



SZÉCHENYI
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THE TRANSFORMATIVE EFFECT OF DIGITALISATION ON THE WORK OF TRADITIONAL LEGAL PROFESSIONS

ABSTRACT BOOK

Széchenyi István University in Győr, Hungary

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ABSTRACTS

Dory Reiling

Safe AI: How to make AI safer

My theme is what it takes to use AI safely in judiciaries and courts. AI is marketed as a wonderful tool that is going to solve all problems and ultimately rule the world. But if we look at a similar development: that of the motorcar, we learn a lot about what it takes to make usage safe for people and the environment. Technology needs a regulatory and organisational setup that makes it safe and beneficial. Users need to understand how the technology works, it needs to be non-discriminatory, the data need to be correct and secure, and all of this must be under human control. The EU AI Act is one element of the safe environment. Another one is the Fundamental Rights Impact Assessment (FRIA).

Hon. A.D. (Dory) Reiling Ph.D. Mag.lur. (May 24, 1950) is a retired senior judge of the Amsterdam District Court, she was a senior judicial reform specialist at the World Bank and IT program manager for the Netherlands judiciary, and actively involved in designing and building digital procedures for the civil courts in the Netherlands. She has advised the Parliament of the Netherlands on AI for courts, Amnesty International on AI and human rights, and contributed to the Ethical Charter on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Judicial Systems for the Commission for the Efficiency of Justice of the Council of Europe and the UNESCO Guidelines for the Use of AI Systems in Courts and Tribunals. She regularly lectures at judicial academies and other academic institutions.

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Francesco Contini

Taming or Playing with Fire? Judicial Governance and Artificial Intelligence in Italy and Brazil

The metaphor of playing with fire captures the opportunities and risks of using artificial intelligence in law. Societies once feared fire. Once tamed, it became essential. Its dangers remain, but are managed by systems that let its benefits improve lives.

AI presents a similar duality. It can enhance access to justice, streamline judicial processes, and support legal reasoning, yet it also carries risks of bias, opacity, and professional or institutional erosion. Most critically, it exposes the judiciary and the legal profession to potential technological capture.

This paper compares Italy and Brazil as two contrasting governance experiments. Italy's regulate-first approach shows how over-centralisation and reliance on external providers can be risky. This can amount to playing with fire. Brazil's innovation-driven model is rooted in full judicial self-governance. It demonstrates how institutional autonomy can tame the fire, though not without risks of fragmentation and inefficiency. This juxtaposition explores how judicial and technological governance architectures determine whether AI remains a dangerous flame or becomes a managed source of judicial reform.

The presentation is based on an ongoing research project conducted by the speaker in collaboration with Hon. Judge Fabrício Castagna Lunardi and Hon. Judge Beatriz Fruet de Moraes.

Francesco Contini is a research director at the Legal Informatics and Justice Systems Institute of the Italian National Research Council (IGSG-CNR)

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Péter Tóth

From Briefs to Bytes: How Digitalisation Is Reshaping Legal Work in Law Firms and Corporate Legal Departments

Since lawyers became part of the corporate ecosystem, they have been pressed by its internal rules: either contribute to making a profit or perform their function cost-efficiently. This forces in-house lawyers to transform a very traditional profession into a corporate asset. One that assesses and manages risks, provides quick and accessible answers, supports decision makers, and as a novelty, contributes to the company's data assets too. Not only does this force lawyers to think differently, but we also need to provide different solutions to our (internal) clients: processes become standardised, deliverables change from memos to business solutions, lawyers create and manage systems, contribute to centralised risk assessment frameworks, and take part in and manage multi-year and multi-stakeholder projects. This forces external counsel to change their business models, their pricing, and the services they provide; easy tasks are rarely outsourced anymore. New service structures, hybrid tech+law and legaltech solutions emerge, which require different staffing and skills. Easy access to text processing AI-solutions also forces lawyers to start using their data more efficiently, which is sometimes even expected or required by their clients. In my presentation, I will shed some light on how this works and why it is not the 'end' of lawyers but an opportunity to reinvent a profession that sometimes feels stuck in its past.

Péter Tóth is a legal engineer at 6mintes legaltech.

ABSTRACTS

Zsolt Zódi

Aspects and limitations of the use of chatbots in legal work

Chatbots and primarily Chat GPT have thoroughly changed the legal profession. Many people talk about the end of the legal profession, others “only” about the complete transformation of it (and other knowledge-based professions), and still others completely reject the use of chatbots on normative grounds. The contribution aims to provide three aspects of how to discuss the issue. On the one hand, it places chatbots in a longer historical process, the process of automating law. As a second aspect, it draws attention to the multifunctional nature of law and to the fact that it is not possible to give a simple and universal answer to the question of what impact chatbots will have on legal work. Thirdly, it argues that the use of chatbots indeed has normative aspects. There are parts of the legal domain where their entry is simply morally questionable: this is the area of deeply morally coloured, “value-laden” decisions, where genuine human wisdom and authority, and the path to a decision, are just as important as the content of the decision itself.

Zsolt Zódi is a Research Fellow at Institute for Information Society and Research Professor at Ludovika University of Public Service

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Magnus Kristoffersson

What Is Legal Intelligence?

Human-Machine Cognition and the Limits of Substitution

This paper examines how digitalisation is reshaping the work of lawyers, and whether any aspects of their professional role remain beyond the reach of artificial intelligence (AI). It argues that AI's increasing ability to emulate reasoning processes is not only transforming legal practice but also reframing the very meaning of intelligence in law. Generative AI now performs tasks such as case synthesis, contract drafting, due diligence, outcome prediction, and argument modelling— functions long regarded as emblematic of human legal expertise (e.g., Katz et al., 2024; Guha et al., 2023; Chalkidis et al., 2022; Grossman & Cormack, 2011). Whether there is anything inherently special about human intelligence in law remains contested. One view emphasises outcome quality over the source of cognition; another stresses that legal decision-making is inseparable from accountability, normative justification, and the legitimacy of coercive power. Consequently, the intelligibility, contextualisation, and contestability of AI outputs matter as much as raw performance (Rudin, 2019; Doshi-Velez & Kim, 2017). Lessons from clinical decision support show that without workflow-aware, transparent design, high-velocity outputs can overload rather than aid professionals (Pinsky et al., 2024). These considerations underpin arguments that law is not merely complex problem-solving but a normative practice where responsibility is attributable to accountable agents (Kroll et al., 2017; Wachter, Mittelstadt & Floridi, 2017). The paper investigates whether certain functions of legal practice remain non-delegable to AI. It focuses on three domains: (1) constitutional accountability in the exercise of public power; (2) value contestation in hard cases; and (3) responsibility for coercive outcomes when legal reasons are disputed. It concludes by proposing governance criteria, auditable provenance, calibrated explainability, contestation pathways, and role-based liability, that integrate AI's advantages into legal practice while safeguarding functions that may remain uniquely human (Kroll et al., 2017; Edwards & Veale, 2017; Veale, Van Kleek & Binns, 2018).

Magnus Kristoffersson is a Docent/Associate Professor and WP-Leader at WP5 NEOLAIa, FORU4ALL R&I

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Vivien Kardos

How do law students use Generative AI systems?

The rise of generative artificial intelligence systems (generative AI systems) is having a significant impact on both higher education and the legal profession. This technology is also becoming increasingly prevalent in the work of legal professionals, and international surveys and trends suggest that this growth is set to continue. In this presentation, based on the results of empirical research conducted among 187 law students at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of the University of Szeged in the spring of 2025, the aims, attitudes and habits of law students regarding the use of generative AI systems will be presented. A special focus of the research was the comparison of responses by gender and examine the similarities and differences. Based on the responses, the largest proportion of law students have used some form of generative AI system as a purpose for learning in connection with their legal studies (53.59%), followed by generating specific text (52.29%), and then entertainment and jokes (41.83%). Regarding magnitude of the reluctance to use generative AI systems, a significant difference can be established with respect to different purposes of use, for example, 39.46% of the respondents show no reluctance whatsoever toward using them for general, everyday topics, whereas in the case of professional (legal) use, this proportion is 11.89%.

Keywords: generative AI systems, empirical research, questionnaire

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Renátó Vági

Legal AI on trial Rethinking evaluation in the age of Generative Artificial Intelligence

The emergence of Generative Artificial Intelligence solutions based on Large Language Models (LLMs), particularly following the release of ChatGPT in late 2022, has revolutionized the way complex tasks are solved across domains. These models demonstrate remarkable capabilities in performing diverse tasks with minimal or no task-specific training. However, evaluating their performance presents significant challenges, especially in high-stakes domains such as legal technology. While the evaluation problem is well-known within the general AI research community, it becomes particularly critical in legal AI applications. Legal tasks, such as summarization, translation, anonymization, retrieval-augmented generation (RAG), and legal reasoning, are highly jurisdiction-dependent, making standardized evaluation frameworks difficult to establish. Current evaluation practices rely heavily on manual expert validation, small-scale user feedback, or subjective "vibe" assessments. This introduces serious concerns around safety, trust, and adoption. Especially in a field like legal technology where precision and reliability are essential. The presentation will first outline the general evaluation challenges posed by new generation Generative AI systems. It will then delve into why these challenges are amplified in legal AI contexts. Finally, it will propose potential solutions and methodologies for improving evaluation practices within legal AI, aiming to foster greater trust and broader adoption of these technologies in legal workflows.

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Bernadett Szabó-András Czebe

Algorithmic Sentencing Support in Hungary: Opportunities, Risks, and Safeguards

The integration of algorithmic decision-support systems into criminal sentencing has become an increasingly debated topic worldwide. In Hungary, where the sanctioning framework of the Criminal Code provides relatively detailed statutory ranges but leaves significant room for judicial discretion, the question arises whether artificial intelligence (AI) could serve as a tool to enhance consistency and proportionality in sentencing without undermining judicial independence.

This paper explores the potential for introducing AI-based sentencing support in the Hungarian criminal justice system, identifying key legal-theoretical and ethical challenges that such a development would entail. First, the study analyzes the compatibility of algorithmic recommendations with the principles of legality, proportionality, and individualization that underlie Hungarian sentencing practice. Second, it examines risks associated with bias in training data, the opacity of complex machine-learning models, and the so-called “input problem”, whereby legally and morally relevant factors may be difficult to translate into algorithmic form. Third, it addresses the challenge of judicial compliance: partial or selective adherence to algorithmic suggestions may produce unintended disparities rather than reducing them.

Rather than advocating the replacement of human judges, the paper proposes a restricted, decision-support model in which AI tools provide modular, transparent recommendations on specific sentencing factors (e.g., aggravating and mitigating circumstances), subject to human validation and contestation. This model is supplemented with safeguards such as algorithmic audits, data quality controls, and judicial training, as well as the establishment of supervisory mechanisms to ensure compliance with constitutional fair trial guarantees.

The paper argues that, if carefully designed and gradually introduced, AI-assisted sentencing could contribute to greater consistency and accountability in Hungarian criminal justice, while respecting the central role of judicial discretion and protecting defendants’ fundamental rights.

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ABSTRACTS

László Vikman

Opportunities and challenges presented by advances in digitalization in the role of legal advisors in the defense sector

Among traditional legal professions, it is perhaps the role of organizational legal counsel that lawyers working primarily for the military, but also for other defense organizations, must fulfill. However, in addition to the traditional internal administrative, HR, financial, and procurement tasks related to the organization's operations, there may also be a number of specific tasks that require either special training — such as codification tasks, the fundamentals of international and humanitarian law — or can only be successfully performed with knowledge that can be acquired through practice and individual legal creativity, such as sub-tasks of operational planning and operational legal advice requiring knowledge of military, intelligence, or even counterterrorism matters. The aim of this study is to identify the areas that have a transformative effect on the tasks of military legal advisers involved in military decision-making, as required by international law, and in which new tools can be more helpful than human labor. However, due to the increasing prevalence of new technologies, especially AI, autonomous weapon systems, and other EDT tools, it is even more important to identify the roles and tasks that still require human presence, assessment, and consistent representation of the fundamental principles of humanitarian law — necessity, proportionality, distinction, and humanity — and command decision support that goes beyond a parameterizable case law approach and is based on human, personal experience, and moral values.

László Vikman is an assistant lecturer SZE DF AJK Department of Modern Technology and Cybersecurity Law

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Gábor Kovács—Orsolya Tamás

Medical-legal Considerations of AI-based Medical Technologies

The medical application of AI is increasingly becoming part of daily medical practice in many fields. At the same time, the areas of application and the different types of AI vary significantly. Different legal and ethical considerations are required in data analysis, big data analysis, patient management, patient triage, or even in radiological imaging diagnostics. Additionally, certain types of AI – such as neural networks and machine learning-based expert systems – differ significantly in terms of transparency, comprehensibility, and traceability.

The legal framework for medical AI systems is not uniform, and the issues of responsibility are disputed. Proper regulation can only be developed with the involvement of the relevant professions. It is essential that users fully understand the characteristics and limitations of the AI systems they use. This necessitates a redefinition and revaluation of the human-computer relationship.

The aim of our research was specifically to assess the professional knowledge regarding AI systems used in radiological imaging diagnostics. We conducted a survey among radiologists regarding the AI systems they use. We examined their knowledge of AI systems, how accurately they understand their functioning, and the errors. We assessed how radiologist users perceive errors made by AI diagnostic systems and how they evaluate responsibility for erroneous diagnoses.

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Ammar Alqatawna

Navigating Ethical and Conceptual Risks of AI in Judicial Decision-Making: Perspectives from Jordanian Judges

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into judicial systems promises significant improvements in efficiency, consistency, and access to justice. However, it also raises complex ethical and conceptual challenges that may undermine fundamental principles of the rule of law. This paper examines the key risks associated with AI-assisted judicial decision-making, focusing on five main risks: lack of transparency and explainability, accountability dilemmas, the potential distortion of the nature of justice, overreliance on algorithmic outputs, bias embedded in data and models, and personal data protection.

The study employs a qualitative research methodology, combining legal analysis with empirical insights gathered through semi-structured interviews with judges in Jordan. Since AI is not currently in use in Jordanian courts, these interviews aimed to explore the needs, opportunities, and potential risks of introducing AI in the judiciary. Findings indicate that judges have a general awareness of the risks associated with AI in judicial decision-making but lack detailed technical knowledge of the systems and their potential consequences. Moreover, the opinions of judges were not uniform across all risks. In particular, they highlighted concerns about overreliance on AI by judges and the protection of personal data, while risks related to transparency, bias, and changes to the nature of justice received less attention—possibly because these risks are less visible before actual AI implementation. By integrating theoretical discussion with empirical evidence, the paper argues for a cautious and principled approach to AI adoption in the judiciary. Key recommendations include establishing clear legal safeguards, ensuring human oversight, and developing ethical guidelines tailored to judicial decision-making contexts.

Ammar Alqatawna is a PhD candidate at the University of Miskolc.

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Mátyás Bencze

Lawyering in the Age of the AI in Hungary

This summer, the State and Rule of Law Research Group at Széchenyi István University conducted an empirical study that aimed to explore the impact of new digital technologies (LLM, predictive software, automated forms etc.) on the work of Hungarian attorneys.

The survey-based study focused on questions such as the prevalence of these technologies among attorneys and their transformative impact on attorneys' activities.

Based on the survey results, we also sought answers to more general questions, such as the effect of new technologies on life-work balance, and the limits of AI in human intellectual activity.

Mátyás Bencze is a former judge and is currently a Professor of Law at the Universities of Szeged and Győr, Hungary. He is also a Senior Research Fellow at the HUN-REN Centre for Social Sciences Institute for Legal Studies

Mátyás Bencze is a former judge and is currently a Professor of Law at the Universities of Szeged and Győr, Hungary. He is also a Senior Research Fellow at the HUN-REN Centre for Social Sciences Institute for Legal Studies.

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Lea Pődör

What Will Judges Do? Holmes Revisited in the Age of AI Hallucinations

The presentation explores one of the most serious challenges of applying generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in law: “precedent hallucinations” - that is, situations where AI systems construct arguments based on non-existent judicial decisions and fabricated citations. This phenomenon fundamentally questions the epistemological status of judicial decision-making, in which a judgment represents a true and final statement about the law.

Cases such as *Mata v. Avianca Inc.* (2023), *Park v. Kim* (2024), and *Wadsworth v. Walmart Inc.* (2025) illustrate that AI-generated fictitious precedents are not mere technical errors but distortions that threaten the legitimacy of law itself. The courts’ responses (monetary sanctions, disciplinary proceedings, and the imposition of verification duties) open new dimensions of professional responsibility.

The presentation argues that GenAI, through its seemingly perfect text generation, creates a form of technological paternalism while undermining the epistemological and moral responsibility of the judge. Truth, as an institutional responsibility, cannot be delegated to algorithms: the judge remains the ultimate guarantor of truth in the digital age.

Lea Pődör is an assistant professor at Széchenyi István University, Deák Ferenc Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, Department of Legal Theory