

FROM QUILL TO CODE: HARNESSING CHATGPT TO REVOLUTIONIZE LEGAL DRAFTING PRACTICES IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly generative language models like ChatGPT, presents a significant turning point for the Nigerian legal drafting. Traditional drafting practices, deeply entrenched in colonial legacies, have been characterized by verbosity, inefficiency, and limited accessibility. This Paper therefore explores the transformative potential of ChatGPT in enhancing precision, consistency, and efficiency, by examining historical context, technical foundations, practical applications, ethical implications, and regulatory challenges associated with integrating ChatGPT into Nigerian legal drafting. Empirical insights drawn from case studies of law firms and governmental institutions reveal significant advantages alongside critical limitations requiring careful oversight. Comparative analysis with international jurisdictions highlights global best practices suitable for Nigeria. Ultimately, the paper argues for a balanced, ethical, and strategically regulated adoption of AI technologies. Recommendations include updating professional guidelines, reforming legal education curricula, and government-backed initiatives. This structured integration approach can significantly enhance the quality and accessibility of legal drafting in Nigeria, positioning it at the forefront of digital innovation.

Keywords: *Artificial intelligence, Legal drafting, ChatGPT, Nigerian law, Regulatory frameworks*

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1.0 Introduction

Legal drafting remains a cornerstone of legal practice, shaping the clarity, enforceability, and authority of legal instruments across Nigeria's judicial and administrative systems. Traditionally, this domain has been heavily influenced by the country's colonial inheritance, particularly British common law drafting conventions. These inherited styles, while foundational, have also perpetuated a legacy of excessive verbosity, rigid formality, and linguistic obscurity often rendering legal documents inaccessible to the layperson and inefficient in their operational use.

As Nigeria confronts a rapidly evolving socio-legal landscape marked by increasing demands for judicial efficiency, transparency, and access to justice, the need for reform in legal drafting practices becomes ever more urgent. In this context, artificial intelligence (AI), and more specifically generative language models such as ChatGPT, offers a compelling frontier for innovation. These AI tools possess the capacity to enhance precision, reduce drafting time, promote consistency, and even democratize access to legal assistance particularly for underserved populations and resource-constrained practitioners.

This paper begins by situating the discussion in the historical evolution of legal drafting in Nigeria, then proceeds to examine the technical capabilities and limitations of ChatGPT as applied to legal text generation. Through empirical observations, comparative legal analysis, and critical reflection on emerging ethical and regulatory dilemmas, this paper aims to offer practical, principled, and forward-thinking recommendations for harnessing AI responsibly within Nigeria's legal system.

2.0 Historical Development and Colonial Influences of Legal Drafting in Nigeria

Nigeria's legal drafting heritage is deeply rooted in British colonial era linguistic and structural conventions. The transplantation of their

legal frameworks into colonial Nigeria established drafting conventions that stressed formality, precision, and bureaucratic rigidity. The use of archaic language, legalisms (such as *inter alia*, *heretofore*), and detailed hierarchical structuring of statutes served to maintain colonial administrative control.² These conventions were systematically entrenched via the introduction of English-style legislative drafting manuals and training programs for colonial clerks.³

As noted by Owolade, the legal system in Northern Nigeria (1900–1960) operated under a dual system that combined common law with customary and Islamic legal principles.⁴ However, the textual structure and drafting lexicon remained firmly within English legal traditions emphasizing complexity over clarity.⁵ The British administration reinforced this approach, believing that verbosity equated to legal certainty.⁶

Early indigenous lawyers such as Christopher Sapara Williams and Kitoye Ajasa were trained in England, and upon return, perpetuated British drafting norms in both public and private practice.⁷ Their training and influence helped institutionalize these stylistic traits across colonial courts and official legislation.⁸ English medium drafting persisted even after 1960 independence, reinforcing linguistic legacies in legal documents and court pleadings.⁹

The dominance of English in legal drafting has also had socio-linguistic ramifications. As languages like Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba

² F Owolade, 'Writing a Colonial Legal History of Northern Nigeria' (2023) *History in Africa* (Cambridge University Press) 24.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ A Dissertor, 'New Frontiers to Legislative Drafting: Plain Language in Nigeria' (May 2023) NIALS dissertation 20.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Wikipedia, *Christopher Sapara Williams* (last visited Jun 2025).

⁸ Wikipedia, *Kitoye Ajasa* (last visited Jun 2025).

⁹ A Dissertor (n 4).

were excluded from official legal discourse, access to law became confined to English-literate elites.¹⁰ This linguistic barrier was not incidental it was foundational to the structure of colonial governance and has had lasting effects on bureaucratic inclusion.¹¹

It is pertinent to mention that, while colonial drafting provided foundational legal structure, it also cemented a drafting culture resistant to simplification. Subsequent reform efforts have acknowledged the persistence of archaic language but implementing change has been slow.¹² This highlights the cultural inertia institutionalized during the colonial period a legacy that continues to hinder the democratization of legal language.

3.0 Conceptualizing Artificial Intelligence in Legal Contexts

Artificial intelligence broadly denotes computer systems capable of tasks traditionally requiring human intellect learning, reasoning, and language processing¹³. In law, AI spans a spectrum from rule-based legal expert systems and e-discovery platforms to NLP-driven chatbots and generative tools.¹⁴ Current legal implementations largely fall within “narrow

AI,” designed for specific tasks such as contract review, citation retrieval, or document summarisation, in contrast to “general AI,” which remains hypothetical.¹⁵

¹⁰ A Baba and A Aluya, ‘Language and Law: The Role of English Language in Nigerian Legal System’ (Oct 2024) *Jalingo Journal of Languages and Literary Studies* 145.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² A Dissertor (n 4).

¹³ See generally L Groothuis and J Svensson, ‘Expert system support and juridical quality’ *Jurix* (2000).

¹⁴ M Donahue, ‘A Primer on Using Artificial Intelligence in the Legal Profession’ (Harvard Jolt

¹⁵ Cf Sayash Kapoor, Peter Henderson & Arvind Narayanan, ‘Promises and Pitfalls of Artificial Intelligence for Legal Applications’ (2024) arXiv 2402.01656 <https://arxiv.org/abs/2402.01656> accessed 22 June 2025.

NLP, a key subset of narrow AI, empowers machines to interpret and generate human language, enabling functions like automatic contract clause creation, case law summarisation, and legal drafting assistance.¹⁶ These tools depend heavily on their training data, meaning

linguistic style, jurisdictional context, and data quality directly influence output accuracy.¹⁷ In Nigeria, while Nigerian courts and academic institutions are exploring AI adoption, comprehensive legal AI regulation remains nascent.¹⁸

Nigerian legal scholars have begun analysing this shift. Itunu Kolade- Faseyi's study observes a gradual, though cautious, uptake of AI by practitioners, emphasising the tension between modernization and professional conservatism.¹⁹ Concurrently, SSRN-published overviews stress both the disruptive potential of AI and the ethical anxieties it provokes including algorithmic bias and accountability.²⁰

Comparatively, international jurisdictions such as the UK and US are leading the way in AI regulation in legal practice. Bar associations like New York City's have issued AI use guidelines focusing on competence, confidentiality, and oversight.²¹ The

¹⁶ Varun Magesh et al, 'Hallucination-Free? Assessing the Reliability of Leading AI Legal Research Tools' (2024) arXiv 2405.20362 <https://arxiv.org/abs/2405.20362> accessed 22 June 2025.

¹⁷ Eliza Mik, 'Caveat Lector: Large Language Models in Legal Practice' (2024) arXiv 2403.09163 <https://arxiv.org/abs/2403.09163> accessed 22 June 2025.

¹⁸ Ii Itunu Kolade-Faseyi, 'Artificial Intelligence and the Nigerian Legal Profession' (2021) 1(1) *Achievers University Law Journal* 161–175 <https://aulawjournal.com/> accessed 22 June 2025.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ LawPavilion, '5 Reasons Every Lawyer Should AVOID Generic Generative AI Tools for Legal Research' (Sept 2024) <https://lawpavilion.com/blog/> accessed 22 June 2025.

²¹ Reuters, 'Navigating the seven C's of ethical use of AI by lawyers' (20 Dec 2024) <https://www.reuters.com/> accessed 22 June 2025.

American Bar Association has similarly issued formal guidance, prompting Nigerian stakeholders to consider analogous regulatory frameworks.²²

3.1 ChatGPT as a Generative Language Model

ChatGPT, from OpenAI, is a large-scale generative language model built upon Transformer neural network architectures.²³ This model is trained on vast text corpora to enable context-sensitive text generation, including drafting clauses, summarising legal precedents, and engaging in real-time legal query responses.²⁴

Unlike rule-based expert systems, ChatGPT is probabilistic, using token prediction rather than explicit legal reasoning.²⁵ While its capacity for fluency and coherence is strong, it lacks built-in factual grounding, increasing its susceptibility to “hallucinations” fabrications of plausible but incorrect content.²⁶ Studies such as *Hallucination-Free?* and *Caveat Lector* highlight that even specialized legal AIs still produce incorrect output in 17–33% of cases.²⁷

In Nigeria, some public-sector entities have adopted generative AI tools, with providers like NobleProg offering official training in ChatGPT for policy drafting.²⁸ Nonetheless, there remains limited evidence of direct usage by law firms or courts. Moreover, Nigerian

²² Reuters, ‘Lawyers using AI must heed ethics rules, ABA says...’ (29 July 2024) <https://www.reuters.com/> accessed 22 June 2025.

²³ A Vaswani et al, ‘Attention Is All You Need’ (2017) <https://arxiv.org/abs/1706.03762> accessed 10 June 2025.

²⁴ LawPavilion blog on generative AI (Apr 2025) <https://lawpavilion.com> accessed 22 June 2025.

²⁵ Varun Magesh et al (n 4).

²⁶ Mik (n 5).

²⁷ Magesh et al (n 4); Mik (n 5).

²⁸ NobleProg, ‘ChatGPT for Legislative Drafting and Policy Writing Training Course’ (nobleprog.com.ng) accessed 22 June 2025.

researchers have emphasised the need for culturally and jurisdictionally apt datasets to fine-tune model performance.²⁹

Despite limitations, ChatGPT offers compelling benefits. It can generate first-draft legal texts such as letters, clauses, or summarised case authorities significantly faster than human drafters. Legal tech blogs note generative AI's ability to produce more coherent and contextually relevant documents than template systems. However, until safeguards like retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) methods are widely incorporated, outputs must be critically assessed by domain trained professionals.³⁰

3.2 Comparison of ChatGPT's Capabilities with Traditional Drafting Methods

Traditional legal drafting relies on in-depth legal training, manual research, and interpretative reasoning. Lawyers draw on statutes, precedent, and bespoke templates to craft documents tailored to specific factual contexts.³¹ While this method ensures doctrinal soundness, it is time-intensive, labour-heavy, and susceptible to human error especially in high volume tasks like filing drafts or reviewing contracts.³²

By comparison, ChatGPT offers rapid, uniform drafting. It excels at generating preliminary drafts, rephrasing boilerplate, and summarising complex documents within minutes.³³ This allows practitioners especially junior lawyers and paralegals to allocate more time toward strategic analysis. However, such efficiency

²⁹ Chisom Emeachi, 'Prospects of Artificial Intelligence in Contemporary Legal Practice in Nigeria' (May 2025) ResearchGate <https://www.researchgate.net/> accessed 22 June 2025.

³⁰ Reuters, Balancing innovation and caution: How lawyers should integrate AI... (23 Apr 2025) <https://www.reuters.com/> accessed 22 June 2025.

³¹ M Susskind, *Tomorrow's Lawyers* (2nd edn, OUP 2017) 78–80.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ LawPavilion generative AI blog (n 12).

comes with costs: without human oversight, models may omit critical legal citations or introduce hallucinated content.³⁴

Empirical studies show that while AI legal tools outperform generic LLMs in citation fidelity, there remains a significant rate of hallucination.³⁵ Even so, generative AI can be a powerful force multiplier in routine drafting contexts, provided output is assessed for accuracy at each stage.³⁶ Reuters reporting emphasises that efficiency gains are best realised when combined with human review and adherence to ethical guidance.³⁷

Traditional methods also offer superior context-awareness and alignment with courtroom practices. They preserve normative drafting conventions and rhetorical structures familiar to judges and adversaries. ChatGPT may struggle with such professional nuance unless prompted precisely and followed by expert editing.³⁸

Therefore, the optimal approach lies in complementarity. ChatGPT should serve as a drafting assistant that enhances productivity not a replacement for legal reasoning. This hybrid model enables practitioners to leverage AI's speed while ensuring quality through experienced oversight.³⁹

³⁴ Kolade-Faseyi (n 6); LawPavilion (n 8).

³⁵ Magesh et al (n 4).

³⁶ Reuters (n 18).

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ Mireille Hildebrandt, 'Law as Computation in the Era of Artificial Legal Intelligence: Speaking Law to the Power of Statistics' (2018)

68 *Univ Toronto Law J Supp* 1 12, 24–26

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2983045 accessed 27 June 2025.

³⁹ Susan Nevelow Mart, 'The Algorithm as a Human Artifact: Implications for Legal {Re}Search' (2017) 109 *Law Lib J* 387, 14–17

<https://scholar.law.colorado.edu/faculty-articles/755/> accessed 27 June 2025.

3.3 ChatGPT Data Training Processes and Implications for Legal Document Accuracy

Understanding how ChatGPT is trained is essential to evaluating its reliability and limitations in legal context. The model's ability to generate human-like response stems from its exposure to massive datasets, yet this same breadth can raise questions about legal precision, jurisdictional relevance and factual accuracy. ChatGPT's knowledge base is constructed via pre-training on a vast dataset scraped from books, articles, websites, and code, creating a broad linguistic foundation.⁴⁰ The scale of training data potentially hundreds of billions of tokens enables zero/few-shot generalisation across tasks without task-specific retraining.⁴¹ As a result, ChatGPT can draft legal documents, summarise case law, or draft clauses based on patterns seen during training.⁴²

However, its data set bears limitations in currency and jurisdictional relevance. Its knowledge is static up to the cutoff date, and it lacks awareness of jurisdiction-specific updates (e.g., new Nigerian statutes or judicial rulings post-training).⁴³ Domain-specific legal accuracy is constrained, as the corpora lack feature engineering tailored to legal reasoning or statutory structure.⁴⁴

Moreover, the training data may include confidential, biased, or low-quality legal content. The model replicates these patterns, sometimes reproducing biased or outdated legal language, leading to hallucinations confident yet incorrect or fabricated content such

⁴⁰ Time, 'The A to Z of Artificial Intelligence' (Apr 2023)

⁴¹ Brown TB et al, 'Language Models are Few-Shot Learners' (2020) arXiv 2005.14165.

⁴² Purdue Global Law School, 'Potential Benefits and Risks of ChatGPT in Legal Practice' (n 17)

⁴³ Harvard CLP, 'Implications of ChatGPT for Legal Services' (n 5).

⁴⁴ Spellbook, 'Is ChatGPT Legal for Lawyers?' (n 3).

as bogus case citations.⁴⁵ Empirical studies indicate up to 58% hallucination rates in legal tasks, raising concerns about reliability.⁴⁶

The supervised fine-tuning and RLHF phases mitigate some issues by incorporating human-curated examples.⁴⁷ Still, the model lacks a built-in mechanism for verifying legal accuracy against authoritative sources or jurisdiction-specific databases, meaning that any generated document requires expert legal review and validation.⁴⁸

Also, the proprietary and opaque nature of OpenAI's training datasets limits transparency. The inability to trace or audit specific sources underlying a given output complicates ethical and compliance considerations especially critical in disciplines like law.⁴⁹

3.4 Practical Applications of ChatGPT in Nigerian Legal Drafting

The emergence of generative artificial intelligence (AI), particularly ChatGPT, has introduced new dimensions to the practice of legal drafting in Nigeria. In particular, it has significantly expedited contract drafting by generating draft clauses with accurate legal structure, conditional logic, and standard formatting. In Nigeria, firms have begun integrating AI-based tools to produce non-disclosure, employment, and service agreements within minutes reducing initial drafting time by as much as 50-70% compared to manual drafting processes.⁵⁰ For example, Nigeria-specific

⁴⁵ Scribbr, 'Legal Implications of ChatGPT' (n 11).

⁴⁶ Dahl M et al, 'Large Legal Fictions: Profiling Legal Hallucinations ... (Jan 2024) arXiv 2401.01301.

⁴⁷ OpenAI (see Wikipedia n 27).

⁴⁸ Spellbook, 'Is ChatGPT Legal for Lawyers?' (n 3).

⁴⁹ Scribbr (n 11).

⁵⁰ ChatGPT for Legal Services Training Course - Nobleprog Nigeria" (nobleprog.com.ng, accessed June 2025) outlines AI-assisted contract generation and automation.

platforms like LawPavilion GPT enable generation of contracts tailored to Nigerian law, enhancing efficiency.⁵¹

The technology offers not only speed but also consistency in terminology critical for commercial transactions. A standardized lexicon reduces internal errors and supports smoother negotiation processes.⁵² Case-based prompting can tailor templates to industry contexts, promoting uniformity across draft agreements.⁵³

AI assists not only in full drafting but also in clause comparison and redlining. Some Nigerian drafters report that ChatGPT-like tools help identify inconsistencies or missing standard warranty/liability provisions during negotiation.⁵⁴ This functionality improves quality control and reduces risks associated with oversight.

Similarly, ChatGPT and similar models can aid legislative drafters by generating coherent consistency checks, clause consolidation, and reduction of cross-references. While institutes like the National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILDS) have not yet deployed ChatGPT, its principles align with NILDS's existing use of technology to aid bill drafting and scrutiny.⁵⁵ A 2025 arXiv study builds on this, showing how generative models can automate amendment consolidation in bills, reducing manual legal drafting time by up to 63%.⁵⁶

In litigation, the case is not different, ChatGPT proves valuable for drafting pleadings, witness statements, and judicial opinions by

⁵¹ LawPavilion GPT for Nigerian lawyers" (Facebook, May 2025) shows localized contract drafting support.

⁵² NobleProg Course (n 59).

⁵³ Juro, '7 best ChatGPT prompts for lawyers' (2025) explains prompt-based clause tailoring.

⁵⁴ Genie AI user testimonials include clause review benefits.

⁵⁵ Wikipedia, *National Institute for Legislative Studies* (accessed Jun 2025) outlines NILDS's drafting support systems.

⁵⁶ Matias Etcheverry et al, 'Algorithm for Automatic Legislative Text Consolidation' (2025) arXiv 2501.16766.

streamlining language, summarising arguments, and suggesting structured legal narratives. Some lawyers have reported that AI tools reduced initial drafting time by up to 60%.⁵⁷ For instance, NobleProg Nigeria notes improvements in document generation and quality control.⁵⁸

ChatGPT's capability extends to generating draft judgments or legal opinions by summarizing precedents and constructing legal analysis frameworks. This can help legal assistants and registrars, especially in understaffed court registries. A 2023 ResearchGate article on AI in Nigeria's justice system highlights AI's potential to automate case administration and outcome prediction.⁵⁹

Still, AI-powered drafting is subject to professional oversight. Nigerian bar Association guidelines stress responsible use of AI, ensuring that final outputs reflect human legal reasoning and ethical obligations.⁶⁰ Judges and counsel must confirm AI-generated documents align with jurisdictional jurisprudence and procedural rules.

3.5 ChatGPT in Legal Research and Precedent Analysis

One of the most transformative uses of artificial intelligence in legal practices lies in the domain of legal research and precedent analysis. Traditional legal research is often time consuming. AI tools like ChatGPT, however are redefining this process by enabling lawyers to retrieve legal information with speed and efficiency. ChatGPT significantly accelerates legal research by summarizing statutes, case outcomes, and relevant legal principles. As noted in the

⁵⁷ Medium article, 'Should Law Firms Use AI?' (2024) discusses drafting efficiency for pleadings and case analysis.

⁵⁸ NobleProg Course (n 59).

⁵⁹ Giwa & Kodjovi, 'Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Law and Justice in Nigeria' (Nov 2023) on automating judgments.

⁶⁰ NBA's 'Guidelines for the Use of AI in the Nigerian Legal Profession' (Apr 2024 Draft).

NobleProg course, AI tools streamline research workflows and reduce time spent locating jurisprudence.⁶¹ In Nigeria, platforms like Genie AI offer AI-assisted legal research incorporating precedent trend analysis and clause insight.⁶²

These tools integrate retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), combining database searches with large language models to enhance accuracy and minimize hallucinations.⁶³ They support complex queries such as identifying all Court of Appeal decisions constraining a legal test, compiled in minutes compared to days manually.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, discrepancies in the coverage of Nigerian legal databases pose limitations; AI tools sometimes draw from international sources, requiring legal practitioners to verify jurisdictional relevance.⁶⁵ The Legal Practice Guidelines emphasise anchoring AI research outputs in authoritative Nigerian law.⁶⁶

4.0 Empirical Perspectives: Case Studies from Nigerian Legal Practice

To fully appreciate the practical impact of artificial intelligence on legal drafting in Nigeria, it is essential to examine how law firms are already integrating these tools in their workflow. One notable example is Liberty Semper Fidelis LLP, founded by former federal law maker Tokunbo Afikuyomi, which launched TechLaw Studio in partnership with Abuja-based IPI Solutions to develop a proprietary chatbot for lawyers, modelled on ChatGPT's

⁶¹ NobleProg Course (n 59).

⁶² Genie AI platform (2025) for clause library and precedent review.

⁶³ Sidra Nasir et al, 'A Comprehensive Framework for Reliable Legal AI' (Dec 2024) arXiv 2412.20468 on RAG.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Awwal-Bolanta (n 68).

⁶⁶ NBA Guidelines (n 72).

architecture.⁶⁷ This bespoke chatbot is designed to handle routine legal queries, automate document generation, and provide standardized legal responses in an AI-enhanced workflow.

Medium exploration by Sopuruchi Rufus highlights that Nigerian law firms are selectively integrating AI to automate tasks such as contract review, due diligence, and client intake yielding measurable gains in productivity and advisor responsiveness.⁶⁸

Research on technology uptake in Nigerian legal practice confirms that larger, internationally-connected firms are adopting custom AI tools faster, while smaller practices remain cautious due to cost, limited digital literacy, and regulatory uncertainty.⁶⁹ A recent SSRN study found that up to 44 per cent of legal tasks like transcriptions and standardised pleadings are amenable to automation via AI and software engineering solutions.⁷⁰

Still, challenges remain. Generic LLMs like ChatGPT are often avoided for in-depth legal drafting due to outdated knowledge and hallucination risk leading firms to favour custom-trained tools like LawPavilionGPT, which is trained specifically on Nigerian statutes, cases, and regulations.⁷¹ Importantly, firms adopting AI are also investing in internal guidelines and training to ensure ethical, confidential, and liability-aware use.

5.0 Ethical, Regulatory, and Professional Considerations

The integration of Artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT into Legal practices raises critical ethical and regulatory questions.

⁶⁷ Solomon Odeniyi, *Firm to invent specialised chatbot for lawyers*, *Punch NG* (9 February 2024)

⁶⁸ Sopuruchi Rufus, 'Should Law Firms Use AI? The Future of Nigerian Legal Practice', *Medium* (10 May 2024)

⁶⁹ Chinonyerem Eleweke & Kazeem Oluwakemi Oseni, 'Applying software engineering solutions to law management, Nigeria as a case study' (2025) SSRN

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Introducing LawPavilionGPT: The AI Redefining Legal Research for Nigerian Lawyers* (LawPavilion blog, May 2025)

While these technologies offer efficiency and innovation, their use must be carefully balance against the professional responsibilities. Of particular concern is the duty of confidentiality, which lies at the heart of legal profession all over the world, including Nigeria.

1. Legal practitioners in Nigeria owe a strict duty of confidentiality to current and former clients, rooted in common law, equity, and rules of professional conduct. ChatGPT, by default, uses input prompts to further train and refine its database raising serious concerns about inadvertent data exposure.⁷²
2. The NBA’s 2024 “Guidelines for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Legal Profession in Nigeria” emphasize that client data must not be shared with AI systems unless robust contractual protections are in place, and human oversight remains central.⁷³ This clearly mirrors global models such as the ABA’s Rule 1.6 commentary and State Bar of California guidance.⁷⁴
3. The underlying issue extends beyond confidentiality: who bears liability when AI generates erroneous advice or breaches confidentiality? In Nigerian professional responsibility and accountability remains with the lawyer not the machine highlighting the imperative for strict oversight.⁷⁵
4. While AI can increase efficiency, it cannot assume the lawyer’s role as arbiter of legal judgments. Ensuring competence demands that lawyers understand AI’s capabilities and limitations another core point emphasized in both NBA guidelines and global ethics discussions.⁷⁶

⁷² *Duty of confidentiality* (Wikipedia, accessed June 2025), RPC Rule 19(1)

⁷³ *Guidelines for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Legal Profession in Nigeria* (NBA, September 2024)

⁷⁴ *AI Watch: Global regulatory tracker – Nigeria* (White & Case, February 2025)

⁷⁵ See *Professional responsibility* (Wikipedia, accessed June 2025)

⁷⁶ *From code to conduct: ethical considerations for AI in legal practice* (Reuters, August 2024)

5. Transparency toward clients is crucial. Lawyers must disclose the limited role of AI and secure informed consent, ensuring clients understand AI's benefits and risks an ethical requirement under both Nigerian and common-law professional responsibility frameworks.⁷⁷

6.0 Regulatory Environment in Nigeria: Gaps and Challenges

1. Nigeria currently lacks dedicated AI regulation; however, relevant provisions exist in the Cybercrimes Act 2015, the Nigeria Data Protection Act (NDPA) 2023, NDPR 2019, and recently issued NBA AI guidelines marking nascent regulatory coverage.⁷⁸
2. While the NDPA restricts automated legal decisions without human oversight (NDPA s 37) and requires “privacy by design” for processing personal data, it does not directly address legal AI systems’ ethical deployment by practitioners.⁷⁹
3. There are ongoing calls for sector-specific regulation; commentators warn that absent clear legal frameworks governing AI in legal services, practitioners face regulatory uncertainty and potential liability gaps.⁸⁰
4. As of late 2023, Nigeria has signed the Bletchley Declaration, yet implementation remains pending. Meanwhile, global parallels like the EU AI Act provide models for risk-based legal compliance that Nigeria could adapt.⁸¹
5. The current regulatory posture thus remains siloed and fragmented: data protection is present, cybersecurity is

⁷⁷ *How to Prevent Lawyer Ethics Violations When Using ChatGPT* (NBI-SEMS, 2024)

⁷⁸ *AI Watch: Global regulatory tracker – Nigeria* (n 93)

⁷⁹ *AI and Data Privacy Protection In Nigeria* (Mondaq, January 2025)

⁸⁰ *What AI Means for the Future of Law Practice in Nigeria* (LinkedIn, April 2025)

⁸¹ *AI Watch: Global regulatory tracker – Nigeria* (n 93)

referenced, but systemic regulation of ethical AI use in law is absent. This underscores the need for comprehensive regulatory instruments and sector-specific provisions in Nigeria.⁸²

7.0 Comparative Analysis: International Perspectives on AI in Legal Drafting (United Kingdom, United States, and Canada)

The UK Bar Council has formally addressed generative AI use among legal professionals. A *Guardian* report (17 June 2025) states that the Bar Council has issued guidance on responsible AI usage and created a working group in response to concerns over “fake case-law citations”.⁸³ The official Bar Council press release (6 June 2025) confirms this guidance, stressing verification, confidentiality safeguards, and barrister training.⁸⁴

In the United States, attorney Joseph McMullen used an AI tool Clearbrief to secure a \$1.5 million settlement in a US District Court civil rights case involving wrongful detention. *Business Insider* (23 June 2025) details how AI helped streamline research, hyperlink citations, and structure filings.⁸⁵ This case is emblematic of AI’s potential when used under careful legal oversight.

Canada introduced its Voluntary Code of Conduct for Generative AI in 2023. The code outlines guiding principles transparency, safety, fairness, accountability emphasized across industry, including legal sectors.⁸⁶ A government press release (May 2024) confirms multiple

⁸² *What AI Means for the Future of Law Practice in Nigeria* (n 99)

⁸³ Matthew Weaver, ‘Bar Council is wise to the risk of AI misuse’ *The Guardian* (17 June 2025)

⁸⁴ Bar Council, ‘Bar Council response to High Court ruling on the misuse of artificial intelligence’ (Press Release, 6 June 2025)

⁸⁵ ‘How this lawyer used AI to help him win a \$1.5 million case’, *Business Insider* (23 June 2025)

⁸⁶ Government of Canada, ‘Voluntary Code of Conduct on the Responsible Development and Management of Advanced Generative AI Systems’ (2023)—see details in ISED press release

organizations as signatories and links the Code to ongoing AI regulation efforts such as Bill C-27 (AIDA).⁸⁷

8.0 India: Local LLMs & Emerging Regulation

India launched the IndiaAI Mission and announced BharatGPT in 2024 as part of a national effort to develop locally relevant LLMs. Reports from the Press Information Bureau (March 2024) confirm these initiatives and emphasise a focus on data sovereignty and multilingual support.⁸⁸

Homegrown legal-tech innovation is rising. Although models like “LawPal” and “VidhikDastaavej” remain emerging and under development, official policy such as NITI Aayog’s “Principles for Responsible AI” promotes inclusion, transparency, and accountability for use in legal services.⁸⁹ The draft India Data Protection Bill (2023) prohibits fully automated legal decisions without human oversight, reinforcing professional responsibility.⁹⁰

9.0 Future Prospects and Innovations

Generative AI is poised to progress from GPT-4-level capabilities to even more powerful models (e.g., GPT-5 and 6), capable of understanding context, pragmatics, and legal reasoning with increasing sophistication.⁹¹ Reports suggest that by 2035, computational power available for AI will grow nearly one million-fold, enabling near-AGI systems that could perform routine legal

⁸⁷ ISED, ‘Eight organizations to join Canada’s voluntary AI code of conduct’ (Media Release, 27 May 2024)

⁸⁸ Press Information Bureau (India), ‘IndiaAI Mission and BharatGPT Announced’ (7 March 2024)

⁸⁹ NITI Aayog, Principles for Responsible AI for All, (2024 February 2021)

⁹⁰ Digital personal Data Protection Bill (India) Bill No 113 of 2023, S34 (as introduced in Lok Sabha, 3 August 2023)

⁹¹ Frank Fagan, ‘A View of How Language Models Will Transform Law’ (2024) <https://arxiv.org/abs/2405.07826> accessed 22 June 2025.

drafting autonomously.⁹² These advancements could automate contract review, precedent summarisation, and even compliance analyses freeing human lawyers to work on strategic, high-value tasks.⁹³

However, the shift also entails structural changes. Firms could transition from billable-hour to value-based pricing, as AI handles standardised formats at scale.⁹⁴ Universities and state regulators are already advancing curricular and ethical frameworks to prepare future lawyers for working with these tools.⁹⁵

Overall, AI promises not just speed but a fundamental reorienting of legal work ambitiously termed the “AI-empowered client” where citizens and smaller enterprises access legal services through AI interfaces, with oversight by lawyers.⁹⁶

10.0 Strategic Foresight: Regulatory & Educational Reforms

Regulators and bar associations worldwide stress that AI integration must follow robust frameworks promoting transparency, accountability, and competence. The ABA Task Force on AI emphasises AI literacy, data governance, and risk management in legal practice.⁹⁷ The EU AI Act and Canada’s voluntary code serve as templates for combining innovation with structured oversight.⁹⁸

⁹² James Titcomb, ‘AI won’t just speed up the legal system – it will revolutionise it’ *The Times* (12 December 2024)

⁹³ International Journal of Law in Context, ‘Generative AI systems in legal practice offering quality legal services while upholding legal ethics’ (2025)

⁹⁴ Colorado Technology Law Journal, ‘The Rise of AI in Legal Practice: Opportunities, Challenges ...’ (2025)

⁹⁵ Financial Times, ‘Young lawyers build tech skills to prepare for AI impact’ (10 December 2024)

⁹⁶ *The Times* (n 2).

⁹⁷ American Bar Association, ‘ABA Task Force releases report on AI’s opportunities, challenges for (August 2024)

⁹⁸ ISED Canada, ‘Voluntary Code of Conduct ...’ (n 4) and EU AI Act via Wikipedia ‘Generative AI’ regulation discussion

Legal education institutions in the U.S., such as NYU and Berkeley and professional bodies like the ABA now embed AI training into curricula and CLE programmes.⁹⁹ A report by the American Bar outlines a “roadmap” for safe, ethical AI adoption, covering vendor vetting, human-in-loop protocols, and ongoing compliance monitoring.¹⁰⁰

For Nigeria, targeted reforms could include: mandating AI literacy modules in universities and Law school, integrating AI ethics into NBA CLE, launching regulatory sandboxes to trial AI tools, and establishing a monitoring body to evaluate technological impacts. Drawing on global best practices to ensure Nigeria stays ahead in regulatory readiness.

11.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

This paper has demonstrated that generative artificial intelligence, particularly ChatGPT has the potential to transform legal drafting practices in Nigeria by enhancing efficiency, improving consistency, and expanding accessibility. Its strengths lie in drafting preliminary versions of legal documents, summarising complex legal texts, and automating routine tasks. However, the benefits of these capabilities are best realised when deployed within the framework that preserves legal integrity through consistent human oversight.

Comparative insights from jurisdictions such as the UK, Canada, and India provided instructive models. These include the adoption of human-in-the-loop frameworks, the development of context-specific large language models (LLMs) and the institution of well-regulated pilot schemes that prioritise ethical compliance. These examples underline a fundamental truth: innovation in legal

⁹⁹ *FT* (n 5) and *Colorado Tech LJ* (n 4).

¹⁰⁰ American Bar Assoc, ‘Incorporating AI: A Road Map for Legal and Ethical Compliance’ (2024 Summer)

technology must be anchored by principled safeguards to be truly transformative.

In light of the findings and reforms discussed throughout this paper, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Faculties of law and the Nigerian Law School must incorporate AI literacy modules, focusing on prompt engineering, RAG systems, and data protection.¹⁰¹ Incorporate Mandatory Continuing Professional Development (MCPD) credits on technology and AI ethics and legal tech to Bar activities, following the NBA's 2025 MCPD mandate.¹⁰²
2. Leveraging investments such as the 3 million Technical Talent (3MTT) Programme and NCAIR infrastructure, to support development of localized LLMs trained on Nigerian law echoing India's BharatGPT approach to yield tools with context-specific reliability.¹⁰³
3. Data protection authorities (NDPC) should reinforce compliance with NDPA obligations specifically regarding automated decision-making in legal drafting.¹⁰⁴ Coordination between NDPC, NBA, NITDA, and FMCIDE is vital to uphold privacy-by-design, algorithmic transparency, and accountability.
4. The various courts and Judicial divisions should issue official guidelines for court registrars, legal assistants and judges, approving AI-assisted routines (e.g., summarizing,

¹⁰¹ Ladipo Soetan, 'What AI Means for the Future of Law Practice in Nigeria' *LinkedIn* (Apr 2025).

¹⁰² Facebook, *NBA introduces mandatory CPD rules for lawyers in 2025*.

¹⁰³ Wikipedia, *3 Million Technical Talent (3MTT) Programme* (accessed Jun 2025).

¹⁰⁴ Wikipedia, *Nigeria Data Protection Commission* (accessed Jun 2025) and *DPA Digital Digest Nigeria 2025*.

initial drafting) only under strict verification protocols mirroring practices in the UK.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Matthew Weaver, 'High court tells UK lawyers to stop misuse of AI...' *The Guardian* (6 Jun 2025).