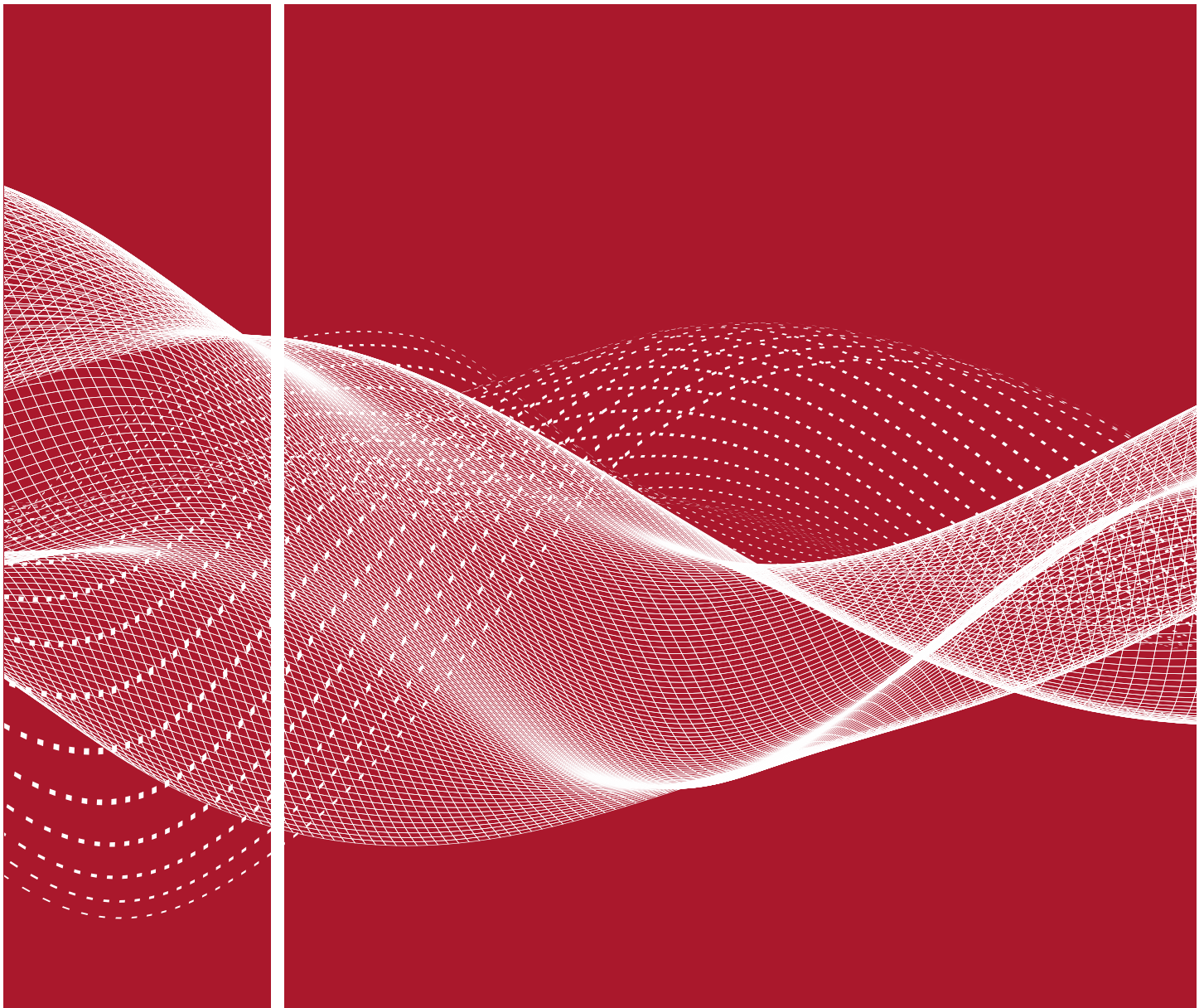


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**Secretariat and ACEDS**

# 2025 Artificial Intelligence Report

prepared by Richard Finkelman



MARCH 2025

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# Introduction

It is an honor to collaborate once again with ACEDS on their third annual Artificial Intelligence survey. This marks Secretariat's first year as a sponsor, and my third time leading the survey and writing this summary. We are grateful to Michael Quartararo, Maribel Rivera, and the ACEDS team for their partnership in bringing this research to fruition.

This year's survey offers a critical snapshot of industry sentiment, adoption trends, and the practical challenges professionals face as AI reshapes legal practice and workflows.

We are pleased to see that the survey continues to grow internationally, this year we had responses from 17 countries, with countries other than the United States accounting for more than 15% of responses.

When this survey began in 2023, the landscape was markedly different — Generative AI (GenAI) was not yet a mainstream consideration in legal technology. Tools like ChatGPT, Claude, and Relativity aiR had yet to make their mark on the industry. Today, GenAI dominates the discussion, with our findings reflecting both its rapid adoption and the challenges professionals face in leveraging its potential effectively and ethically.

Beyond GenAI, the survey continues to provide valuable year-over-year comparisons, highlighting key trends in AI-assisted document review, legal research, and contract analysis. A notable finding this year is the continued shift toward human-AI collaboration. There is cautious optimism that hybrid document reviews will soon be the standard practice.

The legal industry's confidence in AI comprehension is also on the rise. This year, 80% of respondents rated themselves as either very (35%) or somewhat (45%) knowledgeable about AI — an increase from 66% in 2023 and just 56% in 2024. Encouragingly, this trend aligns with expectations that AI-driven tools will become an integral part of legal workflows in the next 12 months, with 74% of respondents expecting their jobs to include using a lot (37%) or some (37%) AI technologies.

Organizations' attitudes toward AI adoption remain mixed. While 30% of respondents describe their organization as ahead of the curve, a substantial 60% indicate a more cautious approach, or lagging behind industry peers. The most cited barriers to AI adoption include concerns over data privacy, cost, education, and AI hallucinations — barriers that persist despite growing awareness and investment.

# Industry Insights and Expert Perspectives

This year, ACEDS engaged a panel of industry experts through its newly established women’s working group, Code and Counsel. This initiative is dedicated to fostering AI adoption and legal education, and its inaugural meeting provided valuable perspectives, including:

- **AI in Document Review:** While AI-enhanced document review is widely used — especially tools like Relativity’s Active Learning — GenAI-specific solutions remain in their infancy. Many respondents reported success with AI-driven review tools but 60% of respondents reported “some issues” with the technology. The working group confirmed these results and expressed reservations about GenAI’s readiness for predicting relevancy and privilege without some level of human review.
- **ESI Agreements and Expert Involvement:** The exclusion of eDiscovery professionals from Electronically Stored Information (ESI) negotiations remains a critical challenge. This year’s survey revealed that 75% of respondents had no involvement in ESI agreements over the past year — a persistent issue that could lead to inefficiencies and costly mistakes.

This lack of oversight is especially concerning as the industry grapples with increasingly complex data beyond Microsoft Office applications. While 70% of respondents report not having to claw back documents after production, 14% had to retract more than 5% of their produced documents.

It was widely agreed that limited attorney education coupled with a lack of expert involvement continue to drive downstream risks for potential errors and higher costs for eDiscovery services.

- **Attorney Education as a Barrier:** A consistent theme across all AI-related discussions is the legal profession’s need for better AI education. Attorney education was identified as the primary impediment to AI adoption, ranking higher than judicial education, cost concerns, or technology limitations.
- **The Expanding Role of eDiscovery Professionals:** A particularly thought-provoking discussion centered on whether AI’s impact will extend beyond eDiscovery into areas such as information governance and knowledge management. With GenAI’s ability to generate metadata, automate coding, and optimize workflows, eDiscovery professionals could expand their influence beyond litigation support. However, opinions were divided on whether this shift is imminent or dependent on organizational strategy and technological alignment.

As one working group member pointed out, the answer is the classic lawyer response, “it depends”. If the stars are aligned and an organization is already leveraging eDiscovery for AI-driven initiatives the shift is likely. If not, then adoption will be slower.

## Conclusion: The Path Forward

AI is reshaping legal practice, but its full impact is still unfolding. The industry's trajectory suggests an era of increased AI adoption, tempered by caution and the need for continued education. The coming year will bring further advancements, broader organizational investment, and ongoing debates over best practices for balancing AI's potential with its risks.

The insights from this survey reinforce that AI's role in legal practice is neither a passing trend nor a fully realized transformation — it is an evolving force that demands strategic investment, thoughtful implementation, and a commitment to continuous learning.

We close this year's survey with a key question: When will the AI Assistant revolution that Jensen Huang predicts reach the legal industry? We may not see AI assistants in 2025 but they are certainly coming soon.

We hope you find this year's survey insightful and a useful guide to better understand where you are in your AI adoption and utilization journey. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how the survey findings directly related to you, as well as any feedback you may have.

We look forward to seeing what changes AI will bring to all of us in 2025 and the years ahead.

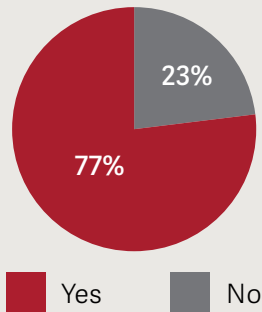


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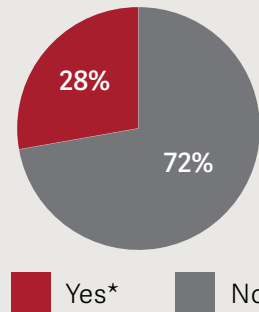
**“Every single company, every single job within the company, will have AIs that are assistants to them. Our software programmers now have AIs that help them program. All of our software engineers have AIs that help them debug software. We have AIs that help our chip designers design chips.”**

*Jensen Huang, CEO of Nvidia at SIGGRAPH 2024*

**Have you used GenAI at work in the last 12 months?**



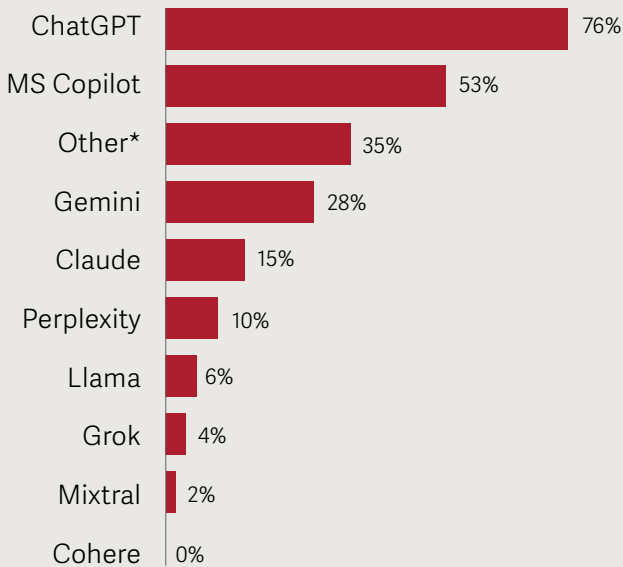
**Do you pay for premium AI subscriptions?**



\*The most common paid-for subscriptions are ChatGPT and Copilot

**What GenAI tech did you use?**

(Check all that apply)



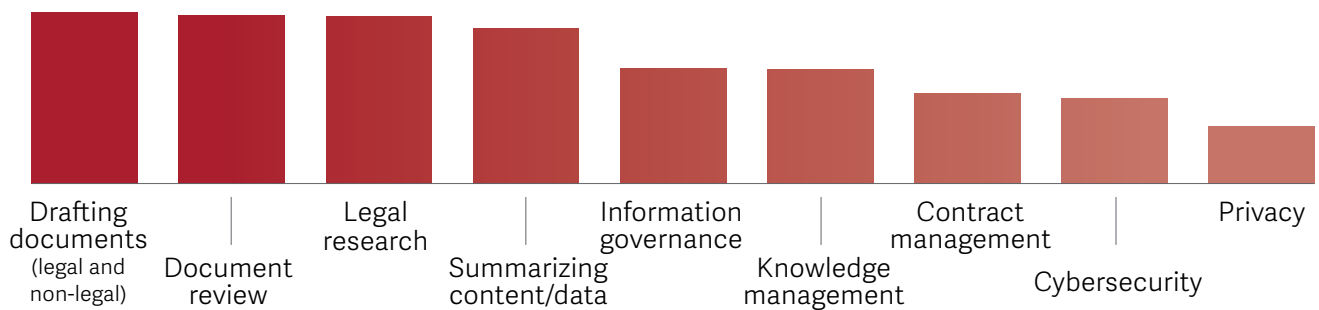
\*Other included CoCounsel, Harvey, DeepSeek, Relativity aiR, and Everflow

**What did you use the tech for?**

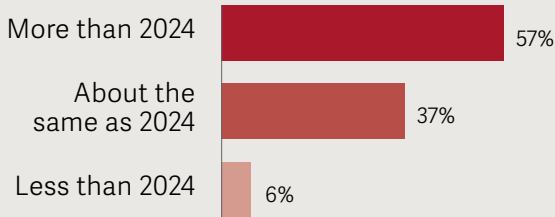
(Check all that apply)

CHOICES	Response Percentage
Document drafting	47%
Web search	40%
Legal research	34%
Other	30%
eDiscovery document review	26%
Deposition summarization/document summarization	26%
Predictive analytics/case analytics	19%
Code review/generation	16%
Contract analysis	15%

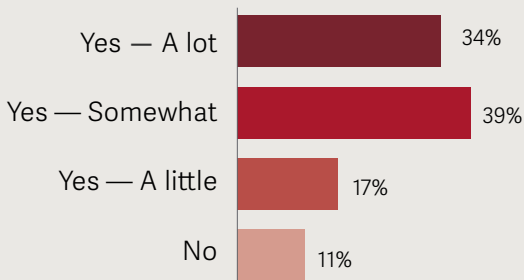
**Over the next 12 months where do you think GenAI will have the biggest impact in the legal industry?** (Composite score out of 10 from respondents ranking choices in order)



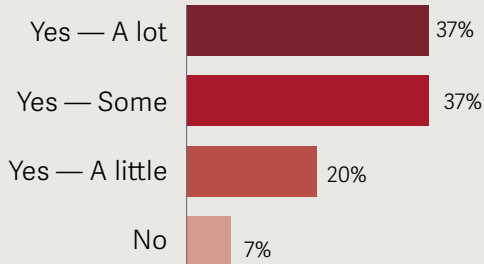
**What level of investment do you expect your organization to make in AI in the next 12 months?**



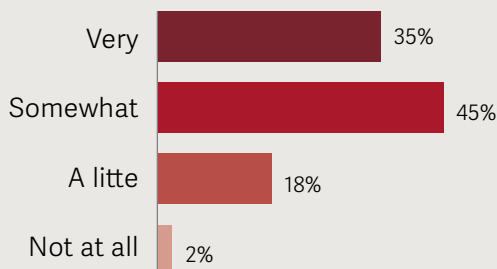
**Do you anticipate that your organization will leverage any AI tech in the next 12 months?**



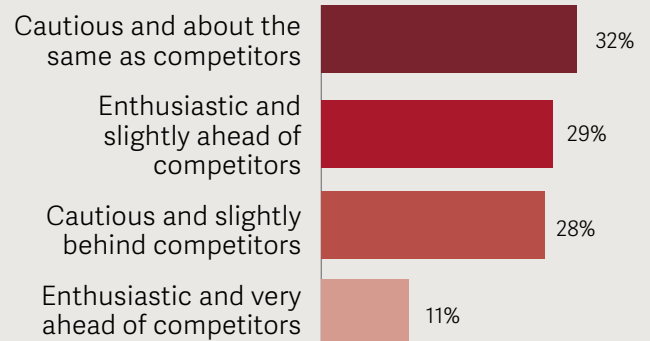
**In the next 12 months do you expect your job to include using AI technologies?**



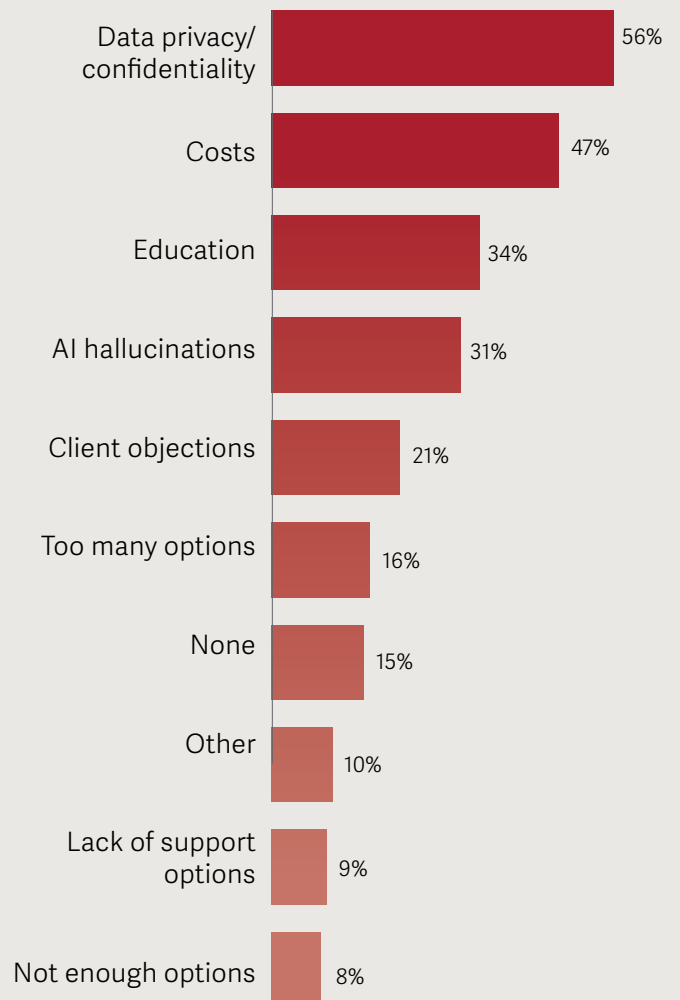
**How knowledgeable do you rate yourself on understanding AI?**



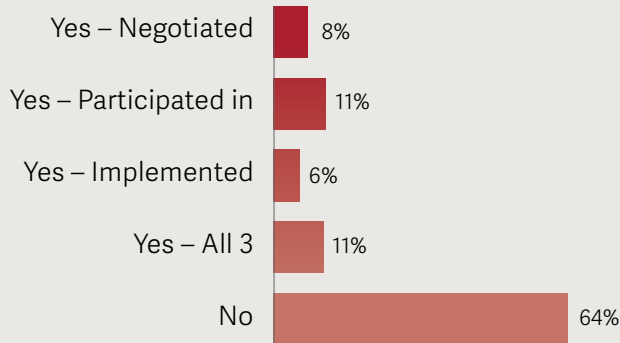
**How would you characterize your organization's approach to AI?**



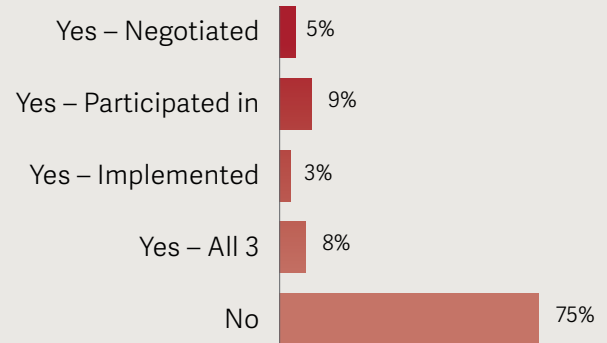
**Have you encountered any of the following barriers to integrating more AI tech within your organization? (Check all that apply)**



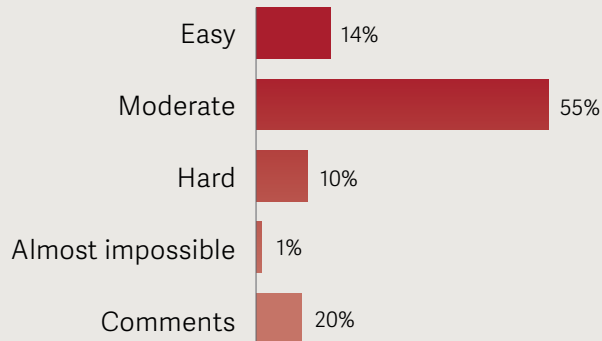
**In the past 12 months have you either negotiated, participated in, or implemented Electronically Stored Information (ESI) agreements with TAR specifications?**



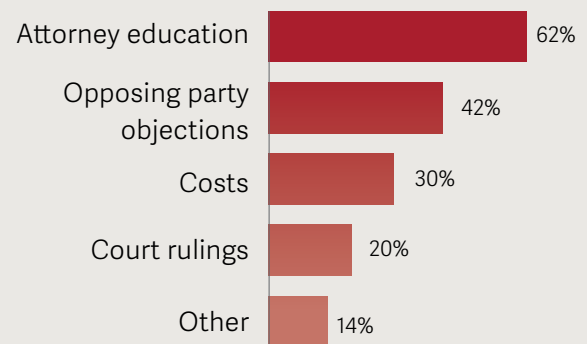
**In the past 12 months have you negotiated, participated in, or implemented ESI agreements that made specific references to the acceptable uses of TAR for privilege review?**



**If yes, was reaching agreement on TAR protocols...**

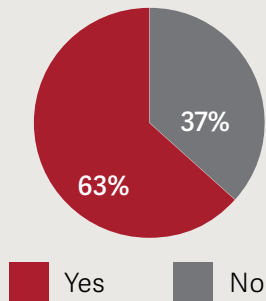


**What do you believe are the biggest impediments to negotiating ESI agreements that discuss the use of TAR? (Select all that apply)**

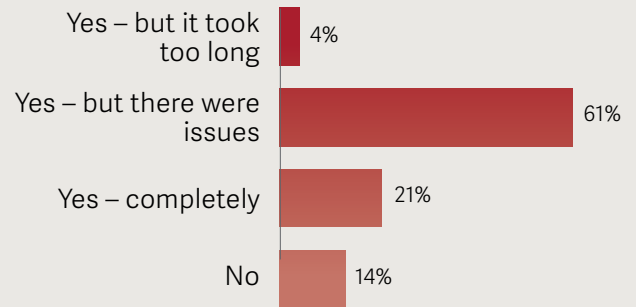




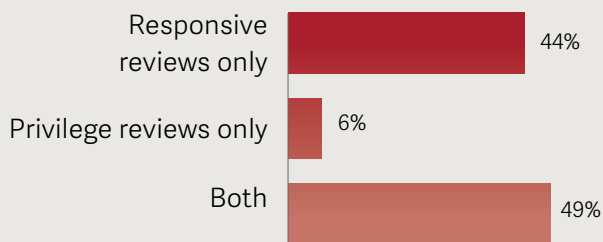
**In the past 12 months have you used AI tech to assist you with document review?**



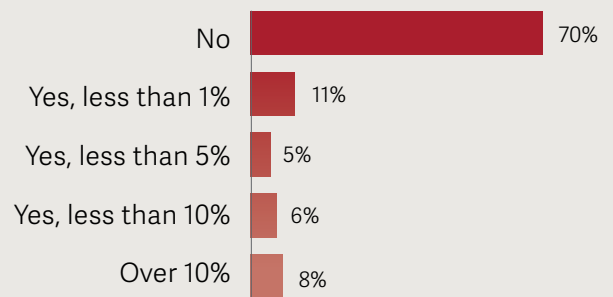
**Did the AI tech work as expected?**



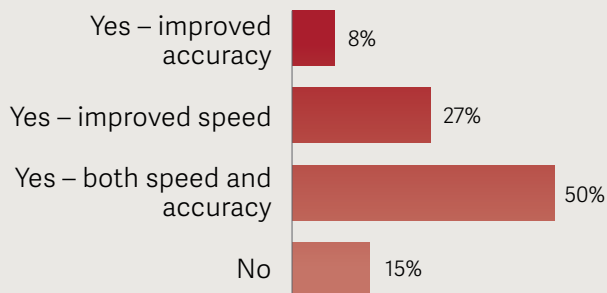
**Did you use AI tech for responsive reviews, privilege reviews, or both?**



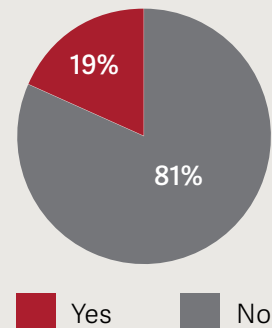
**Did you have to claw back privilege documents after production?**



**Did the technology improve your review process?**

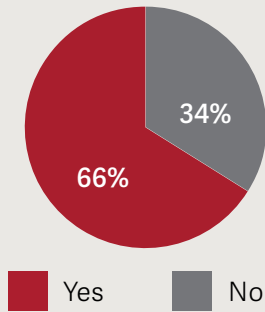


**If yes, did the claw back involve the use of AI tech?**

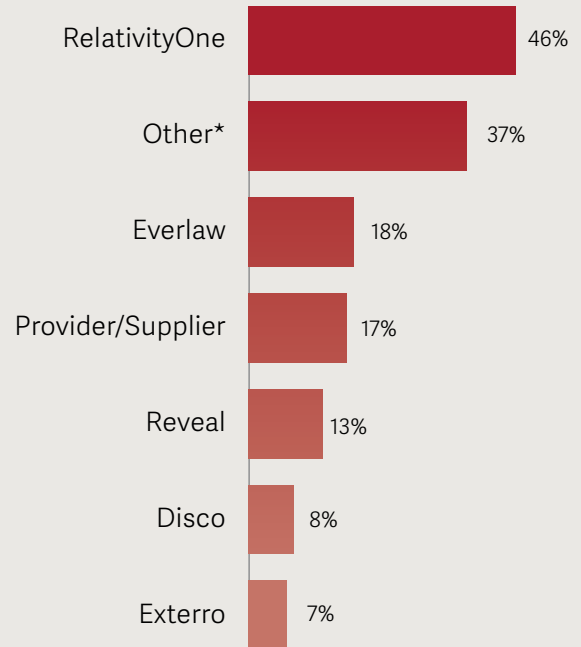




**Did using AI tech save money in document review?**

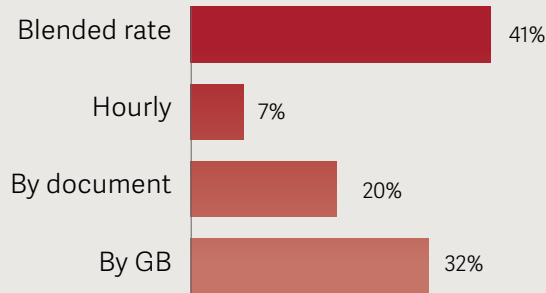


**Please identify the AI tech you used in the past 12 months.** (Check all that apply)

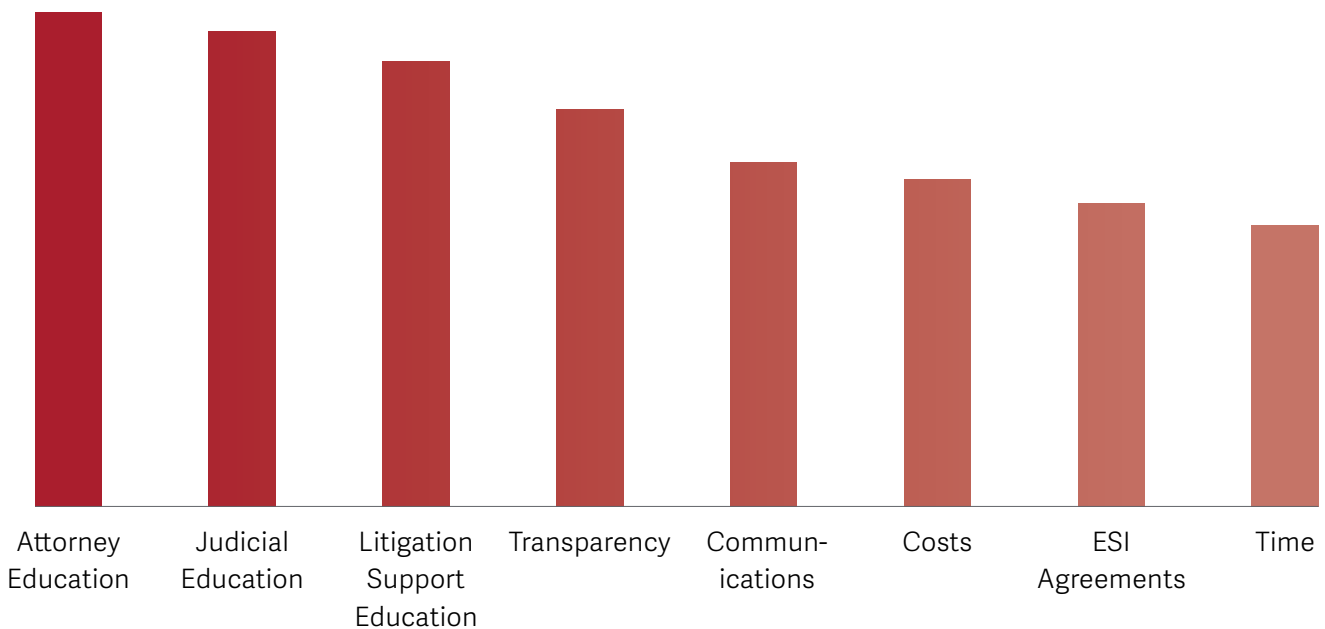


\*Other included CaseMap+, Epiq AI Discovery Assistant, Nuix, and Opus

**In your opinion what is the best method for purchasing AI tech for document review?**



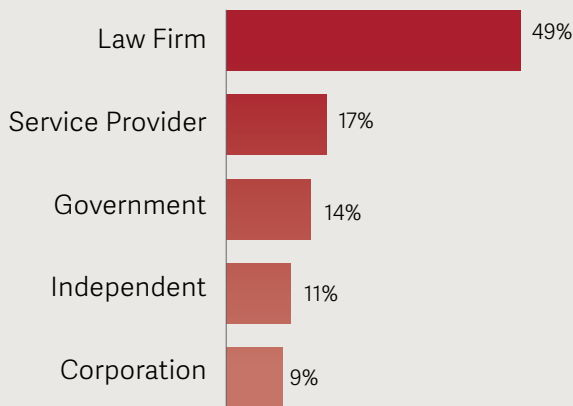
**Challenges to adoption ranked from hardest challenge to easiest.**



**What is your current role?**

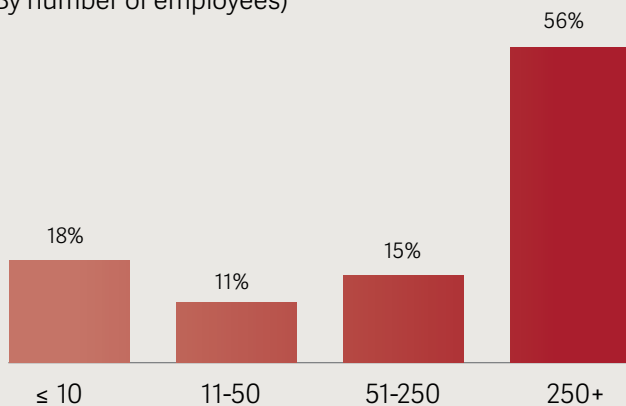


**What best describes the segment of the legal industry that you work within?**



**What is the size of your organization?**

(By number of employees)



**Where are you located?**

The majority of responses came from the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

1. United States
2. United Kingdom
3. United Arab Emirates
4. South Africa
5. Qatar
6. Pakistan
7. Kenya
8. India
9. Germany
10. Georgia
11. Finland
12. Canada
13. Brazil
14. Belgium
15. Australia
16. Argentina
17. Afghanistan

# ACEDS

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