

CASE STUDY

**ROSS Intelligence -
The rise & fall of a legal AI**



Background

Each and every sector-such as finance, health and logistics, as well as eCommerce-has slowly but surely been able to penetrate the doors of artificial intelligence (AI). Nevertheless, of all the industries to understand the importance of AI, legal services have always been among the last to catch on. Frankly, there should be no surprise here. The legal world is mainly a maze of statutes, case laws, precedents, and jargon that can only be understood by a veteran attorney (or perhaps an overly passionate law student). Enter AI-in particular legal AI-that pledges to cut through all the complexity. Given the massive volume of documents, historical precedents, and contextual interpretations involved in legal work, AI sounded like the superhero the sector really craved. This was where ROSS Intelligence came into the picture-an innovative legal tech platform aimed at atomizing and simplifying the laborious research process.

Organization Name

ROSS Intelligence

Target Industry

Legal Services / LegalTech

Problem Statement

These inefficiencies by which the legal service is rendered slow down justice and will in turn erode public trust in the system. These are some challenges faced:

- Time-consuming legal research
- Delayed case preparations
- Inaccessibility of the justice system
- Overwhelming legal jargon
- Low transparency and affordability for the client

The lawyers would spend endless hours looking through legal documents, researching past judgments of cases, and interpreting statutes, which basically drags the case-building process. This results in adjournments, stressed-out lawyers, and unhappy clients.

A remedy for this was necessary in the industry for speed, efficiency, and data-backed clarity with the trade-off of no compromise on accuracy.

Proposed Solution

A smart collective formed in 2014 at the University of Toronto; they launched ROSS intelligence, built on the IBM Watson platform. While not as the first legal AI, it quickly gained the most voices for its easy-to-use interface and trailblazing possibilities.

This is how ROSS Intelligence intended to 'disrupt' the legal world.

1 Automated Legal Research:

ROSS, applying machine learning and NLP, sifts through a gigantic amount of legal data to isolate the most relevant case laws, precedents, and judgments-in seconds. Where this would have taken a few days previously, it now takes merely a few minutes.

2 Simplified Legal Jargon:

These translate cumbersome legal language into English which renders legal documents quite understandable to both attorney and client. Legal dictionaries have dreaded this.

3 Outcome Predictions:

Using historical data, ROSS predicted possible outcomes of a case based on the arguments presented, the context of the case, and past decisions. This added a lot of value in strategizing and preparing for actual battles in the courtroom.

4 Outcome Predictions:

The tool could highlight the strong and weak points of a case, allowing lawyers to refine their approach even further, minimizing human error or bias in the construction of legal strategies.

Outcome

The impact of ROSS Intelligence on the legal industry was immediate and impressive:

● Increased Efficiency

At that time, legal research would take hours or sometimes days to complete. Now, however, it has been reduced to a few clicks. Productivity at law firms has increased significantly, and lawyers have had more time to pay attention to strategies than to sifting through the PDFs.

● Improved Accuracy

Using both structured and unstructured forms of data, the AI will also be able to trace down mentions, detect subtle differences in legal arguments and give detailed summaries, all of which significantly reduces the chances of an accident.

● Data-Driven Strategy

Access to this kind of data was enabling legal professionals to build better cases. Hence, rather than being baseless and without data, arguments got smarter.

● Client Cost Savings

Money saved was merely a corollary of time saved. Clients had less research time billed, thereby making legal services feel a bit less terrifying for their pocketbooks. This allowed legal access to newly opened grounds for a larger segment of the population.

Unfortunately, this promising chapter didn't last.

Shutdown of ROSS Intelligence:

The company ROSS Intelligence was thus forced to shut down in 2021 after a high-profile lawsuit. The plaintiff, Thomson Reuters (the owner of Westlaw, a legal research platform), accused ROSS of copyright infringement, alleging that the AI platform had utilized copyrighted material-not to train its models-which were procured via third-party contractors. ROSS Intelligence protested its innocence by reiterating principles of fair use concerning the use of publicly available legal texts, but the court case drained its resources and created a gloom over its operations. Eventually, ROSS decided to shut down instead of continuing a very costly legal battle.

The court verdict against ROSS Intelligence became a landmark for the intersection of AI, intellectual property, and law. It raised seminal queries about:

- Fair use of data
- Training AI models on proprietary content
- Ethical data sourcing practices
- The definition of “transformative” use under copyright law

Key Takeaways

AI and Legal IP Rights Must Coexist Peacefully:

Arguably, the greatest lesson ROSS Intelligence's fate teaches is that of respecting intellectual property rights. Whatever its phenomenal potential, AI should not be found operating in a legal gray area vis-a-vis data sourcing.

Transparency in Data Sourcing is Non-Negotiable

Every AI platform in a field as sensitive as legal services needs to maintain full disclosure as to where and how it sources its data.

Ethical AI Training is Crucial

Such trained Artificial Intelligence tools should be trained responsibly so that the biases are not built-in, or the output does give out flaws. In a field such as law, where life and destiny hinge on what the law says, accuracy becomes even more ethically important.

AI is Here to Stay in Legal Services

Regardless of the fact that ROSS Intelligence shut down, it nevertheless created an avenue for other legal AI platforms to rise. The baton is now being taken by companies like LexisNexis and Casetext, which are focusing on smarter and safer ways to integrate AI into legal research.

Innovation Must Be Balanced With Legal Compliance

Thus, in a well-established industry, a new venture must know how to set its standards but at the same time accept the original rules. Well and good for disruptive innovation, but not disruptive of the law.

Conclusion

ROSS Intelligence was a startup. Well, one more thing, it was emblematic of what the future holds for legal practice. It proved that artificial intelligence could actually bring value to an industry that pretty much was running through the motions during the modernization process. Its impact was to accelerate legal research, strengthen arguments, and democratize access to legal services a bit.

But its collapse also underscored the minefields destined for legal AI. Oddly enough, the legal business is a beast: precedent-bound and tightly regulated, it is ferociously proprietary over its intellectual property.

Of course, now that ROSS Intelligence has vanished, all that it left will continue to have its implications in legal tech. Its tale conveys inspiration and caution. Future legal AI start-ups would do well to adopt ROSS's spirit of innovation while avoiding its missteps in compliance.

One thing's certain, though: AI will, without question, continue to transform the visage of law in the future. The fall of ROSS Intelligence lights up the path for the heroes who will arise after it.



www.aicerts.ai

Contact

252 West 37th St., Suite 1200W
New York, NY 10018

