

# Integrating AI Into Nigerian Legal Curricula: Preparing Future Lawyers for a Tech-Driven Practice

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## ABSTRACT

*This article examines the current situation of legal education in Nigeria and identifies significant areas where AI can enhance learning outcomes, skill development, and practical training. Through the analysis of successful global models and assessing the unique challenges faced by Nigerian law faculties, the article proposes a comprehensive framework for curriculum reform that includes AI-driven legal research tools, automated drafting software, and simulations of AI applications in practice. The article highlights the importance of interdisciplinary approaches, combining legal training with technology and ethics, to equip students with the competencies needed in a rapidly evolving legal environment. This initiative aims to raise a generation of lawyers who are not only proficient in legal principles but also skilled at using technology to improve access to justice and efficiency in legal services across Nigeria.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Technology continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace and it is transforming virtually every aspect of society. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is arguably the greatest technological force currently shaping modern society. It is used in healthcare to analyze medical images, make diagnoses, and assist in surgery; it is used in finance to manage investments, predict stock performance and detect financial crimes; and it is used in many other sectors to analyze vast amounts of data, predict outcomes and perform complex tasks. While the legal profession was once a slow moving and often tradition-bound field based upon the principles of common law and human judgement, it is now also experiencing rapid technological changes brought about by AI. There are now tools available to draft contracts, analyze case law, predict the outcome of court decisions and assist in resolving disputes (Katz, 2017). Therefore, the incorporation of AI technology into the legal profession is not optional, it is inevitable. Nigeria, a country of more than 200 million people with a thriving legal system based on both common and customary laws, and statutory frameworks, is no different. In Nigeria there exists a myriad of problems in the delivery of justice including overburdened courts and delays in the administration of justice (Taiwo, 2009). Furthermore, given the large population and increasing demand for legal services in Nigeria, there is an opportunity to utilize AI to solve some of the challenges in delivering justice. However, if Nigeria does not prepare itself deliberately to implement AI responsibly, then the implementation of AI may lead to further inequality, the creation of bias and render legal practitioners redundant in many of their routine functions.

This introduction explores the necessity of incorporating AI into Nigerian legal curricula. Legal education provides the foundation for the legal profession. Legal education shapes future lawyers and judges. Nigerian law faculties and the Nigerian Law School, if they do not adapt to the increasing presence of AI in the legal workplace, will be graduating students who are entering an ever-increasingly AI-dominated workplace without the skills needed to effectively utilize the advantages offered by AI or mitigate the risks associated with AI. This article draws upon international trends, regional developments in Africa, and Nigeria-specific context to argue that curriculum reform is required to produce effective and technologically competent legal practitioners equipped for the digital age.

The inclusion of AI in the legal industry is a global trend. Examples of AI in the legal industry include Harvey AI which has been adopted by major law firms, such as Allen & Overy and Olaniwun Ajayi LP (the first firm in West Africa to adopt AI) (Africa Legal, 2025). Generative AI tools such as Harvey AI enable legal teams to automate document reviews, draft contracts and conduct legal research. Other examples of AI platforms in the legal industry include Lexis+ AI and Westlaw Edge. Both of these platforms employ machine learning to provide predictive analysis and surface relevant precedents quickly and efficiently compared to traditional legal research methods.

Courts and firms globally are embracing AI. China utilizes AI in the judicial system to predict the outcome of cases and transcribe testimony. Additionally, Estonia utilizes AI to provide customized education to students in rural areas and to increase access to justice for residents in those areas (Weale, 2025). These examples demonstrate the potential of AI to improve efficiency and decrease costs. However, the global adoption of AI in the legal industry has raised numerous challenges, including but not limited to: algorithmic biases, data privacy concerns and ethical dilemmas. For example, AI systems that are trained using biased data sets can create unequal results in terms of sentencing and hiring (Chen, 2023). The European Union's AI Act (2024) is the first and only comprehensive regulatory framework to classify AI risks and mandate transparency. The lessons learned through the development of the EU's AI Act show the need for pro-active education to ensure the responsible use of AI. The persistent rise in sophistication of cyber-

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