

2025 | SECOND EDITION

State of AI in eDiscovery

**Maturation Drives Greater Clarity
and Higher Expectations**

Table of Contents

Foreword	3
Executive Summary	4
Demographics	5
Familiarity and Usage	6
Attitudes and Motivations	12
Opportunity and Impact	19
Looking Ahead.....	24

Foreword

In the span of just one year, AI has moved from early exploration to pockets of true execution within the legal industry. While use of AI is by no means ubiquitous, the pace of adoption is occurring more rapidly than many expected.

Across the board, law firms, corporate legal departments, and service providers have shifted from testing AI tools and experimenting with solution development to integrating AI tools into critical workflows and launching a whole host of new AI solutions.

At Lighthouse, we've been developing large language model (LLM) backed AI solutions for over six years because we're bullish on the unique capabilities this type of technology provides to solve tough eDiscovery challenges that used to have no good answer. With the explosion of AI that occurred in the wake of ChatGPT we've seen huge uptick in both interest and adoption of our solutions—a trend that's paralleled across the legal industry.

Our second annual State of AI in eDiscovery Report offers a comprehensive look into the evolving landscape of AI awareness, perception, adoption, and attitudes in our space based on inputs from 225 legal professionals across corporate legal teams and law firms.

The insights gained from this year's survey highlight acceleration across the board—acceleration in adoption, advancements in understanding, and a maturing view on both the opportunities and risks presented by AI. By comparing this year's findings with [last year's](#), our report sheds light on the attitudes driving this acceleration as well as illuminating where challenges remain and what's next.

Our Perspective on AI in Legal

At Lighthouse, we believe that the role of AI in legal is not to replace professionals but to empower them.

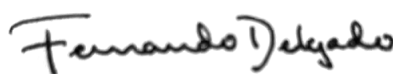
The legal industry thrives on precision, analysis, and strategic reasoning—all of which AI can enhance. But adoption must be thoughtful, ethical, and aligned with legal defensibility standards. That is why we advocate for:

- **Accountable methodology** – Transparent processes including inputs and outputs. Legal teams need visibility into how AI is developed to achieve defensible automated classification
- **Security-first AI implementation** – Given the sensitivity of legal data, data privacy, compliance, and security must be top priorities.
- **Human-AI collaboration** – The future of legal work is not AI vs. lawyers—it's AI + lawyers, working together to achieve significantly better outcomes.
- **Purpose-driven application** – The goal is not to apply AI—the goal is to solve problems and deliver the right outcomes.

Looking Ahead

As we move into 2025, one thing is clear: AI is not a passing trend—it is a defining shift in how legal work is done. The data in this report confirms that legal teams that embrace AI now will be the ones defining the future of the industry.

I hope this report provides you with valuable insights, practical takeaways, and a clearer vision of where AI is heading in eDiscovery and beyond. The legal industry is at an inflection point—and we are excited to be part of shaping what comes next.



FERNANDO DELGADO
HEAD OF AI & ANALYTICS,
LIGHTHOUSE

Executive Summary

Exposure and Adoption Growth

Over the past year, AI has matured in the eDiscovery and legal industry driven by increased exposure to AI solutions and expanded availability of new solutions—moving from “experimental AI” to “operational AI”, where firms and corporations are no longer just testing AI tools but actively embedding them into workflows.

Enterprise AI adoption has increased by:

95%

Last year, 20% of respondents worked at companies that had implemented enterprise AI tools like Copilot. This year 39% of respondents indicate their organizations are currently using enterprise AI.

Drives Maturation of User Views

This maturity is reflected in increasing clarity from respondents about their point of view on the biggest risks and biggest opportunities presented by AI, though it is difficult to tell whether these views about top use cases are driving proliferation of solutions in those areas or if the availability of solutions is driving increased comfort with AI application in the areas with readily available tools.

Trust in AI increased by:

4%

While gradual, an increase in respondents indicating high-trust scenarios correlated to a decrease in medium trust scenarios highlighting that people’s trust is increasing overall and driving people from cautious middle ground to more confident belief in AI.

Resulting in More Informed Attitudes

Organizations are shifting from broad AI skepticism (and fear of job displacement) to a measured, strategic embrace, though concerns around data security and accuracy remain.

Data security concerns still ranked:

#1

While data security remained the #1 concern both years, accuracy and reliability concerns have risen from #4 in 2023 to #2 in 2024, showing that users are now more focused on AI decision-making transparency than job displacement, which fell from #2 in 2023 to last in 2024.

Demographics

The following report is based on 225 survey responses from qualified legal professionals.

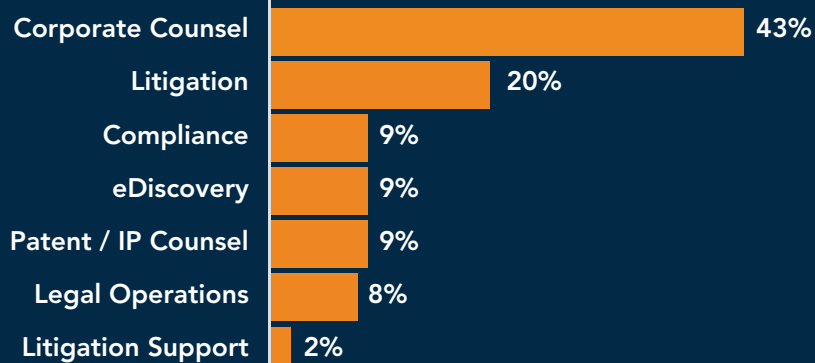
One-third (33%) of the experts work at a **law firm** and the remaining **two-thirds (67%)** work in **corporate industries**.

Experts surveyed were **full-time** employees at **law firms and corporations that use legal discovery services**. Over half of respondents (59%) had more than a decade of experience working in their field.

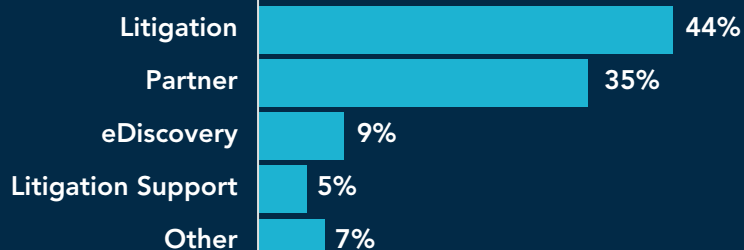
We interviewed 225 qualified respondents across corporate and law firm roles.



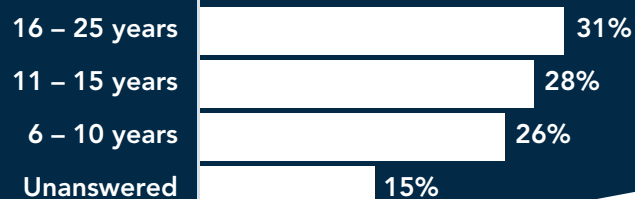
Corporate Roles



Law Firm Roles



Tenure of Respondents



Familiarity and Usage

Familiarity is high, but mostly driven by second- and third-party sources.

Though AI adoption has grown by almost 100% compared to last year's survey responses, most respondents still cite indirect sources such as social media and secondhand experiences from colleagues as the top drivers of their familiarity with AI.

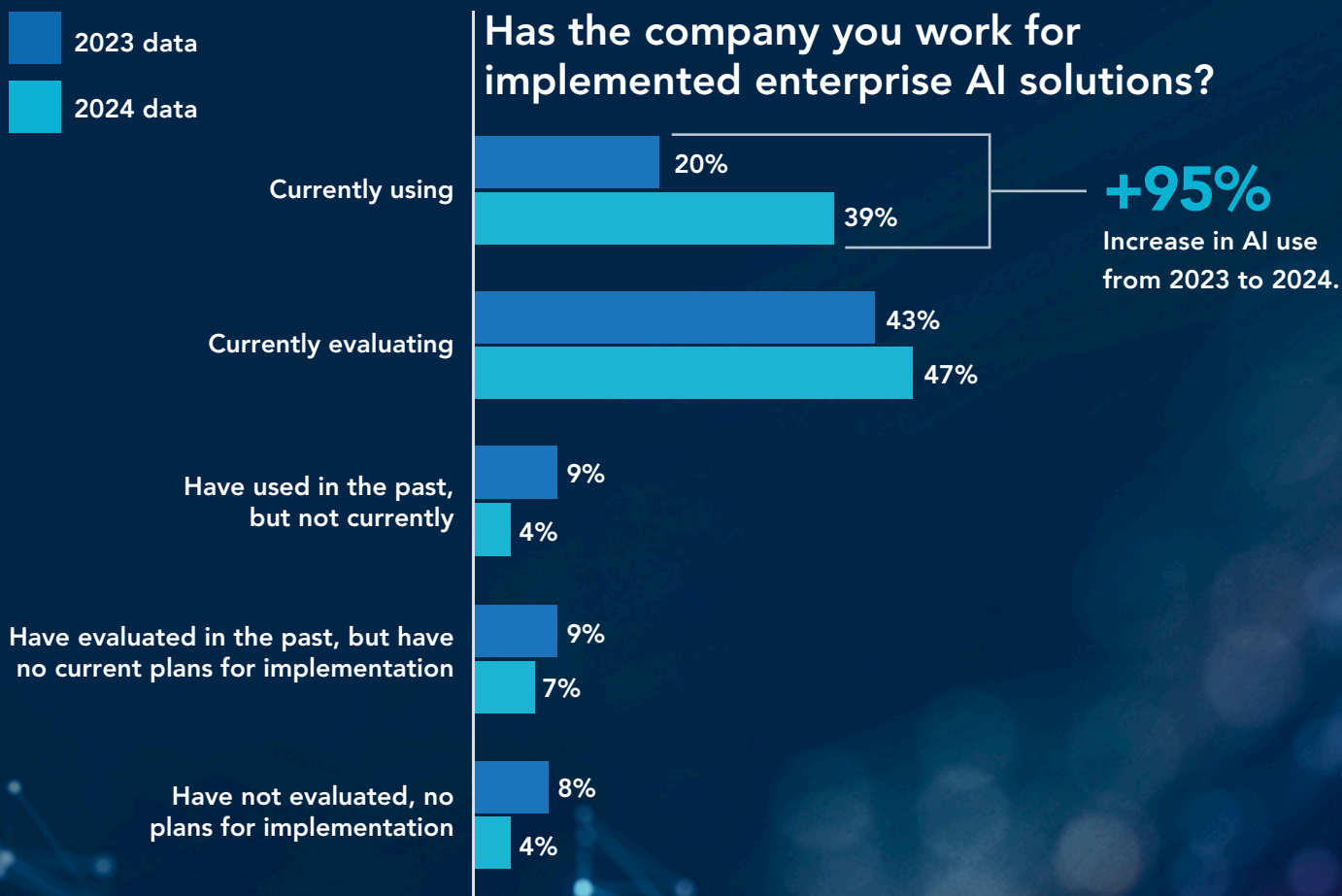
It is clear from the trajectory of reported adoption that the industry's use of AI is growing rapidly. Given that nearly half of respondents report their organizations are actively evaluating AI solutions, we expect to see the pace of adoption accelerate even more rapidly during 2025.

Key Themes

- AI familiarity in the legal industry has grown significantly, with a **45% increase** in respondents reporting **strong familiarity with AI solutions**.
- **95% increase in enterprise AI adoption** compared to last year, demonstrating a shift from early experimentation to full-scale implementation.
- Direct, **hands-on experience remains limited** with most familiarity stemming from indirect exposure through LinkedIn and workplace discussions.
- **Legal AI adoption is accelerating**, with 35% of organizations currently using legal AI solutions and another 49% actively evaluating options.

There has been a **95% increase** in the number of respondents reporting they work for a company that has implemented an enterprise AI solution such as Microsoft Copilot.

At the same time there was also an increase in those reporting their company is currently evaluating solutions. Conversely, the percentage of respondents reporting no plans for implementation has seen a 50% decrease falling from 8% to 4%. Related, those citing previous evaluation, but no plans for use, also decreased slightly; however, the nature of AI enables rapid new solution development, so we expect volatility in the “are not using” tiers of evaluation and adoption as new AI solutions emerge.

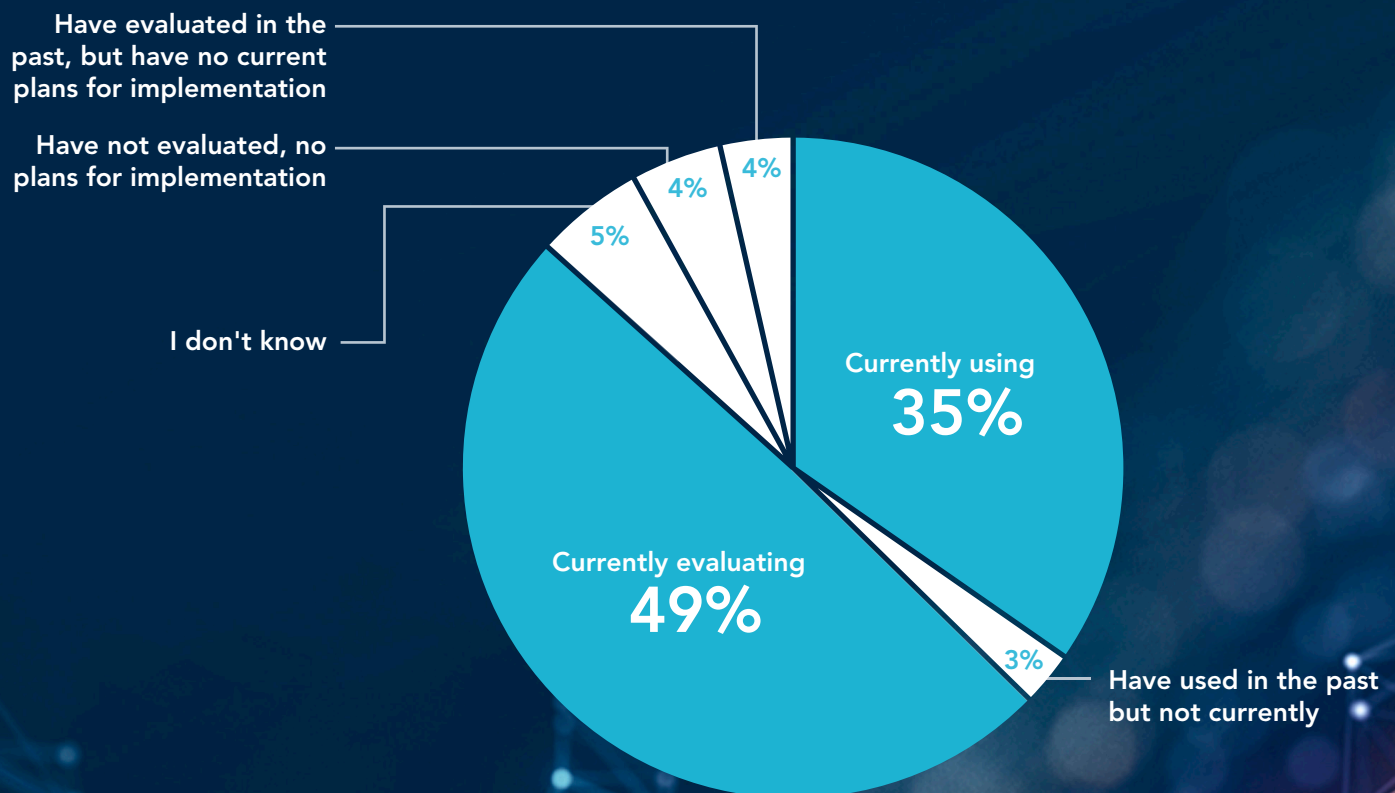


When it comes to legal AI solutions, **35%** of organizations are currently implementing and **49%** are in the active evaluation stage.

Based on trends related to adoption and usage of enterprise AI tools, we can expect that usage within legal may follow a similar trajectory.

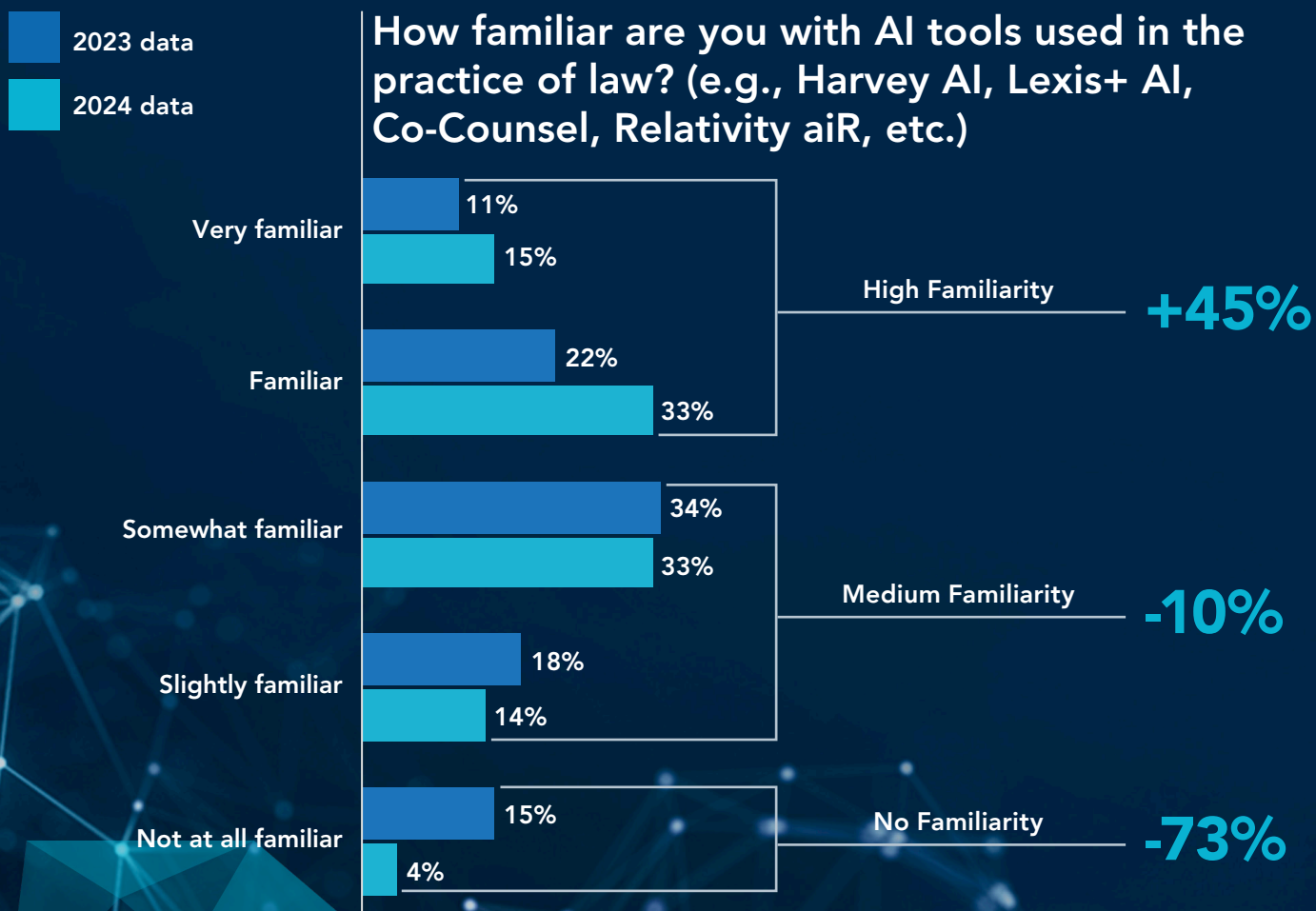
If 49% of companies are actively evaluating legal AI solutions right now, we can presume a significant number of those will convert to AI adopters over the next year given that it appears only a minority (7% down from 9% last year) of organizations evaluated enterprise AI solutions but ultimately decided not to adopt anything.

Which of the following best describes your organization's level of implementation of any AI-based solutions for legal processes?



Familiarity with AI specific to legal has increased significantly in the past year with those saying they are familiar to very familiar increasing 45%.

Overall, the market is becoming more familiar with both AI specific to the practice of law as well as generally from an enterprise productivity standpoint. Complete unfamiliarity with AI used in legal decreased 73% in the past year. Given the amount of media attention and specific legal industry attention it is unsurprising that this number continues to fall; however, despite 96% of all respondents having some familiarity with AI this is not directly correlated to use, as just 27% of respondents cite hands on experience as a source of their familiarity.

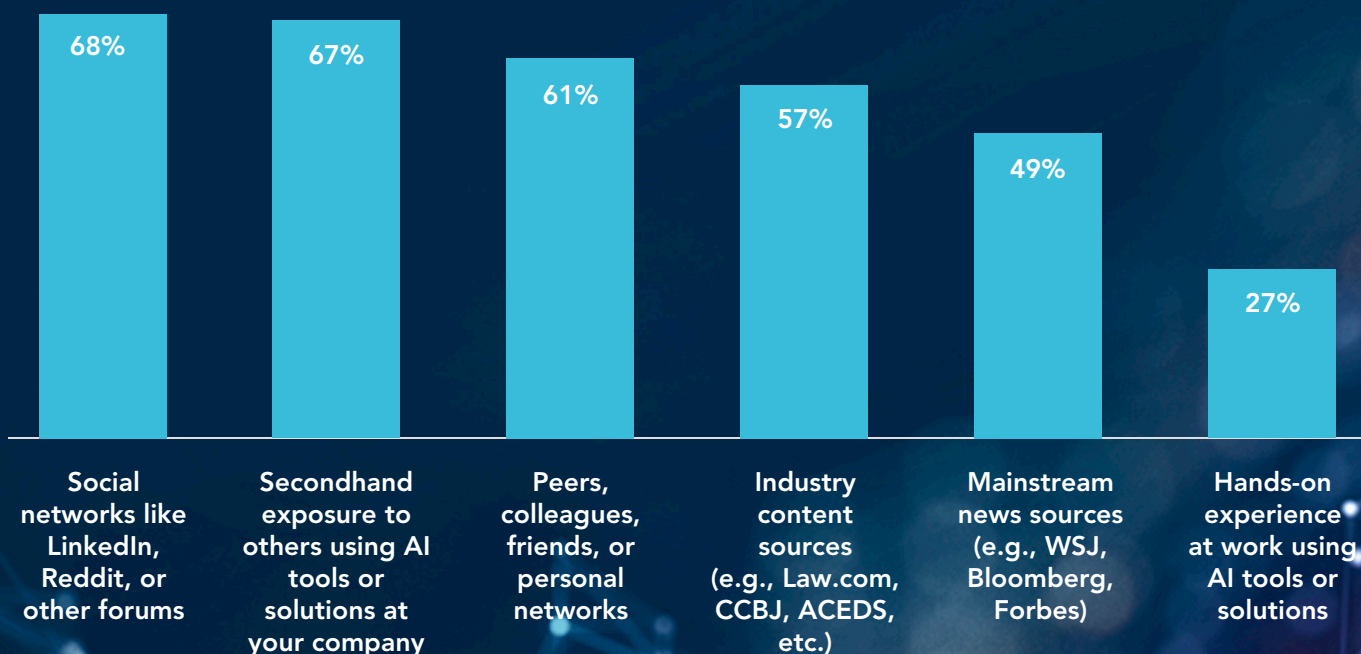


With just over 1 in 4 respondents indicating personal exposure to legal AI tools, there's a **notable gap** between market familiarity and actual use.

Considering the reported adoption of legal AI is 39% at the organizational level and only 27% on the individual level, it seems likely that there are barriers other than availability limiting adoption. It is possible that there is a smaller subset of users that have the willingness, skills, knowledge, or confidence to use legal AI tools themselves, and that availability within an organization is not the only factor in determining individual level use.

The high percentage of users indicating that social networks and peers / colleagues are their top sources of familiarity underscore a question about legal users' level of risk tolerance when it comes to AI applications. Clearly, people are looking to others as their source of information highlighting the importance of anecdotal experience which may carry outsized impact in a space where most users have no direct experience with the technologies in question.

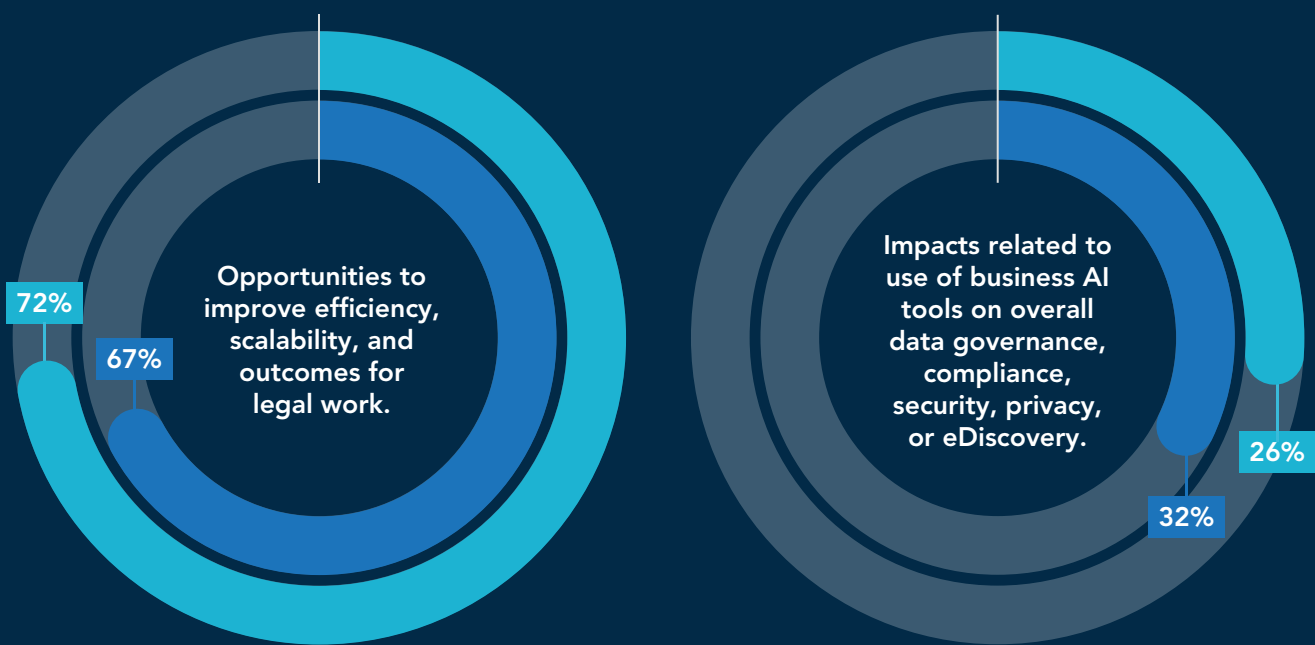
Which of the following are your top two sources for your familiarity with the use of AI tools in the practice of law?



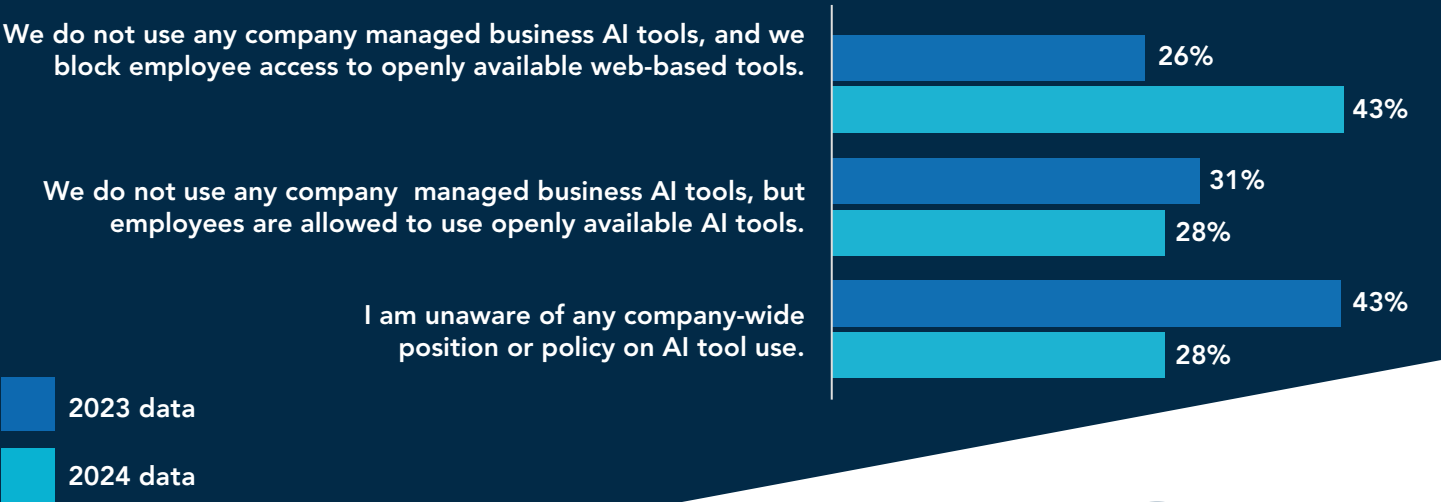
Company policies toward AI usage have matured as evidenced by a **significant decrease** in the number of respondents unaware of any company policies related to AI use.

Respondents from 2023 vs. 2024 are much clearer on the positions of their companies on AI use with the number of people saying they were unaware of any company wide policies falling by 35%. At the same time, it appears organizations are becoming more attuned to the possible risks related to AI with those reporting that their company has a policy blocking employee access to generally available web tools increasing by 65%.

Which of the following areas do you believe is the highest priority when it comes to AI usage related to legal?



Which of the following best describes your company's position on use of business AI tools? (Among those not currently using business AI tools.)



Attitudes and Motivations

Sentiment toward AI reflects growing maturity in the market as existential fears decrease and focus shifts to practical applications.

In the past year, overall sentiment about the impact of AI on legal has improved with 72% of respondents saying that the impact is net positive. Some of this view may be related to another trend highlighted in this year's data—an evolution to more sophisticated views on the value of AI rather than a focus on emotional concerns about potential job displacement that was a much larger concern from respondents in 2023.

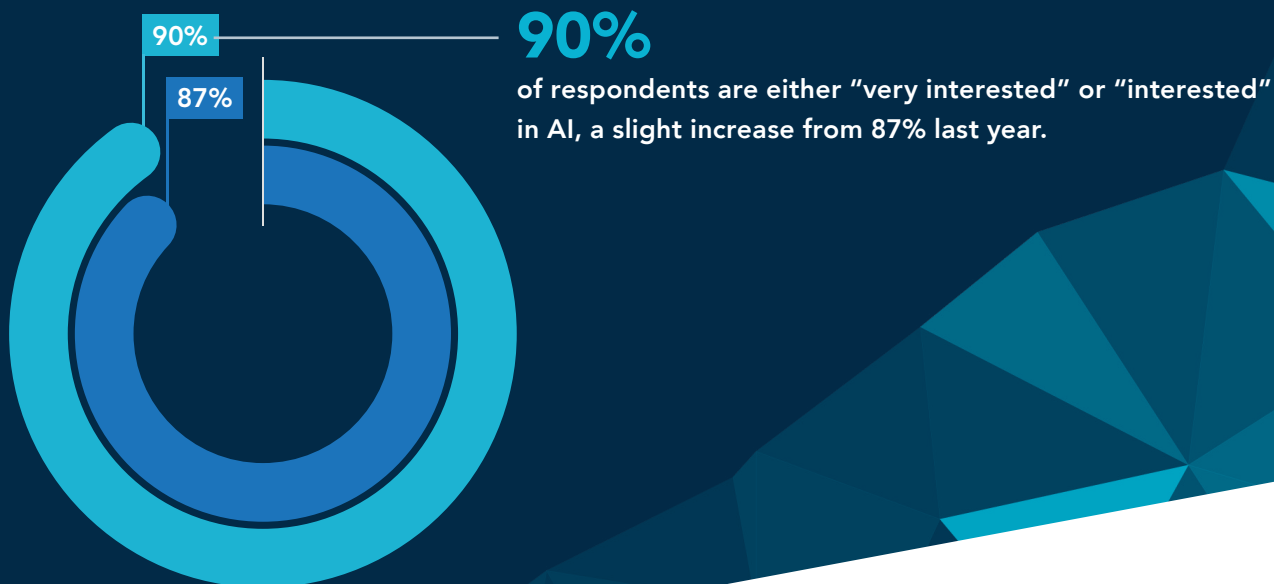
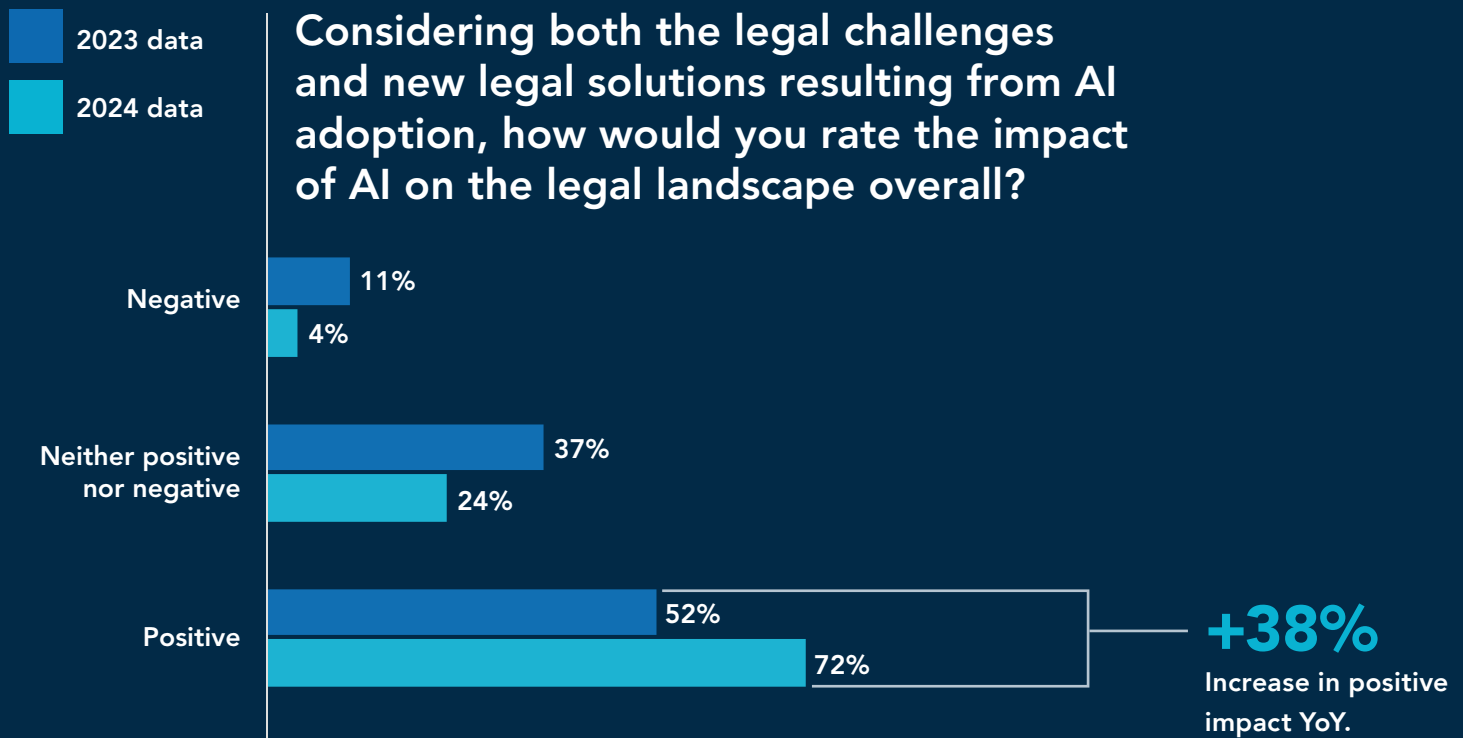
As users get more exposure to the impacts of AI, it stands to reason that they are better able to form educated opinions about the merits and potential value it presents, and we can expect to see further crystallization of user viewpoints as AI adoption continues to increase.

Key Themes

- Overall **sentiment toward AI has become more positive**, with a 38% increase in respondents who believe AI has a net positive impact on the legal industry.
- **Concerns around job displacement have declined**, falling from the #2 risk in 2023 to the lowest-ranked concern in 2024.
- Reliability & Accuracy and Data Security & Privacy remain the top risk concerns, reflecting a **shift from existential fears to practical implementation challenges**.
- **ROI is an increasing focus**, with more legal professionals recognizing AI's potential to improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

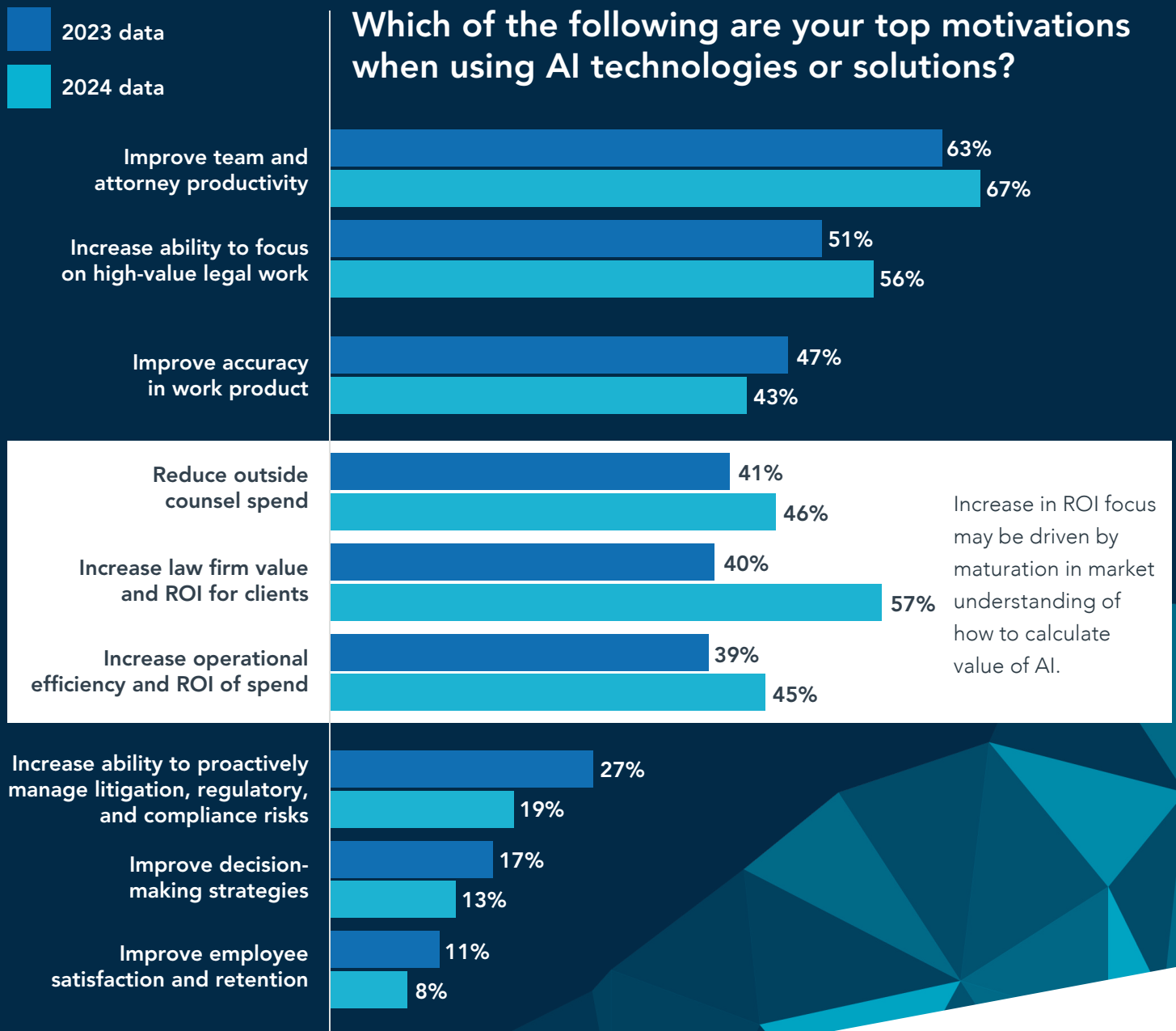
There is greater positive sentiment about the impacts of AI on the legal industry: Respondents saying that AI is either **positive or very positive** increased by 38%.

Last year, fears around potential job displacement as well as general lack of AI understanding colored responses; however, this year there was a significant decrease in both existential concerns about the impact of AI as well as a decrease in overall “grey area” across responses. It seems that the markets growing understanding of AI is strongly correlated to the growth in positive perception toward AI. This relationship may reflect the aggressive focus on positive impacts and ROI that AI solution providers have pushed into the market over the past year.



While team and attorney productivity remain the leading motivation for AI use, recognition of AI's **positive impact on ROI** of legal spend increased significantly.

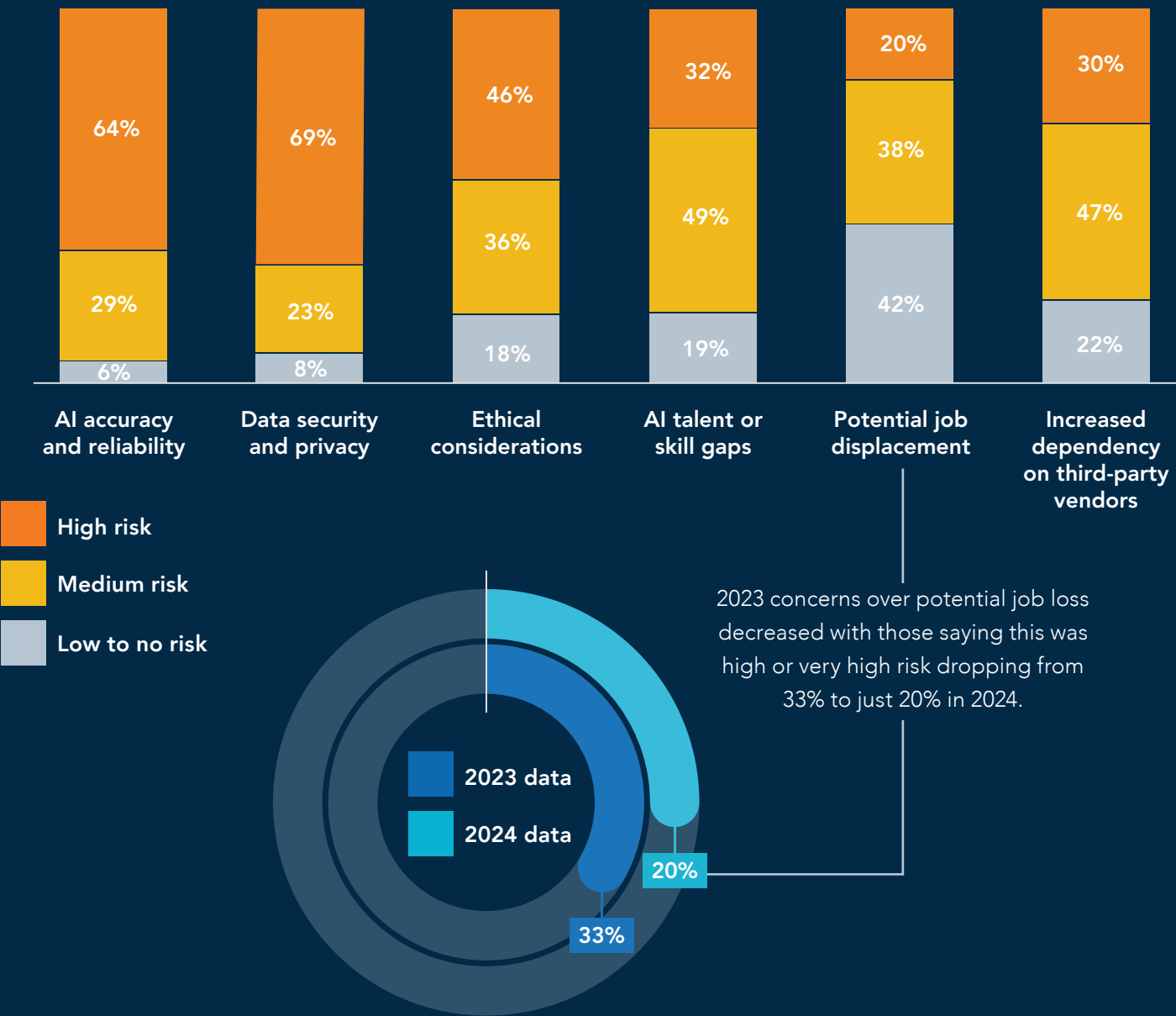
Despite most users still relying on secondhand or even 3rd party sources for their familiarity with AI, it is interesting to see the growth in focus on ROI over the past year as well as the growth in positive sentiments. This shift in focus seems to reflect much of the messaging that AI providers have pushed into the space and further highlights the gap between perception and use. While providers are clearly being successful in influencing market views about the value of AI, it remains to be seen if they will be equally as successful in driving adoption over the next year. If changing sentiment is a leading indicator of adoption, we should expect 2025 to see exponential increases in usage compared to 2024.



Reliability & Accuracy and Privacy & Security remain the top areas of perceived risk related to AI use.

When it comes to mitigating risk related to AI use, the two main drivers of concern are also highlighted as the top mitigations. Those highlighting concern over accuracy and reliability cite AI specific security and privacy measures as the top opportunity to mitigate this concern and vice versa. As another sign of maturing market viewpoints, concerns over job displacement declined significantly.

How would you classify the level of risk for each of the following areas related to adopting AI for the legal industry?



It was notable that responses to this question clearly indicate a perception that **Accuracy & Reliability** and **Data Security & Privacy** are inextricably linked.

It stands to reason that someone whose top concern is security and privacy would view AI-specific security and privacy measures as the top mitigation for this concern; however, that was not the case in this survey. Rather, respondents identified proven accuracy and reliability as the top mitigation for concerns over security and privacy. Similarly, the reverse was true with those citing accuracy and reliability as the top concern identifying AI-specific data security and privacy measures as the most important mitigation.

Which of the following would have the biggest impact on mitigating your risk perception for AI **Accuracy & Reliability** and **Data Security & Privacy**?



Document review for eDiscovery emerged as the number one opportunity for AI use by legal.

These results were gained through a series of questions asking respondents to identify from a list the most opportunity and least opportunity use case.

In this methodology a score of “zero” should be read as a 50/50 split in opinion about the highest or lowest opportunity use case. The higher the score, the more agreement there was among respondents that this was the highest-value use case. Similarly, the lower the score the more agreement among respondents that this was the lowest-value use case.

One notable finding again highlights a question about AI solution providers’ influence on perceptions in the market: the relative perceptions about document review for eDiscovery vs. data reduction for eDiscovery. There has been huge focus on AI use for document review; however, there’s been much less focus on AI for data reduction despite this being a much more established use case with solutions leveraging predictive LLMs going back as far as six years. Do perceptions about the relative opportunity here represent individually held beliefs or simply a reflection of the most well-known solutions in the market?

Please select which of the following has the most opportunity and least opportunity for AI adoption for legal uses.



Despite increased exposure and positive sentiment, **trust** and particularly, **mistrust**, are still at the heart of the legal market's attitudes toward AI.

Through qualitative responses collected in the survey the role of trust emerges as a central area of uncertainty. Concerns around accuracy and reliability of AI are top of mind. At the same time, users also recognize the benefits of AI and acknowledge the need to build the right supporting workflows to enable oversight. These quotes highlight another major factor on the road to widespread AI adoption—individual behavior change. Regardless of the quality of the technology itself, for AI adoption at scale, people must change their mindset and habitual way of working. For those hoping to accelerate that process it will be crucial to educate and support the mindset shifts needed to enable AI driven workflows to proliferate.

“

AI helps **reduce the amount of human time** spent on certain workstreams, but still it **requires a lot of oversight and checks.**

”

“

I am still getting in the habit of utilizing AI tools as well as **learning to trust AI to do my job accurately.**

”

“

We always **worry that the AI might be wrong.** Based on others' input.

”

“

They **can't be trusted** and often give very wrong answers.

”

“

We are **slow to trust new technology**, especially AI that is not regulated.

”

Opportunity and Impact

Level of user trust is a critical factor in AI adoption, but drivers of trust remain highly subjective and variable.

Overall, there was a general increase in trust toward AI. Despite this, mistrust of AI accuracy and reliability as well as concerns over security and privacy persist. Specific concerns expressed in qualitative responses highlight the role of trust that underpins both issues.

The issue of trust reflects the relative immaturity of the legal AI market where people largely don't have personal experience to draw on or established third-party frameworks with which to evaluate things like the accuracy and security of AI. As the market matures, we would expect to see increasingly nuanced views emerge with perspectives on what users expect to see to gain their trust in both the accuracy and security of AI.

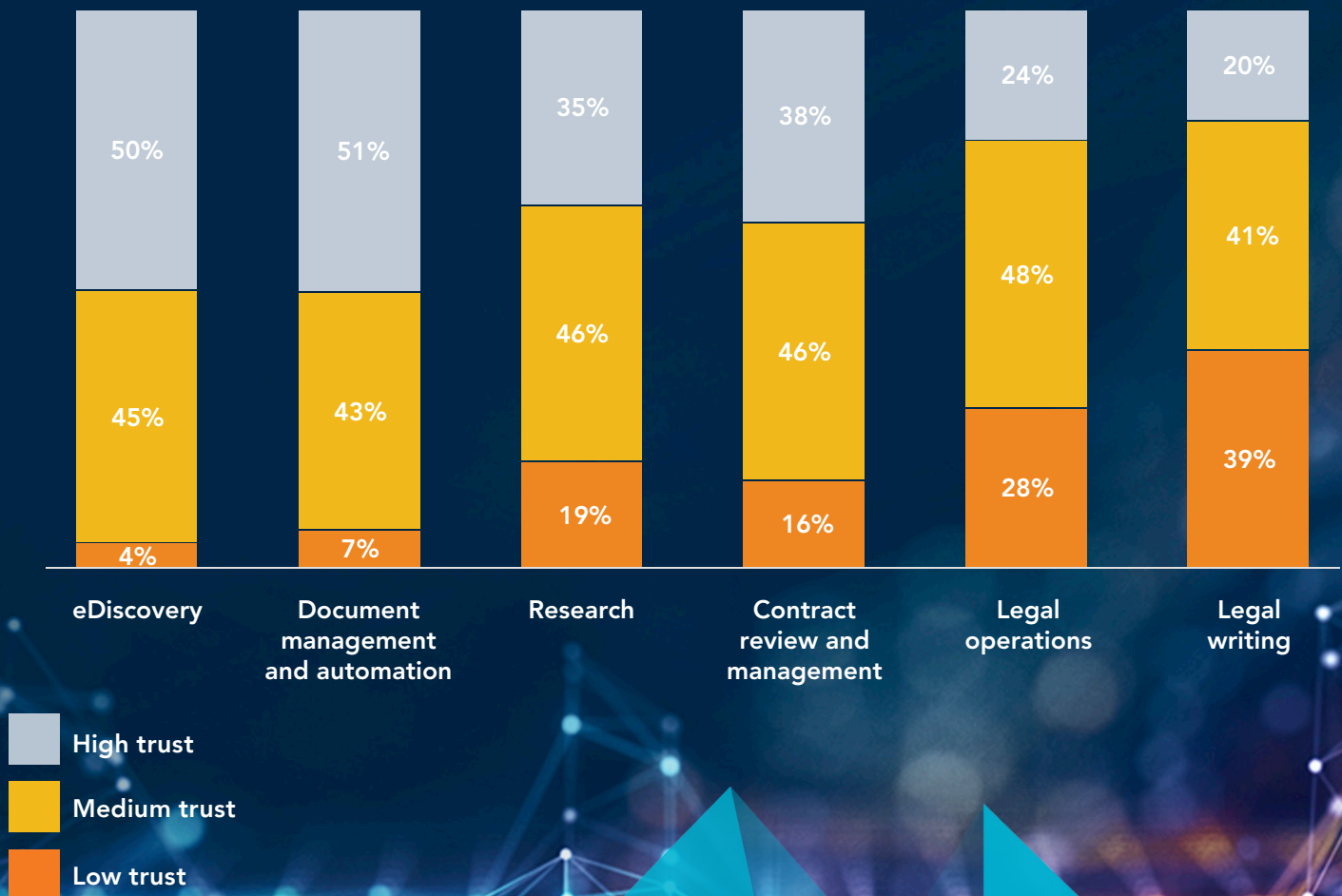
Key Themes

- **eDiscovery is now the most trusted AI application in legal**, with 95% of respondents expressing medium to high trust in AI for eDiscovery tasks.
- **Adoption is highest for well-established AI use cases** like privilege review, key document identification, and summarization.
- Despite increased adoption, **perceived AI effectiveness has slightly declined**, with more respondents rating their company's AI solutions as "ineffective."
- **Trust remains a critical factor**, particularly for higher-complexity AI applications where accuracy and reliability concerns persist.

There is **greater trust for more objective and routine use cases**, confirming user mistrust of AI for tasks assumed to be more complex.

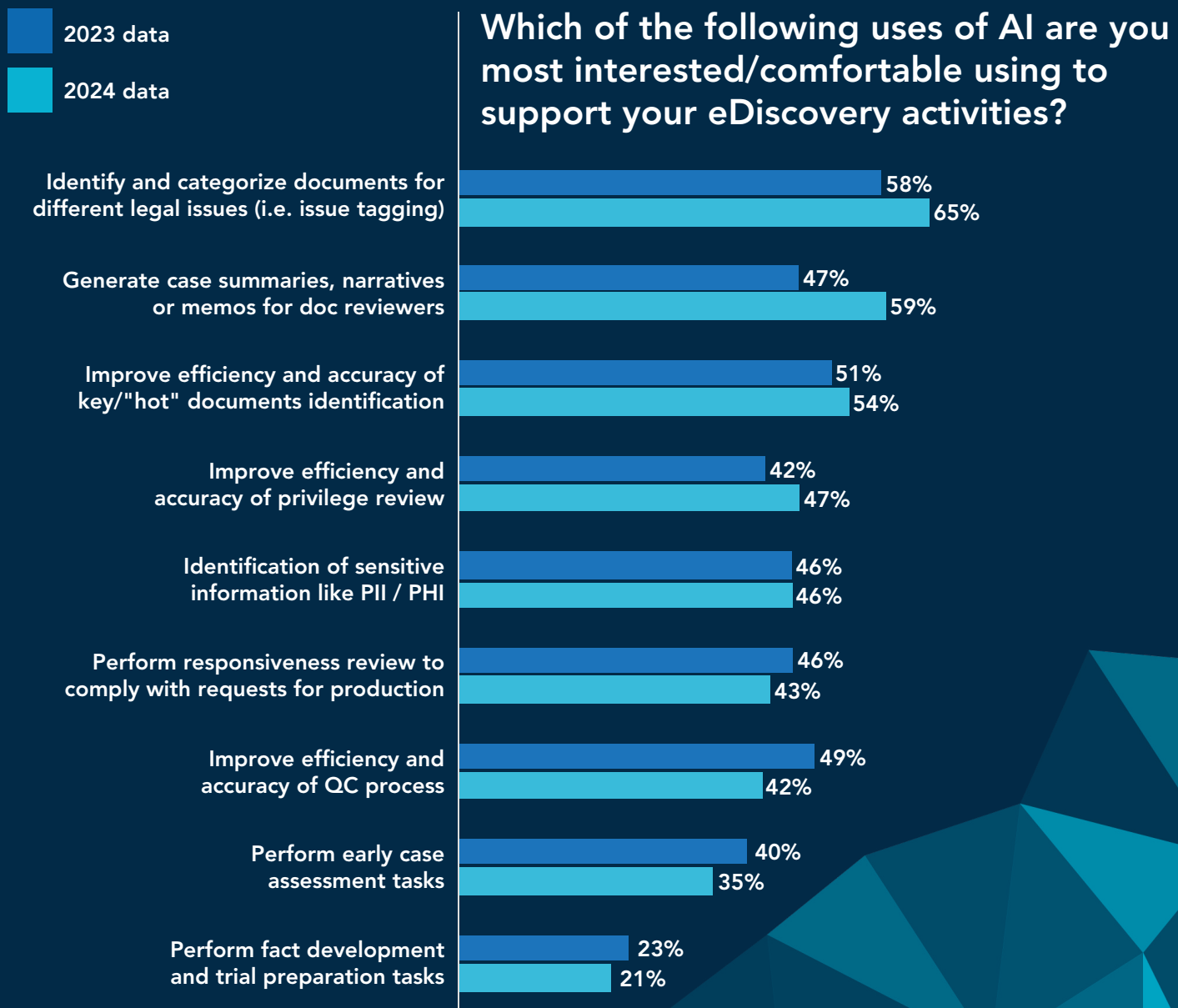
eDiscovery was identified as the area where respondents had the highest trust in AI tools. The level of trust in AI for this use case parallels the identification of document review for eDiscovery as the highest opportunity use case for AI in legal—further highlighting the important relationship between trust and adoption. Lower levels of trust around legal writing correlate to anecdotal feedback from the survey questioning the efficacy of AI for higher complexity tasks that require more human nuance.

How would you classify the level of trust for each of the following areas related to adopting AI for the legal industry?



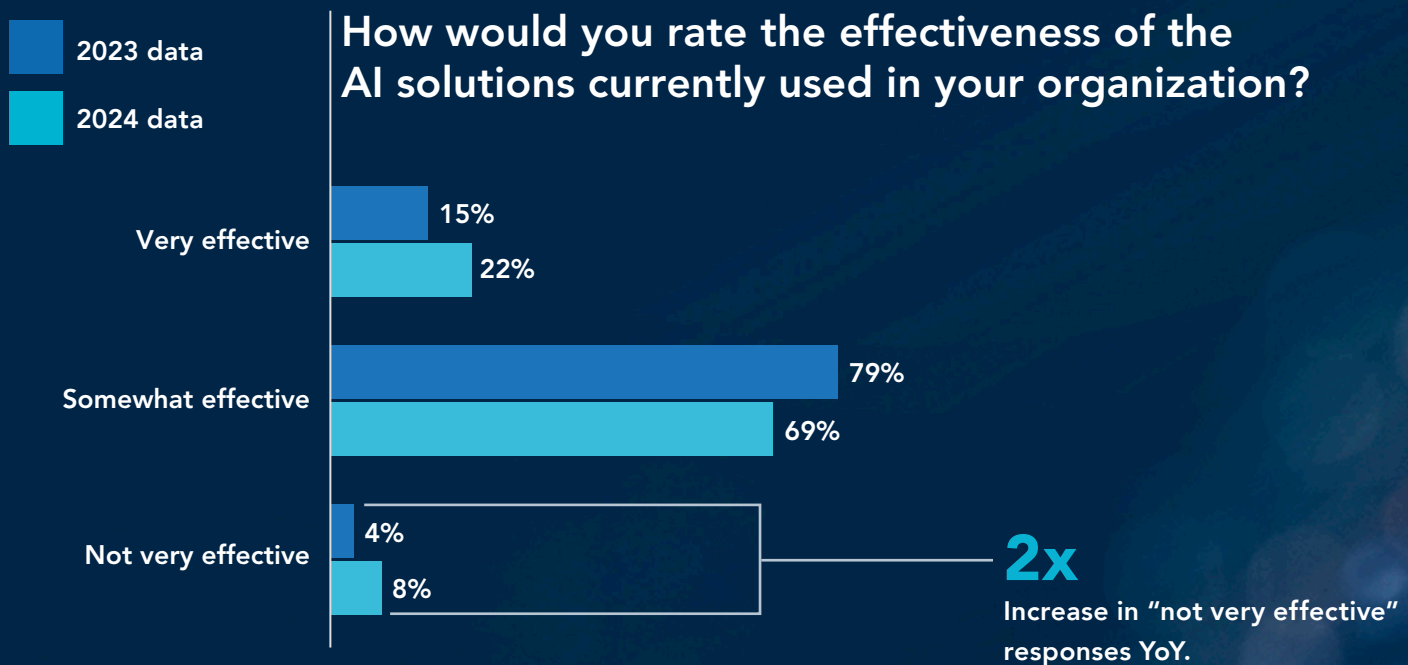
Within eDiscovery, identification of the most compelling use cases reflected changes from 2023 that **parallel dominant AI solutions** introduced in the past year.

Privilege review has emerged as a dominant use case for AI application in eDiscovery, which may reflect the increase in users identifying privilege as an area where they feel comfortable using AI. It is not clear whether the emergence of privilege is one driven by demand or if user perception reflects the availability of AI solutions addressing privilege. Similarly, increases in opportunity perception around aiding document reviewers and locating hot docs further reflect use cases that have seen AI-based solutions released over the past year.



Respondents' assessment of the effectiveness of AI solutions decreased slightly, and those rating their **company's AI solutions as "not very effective" doubled.**

This year showed an increase in both those rating AI used at their company as "very effective" and "not very effective," pointing to increasing crystallization of views. The increases at both ends of the spectrum also paralleled a decrease in the middle category, "somewhat effective." As adoption increases and people's direct experience grows, it will be interesting to see if there's a continuation of this trend—a continuation that could point to increasing maturation that drives polarization of viewpoints in the market.



According to qualitative responses, sentiment regarding barriers driven by **trust and reliability of AI outputs** persists.

Respondents indicate higher trust in AI for lower-value tasks—trust which decreases as tasks grow in required “sophistication.” One area of challenge for AI solutions relates to the question of how to determine value. Considering the indication of higher user trust for lower-value tasks, getting the question of pricing right will be crucial to aiding increased AI adoption. Further, until the market develops a mature and consistent ways to assess and measure the accuracy of AI widespread adoption will remain difficult.

“

Very useful in **identifying trends for investigations, document management, and eDiscovery**. The results are accurate, but could use improving.

”

“

For **more direct, low-value tasks**, there is **high efficacy**, but there is **degradation for higher sophistication activities** that require more rework and additional scrutiny.

”

“

There are still **data quality issues** that generate inconsistent results.

”

“

AI solutions are **useful for low-complexity tasks but face challenges with accuracy**, contextual application, trust, user competency, regulatory limitations, and adapting to more sophisticated or organization-specific needs.

”

Looking Ahead

Conclusion

As AI adoption in legal workflows continues to accelerate, the insights from this year's report highlight key shifts in perception, trust, and implementation.

Compared to last year, legal professionals are moving beyond curiosity and initial experimentation, with a significant increase in real-world AI deployment across eDiscovery, contract review, and research. While concerns around data security and AI accuracy remain top of mind, fears of job displacement have declined, signaling a more pragmatic and strategic approach to AI adoption likely driven by maturing views across the space.

The data also reveals a growing divide between early adopters and those hesitant to embrace AI, suggesting that firms investing in AI now may gain a competitive advantage in efficiency, cost savings, and decision-making. At the same time, the industry is facing new regulatory and ethical considerations, pushing organizations to establish clearer governance frameworks for AI usage.

Against this backdrop, the following predictions outline where the legal industry is headed in 2025 and beyond. These forecasts are grounded in the trends observed in this year's survey and reflect both the opportunities and challenges that will shape the next phase of AI in legal practice.

Predictions

- **AI is moving from an emerging trend to an operational necessity** in legal workflows, particularly in eDiscovery, contract management, and research.
- **Trust will continue to be a major driver of AI adoption**, with transparency, accuracy, and oversight playing key roles in accelerating usage.
- **Legal professionals will demand more from AI solutions**, expecting greater reliability and contextual accuracy as AI tools mature.
- **The gap between AI adopters and skeptics will widen**, with firms that fail to implement AI at scale potentially falling behind in efficiency and cost competitiveness.
- **Regulation and governance will play a bigger role in AI adoption**, with increased focus on compliance, ethical considerations, and mitigating AI-related risks.
- **AI will enhance—not replace—legal professionals**, with the most successful implementations complementing human expertise rather than attempting full automation.

About Lighthouse

For 25 years, Lighthouse has provided innovative software and services to manage the increasingly complex landscape of enterprise data for compliance and legal teams. Lighthouse leads by developing proprietary technology that integrates with industry-leading third-party software, automating workflows, and creating an easy-to-use, end-to-end platform. Lighthouse also delivers unique proprietary applications and advisory services that are highly valuable for large, complex matters, and a new SaaS platform designed for in-house teams. Whether reacting to incidents like litigation or governmental investigations, or designing programs to proactively minimize the potential for future incidents, Lighthouse partners with multinational industry leaders, top global law firms, and the world's leading software provider as a channel partner.

Connect with us about this report or to learn more about Lighthouse AI.

206-223-9690 | lighthouseglobal.com/artificial-intelligence | insights@lighthouseglobal.com

© Lighthouse. All rights reserved. Lighthouse is a registered trademark of Lighthouse Document Technologies.



LIGHTHOUSE