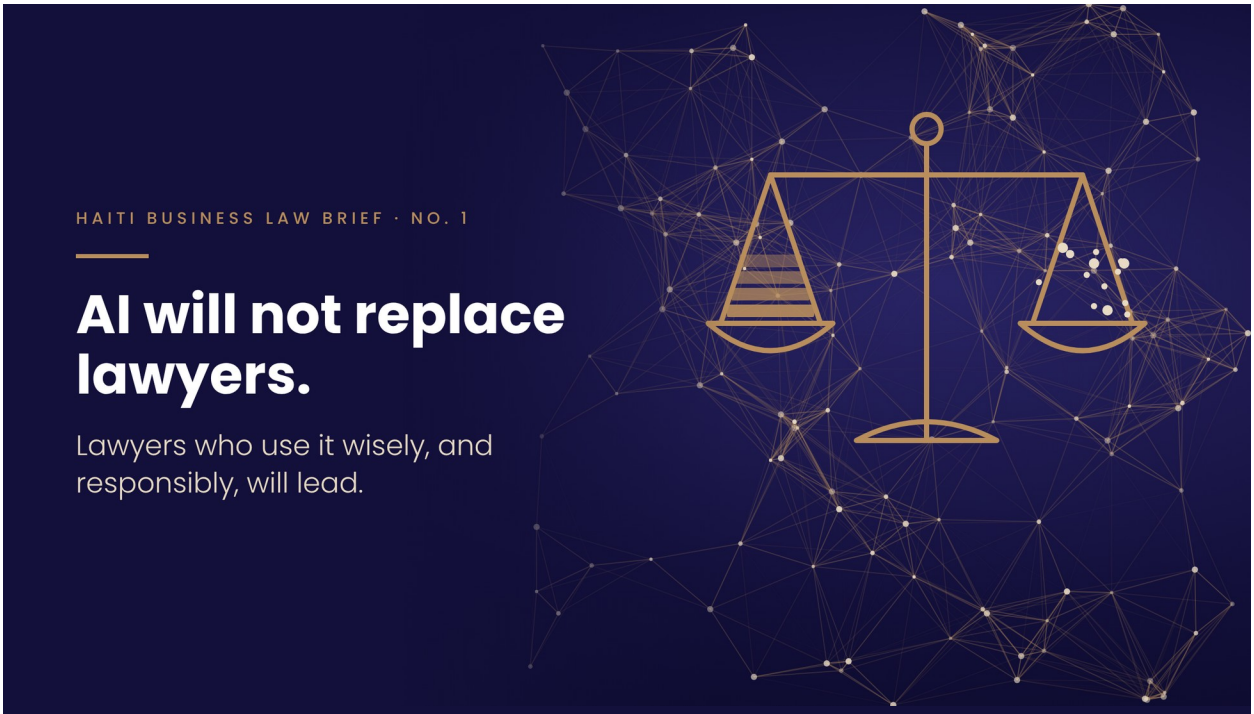


HAITI BUSINESS LAW BRIEF · No. 1 · AI AND THE LAW

Will AI Replace Lawyers?

Rethinking the future of legal expertise in the age of intelligent machines

By **Philippe-Raymond Cantave**, Attorney-at-Law, Port-au-Prince Bar, international lawyer, and Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators · PRC Attorney-At-Law, Pétion-Ville · November 2026

Introduction: a question that won't go away

Every week, clients, colleagues, and even law students ask me the same question: *will AI replace lawyers?* The debate is everywhere, from Richard Susskind's *The End of Lawyers?* (Oxford University Press, 2008) and his more recent *How to Think About AI* (Oxford University Press, 2025) to academic discussions in journals such as the **Harvard Journal of Law & Technology** and the **Yale Journal of Law & Technology**.

The question stopped being theoretical in June 2023, when a federal court in New York sanctioned two lawyers for filing a brief that cited judicial decisions which did not exist. A

chatbot had invented them (*Mata v. Avianca, Inc.*, No. 22-cv-1461 (PKC), S.D.N.Y., 22 June 2023). The lesson was not that AI is useless. It was that AI without legal judgment is dangerous.

But the real question is not whether AI will replace lawyers. It is whether lawyers will learn to use AI intelligently, strategically, and ethically.

At **PRC Attorney-At-Law**, we believe the answer is clear.

1. AI is not a competitor. It is a powerful research method

We encourage clients to research their legal questions with AI tools before they come to us. Why? Because informed clients make better decisions, ask sharper questions, and engage more meaningfully in the legal strategy we build together.

AI can scan:

- Hundreds of court decisions in minutes
- Doctrinal summaries across multiple jurisdictions
- Comparative law materials from civil law and common law systems

But AI cannot:

- Understand your emotions
- Detect nuance in your voice during a call
- Interpret cultural context
- Assess the human impact of a legal decision

These are the dimensions where experienced lawyers excel. And even in research, AI needs a lawyer's eye. A Stanford study of leading AI legal research tools found that they still gave incorrect or poorly sourced answers to roughly 17% to 33% of test queries (Magesh et al., "Hallucination-Free? Assessing the Reliability of Leading AI Legal Research Tools," *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, 2025).

In other words, AI is a brilliant intern: it never sleeps, never complains, never bills by the hour, and occasionally invents a court decision with total confidence. You would not let that intern sign your brief. Neither do we.

> **A PRACTICAL TIP FOR CLIENTS**
>
> Use AI to **prepare**, not to **decide**. Bring us your questions and your AI research. But never paste confidential contracts, personal data, or privileged correspondence into a public AI tool.

2. Legal judgment requires human intelligence, empathy, and context

International law is not just a set of rules. It is a **cultural, political, and institutional ecosystem**. AI cannot replace:

- The empathy needed to understand a client's fears
- The intuition developed through decades of practice
- The ability to read a client's facial expression during a video conference
- The cultural translation required when explaining legal concepts across systems

As international lawyers, we do not simply define a concept. We explain it using the equivalent idea, if one exists, in the client's own legal culture. Comparative lawyers call this the functional method (Konrad Zweigert and Hein Kötz, *An Introduction to Comparative Law*, 3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 1998).

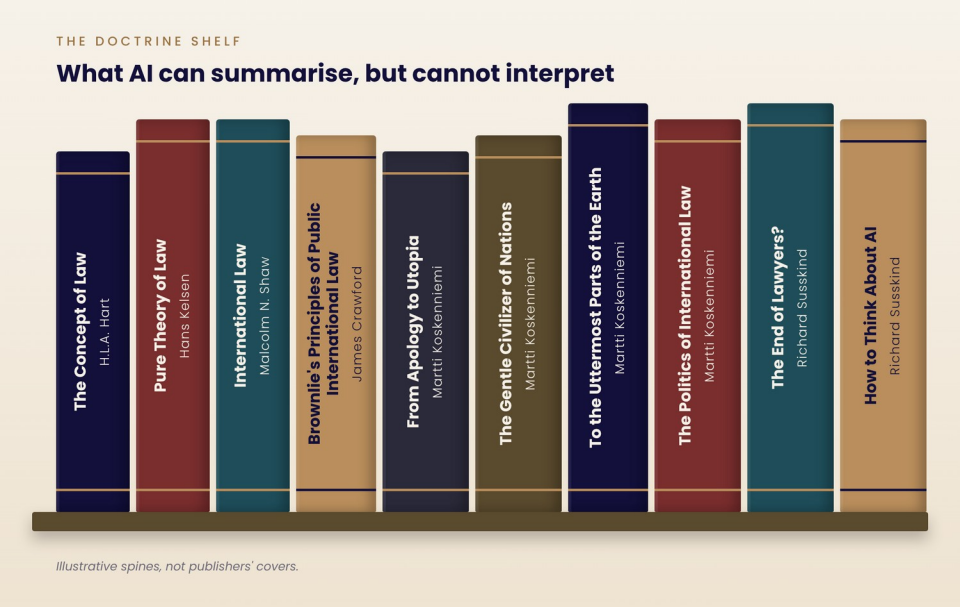
Take an everyday example from our practice. Explaining to a common law investor why a real estate sale in Haiti goes through a notary and an authentic deed, rather than a simple signed contract, means translating more than words. It means translating institutions, habits, and risks. In a trilingual practice (English, French, and Creole), that translation is daily work.

This is something no AI can do.

3. Doctrine still matters, and AI cannot replace it

Even with AI, we still turn to foundational works such as:

- **H.L.A. Hart**, *The Concept of Law* (Clarendon Press, 1961; 3rd ed., Oxford University Press, 2012)
- **Hans Kelsen**, *Pure Theory of Law* (2nd ed., trans. Max Knight, University of California Press, 1967)
- **Malcolm N. Shaw**, *International Law* (10th ed., Cambridge University Press, 2026)
- **James Crawford**, *Brownlie's Principles of Public International Law* (9th ed., Oxford University Press, 2019)
- **Martti Koskenniemi**, *From Apology to Utopia: The Structure of International Legal Argument* (Cambridge University Press, reissue 2005); *The Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law 1870–1960* (Cambridge University Press, 2001); *To the Uttermost Parts of the Earth: Legal Imagination and International Power 1300–1870* (Cambridge University Press, 2021); and *The Politics of International Law* (Hart Publishing, 2011)



Legal theory, doctrinal analysis, and empirical evidence remain essential. Some strategies are intuitive; others require deep doctrinal grounding. AI can summarise doctrine, but it cannot *interpret* it. Hart reminded us that legal rules have an "open texture" (*The Concept of Law*, chapter VII): there will always be cases that the words of a rule do not settle. Deciding those cases is an act of judgment, and judgment is the lawyer's work.

4. AI enhances lawyers who already know the law

Just as Excel did not replace accountants, legal AI will not replace lawyers. Instead, it will empower those who understand:

- How to question AI outputs
- How to verify sources against the primary texts
- How to integrate AI research into legal reasoning
- How to adapt AI insights to real-world contexts

Excel did not make accountants obsolete. It simply made it possible to be wrong in sixty columns at once, unless an accountant was checking the formulas. The same is true of legal AI. The more you know about international law, the better you will use Westlaw, LexisNexis, Jus Mundi, and AI-powered engines.

Professional rules point the same way. In the United States, the duty of competence expressly includes keeping abreast of "the benefits and risks associated with relevant technology" (ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct, Rule 1.1, Comment 8). The American Bar Association has confirmed that lawyers who use generative AI remain fully responsible for competence, confidentiality, client communication, supervision, and reasonable fees (ABA Formal Opinion 512, 29 July 2024). Judges in England and Wales have received similar guidance (Courts and Tribunals Judiciary, *Artificial Intelligence (AI): Judicial Guidance*, December 2023, updated April and October 2025). In Haiti, the same

conclusion follows from the duties of loyalty and professional secrecy that govern our profession (*Décret du 29 mars 1979 réglementant la profession d'avocat*; Code of Ethics of the Fédération des Barreaux d'Haïti).

5. The rules of the game are being written now

For businesses that operate across borders, AI is no longer only a technology question. It is a compliance question, and international law is writing the rules:

- **The European Union's AI Act** classifies AI systems intended to assist judicial authorities in researching and interpreting facts and the law as high-risk (Regulation (EU) 2024/1689, Annex III, point 8). Under the 2026 "AI Omnibus" amendments, obligations for these stand-alone high-risk systems are set to apply from 2 December 2027.
- **The Council of Europe Framework Convention on Artificial Intelligence and Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law** is the first legally binding international treaty on AI (CETS No. 225, opened for signature in Vilnius on 5 September 2024).
- **Soft-law standards** shape expectations worldwide: the European Ethical Charter on the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Judicial Systems (CEPEJ, December 2018), the OECD AI Principles (2019, updated 2024), and the UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (November 2021).



To my knowledge, Haiti has not yet adopted AI-specific legislation. But Haitian companies, NGOs, and public institutions that work with European, American, or multilateral partners will meet these standards in their contracts, grant agreements, and due diligence questionnaires. The question is not only whether these rules apply to you directly. It is whether your partners will expect you to meet them.

FIVE RULES FOR USING LEGAL AI RESPONSIBLY

1. **Protect confidentiality first.** Never share privileged or personal data with a tool whose terms you have not reviewed.
2. **Verify every citation.** Check each case, article, and quotation against the primary source before relying on it.
3. **Keep a human decision-maker.** AI may draft and summarise; a qualified lawyer decides and signs.
4. **Be transparent.** Tell clients, courts, and counterparties how AI was used when it matters.
5. **Document the process.** Keep a record of the tools, sources, and checks used on important matters.

Conclusion: the future belongs to lawyers who use AI wisely

A post I read recently said: **"Excel didn't replace accountants. AI won't replace lawyers."**



At **PRC Attorney-At-Law**, we agree. AI is a tool, an extraordinary one, but it is not a substitute for human judgment, cultural intelligence, or legal strategy.

Clients come to us not only for answers, but for:

- Interpretation
- Strategy
- Judgment
- Empathy
- Innovation

AI can assist with research. But only lawyers can understand people. AI has never sat across the table from an anxious investor in Pétion-Ville, and it has never had to explain a

postponed hearing with a straight face. And in international law, understanding people, and their legal cultures, is everything.

LET'S TALK

If your organisation is investing in Haiti, working across legal systems, or deciding how to adopt legal AI responsibly, I would be glad to discuss how we can help. Write to **avocat@philippe-cantave.com**, send a WhatsApp message to **+509 46 17 89 75**, or visit **philippe-cantave.com**. Follow the *Haiti Business Law Brief* every Monday in English and every Tuesday in French.

#LegalAI #AIandLaw #InternationalLaw #LegalTech #FutureOfLaw #Haiti #BusinessLaw

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This article provides general information on legal developments. It is not legal advice and does not create a lawyer–client relationship. Citations were checked against published sources as of November 2026.