way you'd supervise a junior lawyer's work.

Ask these questions:

- Does it provide clear documentation of sources and reasoning?
- Does the tool provide supportive usage data if my work is questioned?
- Can I explain how I exercised professional judgment when using this tool?

4. Ensure jurisdiction and practice area coverage

A tool focused on one province's statutes won't help a family law practitioner who needs another province's specific legislation and case law. Verify that any AI tool covers your jurisdictions and practice areas with current, authoritative sources.

Ask these questions:

- Does it cover my specific jurisdictions (federal, provincial, territorial)?
- Does it include current, authoritative sources for my practice areas?
- Are secondary sources and practice materials included where relevant?
- Is the legal content updated regularly?

5. Review access controls and permissions

Enterprise-grade tools let you control who accesses what information, ensuring junior associates don't see partner-level financial data and that confidential matters remain properly separated.

Ask these questions:

- Can I set role-based permissions for different team members?
- Can I restrict access to confidential matters?
- Does it support proper information barriers between matters?

6. Test for matter-aware capabilities

Matter-aware AI produces more accurate outputs because it considers the full picture: not just the question you asked but also the matter it relates to, the client's situation, and your firm's standards.

Ask these questions:

- Does it understand specific details of my matters?
- Can it access my documents and matter files?
- Does it consider the full context of my question?
- Can it reference my firm's standards and preferences?

7. Assess workflow integration

If your AI tool requires lawyers to switch platforms or re-key information, it doesn't matter how good it is, they likely won't use it. Implementation succeeds when AI integrates with how your firm actually works.

Ask these questions:

- Does it integrate with my practice management system?
- Can I use it without switching between multiple systems?
- Does it fit into my team's existing workflows?

Practical evaluation tips

Before committing to any AI tool, request sample outputs or run pilot tests using representative, non-client materials. Evaluate how it performs on work similar to what you handle.

Use this simple scoring rubric to compare tools systematically:

	TOOL A SCORE (1-5)	TOOL B SCORE (1-5)
Verifiability		
Security & data protection		
Jurisdictional applicability		
Workflow fit		
Ease of use		

This structured approach will help you fairly compare vendor presentations so you can make the best choice for your practice.

Move your legal work forward with AI

AI has moved from an experimental tool to essential infrastructure for legal practice. Firms of all sizes are using AI to deliver higher-quality work with less friction.

The most valuable AI use cases in law, such as research, drafting, contract review, intake, litigation support, and operational efficiency, are accessible today through purpose-built, legal-specific tools. The key is choosing systems designed for how lawyers work, grounded in verified sources, and built with the safeguards Canadian legal practice demands.

With the right tools and verification workflows, AI becomes a reliable partner that accelerates your work, protects your clients, and strengthens your competitive position.

Experience AI built specifically for lawyers

Secure, accurate, and designed for how you work.

Book a demo

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.