# The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Improving Access to Justice (Canada Legal System)

**Muhammad Ali Nadeem**
*St Clair College Windsor, Canada*
ali.nadeem@trios.com

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## Abstract

Artificial Intelligence can play a transformative role in *Access to Justice (A2J)* by reducing cost, increasing speed, and expanding legal support to people who traditionally struggle to obtain it. This paper examines how artificial intelligence (AI) can strengthen Access to Justice (A2J) in Canada by modernizing legal processes, improving service delivery, and reducing systemic inequities. It analyzes a broad range of AI applications—including legal information tools, automated document assembly, triage and issue-spotting systems, decision-support technologies for judges and tribunals, and AI-enabled court administration—to show how these innovations can streamline workflows, reduce delays, and support self-represented litigants. The paper also explores AI's role in legal education, public legal literacy, and targeted support for vulnerable populations such as newcomers, survivors of violence, people with disabilities, and rural communities. Additionally, it highlights the potential of predictive analytics to inform evidence-based policy reform by identifying delays, forecasting backlogs, and detecting inequities. Throughout, the paper emphasizes the ethical and legal safeguards—transparency, non-discrimination, privacy protection, human oversight, and professional responsibility—that must guide responsible AI adoption. Together, these insights demonstrate that AI, when governed carefully, can significantly advance equitable and efficient access to justice in Canada.

**Key Words:** Access to Justice, Artificial Intelligence, Legal Tools, Predictive Legal Analysis, Ethics, Privacy, Canada legal System, Courts, Tribunals.

## Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly recognized as a transformative force in expanding Access to Justice (A2J), particularly by reducing the financial and procedural barriers that prevent many individuals from obtaining legal assistance. According to the OECD, AI-driven tools can streamline justice administration by automating routine tasks, improving case management, and enhancing the efficiency and fairness of legal processes (OECD, 2025). These technologies help reduce costs by minimizing the time lawyers, court staff, and self-represented litigants spend on document preparation, triage, and information retrieval. Research from the National Association for Court Management (NACM) further highlights that generative[1] AI can produce legal content, summarize complex materials,

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[1] **Generative AI** refers to a class of artificial intelligence systems that can create new content—such as text, images, audio, code, or data patterns—by learning from large datasets and generating outputs that resemble the examples on which they

and support litigants in understanding their rights, thereby lowering the cost of initial legal engagement and reducing reliance on expensive professional services (Laskowski et al., 2023).

AI also accelerates the delivery of justice by enabling faster processing of legal information and improving the speed of decision-making. The *Stanford Legal Design Lab's AI & Access to Justice* Initiative demonstrates how AI systems can assist users in navigating legal processes more quickly by offering real-time guidance, automated form completion, and intelligent triage that directs individuals to the appropriate legal pathways or community resources (Stanford Legal Design Lab, 2025). These tools are particularly impactful for marginalized populations—such as low-income individuals, newcomers, and rural communities—who often face long delays[2] or lack access to legal professionals[3].

Moreover, systematic reviews of AI in justice systems show that AI can support judges and tribunals by summarizing case files, identifying relevant precedents, and improving administrative efficiency, all of which contribute to faster and more consistent outcomes (Borgesano et al., 2025).

Beyond efficiency and cost reduction, AI expands legal support by making justice systems more inclusive and user-centered. The United Nations has noted that AI, when properly regulated, can enhance accessibility for vulnerable groups by offering multilingual support, simplifying legal language, and enabling remote access to legal information and services (American University, 2025).

These capabilities help bridge longstanding equity gaps in justice systems, ensuring that individuals who traditionally struggle to obtain legal help—due to socioeconomic, linguistic, or geographic barriers—can more easily understand and assert their rights. Collectively, the research shows that AI has the potential to reshape A2J by making legal systems more affordable, faster, and fundamentally more accessible.

## The Structure of This Research Paper

This research paper is organized thematically to provide a comprehensive, evidence-based examination of how artificial intelligence can enhance Access to Justice (A2J) in Canada. It begins with a *foundational introduction* that frames AI as a transformative force capable of reducing cost, increasing efficiency, and expanding legal support for underserved populations. This sets the stage for a deeper exploration of the specific domains where AI can meaningfully reshape justice processes.

The first major section examines *AI-enabled legal information tools*, focusing on plain-language explanations, guided legal processes, and multilingual support. This section highlights how AI improves public legal literacy and empowers individuals to understand their rights before engaging with formal

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were trained. These models do not merely retrieve information; they synthesize novel material based on statistical patterns in the data.

[2] Canada's courts and tribunals face chronic, multi-year delays driven by judicial vacancies, resource shortages, and pandemic-related backlogs, with many criminal, civil, and tribunal matters exceeding 18–30-month timelines. These systemic delays have been widely documented as a national access-to-justice crisis, leading to stayed cases, prolonged uncertainty, and declining public confidence. *The Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) has experienced significant delays, with average wait times reaching up to 36 months for dispute cases involving amounts as low as $400 to $2,000.*

[3] In Canada, a significant proportion of the population lacks meaningful access to legal professionals due to high costs, geographic barriers, and limited availability of affordable services, leaving many individuals—especially those with low income or in rural and remote regions—to navigate complex legal problems without representation.

legal systems. It is followed by a detailed analysis of *automated document assembly*, including Canadian examples and tools that assist with drafting demand letters, affidavits, small-claims forms, and immigration applications. Together, these sections illustrate how AI reduces procedural barriers and supports self-represented litigants.
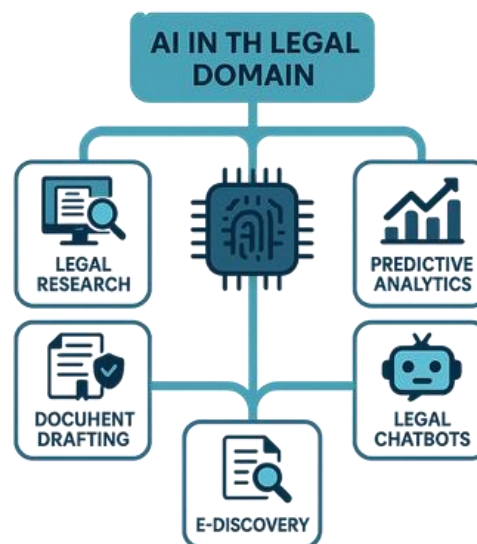
The paper then transitions to AI's role in *triage and issue-spotting*, explaining how AI can serve as a "front door" to justice systems by identifying legal issues, assessing urgency, and directing users to appropriate courts or tribunals. This is complemented by a section on *decision support for judges and tribunals*, which explores how AI can summarize case files, highlight precedents, flag inconsistencies, and support case-flow management while preserving human judgment. A subsequent section on *court administration and case management* expands this analysis by examining AI's potential to streamline scheduling, notifications, document classification, e-discovery, and evidence organization.

Building on these operational improvements, the paper includes a dedicated section on *legal education and public legal literacy*, demonstrating how AI can simulate legal scenarios, support interactive learning, and enhance community workshops—particularly in multilingual contexts. This is followed by an in-depth exploration of *AI support for vulnerable populations*, including newcomers, survivors of domestic violence, people with disabilities, and residents of rural or remote communities. This section emphasizes AI's potential as an equalizer when deployed responsibly and collaboratively.

The paper culminates in a forward-looking section on *predictive analytics for policy and system reform*, showing how governments and legal institutions can use AI to identify systemic delays, forecast backlogs, analyze inequities, and allocate resources more effectively. Finally, the paper concludes with a comprehensive discussion of *ethical and legal considerations*, including transparency, non-discrimination, privacy protection, human oversight, and compliance with professional responsibility rules. This final section grounds the entire analysis in the principles necessary for responsible AI adoption in Canadian justice systems.

## 1. Legal Information - Not Legal Advice

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly being used to expand access to legal information by providing clear, plain-language explanations of legal rights—an essential first step for individuals who cannot afford a lawyer or who are navigating the justice system alone. Research on *self-represented litigants* (SRLs) in Canada shows that *large language models* (LLMs[4]) can help users understand complex legal concepts by simplifying terminology and offering structured explanations that make legal rights more accessible (Ogunde, 2024). This is particularly important because many SRLs struggle



AI IN TH LEGAL DOMAIN
- LEGAL RESEARCH
- PREDICTIVE ANALYTICS
- DOCUHENT DRAFTING
- LEGAL CHATBOTS
- E-DISCOVERY

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[4] *Large language models (LLMs)* are advanced artificial intelligence systems trained on massive collections of text data to learn patterns in language, enabling them to generate human-like text, answer questions, summarize information, and perform a wide range of language-based tasks.

not with the substance of the law, but with understanding legal vocabulary, procedural requirements, and the implications of their choices. AI tools can bridge this gap by offering digestible, user-friendly information that empowers individuals to identify the nature of their legal issue before seeking professional assistance.

AI systems also support access to justice by providing step-by-step guidance on common legal processes, such as filing claims, responding to applications, or preparing evidence. Reports from the *University of Saskatchewan's Dean's Forum on Access to Justice* highlight that generative AI can guide users through procedural steps, automate form completion, and help them understand what documents they need and why (Jorgenson et al., 2024). This type of structured guidance reduces procedural errors—one of the most common barriers faced by *Self Represented Litigants* (SRLs) —and helps individuals participate more effectively in legal processes.

By offering *process-oriented support*, AI tools reduce the cognitive and administrative burden on litigants and improve their ability to navigate the justice system independently.

*Language accessibility* is another critical area where AI contributes to access to justice. Machine translation tools powered by AI can convert legal documents into more accessible language or translate them into a user's preferred language. However, research from the *Stanford Legal Design Lab* emphasizes that while AI-driven translation tools show promise, their accuracy in legal contexts varies, requiring human oversight to ensure fairness and reliability (Stanford Legal Design Lab, 2025). Courts and justice organizations are increasingly exploring AI-assisted translation to support individuals with limited English proficiency, recognizing that language barriers are a major obstacle to understanding legal rights and obligations (Akhlaghi, 2025). When used responsibly, AI translation tools can significantly enhance comprehension and reduce inequities in legal processes. So, AI can provide:

- Plain-language explanations of legal rights
- Step-by-step guidance on common legal processes
- Translations of legal documents into accessible language

This helps people understand *what* their issue is before they seek a lawyer, paralegal[5], or tribunal.

## 2. Automated Document Assembly

Artificial intelligence–driven automated document assembly has become one of the most impactful applications of legal technology in Canada, particularly for routine legal drafting such as demand letters, small claims forms, affidavits, statutory declarations, and immigration or benefits applications. Document automation platforms use *natural language processing* (NLP) and *large language models* (LLMs) to convert user inputs into structured legal documents, reducing the need for costly lawyer

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[5] In Canada, *paralegals* are regulated legal professionals authorized to provide specified legal services—most notably in Ontario, where they are licensed by the *Law Society of Ontario* to represent clients in small claims, traffic matters, provincial offences, landlord-tenant disputes, and certain tribunal proceedings. Outside Ontario, most provinces do not license independent paralegals, but several jurisdictions permit alternative legal service providers: British Columbia is developing a *Licensed Paralegal* framework; Alberta recognizes *Limited Licence Legal Practitioners*; and Saskatchewan and Manitoba allow *legal assistants* or *advocates* to perform restricted tasks under lawyer supervision.

intervention for straightforward matters. According to *AIQ Labs*, Canadian law firms adopting AI-based document automation report 60–80% reductions in drafting costs and 20–40 hours saved per employee per week, demonstrating the efficiency gains possible when routine drafting is automated (AIQ Labs, 2025). These tools help *self-represented litigants* (SRLs) and low-income individuals prepare legally compliant documents without requiring advanced legal knowledge.

A growing ecosystem of AI tools supports automated document assembly in Canada. Platforms such as *Genie AI, Briefpoint, Ares Legal*, and *Ironclad* offer automated drafting for demand letters, contracts, affidavits, and litigation documents. Genie AI, which has a dedicated Canadian version, allows users to draft and review legal documents across *120+ jurisdictions*, using plain-language templates and AI-generated clauses tailored to user needs (Genie AI, 2025). *Briefpoint* automates litigation drafting by extracting key facts from uploaded documents and generating formatted pleadings, affidavits, and declarations—significantly reducing manual work for lawyers and SRLs (Briefpoint, 2025). These tools are increasingly used in Canadian legal clinics and small firms to support high-volume, low-complexity matters.

Automated document assembly is also expanding into small claims and tribunal processes, where procedural forms are standardized and well-suited to automation. Tools such as *Ares Legal* and *Ironclad* integrate form-filling workflows that guide users through required fields, attach supporting evidence, and generate court-ready documents. This is particularly valuable in Ontario, where the Small Claims Court and Landlord and Tenant Board rely heavily on standardized forms that SRLs often struggle to complete correctly. Research from the *Manitoba Access to Justice Hub* notes that AI-assisted drafting is increasingly used by SRLs to prepare pleadings[6], although courts emphasize the need for accuracy and verification to avoid errors or fabricated citations (Kim, 2025). Nonetheless, the potential for automation to reduce procedural mistakes and improve filing quality is significant.

Immigration and benefits applications are another major area where AI-powered document assembly is gaining traction. These applications involve repetitive data entry, standardized forms, and strict formatting requirements—making them ideal for automation. Canadian AI platforms now assist users in preparing immigration forms, eligibility letters, and supporting affidavits by guiding them through structured questionnaires and generating complete application packages. The federal government's broader investment of *CAD $568 million in AI* to support ethical and efficient digital services further signals national support for AI-enabled administrative processes (AIQ Labs, 2025). Artificial intelligence is increasingly used within immigration law to support case triage, risk assessment, and document analysis. Its adoption aims to enhance efficiency and consistency in decision-making, though it also raises concerns regarding transparency, algorithmic bias, and procedural fairness. Ongoing oversight and ethical governance remain essential to ensure that AI tools align with fundamental principles of access to justice and due process. While immigration lawyers caution that AI cannot replace legal advice, automated assembly tools help applicants prepare accurate documents before seeking professional review. (Docketwise, 2025)

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[6] *Pleadings* refer to the formal written documents filed by each party in a lawsuit that set out their claims, defenses, and the material facts they intend to rely on. Pleadings define the issues in dispute and guide the court in determining what must be decided.

Overall, automated document assembly reduces dependency on costly legal drafting for routine matters and enhances access to justice by empowering individuals to prepare legally compliant documents independently. As Canadian courts and regulators continue to develop AI guidelines—such as the *Canadian Judicial Council's 2024 AI Guidelines*—the use of document automation is expected to expand responsibly, balancing innovation with accuracy, transparency, and ethical oversight. With proper safeguards, AI-powered document assembly can significantly reduce barriers for SRLs, streamline legal workflows, and modernize Canada's justice system. In short AI-powered tools can help users:

- Draft demand letters

- Prepare small claims forms

- Generate affidavits or statutory declarations

- Complete immigration or benefits applications

This reduces dependency on costly legal drafting for routine matters.

## 3. Triage and Issue-Spotting

AI-driven triage and issue-spotting systems are increasingly recognized as essential "front door" tools for modern justice systems, helping users identify their legal issues, assess urgency, and navigate toward the correct tribunal or legal service. In Canada, the Action Committee on Modernizing Court Operations has emphasized that AI can streamline court processes by supporting early case assessment and routing users to appropriate services, thereby improving access to justice and reducing administrative burdens (Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada, 2025).

These systems use natural language processing to interpret user narratives—such as disputes with landlords, workplace conflicts, or family breakdowns—and classify them into legal categories. This is particularly valuable for self-represented litigants, who often struggle to articulate their issues in legal terms.

AI triage tools are especially impactful in high-volume areas like landlord-tenant disputes, where delays and backlogs are common. Canadian legal professionals have noted that AI can help identify urgent matters—such as illegal evictions or safety risks—by analyzing user input and flagging cases requiring immediate attention (Crossroads Law, 2025). For example, an AI system could detect keywords indicating lockouts, harassment, or health hazards and prioritize these cases for expedited review. This type of automated urgency assessment aligns with broader modernization efforts in Canadian courts, which are exploring AI to enhance case flow management and reduce bottlenecks (Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada, 2025).

Globally, AI triage tools such as *DoNotPay, LegalZoom's AI assistant*, and *Streamline AI's legal triage platform*[7] demonstrate how automated issue-spotting can categorize legal problems, assign priority levels, and direct users to appropriate resources. Streamline AI, for instance, automatically classifies

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incoming legal requests, assigns urgency scores, and routes matters to the correct department or service provider (Streamline AI, 2025).

While these tools are primarily used in corporate legal operations, their underlying technology could be adapted for public-facing justice systems in Canada. A Canadian version could integrate with provincial tribunals—such as the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB), Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario (HRTO), or Social Benefits Tribunal—to guide users to the correct forms, deadlines, and community legal clinics.

Canadian courts and regulators are already laying the groundwork for responsible adoption of such tools. The Canadian Judicial Council's *2024 Guidelines for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Canadian Courts* emphasize that AI may support administrative and navigational functions, provided it does not replace judicial decision-making or compromise fairness (Canadian Judicial Council, 2024). This framework allows for AI-enabled triage systems that help users understand where to go and what to file, while ensuring that adjudication remains human-led.

Additionally, the Federal Court's 2025 interim principles explicitly acknowledge that AI can assist self-represented litigants in preparing and navigating their cases, as long as transparency and verification safeguards are in place (Federal Court of Canada, 2025).

To fully integrate AI triage into the Canadian legal system, provinces could adopt centralized digital portals where users describe their issue in plain language and receive AI-generated guidance on next steps. Such a system could direct a tenant with a repair dispute to the LTB, a worker facing wrongful dismissal to the Ministry of Labour, or a newcomer with immigration concerns to a local settlement agency. This would reduce confusion, improve efficiency, and help legal clinics allocate resources more effectively. With proper oversight, AI-enabled triage could become a cornerstone of Canada's access-to-justice strategy, ensuring that individuals receive timely, accurate, and equitable pathways into the justice system. Thus, AI can act as a "*front door*" to justice systems by:

- Identifying the legal issue (e.g., housing, employment, family)
- Assessing urgency or risk
- Directing users to the right tribunal, court, or community legal clinic

This is especially valuable in high-volume areas like landlord-tenant disputes.

## 4. Decision Support for Judges and Tribunals

Artificial intelligence has significant potential to enhance judicial and tribunal decision-making in Canada by supporting—rather than replacing—human adjudicators. The *Canadian Judicial Council's (CJC) 2024 Guidelines for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Canadian Courts* explicitly recognize that AI may be used for administrative and analytical support, provided that judicial independence and human judgment remain paramount (Canadian Judicial Council, 2024).

One of the most promising applications is automated *case-file summarization*. AI systems can rapidly review large volumes of documents, extract key facts, and generate concise summaries that help judges focus on the core issues. This is particularly valuable in complex civil litigation, immigration appeals, and administrative tribunal matters where records can span hundreds or thousands of pages. By reducing

time spent on document review, AI allows adjudicators[8] to devote more attention to legal reasoning and fairness.

AI tools can also assist judges by identifying relevant precedents and legal authorities. In other jurisdictions, experimental systems have been developed to scan case files and match fact patterns with prior decisions, helping judges ensure consistency and reduce the risk of overlooking important jurisprudence. Canadian courts have acknowledged this potential: the *Action Committee on Modernizing Court Operations* notes that AI can support legal research and improve the efficiency of judicial workflows, provided that transparency and verification safeguards are in place (Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada, 2025). For example, an AI system could highlight leading cases on procedural fairness for an administrative tribunal or identify Supreme Court of Canada precedents relevant to a *Charter* claim[9]. While judges must always verify the accuracy of AI-generated citations, such tools can significantly reduce research burdens.

Another important application is *AI-assisted detection of inconsistencies or missing evidence*. AI systems can compare witness statements, expert reports, and documentary evidence to flag contradictions or gaps that may require clarification. This type of analytical support is already being explored internationally in areas such as fraud detection and asylum adjudication. In Canada, legal commentators have noted that AI could help judges identify red flags—such as missing affidavits, incomplete financial disclosures, or contradictory timelines—without making any substantive findings of fact (Smith, 2025). This ensures that adjudicators receive a more complete and organized evidentiary record while maintaining full control over credibility assessments and legal conclusions.

AI can also support courts by predicting procedural timelines, identifying bottlenecks, and recommending scheduling efficiencies. The *Federal Court of Canada's 2025 Interim Principles on AI* acknowledge that AI may be used to enhance case-flow management, provided it does not influence the substance of judicial decisions (Federal Court of Canada, 2025).

Predictive analytics could estimate how long a judicial review application might take based on historical data, or forecast when a tribunal is likely to experience backlogs. These insights would help courts allocate resources more effectively and improve access to timely justice—an ongoing challenge in high-volume areas such as refugee appeals, employment standards dispute, and landlord-tenant matters.

To adopt these tools responsibly, Canada must ensure strong governance, transparency, and human oversight. The CJC guidelines emphasize that AI must never replace judicial reasoning, and any AI-generated output must be reviewable, explainable, and subject to human verification (Canadian Judicial Council, 2024). Courts could begin by piloting AI tools in administrative and clerical functions—such as case summarization or precedent identification—before expanding to more sophisticated analytics.

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[8] **Adjudicators** are officials—such as judges, tribunal members, or decision-makers—who have the legal authority to hear evidence, interpret the law, and render binding decisions in disputes.

[9] **A Charter claim** refers to a legal argument made under the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* alleging that a government law, action, or decision has violated one or more of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Charter.

Training programs for judges, tribunal members, and court staff will also be essential to ensure that AI is used ethically and effectively. With proper safeguards, AI-enabled decision support can strengthen judicial efficiency, reduce delays, and enhance the quality of justice while preserving the core principles of independence, impartiality, and human judgment.

In summary, it is said that AI can assist— *but not replace*—decision-makers by:

- Summarizing case files
- Highlighting relevant precedents
- Flagging inconsistencies or missing evidence
- Predicting timelines or procedural requirements

This improves efficiency while keeping human judgment at the core.

## 5. Court Administration and Case Management

AI is increasingly viewed as a key enabler for modernizing court administration and case management, particularly in areas such as scheduling, notifications, document classification, e-discovery, and evidence organization. The Action Committee on Modernizing Court Operations has explicitly recognized that courts can use AI to enhance administrative processes, especially case-flow management, digital filing, and user-facing services, to improve efficiency and access to justice (Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada, 2025). In practice, this can mean AI systems that automatically route cases based on urgency, complexity, or subject matter, or tools that predict likely time requirements for hearings to optimize scheduling.

Internationally, the National Center for State Courts (NCSC) has documented how AI is already used to support scheduling and workflow management by classifying cases, tracking progress, and helping courts prioritize workloads, demonstrating a concrete pathway for similar deployments in Canada (National Center for State Courts, 2024).

Scheduling and notifications are particularly ripe for AI-enabled reform. AI tools can analyze historical case data, judge availability, and matter complexity to generate optimized hearing schedules, reducing adjournments and underutilized court time. Automated notification systems can then send reminders to parties, witnesses, and lawyers via email or SMS, decreasing non-appearances and associated delays (National Center for State Courts, 2024). The Courts Administration Service (CAS) Digital Strategy 2025–2027 emphasizes the need for smarter digital services, including better online interfaces and more efficient case handling, as part of a broader vision for future-ready federal courts (Courts Administration Service, 2025). AI-driven scheduling and notification tools align directly with this vision and could be incorporated into CAS's roadmap as part of its "future state" for digital court services.

Document classification, e-discovery, and evidence organization are another cluster of functions where AI can significantly reduce administrative burdens. AI systems can automatically classify filings (e.g., motions, affidavits, exhibits), detect duplicates, extract key metadata, and route documents to the correct electronic file, improving accuracy and reducing manual data entry (National Center for State Courts, 2024).

In e-discovery, machine learning tools can sift[10] through large volumes of electronic records, identify relevant documents, and prioritize review, which is particularly important in complex civil and regulatory cases. The Canadian Judicial Council's Guidelines for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Canadian Courts acknowledge that AI may be appropriately used to support administrative and research functions, provided it does not replace judicial decision-making and remains transparent and auditable (Canadian Judicial Council, 2024). This gives Canadian courts a clear policy basis for adopting AI in back-office functions such as classification and evidence management.

The Federal Court of Canada's Interim Principles and Guidelines on AI further clarify that while AI cannot be used for automated decision-making in judgments or orders, it may support internal processes as long as its role is disclosed where appropriate and does not compromise fairness or impartiality (Federal Court of Canada, 2025).

This opens the door to AI tools that help organize evidence, generate exhibit lists, or create searchable bundles for judges and parties—without influencing the substance of the decision itself. For example, an AI system could automatically link exhibits to witness statements or highlight missing documents in an administrative record, enabling registry staff and judges to work more efficiently. Such tools would be particularly impactful in high-volume contexts like immigration, tax, or social benefits appeals, where records are dense and repetitive.

To adapt these tools responsibly, the Canadian legal system will need a combination of governance, piloting, and capacity-building. Governance is already emerging through instruments like the CJC Guidelines and Federal Court principles, which stress human oversight, transparency, and no delegation of adjudicative authority to AI (Canadian Judicial Council, 2024; Federal Court of Canada, 2025). Pilots could be launched within the CAS framework, targeting specific processes such as automated scheduling for certain hearing types, AI-assisted classification of electronic filings, or evidence-bundle generation in identified case streams (Courts Administration Service, 2025).

Finally, training for judges, court administrators, and IT staff will be essential to ensure that AI is used competently and ethically. If implemented within these guardrails, AI-enabled court administration and case management could substantially reduce delays and administrative burdens, thereby improving access to justice across Canada. AI can streamline:

- Scheduling
- Notifications
- Document classification
- E-discovery
- Evidence organization

This reduces delays and administrative burdens that often block access to justice.

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[10] to examine something carefully—often by sorting, filtering, or separating information or material—to identify what is important or relevant.

# 6. Legal Education and Public Legal Literacy

Artificial intelligence is rapidly reshaping legal education and public legal literacy in Canada by enabling new forms of interactive, accessible, and multilingual learning. National research on AI literacy shows that Canadians increasingly want tools that help them understand complex systems—including law—through hands-on, scenario-based learning (Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada [ISED], 2022). AI-driven simulation platforms can recreate courtroom environments, negotiation exercises, or administrative tribunal hearings, allowing students to practice legal reasoning in realistic settings. These simulations help learners test arguments, explore procedural steps, and receive instant feedback.

For Canadian law schools and colleges, this represents a major opportunity to modernize curricula and prepare students for digital transformation in legal practice.

AI also supports interactive learning tools that enhance both formal legal education and public legal literacy. The Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta (CPLEA) has already piloted generative AI to improve public legal information resources, demonstrating how AI can generate plain-language explanations, create sample forms, and assist with referrals to legal services (Feng, 2025). These tools help bridge the gap between complex legal rules and the everyday needs of Canadians, particularly self-represented litigants.

For students, AI-powered tutoring systems can break down statutes, summarize case law, and offer quizzes or scenario-based exercises. This aligns with broader trends in Canadian legal education, where institutions are integrating AI literacy into professional training to ensure future lawyers understand both the capabilities and risks of AI (Akhlaghi, 2025).

Multilingual support is another area where AI can significantly expand public legal literacy. Many Canadians—especially newcomers—face language barriers that prevent them from understanding their rights or navigating legal processes. AI-powered translation tools can provide real-time explanations of legal concepts in multiple languages, supporting community workshops, settlement agencies, and legal clinics. The Alberta Law Foundation's *Bridging the Gaps* assessment identified AI-enabled translation as a promising tool for improving access to justice, especially in immigrant-serving organizations (Feng, 2025). When paired with human oversight, these tools can help ensure accuracy while dramatically expanding the reach of public legal education programs.

For the Canadian legal system to adopt AI effectively in education and literacy, institutions must invest in AI literacy across all justice roles. The *Cyberjustice Laboratory* emphasizes that judges, lawyers, clerks, and interpreters must understand how AI works, where it is helpful, and where it may mislead (Akhlaghi, 2025). This means integrating AI training into judicial education, law society continuing professional development (CPD), and law school curricula. Public legal education organizations can also adopt AI to personalize learning materials, tailor content to local legal issues, and deliver workshops in multiple languages. With proper governance and transparency, AI can become a cornerstone of Canada's strategy to improve legal literacy and prepare both professionals and the public for a rapidly evolving justice system. AI can:

- Simulate legal scenarios for students

- Provide interactive learning tools
- Support community workshops with multilingual explanations

This aligns beautifully with work as an educator preparing learners for digital transformation.

## 7. Support for Vulnerable Populations

AI is increasingly seen as a way to support vulnerable populations in Canada by making legal information and services more understandable, accessible, and tailored to specific barriers. For newcomers, AI has particular promise in the immigration and settlement context, where information overload, complex procedures, and language barriers are common.

Recent research on human-centred AI for Canada's immigration settlement sector argues that AI could be used to deliver personalized information, triage questions, and provide multilingual guidance to newcomers, as long as systems are designed around their needs rather than solely for state surveillance or selection (Missaghi et al., 2024). At the same time, work by Canadian researchers warns that relying on generic large language models for settlement and immigration questions carries social and ethical risks, including hallucinated legal information and unequal impacts on migrants and refugees (Nejadgholi et al., 2024). Together, these studies suggest that Canada should move toward purpose-built, community-governed AI tools for immigration and settlement support, rather than leaving newcomers to rely on unsupervised commercial chatbots.

Legal chatbots more broadly can serve as a "first line" of assistance for vulnerable users by offering plain-language explanations, guided interviews, and referrals without requiring travel or prior legal knowledge. A Canadian study on legal chatbots found that one in three Canadians encounter a justiciable problem within a three-year period, and that AI-enabled conversational agents can help people recognize they have a legal issue, understand basic rights, and be directed to appropriate resources (Queudot et al., 2020). These tools can be particularly powerful for survivors of domestic violence, who may need discreet, 24/7 access to information on protection orders, shelters, and legal remedies without alerting an abusive partner.

While much of the *existing work is still at the prototype or experimental stage*, the underlying design patterns—anonymous access, safety prompts, quick-exit features, and integration with local support services—are well documented and could be adapted for Canadian public legal education sites and provincial victim-services portals (Queudot et al., 2020).

AI also offers important accessibility gains for people with disabilities interacting with courts and tribunals. Voice interfaces, speech-to-text, and intelligent virtual assistants can help users who are blind, low-vision, or have mobility or cognitive impairments navigate online filing systems, read court documents, or track hearing dates. Canadian access-to-justice research on generative AI emphasizes that language translation, conversational interfaces, and automated explanation tools could reduce barriers for users who face both disability and linguistic or educational disadvantages (Jorgenson et al., 2024).

If courts and tribunals in Canada adopt AI-enabled accessibility tools that comply with federal and provincial human-rights and accessibility standards, they could move beyond minimum compliance

toward proactive inclusion—designing interfaces that allow people with diverse abilities to participate meaningfully in their own cases.

*Rural and remote communities* are another context where AI can act as an equalizer by overcoming geographic barriers to legal help. Many northern, Indigenous, and remote communities have limited access to lawyers or clinics, making online tools and mobile-friendly AI assistants a crucial bridge. Generative-AI access-to-justice research in Canada highlights that AI-powered legal information platforms, if properly localized and governed, can reduce wait times, support document preparation, and help people understand procedure without travelling long distances to urban centres (Jorgenson et al., 2024).

Legal chatbots and online triage systems can provide initial guidance on housing, employment, or benefits disputes and then connect users to duty counsel, community legal clinics, or culturally appropriate services where available (Queudot et al., 2020). This has particular relevance for Indigenous communities[11], where any AI deployment must be co-designed with community leadership and respect Indigenous data sovereignty.

For the Canadian legal system to adapt AI responsibly in support of vulnerable populations, design and governance must be as important as the technology itself. Settlement-sector research stresses the need for human-centred AI co-designed with frontline workers and newcomers, rather than imposed as top-down "solutions" driven by state or commercial priorities (Missaghi et al., 2024; Nejadgholi et al., 2024). Access-to-justice scholars similarly recommend that generative-AI tools be piloted in partnership with legal clinics, public legal education organizations, and communities most affected by legal exclusion, with strong safeguards against misinformation, bias, and over-reliance on automated outputs (Jorgenson et al., 2024).

If Canadian courts, governments, and community organizations follow these principles—focusing on targeted domains like immigration help, domestic-violence information, disability access, and rural outreach—AI can function as a genuine equalizer: expanding legal understanding and pathways to help precisely where traditional systems have failed to reach. AI can help:

- Newcomers navigate immigration processes
- Survivors of domestic violence access resources safely
- People with disabilities interact with courts through voice or text interfaces
- Rural or remote communities access legal information without travel

This is where AI becomes a genuine equalizer.

## 8. Predictive Analytics for Policy and System Reform

Predictive analytics offers Canadian justice institutions a powerful way to move from reactive crisis management to proactive, evidence-based reform. AI systems can analyze historical case data, filing patterns, and disposition times to identify where systemic delays are occurring and which types of

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[11] refer to the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada, who are the original inhabitants of the land and maintain distinct cultural traditions, languages, governance systems, and historical relationships with the Canadian state.

matters are most at risk of breaching constitutional timelines. This is especially relevant in Canada, where mounting delays and collapsed cases have been widely documented; judicial vacancies, increasing case complexity, and resource constraints are contributing to charges being stayed for unreasonable delay and eroding public confidence in the justice system (CBC News, 2024).

By using AI to model how changes in staffing, procedure, or legislation affect time to disposition, ministries of justice and court services could design reforms grounded in data rather than anecdote, and monitor whether interventions are actually reducing delay over time (Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada, 2025).

AI-driven predictive tools can also forecast case backlogs and help courts and tribunals manage workloads more strategically. Canadian commentators note that AI is already being explored for case-flow management and workload modelling, allowing courts to simulate different scheduling or resource allocation scenarios before implementing them (Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada, 2025).

Predictive analytics could estimate how many new matters a tribunal is likely to receive in a given quarter, which types of cases are most likely to require long hearings, and where bottlenecks will emerge if no action is taken. In administrative law, legal technology providers highlight how predictive dashboards can help tribunals anticipate surges in appeals after major policy changes and reassign staff or members accordingly (LexisNexis Canada, 2025). Applied across provincial and federal systems, these tools could support coordinated responses to backlogs instead of piecemeal, last-minute fixes.

Beyond volume and delay, predictive analytics can be used to analyze patterns of discrimination or inequity within the justice system. AI can detect disparities in outcomes across different demographic groups by examining case trajectories, sentencing patterns, or access to diversion programs—data that is often too complex for manual analysis at scale. Canadian access-to-justice research has emphasized that delays and inefficiencies tend to hit marginalized communities hardest, compounding existing inequities (Dods, 2024). Properly governed and paired with disaggregated data, predictive models could flag where certain groups are disproportionately experiencing longer wait times, lower success rates, or higher rates of withdrawn or stayed matters. Policymakers could then investigate the structural causes—such as location of services, language barriers, or eligibility rules—and design targeted reforms.

Canadian governments and courts are already acknowledging the role of AI in supporting such system-level analysis, even if full predictive programs are still emerging. The Action Committee on Modernizing Court Operations has explicitly identified AI as a tool to enhance case-flow management and court operations, while warning that transparency, fairness, and public trust must guide any deployment (Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs Canada, 2025). Thought leaders in Canadian AI ethics similarly argue that predictive systems in justice must be designed with clear accountability, rigorous validation, and mechanisms to prevent reproducing historical bias (Faulkner, 2025). In practical terms, this suggests that predictive analytics projects in Canada should begin as tightly scoped pilots—for example, modelling backlogs in a single high-volume tribunal or analyzing time-to-disposition across regions—before scaling nationally.

To adapt predictive analytics responsibly, Canadian justice institutions will need robust governance frameworks, interdisciplinary teams, and meaningful community engagement. Ministries of justice, courts administration services, and tribunals could partner with statisticians, computer scientists, and socio-legal researchers to build models that are transparent, auditable, and aligned with constitutional and human-rights obligations.

Regular public reporting on backlog projections, delay drivers, and equity impacts—supported by AI analysis—would strengthen democratic accountability and allow civil society to scrutinize reforms (Dods, 2024). If implemented in this principled way, predictive analytics can become a cornerstone of evidence-based justice reform in Canada, helping institutions see problems earlier, allocate resources more fairly, and rebuild trust in a system currently strained by delay and inequality. Governments and legal institutions can use AI to:

- Identify systemic delays
- Predict case backlogs
- Analyze patterns of discrimination or inequity
- Improve resource allocation

This supports evidence-based justice reform.

## Ethical and Legal Considerations

Artificial intelligence in the legal domain raises significant ethical and legal considerations, particularly in Access to Justice (A2J) contexts where vulnerable populations rely on accurate, fair, and trustworthy information. Transparency is a foundational requirement. Canadian federal guidance on the responsible use of AI emphasizes that institutions must clearly disclose when, how, and why AI systems are being used, ensuring that individuals understand the role AI plays in shaping legal information or administrative decisions (Government of Canada, 2023).

Transparency also requires explainability—AI outputs must be interpretable by legal professionals and end users. Without this, AI risks undermining procedural fairness, a core principle of Canadian administrative law.

Non-discrimination is another critical ethical concern. AI systems trained on historical legal data may inadvertently reproduce or amplify existing biases in policing, sentencing, or administrative decision-making. The *Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada* (OPC) warns that generative AI systems can embed systemic biases unless organizations implement rigorous testing, bias audits, and representative training datasets (OPC, 2023).

Research on AI ethics in Canadian law firms similarly highlights that bias mitigation must be embedded throughout the AI lifecycle—from design to deployment—to prevent discriminatory outcomes that disproportionately affect marginalized communities (Kelley, 2025). Ensuring non-discrimination is therefore both a legal obligation under human-rights law and an ethical imperative for maintaining public trust.

Privacy protection is central to AI governance in the legal sector because AI systems often rely on sensitive personal information. Canadian privacy regulators have clarified that organizations using AI must comply with existing privacy laws, including lawful collection, meaningful consent, data minimization, and limits on secondary use (Torys LLP, 2024). Legal AI tools that process client documents, case files, or tribunal records must incorporate strong safeguards such as encryption, access controls, and privacy-by-design principles.

Osler's national legal review of AI governance further notes that privacy risks increase when AI systems rely on cloud-based infrastructure or third-party vendors, requiring enhanced contractual protections and ongoing monitoring (Osler, 2025). In the legal domain—where confidentiality is paramount—*privacy compliance is not optional*; it is a professional responsibility.

Human supervision remains essential to ensure that AI does not replace legal judgment or undermine professional accountability. Canadian guidelines for AI in government stress that AI outputs must always be reviewed by qualified human decision-makers, especially in contexts involving legal rights, entitlements, or procedural fairness (Government of Canada, 2023). This aligns with professional responsibility rules for lawyers, who must maintain competence, verify the accuracy of AI-generated content, and avoid delegating core legal tasks to automated systems.

Kelley's (2025) ethics governance research emphasizes that law firms must implement oversight structures—such as audit trails, human-in-the-loop review, and escalation protocols—to ensure that AI augments rather than replaces legal expertise.

Finally, compliance with professional responsibility rules is a defining legal requirement for AI adoption in the justice system. Canadian law societies increasingly warn that lawyers must understand the capabilities and limitations of AI tools they use, maintain confidentiality, avoid unauthorized practice of law, and ensure that AI-generated work meets professional standards. Osler's national AI legal guide notes that improper use of AI could expose lawyers to liability in areas such as negligence, confidentiality breaches, or unauthorized disclosure of client information (Osler, 2025).

Ethical AI adoption therefore requires not only technical safeguards but also institutional policies, training, and governance frameworks that align with the legal profession's duties of competence, loyalty, and integrity. AI in A2J must be:

- Transparent
- Non-discriminatory
- Privacy-protective
- Human-supervised
- Compliant with professional responsibility rules

## The Future Direction of AI in Law

Artificial intelligence is positioned to become a foundational component of legal systems across North America, reshaping how legal services are delivered and how courts manage growing caseloads. In both Canada and the United States, AI-driven tools are expected to expand far beyond research assistance,

supporting functions such as automated document drafting, case-flow management, and predictive analytics. These technologies promise to reduce administrative burdens, accelerate routine processes, and improve consistency in decision-making—particularly in high-volume areas like immigration, small claims, and regulatory compliance.

Law firms and legal departments are also preparing for deeper integration of AI into everyday practice. Emerging platforms are capable of reviewing contracts, triaging client matters, and generating first-draft legal documents with increasing accuracy. As these systems mature, they are likely to shift the role of legal professionals toward higher-level analysis, negotiation, and strategic judgment. This transition may also broaden access to justice by lowering costs for routine legal tasks and enabling self-represented litigants to navigate complex procedures with greater confidence.

At the same time, the rapid adoption of AI raises significant governance challenges that North American jurisdictions must address. Concerns about algorithmic bias, transparency, data protection, and due-process rights are prompting regulators, courts, and professional bodies to develop clearer standards for responsible AI use.

The future of AI in the legal domain will therefore depend not only on technological innovation but also on the creation of robust oversight frameworks that preserve fairness and accountability. With thoughtful regulation and ethical deployment, AI has the potential to enhance—not replace—the work of legal professionals while strengthening public trust in the justice system.

## Richard Susskind Hope

Richard Susskind has long argued that artificial intelligence will fundamentally reshape the global legal profession by shifting legal work away from traditional, bespoke services toward technology-enabled, systematized delivery. He foresees a future in which AI tools handle large volumes of routine tasks—such as document review, legal research, and contract analysis—at speeds and levels of accuracy that far exceed human capability. This transformation, he suggests, will push lawyers to focus on higher-order judgment, strategy, and client-centred problem-solving rather than repetitive analytical work (Susskind, 2019). In his view, AI will not simply enhance existing legal processes; it will redefine them by enabling new forms of dispute resolution, online courts, and automated advisory systems accessible to the public.

Susskind also anticipates that AI will play a central role in expanding global access to justice. He argues that millions of people worldwide cannot afford traditional legal services, and AI-driven platforms—such as expert systems, automated triage tools, and online legal guidance—will help close this justice gap by offering scalable, low-cost assistance (Susskind, 2019). This shift, he predicts, will be particularly significant in administrative and high-volume legal domains, where AI can streamline procedures and reduce bottlenecks. However, he also warns that the profession must address concerns about transparency, accountability, and fairness in algorithmic decision-making to ensure that technological progress does not undermine public trust.

Ultimately, Susskind envisions a global legal ecosystem in which AI is deeply embedded in courts, law firms, government agencies, and corporate legal departments. He argues that the legal profession must prepare for a future defined not by incremental change but by structural transformation, where technology becomes a primary means of delivering legal expertise rather than a mere support tool.

Lawyers, he contends, will need to adapt by developing new skills, embracing interdisciplinary collaboration, and rethinking long-standing assumptions about how legal work is performed and valued (Susskind, 2019).

## Conclusion

This paper demonstrates that artificial intelligence is poised to play a transformative role in strengthening Access to Justice in Canada. By modernizing legal processes, enhancing public legal literacy, and reducing long-standing systemic barriers, AI offers a pathway toward a more responsive and equitable justice system. Across multiple domains—ranging from legal information delivery and automated document assembly to triage systems, judicial decision support, and court administration—AI technologies have shown the capacity to streamline workflows, reduce procedural delays, and support individuals who have historically struggled to navigate complex legal environments. These benefits are particularly significant for vulnerable populations, including newcomers, survivors of violence, people with disabilities, Indigenous communities, and residents of rural or remote regions. For these groups, AI-enabled tools can function as genuine equalizers by offering accessible, multilingual, and user-centred support that would otherwise be difficult or impossible to obtain.

At the same time, the research underscores that the adoption of AI in the justice system must be grounded in strong ethical, legal, and professional safeguards. Transparency, non-discrimination, privacy protection, and meaningful human oversight are essential to ensuring that AI systems do not inadvertently reinforce inequities or undermine public trust. Compliance with professional responsibility rules—particularly those governing confidentiality, competence, and accountability—must guide every stage of AI design, deployment, and evaluation. Predictive analytics further offers a promising avenue for evidence-based policy reform, enabling governments, courts, and legal organizations to identify bottlenecks, forecast backlogs, and detect inequities with far greater precision than traditional methods allow.

The Canadian legal domain is already witnessing the emergence of AI-enabled software and applications that illustrate this potential. Tools such as *Lexis+ AI, Thomson Reuters CoCounsel, Blue J Legal, Harvi (Legal Aid BC), MyLawBC, Notarius,* and *Clio's AI-enhanced practice management features* are reshaping how legal professionals conduct research, draft documents, predict case outcomes, and manage client files. In courts and tribunals, platforms like the *Civil Resolution Tribunal (CRT)* and *Ontario's Justice Services Online (JSO)* demonstrate how digital pathways and guided forms can reduce administrative burdens and improve user experience. These tools collectively signal a broader shift toward a hybrid justice ecosystem in which AI augments human expertise rather than replacing it.

Taken together, these insights show that AI is not a substitute for human judgment, empathy, or discretion. Instead, it is a powerful enabling technology that—when governed responsibly and implemented collaboratively—can help build a justice system that is more efficient, more equitable, and more accessible for all Canadians. The future of justice in Canada will depend on striking the right balance between innovation and accountability, ensuring that technological progress is matched by ethical stewardship and a commitment to the foundational values of fairness, dignity, and inclusion. If Canada continues to invest in responsible AI development, robust data infrastructure, and user-centred

design, it can position itself as a global leader in delivering justice that is not only modern but meaningfully accessible to everyone.

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