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Summary report

Law in the age of algorithms: AI and the generation of legal texts in Canada

WINTER 2026

This study is made possible by funding from Department of Justice Canada as part of the Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028.

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This report contains a summary of the results. For more data or clarification about the study procedure (current state of knowledge, objectives, methodology), contact the **1 Justice, 1 Access Research and Information Hub (1J1A)** (info@1j1a.ca) research team.

Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the support and collaboration of a number of individuals and organizations. The members of the research team wish to sincerely thank their partners in Canada's legal sector, notably the law societies, associations of French-speaking lawyers across Canada, legal information centres, and other public and private organizations, which graciously shared their expertise and experiences, distributed the data-collection tools, encouraged members of their networks and their employees to respond to our requests for information, and also took the survey themselves. While some partners were less overt in their support, their contribution was no less valuable, with their expertise and input being essential to this study.

We are also deeply grateful to the Department of Justice's Access to Justice in Both Official Languages Support Fund, whose financial support made this work possible. The Fund's trust in our approach was a driving force throughout the process.

Our sincere thanks also go out to the research team for their exemplary professionalism, attention to detail, and dedication. Special thanks to researcher Etienne Lehoux-Jobin, whose diligent work vastly improved the quality of the report.

Finally, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all the study participants. Their generosity, time, and anecdotes enriched our reflection and gave us a better understanding of the situation on the ground.

Thank you.

The report in brief

How is AI used in Canada's legal sector to produce and process legal texts? To answer this—and other—questions, we conducted a survey of 206 people.

Some **110 respondents (53%) said they use AI to generate legal texts**. The use of AI is particularly high among respondents with a graduate degree, those with fewer than five years of professional experience, and those in the private sector.

AI is most often used to **1) translate, 2) summarize and 3) revise texts**. Occasional use of AI is most prevalent; AI is widely used to verify generated content; and it is used mainly for internal purposes. The two main reasons cited for restricting AI use are the fear of obtaining inaccurate information and the risk of data breaches.

Employers or clients are generally perceived as being **somewhat in favour of AI**, but this perception is not always grounded in formal policies. Issues related to the hosting of AI engines are also frequently unclear, which raises some concerns.

In any case, we can confirm that professionals in Canada's legal sector are **gradually adopting AI** to generate legal texts. This fact engenders both risks and opportunities. To find out more, consult the report.

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Study presentation

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been the hot topic for the past few years. Whatever one might think about its pros and cons—or even its risks—one fact remains: AI, in particular generative AI,[1] is being used increasingly often to perform a wide variety of tasks in all areas of human life. Naturally, Canada's legal sector has not been immune to this trend.

This is the backdrop against which we conducted a study to better understand the use—or non-use—of AI by people working in Canada's legal sector. We specifically focused on tasks related to text generation. The ultimate goal is to better understand the issues related to the use of these technologies in Canada's legal sector.

Our approach involved conducting a survey to collect data on the practices and perceptions related to using AI to produce and process legal texts, namely the tasks of writing, revision, translation, and popularization.

This survey was intended for individuals whose work is in any way related to the justice system or legal language professions in Canada: legal professionals (lawyer, notary, judge, etc.), legal language professionals (interpreter, editor, translator, etc.), or other professionals (public servant in a justice ministry, court clerk, bailiff, stenographer, etc.). The questions focused mainly on the use of AI and other technologies[2] to generate legal texts.

The survey was distributed online by several partner organizations in the legal sector, including provincial and territorial law societies, legal information centres, and public- and private-sector organizations, among others. It was available in French and in English on LimeSurvey from January 30 to April 4, 2025 (65 days). A total of 206 usable surveys were collected.[3]

The rest of the report consists of a presentation of the main study results, broken down into four major sections, followed by a brief conclusion.

[1] According to *TERMIUM Plus*, "generative AI" is "[…] a type of artificial intelligence that generates new content by modelling features of data from large datasets that were fed into the model. While traditional AI systems can recognize patterns or classify existing content, generative AI can create new content in many forms, including text, image, audio, or software code" [https://www.btb.termiumplus.gc.ca/tpv2alpha/alpha-eng.html?lang=eng&srchtxt=GENERATIVE%20AI]. This study focuses solely on text generation.
[2] We used the wording "and other technologies" because a preliminary review revealed some confusion surrounding AI, with many people being unsure—and justifiably so—whether the tools they were using were in fact powered by AI.
[3] The data are primarily presented as percentages, rounded to the nearest whole number.

Analysis and interpretation of results

1.1. Demographic and professional profile

1.1.1. WHO ANSWERED THE SURVEY?

A total of 206 people generously agreed to answer our survey. Here are the main trends we observed in the respondents' sociodemographic and socioprofessional profiles.

DIMENSIONS	KEY FINDINGS
Place of residence	39% live in Alberta; together, Ontario, Québec and New Brunswick account for 46% (these four provinces combined represent 85% of all responses).
Location of employers or clients	36% work for (at least) one employer or client based in Alberta; followed by Québec (18%), the federal government (17%), New Brunswick (16%), and Ontario (14%).
Mother tongue	70% are English-speaking and 25% are French-speaking (5% have another mother tongue).
Languages at work	90% regularly use English, 40% French, and 32% both languages. English is the language used most often at work by 80% of respondents, compared to 19% for French.
Age and years of experience	No strong trends were observed, although 57% of respondents are under age 45, and 32% have more than 20 years of experience.
Field of study and level of education	92% studied in a primarily legal discipline, and 53% have a master's degree or other graduate certificate.
Employment sector and employer type	Just over half work in the private sector (54%), compared to just under half in the (para)public sector (46%). More specifically, 44% work for a law firm and 32% for a (para)public organization.

Table 1: Profile of all survey respondents

1.1.2. WHO ARE THE PEOPLE USING AI?

Among the 206 surveys completed, 110 people reported using one or more AI systems (and other technologies) to perform legal text-generation tasks (writing, revision, translation, popularization, etc.). Here are the main trends we observed in the sociodemographic and socioprofessional profiles of AI users.

DIMENSIONS	KEY FINDINGS
Place of residence	30% live in Alberta; together, Ontario, Québec and New Brunswick account for 54% (these four provinces combined represent 84% of all responses).
Location of employers or clients	30% work for (at least) one employer or client based in Alberta; followed by New Brunswick (22%), Québec (18%), the federal government (16%), and Ontario (15%).
Mother tongue	69% are English-speaking and 27% are French-speaking (4% have another mother tongue).
Languages at work	90% regularly use English, 44% French, and 35% both languages. English is the language used most often at work by 81% of respondents, compared to 19% for French.
Age and years of experience	No strong trends were observed for age, although 64% of respondents who use AI are under age 45. With respect to experience, we observe a relatively low concentration of responses in the mid-range categories, while the extreme categories display higher and nearly equivalent proportions: 27% of users have fewer than five years of experience, and 28% have more than 20 years of experience.
Field of study and level of education	93% studied in a primarily legal discipline, and 60% have a master's degree or other graduate certificate.
Employment sector and employer type	Nearly two-thirds of users work in the private sector (63%), compared to just over one-third in the (para)public sector (37%). More specifically, 51% work for a law firm and 22% for a (para)public organization.

Table 2: Profile of AI users

1.1.3. WHAT DISTINGUISHES AI USERS FROM NON-AI-USERS?

Fifty-three percent (53%) of respondents report using AI, compared to 47% who do not. Among all the dimensions studied, the most significant differences between these two categories relate to 1) level of education, 2) employment sector, and 3) number of years of experience.

For each of these three dimensions, the following figure compares the proportion of AI users between two relevant groups and highlights the observed gaps, expressed as percentage points (pp).

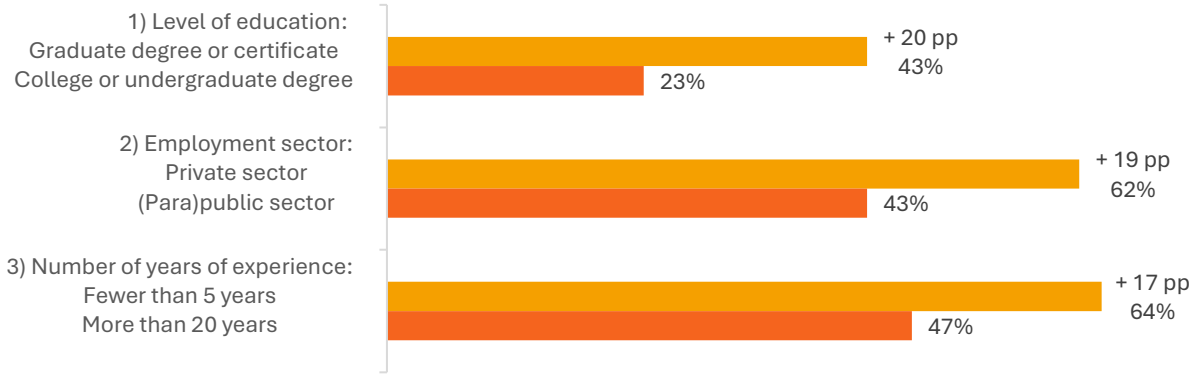

Figure 1: Proportions of AI users, by group

First, AI use is higher among individuals with a graduate degree than among those with a college degree or undergraduate degree (gap of 20 pp).

Second, AI use is higher in the private sector than in the (para)public sector (gap of 19 pp).

Third, AI use is higher among individuals with fewer than five years of experience than among those with more than 20 years of experience (gap of 17 pp).

1.2. Types of tasks entrusted to AI

1.2.1. WHICH TASKS IS AI USED FOR?

Ranked in descending order by proportion of respondents who reported using AI, here are the tasks for which AI is used.

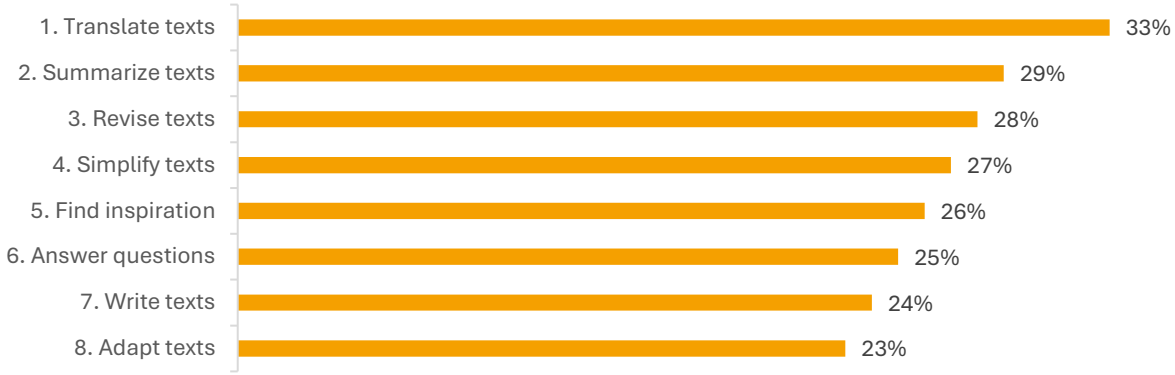

Figure 2: Tasks entrusted to AI

In the following sections, we examine the three tasks for which AI is used most often when generating legal texts: 1) translating, 2) creating summaries, and 3) revising.

1.2.2. HOW DO RESPONDENTS USE AI TO TRANSLATE?

The following table summarizes the main results related to the use of AI for translating legal texts.[4]

DIMENSIONS	KEY FINDINGS
Frequency of use	The occasional use of AI (71%) predominates over frequent use (29%).[5]
Systems used	Specialized translation tools (e.g., DeepL, Google Translate) (69%) are used far more than generative AI systems (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini) (31%).
Versions used	A majority of respondents exclusively use free tools (58%), whereas 32% use paid versions. Moreover, 10% of respondents say they do not know which versions they use.
Languages involved	87% translate from French to English, compared to 74% who translate from English to French. A significant proportion of users (68%) translate in both directions.
Purpose of the texts	AI is used mainly for personal use at work (68%), followed by uses within the organization (65%), and, to a lesser extent, for uses outside the organization (52%).
Level of satisfaction	The reported level of satisfaction is relatively high: 43% say they are quite satisfied and 30% very satisfied, for a total of 73% of respondents who are “generally satisfied.”
Verification of texts	Reported practices reflect a certain degree of caution. A majority perform a thorough revision (69%), while 21% perform a cursory review. Only 10% say that they do not verify the texts whatsoever.

Table 3: Use of AI for translating legal texts

1.2.3. HOW DO RESPONDENTS USE AI TO SUMMARIZE TEXTS?

The following table summarizes the main results related to the use of AI for generating summaries of legal texts.

[4] Note that a scientific article was published based on data related to the use of AI for the translation (including machine translation) of legal texts. Reference: Girard, Marie-Hélène, Etienne Lehoux-Jobin and Marc Pomerleau. (2026). “The use of MT and AI for translation by legal professionals in Canada: A survey-based study.” *Digital Translation*, 13(1): 8-28. https://doi.org/10.1075/dt.25022.gir.

[5] To estimate the current frequency of AI use, five response options were given: 1) “Never,” 2) “Rarely,” 3) “A few times a month,” 4) “A few times a week,” and 5) “Daily.” For the purposes of this report, these responses were grouped into three categories: 1) “No use” (“Never”), 2) “Occasional use” (“Rarely” and “A few times a month”), and 3) “Frequent use” (“A few times a week” and “Daily”).

DIMENSIONS	KEY FINDINGS
Frequency of use	The occasional use of AI (55%) predominates over frequent use (45%).
Versions used	A majority use paid versions (60%), whereas 33% exclusively use free tools. Moreover, 7% of respondents say they do not know which versions they use.
Languages involved	69% summarize only English texts, whereas no one summarizes only French texts. A good proportion (28%) summarize texts in both languages.
Purpose of the texts	AI is used mainly for personal use at work (75%), followed by uses within the organization (56%), and, to a lesser extent, for uses outside the organization (22%).
Level of satisfaction	The reported level of satisfaction is moderately high: 54% say they are moderately satisfied, compared to 43% who report being quite or very satisfied ("generally satisfied").
Verification of texts	Reported practices reflect a significant degree of caution. A large majority perform a thorough revision (89%), while 11% perform a cursory review.

Table 4: Use of AI for summarizing legal texts

1.2.4. HOW DO RESPONDENTS USE AI TO REVISE TEXTS?

The following table summarizes the main results related to the use of AI for revising legal texts.

DIMENSIONS	KEY FINDINGS
Frequency of use	Occasional use of AI (52%) predominates slightly over frequent use (48%).
Versions used	A majority use paid versions (56%), whereas 40% exclusively use free tools. Moreover, 4% of respondents say they do not know which versions they use.
Languages involved	32% revise only English texts, whereas no one revises only French texts. A good proportion (45%) revise texts in both languages.
Purpose of the texts	AI is used mainly for personal use at work and for uses within the organization (61%), and, to a lesser extent, for uses outside the organization (52%).
Level of satisfaction	The reported level of satisfaction is relatively high: 40% say they are quite satisfied and 28% very satisfied, for a total of 68% of respondents who are "generally satisfied."

DIMENSIONS	KEY FINDINGS
Verification of texts	Reported practices reflect a significant degree of caution. A large majority perform a thorough revision (76%), while 20% perform a cursory review.

Table 5: Use of AI for revising legal texts

1.2.5. WHAT CONCLUSIONS CAN BE DRAWN FROM THE USE OF AI FOR TRANSLATION, SUMMARIZATION AND REVISION?

Taken together, the results related to translation, summarization, and revision highlight both common trends and differences linked to the nature of the tasks examined.

In all three cases, the occasional use of AI predominates, and the reported practices attest to widespread caution, with the majority of people who use AI for these tasks opting to proofread or revise the texts that are produced or processed. AI is also used primarily for internal purposes (for personal use at work and for uses within the organization), with external uses remaining secondary.

However, differences emerge in the ways in which the AI systems are used. Translation is more frequently carried out using free tools, whereas summarization and revision are more often done using paid tools. The languages involved also vary by task: A significant proportion of users translate in both directions, whereas summarization and revision are more often carried out on texts written in English. Finally, the reported level of satisfaction is relatively high for translation and revision, whereas summarization is characterized by a more nuanced opinion of the results generated by AI systems.

1.3. Attitudes toward AI

1.3.1. WHY DO SOME PEOPLE SOMETIMES DECIDE NOT TO USE AI?

Among the respondents who reported using AI, 85% say there are situations in which they never use AI. We asked them to rank the influence that certain factors had on their decision not to use or to limit their use of AI.

The factors below are ranked in descending order based on a weighted average score, calculated on a scale of 0 to 3 points[6] and normalized to a scale of 0 to 100.

[6] The 0-to-3 point scale is weighted as follows: “no influence” (0), “minimally influence” (1), “moderately influence” (2), and “significantly influence” (3).

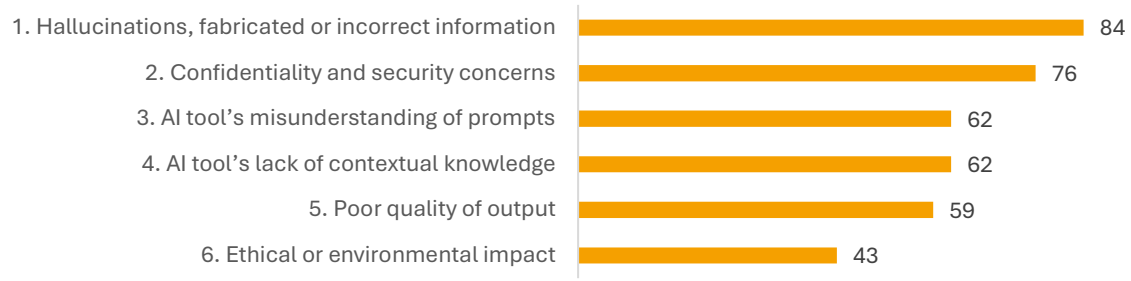

Figure 3: Factors influencing the decision not to use AI

The results show that the two main factors are: 1) fear that AI could produce inaccurate or outright incorrect information, 2) the data confidentiality and privacy risks. Quality of results, particularly when compromised by the AI tool's misunderstanding of prompts or lack of contextual knowledge, is also a source of concern, although to a lesser extent. Finally, ethical or environmental considerations appear to weigh less heavily in the decision to avoid using AI.

1.3.2. HOW IS AI USE PERCEIVED?

We asked AI users to indicate, to the best of their knowledge, their employer's or clients' position on the use of AI. The most frequent response is "neither for nor against" (39%), followed very closely by "mostly for" (37%). These were followed by "I don't know" (17%) and, lagging far behind, "mostly against" (7%). These results show that, despite some uncertainty about employers' or clients' perceptions and a large proportion of neutral answers to this question, positive perceptions of AI are clearly more widespread than negative ones.

1.3.3. HOW IS AI USE GOVERNED?

Links can be drawn between the observations mentioned and the answers to another question about whether or not employers and clients have AI policies. In almost identical proportions, users reported that their employers and clients have AI policies (43%) or do not have AI policies (44%), whereas 13% said they do not know. These results therefore suggest that the answers to the previous question are sometimes grounded in formal policies and sometimes on general impressions.

1.3.4. WHERE AND BY WHOM ARE THE AI SYSTEMS HOSTED?

We also wanted to know whether the AI systems used at work are hosted by the employer or the clients, and whether they are hosted in Canada. More than half of users (52%) said that these systems are not hosted by their employer or clients, and an even higher proportion (60%) reported not knowing whether the systems are hosted in Canada. These results raise certain questions since they suggest that the users—and even the employers and clients—do not always have a clear understanding of the hosting conditions for the AI systems to which they entrust their data. One encouraging finding, however, is that a majority (58%) report having completed at least one training course on AI.

1.4. Retrospective and prospective trends in AI use

At the time of responding to the survey in winter and spring 2025, those who reported using AI had been using AI systems to generate legal texts for a little over eighteen months on average. To better understand the evolution of practices, we sought to identify both the retrospective and prospective trends in AI use.

1.4.1. WHAT RETROSPECTIVE TRENDS EMERGED?

The retrospective analysis highlights a rapid increase in the use of AI. A majority of respondents (57%) reported that they were not using AI at all 24 months before the survey (winter/spring 2023).[7] This proportion dropped to 27% one year later (winter/spring 2024), and then to 17% six months before the survey (summer/fall 2024). This decrease coincided with a sharp rise in occasional use, increasing from 33% (a minority) 24 months before the survey to 55% (a majority) 12 months before, then stabilizing at 56% six months later. At the same time, frequent use rose steadily from 10% (24 months before the survey) to 18% (12 months before), reaching 27% six months before the survey. These results indicate a gradual but sustained shift toward using AI to generate legal texts.

[7] To estimate the retrospective frequency of AI use, five response options were grouped into three categories: 1) “No use” (“Never”), 2) “Occasional use” (“Rarely” and “A few times a month”), and 3) “Frequent use” (“A few times a week” and “Daily”).

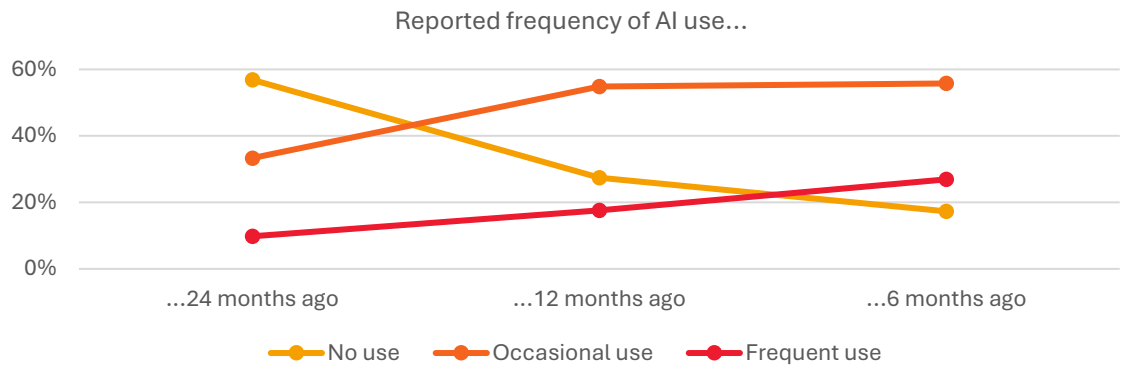

Figure 4: Retrospective trends in AI use

1.4.2. WHAT PROSPECTIVE TRENDS EMERGED?

The prospective analysis confirms and extends the retrospectively observed trends in stated intentions to use AI. Six months after the survey (summer/fall 2025), a relative majority (58%) projects increasing their AI use, while a substantial share (40%) expects it to stabilize.[8] By contrast, at the 12- and 24-month horizons (winter/spring 2026 and 2027), projected increase in AI use becomes clearly dominant, with 73% of respondents in both periods. At the same time, the share expecting stabilization declines steadily, from 40% to 24%, then to 22%. Projected decrease in AI use remains marginal, if not nonexistent, and although long-term uncertainty rises slightly, it remains limited overall. These results suggest that AI integration into legal text generation is likely to intensify over time.

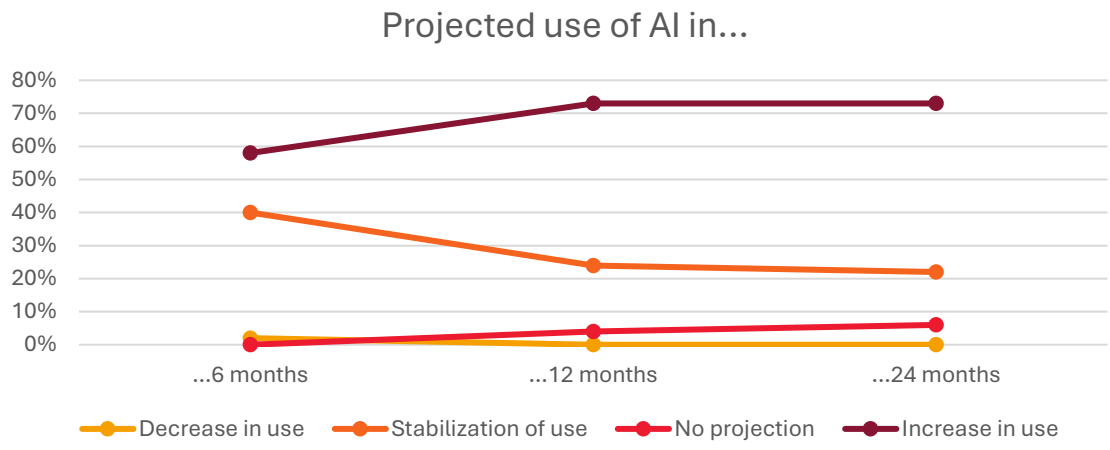

Figure 5: Prospective trends in AI use

[8] To estimate the prospective frequency of AI use, five response options were grouped into four categories: 1) “Decrease in use” (“I will use it much less” and “I will use it less”), 2) “Stabilization of use” (“No change”), 3) “Increase in use” (“I will use it more” and “I will use it much more”), and 4) “No projection” (“I don’t know”).

1.4.3. WHAT CONCLUSIONS CAN BE DRAWN FROM CHANGES IN AI USE?

Taken together, the retrospective and prospective findings reveal a consistent trajectory of gradual AI adoption in professional practice. The results suggest that AI is no longer seen as experimental, but as a tool set to become a lasting part of legal text-generation practices.

Conclusion

This report presents the main findings of our study on the use—or non-use—of AI by legal professionals in Canada for text-generation tasks. Based on a survey of 206 participants, this study marks an important first step toward better understanding the challenges associated with these technologies in the legal sector and encouraging reflection on their governance.

The results reveal clear differences between users and non-users, with AI use being more common among those with a graduate degree, working in the private sector, or having fewer than five years of professional experience.

The analysis also shows that AI is used mainly for text-production tasks—particularly translation, summarization, and revision—and that its use remains largely occasional and cautious, primarily for internal purposes. The main limitations reported concern the reliability of output and data protection.

Although users generally perceive their employers or clients as being somewhat in favour of AI use, this perception is not always grounded in formal policies. Uncertainty about where AI systems are hosted can also give rise to certain concerns. Despite these challenges, it is clear that Canadian legal professionals are beginning to gradually adopt AI for legal text generation. While this trend entails risks that must be mitigated, it also presents interesting opportunities.

This is a pivotal moment that calls for carefully considered action: To ensure AI supports the integrity of legal communication in Canada's two official languages, we must value human expertise, invest in language equality, and adopt robust policies on the responsible and effective use of these technologies.