

# Modern Lawyer

Ideas for Legal Leaders

Editor: Alex Davies

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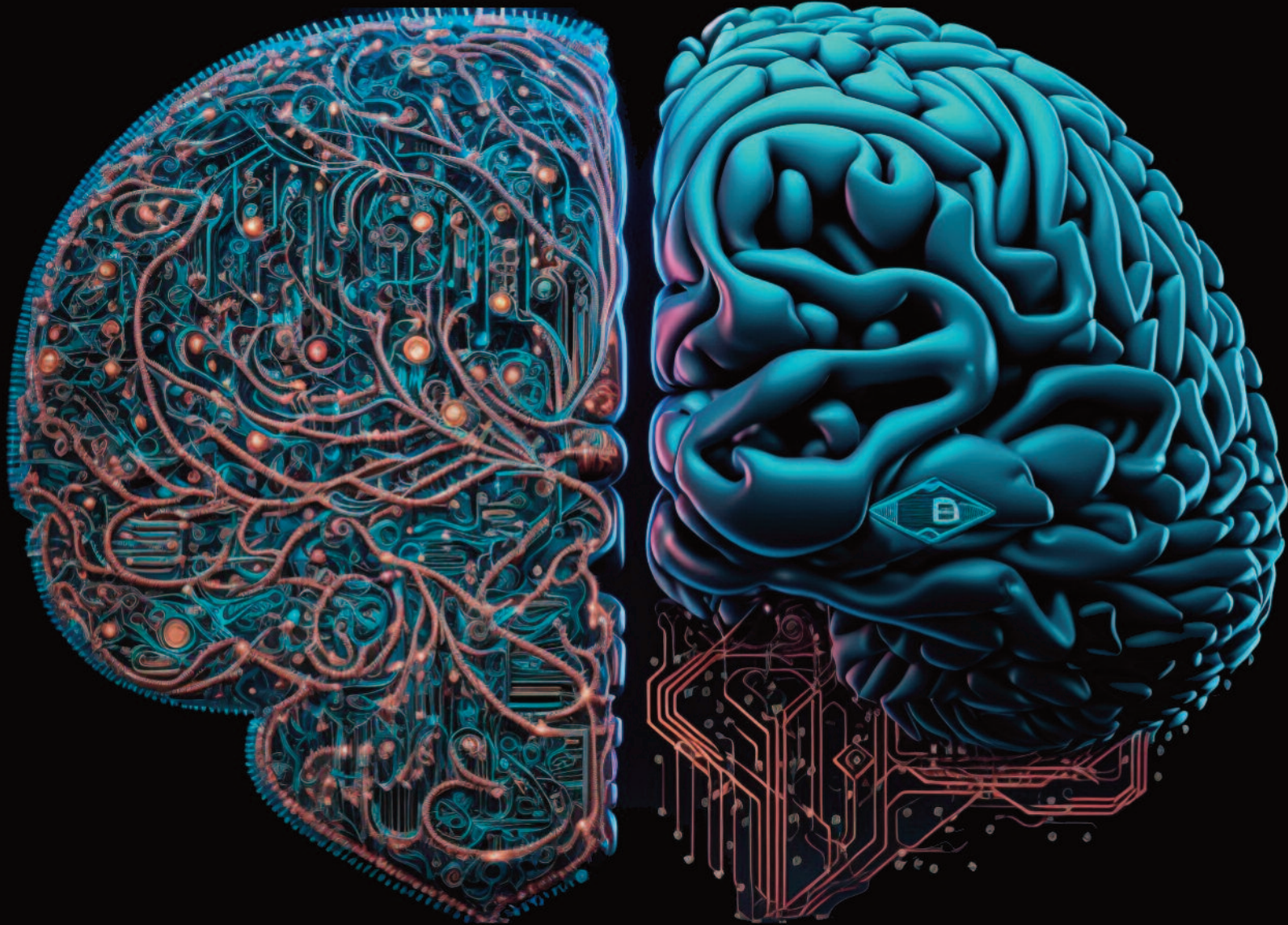


## Featured in this issue

*The legal sector in 2033 – how lawyers and law firms will work in the future and who will make it happen*

*Making your alumni an asset to your firm*

*Client listening: Good news, AI is coming for you*



## The Human Element

How legal tech won't work without the human touch



When planning this issue of *Modern Lawyer*, my intention was for the theme to be around legal tech, specifically AI. You can hardly blame me – artificial intelligence has been at the forefront of people’s minds since November last year and the launch of OpenAI’s transformative ChatGPT tool, which in just 11 short months has revolutionized the way people work.

But when I started to read through the submissions to this issue, I noticed a recurring theme. Whilst AI is talked about a great deal – the abbreviation appears 73 times, in fact – the focus is not so much on the tech but the people using it.

Time and again, we return to the issue of people – the value we add, the understanding we bring, the empathy, the compassion, the knowledge and breadth of experience – these are all human qualities that Artificial Intelligence, Generative AI, or even Artificial General Intelligence, if such a thing is even possible, cannot achieve.

In p10 of this issue, Andrew White discusses the notion of ‘smart law’ in his article – but the thing that makes it smart is the lawyers, not the tech.

Jordan Furlong's piece (p2) makes some predictions about the legal landscape in 2033, but envisages a sector in which the drudgery of legal research has long been delegated to the whirring machines in the basement, whilst allowing the lawyers to concentrate on high-value tasks like negotiation, advocacy, risk assessment, and opportunity identification.

Claire Rason and Paul Roberts discuss AI and client listening on p62, and how AI can vastly improve the client experience by utilizing the mountains of data that lawyers couldn’t possibly attempt to analyze themselves, thus allowing the human to do what they do best – use empathy, understanding, and experience to harness it.

Jordan believes that AI will soon become as ubiquitous as other legal tools, maintaining “You’d no more say, ‘A lawyer made this using AI’ in 2033 than you’d say, ‘A lawyer made this using a computer’ today”.

And for those skeptics who argue the legal profession is slow to adopt tech, Helen Hamilton-Shaw disagrees, arguing on p46 that lawyers are keeping pace with technological development, and that the best innovation comes through collaboration. The human element, again, is essential in the adoption of new ideas, and the legal industry needs to understand how to work with the tech to fully reach its potential. As Claire and Paul conclude, “AI can help us on the journey but it can’t do it alone”.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Davies".

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