

Responsible Governance of AI in Nigerian Legal Practice and Education

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Abstract— AI is transforming the practice and teaching of law in Nigeria with general-purpose tools and niche research platforms. The critical question is therefore not whether these tools will be used, but how their benefits will be used without undermining professional judgement, confidentiality, integrity of sources, fair hearing and legal reasoning. This article argues that there is already regulation of significant aspects of AI in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, Rules of Professional Conduct for Legal Practitioners 2023, the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, the Evidence Act 2011 and the General Application and Implementation Directive 2025. The problem is that these obligations need to be translated into effective guidelines for the practice of law, judiciary and law teaching. The article explores the advantages AI can offer in research, drafting, document review, and education, and the potential pitfalls of dealing with false authorities, confidentiality concerns, lack of Nigerian legal data, inequality, and dependency on AI for education. It calls for a 3-level model of assurance, related to the severity of each use. Ordinary review of the model for routine support, verified sources and human responsibility for substantive work need to be included, and the safeguards need to be enhanced, to accommodate uses that can impact rights.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Legal Practice; Legal Education; Professional Responsibility; Data Protection, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

The easiest way to write about artificial intelligence in law is to announce a revolution. That language is attractive, but it often hides the harder questions. A lawyer does not need a revolution when a client needs a correct answer by Friday. A student does not become a better lawyer merely because a fluent system can produce an essay in seconds. The practical issue is whether a particular tool improves the work while preserving the habits and duties on which legal judgment depends.

That issue is already live in Nigeria. Legal research services now market generative tools trained or grounded on Nigerian cases and legislation. LawPavilion, for example, describes its current platform as a system for legal research, drafting, and document review based on Nigerian materials (LawPavilion, 2025). That description is a vendor claim and not independent proof of accuracy. It is nevertheless evidence that the Nigerian debate has moved beyond speculation. Lawyers, chambers, firms, courts, lecturers, and students now need rules that are usable before a mistake reaches a client file, an examination script, or a court process.

Artificial intelligence is not a single method. Some legal systems classify documents or rank search results. Some extract clauses from contracts. Predictive models identify statistical patterns in earlier decisions. Generative systems produce new text in response to instructions. Surden (2019) offers a useful overview of these different technical functions and their legal uses. These tools create different risks. A scheduling system does not require the same safeguards as a system that drafts a pleading or recommends an outcome. Treating every use as equally dangerous invites a ban that will be ignored. Treating every use as ordinary software overlooks the special ability of generative systems to produce confident and persuasive error.

The benefits are real but limited. Artificial intelligence can reduce the time spent on first drafts, document sorting, and repetitive comparison. In a randomised study of realistic legal tasks, access to GPT-4 produced large and consistent gains in speed, while improvement in quality was modest and uneven (Choi et al., 2024). Research on examination performance also shows that a model can perform strongly on a structured legal test (Katz et al., 2024). Neither finding proves that a system can assume professional responsibility. They show something more useful. AI may increase the capacity of a person who already understands the task, while leaving the quality of the final work dependent on human knowledge and review.

The risks are equally concrete. Earlier large language models invented legal propositions and authorities at high rates when asked verifiable questions about United States federal cases (Dahl et al., 2024). A South African study using five contemporary systems found generally promising performance but also hallucinated or misapplied authority and omissions in local private law analysis (Thaldar, 2025). These studies concern particular models, prompts, datasets, and jurisdictions. Their percentages

should not be transplanted to Nigeria. Their common lesson is narrower and stronger. Fluency is not evidence, and local legal accuracy cannot be assumed from performance elsewhere.

This article makes two claims. First, Nigeria does not face a complete legal vacuum. Existing professional, constitutional, evidentiary, and data protection rules already reach much AI assisted work. Second, those rules remain too general for consistent daily use. The most urgent reform is therefore an operational framework that connects the level of legal risk to the intensity of human verification, privacy review, record keeping, and disclosure.

The argument also joins practice and education. This is deliberate. The lawyer who fails to verify an invented case and the student who submits an AI written analysis without understanding it are not engaged in identical misconduct. They share an underlying failure, however. In each setting, the appearance of competent work has become detached from the reasoning that should support it. Legal education is where the profession can repair that gap before it becomes a client or court problem.

METHOD AND SCOPE

The article uses doctrinal legal research. It reads the Nigerian legal materials that bear directly on competence, candour, confidentiality, privacy, automated decision making, evidence, and legal education. The principal materials are the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, the Rules of Professional Conduct for Legal Practitioners 2023, the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, the Evidence Act 2011, and the Nigeria Data Protection Act General Application and Implementation Directive 2025. The analysis also considers the statutory position of the Council of Legal Education.

The comparative inquiry is focused rather than encyclopaedic. It examines the American Bar Association guidance issued in 2024, judicial guidance in England and Wales updated in 2025, two decided cases involving false AI related legal authority, the European Union risk based approach, and the African Union Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy. These materials were selected because each addresses an operational question that Nigeria also faces. They are not presented as rules that automatically bind Nigerian institutions.

Secondary sources were chosen for relevance, verifiability, and publication quality. The article relies mainly on peer reviewed work in established journals, including recent empirical studies on legal hallucination, legal task performance, South African law, and legal education. Nigeria specific scholarship is used to identify local concerns, while broader studies are treated with care when their datasets and institutional settings differ from Nigeria. The source review is current to 11 September 2026.

WHAT AI CAN USEFULLY DO

Research and source discovery

Legal research is an obvious field for assistance. A well designed system can convert a question in ordinary language into a search, rank potentially relevant authorities, summarise a long judgment, and identify related provisions. This can be valuable where official materials are dispersed or where a practitioner must move quickly from an unfamiliar fact pattern to a preliminary map of the law. Alarie *et al.*, (2018) anticipated this movement from simple retrieval towards systems that detect patterns and support professional prediction.

The value should not be confused with authority. A generated answer is a lead. The judgment, statute, regulation, rule, or official record is the source. This distinction matters particularly in Nigeria, where databases may differ in coverage and where many decisions remain difficult to obtain in complete and reliable form. The sound workflow starts with AI assisted discovery and ends with the lawyer reading the primary source in context. It does not end with a quotation supplied by a chatbot.

Drafting and document review

Generative tools can produce a useful first structure for letters, contracts, pleadings, internal memoranda, and checklists. They can compare clauses across documents, flag inconsistent defined terms, and extract dates or obligations from a large file. These tasks can save time, especially for small practices with limited support staff. The evidence does not justify the stronger claim that the tool reliably improves legal quality. Choi *et al.* (2024) found that speed gains were much clearer than quality gains. This is a reason to use AI for a first pass, not a reason to reduce review.

Document review also illustrates why the required assurance should vary by task. If a tested tool sorts a large contract set, sampling and targeted validation may be reasonable. If the same tool drafts a termination clause that determines a client's exposure, line by line legal review is required. The American Bar Association adopts this fact sensitive position. It links the degree of verification to the tool, the task, prior testing, and the professional judgment involved (American Bar Association Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility, 2024).

Case management and access to justice

AI may also assist with administrative triage, scheduling, transcription, translation, and the preparation of plain language information. These uses may reduce delay and make legal information easier to navigate. Digital justice scholarship has long shown that technology can reorganise the path through which people identify and resolve disputes (Katsh & Rabinovich-Einy, 2017). Yet an information tool is not the

same as legal representation. A chatbot that explains filing steps can be useful. A chatbot that gives individual advice without adequate facts, current law, or a responsible lawyer may deepen rather than close the justice gap.

Prediction requires even greater caution. Studies have shown that machine learning can classify outcomes from features in earlier judicial decisions (Aletras et al., 2016). Statistical prediction is not legal justification. It may identify patterns without explaining why a result is lawful or fair. Hildebrandt (2018) warns that law cannot be reduced to computation without altering the contestable and interpretive character of legal judgment. In Nigeria, prediction based on incomplete reported cases may also mistake the available record for the full work of the courts.

Teaching and learning

In legal education, AI can act as a patient practice partner. It can generate alternative facts, test issue spotting, simulate a client interview, provide feedback on organisation, and translate a difficult explanation into simpler language. Recent legal education literature has moved from the narrow question of cheating towards questions of curriculum, transparency, and professional preparation (Lorteau & Sarro, 2026). A two year classroom experiment likewise supports structured training over prohibition or unguided exposure (Schrepel, 2026).

The educational benefit depends on sequence. A student who first attempts a problem, identifies uncertainty, and then uses AI to test an argument may learn from comparison. A student who asks for a complete answer before reading the authorities may submit better prose while learning less law. Strong performance by a model on law school examinations does not resolve this tension (Choi et al., 2022). It makes assessment design more important because the final text alone may no longer reveal who performed the reasoning.

THE NIGERIAN LEGAL POSITION

Competence, candour, and responsibility

The Rules of Professional Conduct for Legal Practitioners 2023 provide the first line of control. Rule 16 requires competent representation and adequate preparation. Rule 15 requires representation within the bounds of law. Rule 32 requires candid and fair dealing with the court and prohibits misquotation of legal materials. These obligations apply to the work product, regardless of whether the error began with a junior lawyer, a search engine, a contractor, or a generative system (General Council of the Bar, 2023).

It follows that AI does not dilute responsibility. A lawyer who signs, files, sends, or relies on AI assisted work adopts that work. The professional question is not whether the lawyer personally typed every sentence. It is whether the lawyer used a sound

process and had a proper basis for each material assertion. Where the output includes a case, the lawyer should retrieve the judgment, confirm the court and citation, read the relevant passage, check subsequent treatment, and decide whether the proposition fairly reflects the decision. That is ordinary legal method applied to a new source of risk.

The same rules support a duty of technological competence, even though they do not name generative AI. Competence now includes enough knowledge to decide when a tool is suitable, what information may be entered, where the output can fail, and how it should be checked. This does not require every lawyer to become a software engineer. It does require more than knowing how to write a prompt.

Confidentiality and privilege

Rule 19 protects the privilege and confidence of a client (General Council of the Bar, 2023). Entering a client's facts into a public generative system can disclose information to an external provider, trigger storage in another jurisdiction, permit human or automated review, or expose the material through an account or security failure. Removing a client's name may not be enough when dates, locations, transactions, or unusual facts make the person identifiable.

A responsible lawyer must therefore examine the provider's terms, privacy notice, retention settings, training policy, access controls, and location of processing before using client information. An enterprise label is not a substitute for this inquiry. The decision should consider the sensitivity of the matter, contractual protections, the lawful basis for processing, and whether a less intrusive method can achieve the same purpose. In some matters, the correct choice will be not to use the tool.

Data protection and automated decisions

The earlier claim that Nigeria lacks an operational data protection framework is no longer sustainable. Section 24 of the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023 establishes processing principles. Section 25 addresses lawful bases. Section 28 requires a data privacy impact assessment where processing is likely to create high risk. Section 29 regulates controller and processor relationships. Section 37 protects a person against certain decisions based solely on automated processing and provides safeguards that include human intervention and an opportunity to contest the decision. Part VIII regulates cross border transfer (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2023).

The 2025 General Application and Implementation Directive makes the connection to AI express. Article 28 requires a data privacy impact assessment for listed forms of high risk processing, including automated decisions with legal or similarly significant effects, innovative technology that may pose significant privacy risk, and educational services that process student records. Article 43 addresses artificial

intelligence as an emerging technology. It requires technical and organisational parameters, attention to solely automated decisions, assessment of disparate outcomes, testing in controlled settings, and continuous monitoring. Article 46 treats capacity building as a required organisational measure (Nigeria Data Protection Commission, 2025).

These provisions materially change the Nigerian debate. A law faculty using AI to grade identified students, a firm deploying a system that profiles clients, or a justice institution introducing an automated rights affecting process cannot treat privacy review as a later administrative formality. The assessment must precede the high risk processing where required. It should identify the data, purpose, legal basis, provider, transfer route, affected persons, likely errors, security measures, human review, and route of complaint.

Fair hearing and judicial responsibility

Section 36 of the Constitution protects fair hearing, while section 37 protects privacy (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999). AI assisted adjudication can engage both rights. If an undisclosed system introduces a factual inference, credibility signal, risk score, or legal proposition that materially influences a decision, a party may be unable to know or answer the case against them. Human presence at the final stage does not cure the problem if the human merely accepts the system's recommendation.

Judicial support tools should therefore remain support tools. They may assist with organisation, search, or summarisation, but a judicial officer must verify the materials and exercise independent judgment. Sourdin (2018) similarly distinguishes forms of technological support from uses that move closer to adjudication. The more closely a system approaches the determination of facts, law, liberty, status, or entitlement, the stronger the need for transparency, an accessible record, and a meaningful opportunity to challenge its contribution. Judicial independence is not protected by calling an opaque recommendation neutral.

Evidence and source integrity

Section 84 of the Evidence Act 2011 governs the admissibility of statements in computer generated documents and sets conditions for their reception (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011). The provision was not written for modern generative systems and it does not make AI output reliable merely because it is electronic. Admissibility and weight remain distinct. A party tendering an AI related record may need to explain how it was created, stored, preserved, and connected to the matter. The court may also need evidence about the system's operation where its output is disputed.

For legal submissions, the more immediate issue is source integrity. An invented case is not a defective computer document. It is no authority at all. A fabricated

quotation from a genuine judgment is equally serious because it borrows the appearance of a primary source while altering its content. The professional response is direct verification from an authoritative report, court copy, official legislation database, or other dependable source.

RISKS THAT REQUIRE NIGERIAN ATTENTION

Hallucination and automation bias

Generative systems are designed to produce plausible continuations of text. They can answer uncertainty with confident detail. Dahl et al. (2024) found high rates of legal hallucination in controlled questions about United States federal cases using earlier versions of widely discussed models. The value of that study lies less in a single percentage than in its finding that the systems did not reliably know when they were wrong. A polished citation can therefore attract trust precisely when verification is most needed.

Human review can also fail. Automation bias arises when a user gives undue weight to a system because it appears technical, quick, or consistent. A busy lawyer may check a surprising answer but accept a familiar one. A student may regard the model's confident explanation as confirmation of a weak reading. A judge or clerk may assume that retrieved text came from the cited case. Training should therefore teach verification as a documented task, not as a general warning to be careful.

Weak local coverage and legal pluralism

Nigeria's legal order includes the Constitution, federal and state legislation, received English law, judicial precedent, customary law, and Islamic law within their proper fields. The meaning of a rule may depend on court hierarchy, state variation, procedural context, and whether a custom has been pleaded and proved. A general purpose model trained mainly on material from other jurisdictions may flatten those distinctions or fill a gap with an apparently similar foreign rule.

This is not only a technical data problem. It is a problem of whose knowledge is treated as normal. Mohamed et al. (2020) show how AI development can reproduce unequal relations when systems built around dominant datasets and institutions are presented as universal. A Nigerian legal tool should be evaluated on Nigerian questions, including state legislation, procedural rules, customary law, Islamic law, and recent unreported decisions where lawful access is available. Imported benchmark success is not local validation.

Privacy, security, and vendor dependence

Legal files contain identity data, health information, financial records, allegations, strategy, privileged communication, and evidence about third parties.

Uploading an entire file for convenience may conflict with data minimisation and confidentiality even if the resulting summary is accurate. A provider may also change its model, terms, retention settings, or hosting arrangements without changing the product name. Procurement must therefore cover the service over time, not only at the date of purchase.

Vendor dependence creates another risk. If a firm or university cannot export records, reproduce an earlier output, or explain which model processed the data, it may be unable to audit a mistake. Institutions should require clear contractual terms on data use, security incidents, subprocessors, cross border transfer, deletion, access logs, service changes, and exit. They should also retain enough internal expertise to challenge the provider's claims.

Inequality and access

AI can reduce the cost of some legal tasks, but the benefit will not be evenly distributed. Reliable connectivity, current devices, paid databases, secure enterprise tools, and staff training all require resources. Nigeria's broader digital infrastructure constraints have been documented for years (World Bank, 2019). If institutions assume universal access, students and small practices may be judged against outputs produced with tools they cannot afford.

Equity requires more than giving everyone a free chatbot account. Free systems may offer weaker privacy controls, lower usage limits, or less dependable source grounding. Universities and professional bodies should provide shared access to verified legal databases, practical training, and alternatives for people with disabilities or poor connectivity. Any assessment that permits AI should state what tools are available and ensure that the learning outcome does not depend on private purchasing power.

Erosion of learning

The danger to legal education is not simply plagiarism. It is the loss of productive struggle. Students learn to distinguish holding from dicta, reconcile authorities, identify missing facts, and revise an argument by doing those tasks. If AI performs the difficult middle of the exercise, a student may deliver a smooth answer without developing the judgment needed to detect its errors later in practice.

Academic integrity policies still matter. Research on higher education identifies authorship, transparency, and unfair assistance as immediate concerns (Cotton et al., 2024). A blanket ban, however, may drive use underground and leave students unprepared for practice. A better policy identifies when independent work is the learning outcome, when limited assistance is permitted, and what evidence of the process must accompany the final work. The Artificial Intelligence Assessment Scale

offers a useful model because it connects permitted use to the purpose of the assessment (Perkins et al., 2024).

COMPARATIVE LESSONS

United States professional guidance

The American Bar Association's Formal Opinion 512 applies familiar duties to generative AI. It addresses competence, confidentiality, communication, supervision, candour, meritorious claims, and reasonable fees. It requires lawyers to understand the capabilities and limitations of a tool, assess confidentiality before entering client information, and independently verify output to the degree demanded by the task (American Bar Association Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility, 2024). The useful lesson for Nigeria is methodological. A profession does not need to wait for an AI specific statute before applying existing ethical duties.

The facts of *Mata v. Avianca, Inc.* (2023) show why the method matters. Counsel relied on fictitious cases generated by ChatGPT and then supplied fabricated material when the court asked for the authorities. The court imposed sanctions. The failure was not the mere use of a tool. It was the repeated presentation of unverified false material and the absence of a candid response when the problem emerged.

England and Wales

In *R (Ayinde) v London Borough of Haringey and Al-Haroun v Qatar National Bank QPSC* (2025), the High Court addressed false and altered authorities in two matters. The judgment stressed the consequences for the administration of justice and the duties of lawyers who place material before a court. It also called for practical action by professional leaders and regulators. The case is especially useful because it rejects the idea that a general warning is enough.

The judiciary of England and Wales has since updated its AI guidance. The October 2025 version emphasises confidentiality, bias, hallucination, verification, and the personal responsibility of judicial office holders for work produced in their name (Courts and Tribunals Judiciary, 2025). Nigeria need not reproduce that document word for word. It can adopt the same clarity about ownership of the final work.

European Union and African Union

The European Union Artificial Intelligence Act uses a risk based structure. Certain systems used by judicial authorities to research and interpret facts and law and to apply law to facts are treated as high risk, subject to the terms and exceptions in the Regulation (European Parliament & Council of the European Union, 2024). The transferable lesson is proportionality. Formatting assistance and rights affecting judicial support should not be governed at the same level.

The African Union Continental Artificial Intelligence Strategy calls for an Africa centred, ethical, responsible, and equitable approach and encourages coherent national action (African Union, 2024). This supports localisation rather than simple regulatory importation. Nigeria's framework should respond to its professional rules, data protection law, legal pluralism, language needs, infrastructure, and institutions.

A RISK BASED ASSURANCE MODEL FOR NIGERIA

Nigeria needs a practical rule that can be understood in chambers, classrooms, firms, clinics, and courts. The proposed model links the consequence of error to the strength of the control. It draws from the risk logic in the Nigeria Data Protection Act, the 2025 General Application and Implementation Directive, professional duties, and comparative guidance. The categories describe the use, not the brand of software. The same product may fall into different categories on different days.

Table 1

A three level assurance model for legal AI use

Use level	Illustrative tasks	Minimum assurance
Routine support	Formatting, scheduling, and work on nonconfidential administrative text	Approved tool and ordinary human review
Substantive assistance	Legal search, case summary, first drafts, contract comparison, and document review	Direct source verification, confidentiality check, named reviewer, and a record of material use
Rights affecting use	Client advice, pleadings, evidence, grading, selection, judicial reasoning, and legally significant automated decisions	No unsupervised reliance, full verification, documented accountability, disclosure where material, and a data privacy impact assessment where required

The model needs to be used prior to the task. The user is responsible for determining the use, the data that will be addressed, the potential damage to be done if the output is incorrect, and the person who will authorize the output. The level of assurance should be commensurate with the change in use during the task. When the output of a routine summarisation is put into advice, grading, evidence or a judicial decision, it turns into a rights affecting routine summarisation.

Minimum controls for legal practice

All law firms that allow the use of generative AI should have a concise written policy. The protocol should specify acceptable tools and unacceptable information. Should need a matter level decision before confidential or personal data is entered. When material will be used to affect advice, negotiation, filing or evidence, it should say that every case, statute, quotation or factual statement must be verified from the underlying source.

The substantive work should be done under the responsibility of a named lawyer with the help of AI assistant. Record does not have to record all of the casual prompts. Should include sufficient information to re-create the material use: tool, version (if applicable), date, purpose, source documents provided, reviewer, major changes, materials approval. The principle of record keeping itself should observe the principles of data minimisation, security and privilege.

Materiality should be the basis for client disclosure. A lawyer does not have to disclose the use of spelling assistance every time. Disclosure is warranted if AI has a material impact on the agreed method, presents a confidentiality risk, alters fees, or is required by a court or regulator, or if the client reasonably expects the lawyer to carry out the task. Where consent is the basis, consent should be informed and specific. If the general sentence is in an engagement letter, it provides inadequate coverage for a significant data or professional risk.

Fees must reflect work actually accomplished and value and terms of the retainer. A lawyer should not charge for several hours of drafting, simply because that is how long the task used to take. Professional time for required verification is still professional time. Transparent billing will help ensure that efficiency benefits get to clients, and not become a hidden margin.

Minimum controls for courts and justice institutions

A court should first take an inventory. It must include all AI or automated systems that are used for transcription, translation, search, scheduling, case allocation, document review, risk scoring, and decision-support. Every system should have an owner, a stated purpose, data map, vendor record, testing plan, incident route and review date. If the institution does not know that the system is in use then it won't be governed.

Delegation of judicial decision to a generative system is not to be allowed. Where a tool enhances research or summarisation it is the duty of the judicial officer to review the primary source materials and the record. For rights affecting systems, a data privacy impact assessment (DPIA) is required if the statutory threshold is reached, as well as a test for disparate outcomes, accessible human review and an audit trail. If knowledge is

required to challenge the material automated contribution, parties should be notified of such contribution.

The National Judicial Council may provide national guidance, and this procedure may be task specific. This should include information on private information, access to tools, verification of sources, disclosure, procurement, incidents, staff use and training. It should also state that digitisation of court and AI adjudication are two different projects. The ability to file electronically and easily access judgments could be more valuable than any aspirational predictive system.

Minimum controls for legal education

Law faculties and the Nigerian Law School should reduce the vagueness of the unauthorised assistance statements by using the assessment level instructions. Each task should explicitly mention if AI is not allowed, allowed for some limited functions, should be used for comparison, or it can be used fully and must be disclosed. The policy should identify the learning outcome and the reasons why the selected level is appropriate for the learning outcome. This aligns with the staged logic that has been suggested by Perkins et al. (2024) and the human centred guidance provided by Miao and Holmes (2023).

Independent reading, analysis of cases and writing should be preserved in foundational courses. For core issue spotting and doctrinal exercises, a first attempt without using AI might be needed. For the latter courses the use of AI can be critical, for example, students may be asked to identify errors, compare the output with the primary source, revise a draft, or create a risk note. This sequence considers AI literacy as complementary to, not a shortcut for legal literacy.

Assessment should encompass the process and the product. These can include an annotated source list, a brief report on the use of AI, a retained prompt and revising documentation for selected tasks, a viva voce defence and an in class component. A student who can explain the reasons for application of an authority, and the changes to the draft demonstrates learning that a polished submission alone may not show.

Lecturers too require protection and training. They must not post student work onto any detection and/or grading system without a lawful basis and safe-guards in place. The detection scores provided by AI should not be viewed as evidence of misconduct. If AI is used in feedback or grading then it should be read through by a lecturer and the lecturer held responsible for the outcome. Article 28 of the General Application and Implementation Directive, 2025 is relevant in the processing of student records by educational service providers and when the high risk criteria are applicable (Nigeria Data Protection Commission, 2025).

INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Professional regulation

It is suggested that the General Council of the Bar and the Nigerian Bar Association issue a practice note which will incorporate Rules 15, 16, 19 and 32 to AI assisted work. It should contain a checklist for verification, a confidentiality decision form, sample client disclosure and some directions for supervision and fees. It would be better to allow participants to continue their professional development with realistic files from Nigeria, and to have them identify and correct plausible errors.

Disciplines should be kept to a level of proportion. An intentional submission of false authority is not a one-off administrative error. Factors that should be taken into consideration should be related to the importance of the material, the sufficiency of the verification, previous training, candour after discovery, harm, repetition, and supervision. Establishing clear rules prior to punishment will make the situation more fair and compliant.

Legal education

In Nigeria, the Council of Legal Education has statutory duties over legal education and has the ability to coordinate vocational training to be in sync with responsible digital practice (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). It should interface with the NUC, law faculties, law libraries, clinics and the profession to agree on minimum AI literacy outcomes. Those results should encompass the selection of tools, confirmation of primary sources, confidentiality, data protection, bias, citation integrity, procurement awareness, and completing necessary legal analysis without the use of AI.

Curriculum, infrastructure and integrity issues have already been identified by Akinola & Kurere (2026) as challenges in Nigeria. Implementation and evidence should follow. The staged assessment model should be tried out by institutions and outcomes of anonymous assessments should be made public and assessed for the retention of doctrine, detection of false authority, and student independence. Change the policy if there is evidence that it is about appearance and not learning.

Local evaluation and public infrastructure

An independent Nigerian legal AI benchmarking should be encouraged by regulators and universities. Should examine federal and state legislation, binding and persuasive authority, procedural rules, customary law and Islamic law as well as multilingual explanation and professional ethics. Nigerian Lawyers, Judges, Librarians, Lecturers and Technologists should write and review questions periodically. Results should be determined by date, model, settings, sources and limitations.

The benchmark should not be considered an endorsement of a vendor. It should

help to compare and identify the tasks that need to be performed best by human intervention. The importance of public investment in the complete and searchable and authentic legislation and judgments is similar. The more reliable the primary source infrastructure, the more reliable the conventional research and the safer the AI with the primary source. It is more sustainable reform than buying into a "trendy" system with no firm legal information.

Procurement and oversight

The public and educational procurement process should include a documented purpose, legal basis, risk classification, impact assessment (if required), security review, accessibility review, and exit plan. Training use, ownership of inputs and outputs, retention, deletion, incident notice, subprocessors, cross border transfer, audit access, model changes and service termination should be addressed in contracts.

People impacted by the system should be included in the oversight. The students, clients, court users, legal aid providers, librarians, and disability advocates can identify practical risk areas that are not captured by a technical test. With the involvement of affected communities in the design and evaluation of AI systems, the goals of the African Union's call for responsible and equitable AI can be achieved with greater likelihood.

CONCLUSION

Artificial intelligence can make Nigerian legal work faster and more accessible, but it can also generate false authority, compromise confidential information, deepen weaknesses in legal data, and create the appearance of reasoning without its substance. Nigeria therefore needs neither blanket prohibition nor uncritical adoption. It needs controls proportionate to each use and the harm that an error may cause. The claim of a complete regulatory vacuum is no longer convincing because existing professional duties of competence, candour, and confidentiality already apply, while the Constitution, the Evidence Act, the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, and the 2025 General Application and Implementation Directive provide rules on fair hearing, privacy, electronic evidence, high risk processing, automated decisions, and impact assessment. The remaining weakness lies mainly in implementation. Lawyers need clear verification and confidentiality procedures. Courts need an inventory of artificial intelligence systems and firm safeguards for uses that may affect rights. Law schools need assessment rules that protect independent reasoning while teaching responsible use, and regulators need evidence drawn from Nigerian conditions. In every setting, final responsibility must remain with an identifiable person who understands the law, can explain how the tool was used, and can answer for the result.

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