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Strategic Knowledge & Innovation Legal Leaders Summit

SKILLS 2025 AI Survey Results

By Abhijat Saraswat, with editorial review by the SKILLS.law 2025 organizing committee: Mary Abraham, Oz Benamram, Lucy Dillon, Ron Friedmann, Nick Pryor, and Kate Simpson.

Introduction

We surveyed large law firm KM and innovation professionals from September - November 2024. Nearly 500 people replied, of which almost 300 individuals responded across many large law firms, primarily in North America and the UK, with some representation from other jurisdictions. Where more than one individual from a firm responded, we selected one person to include in the analysis here, yielding 143 law firm respondents for this analysis.

Two years after the general availability of Large Language Models (LLMs), the results provide a better insight into these tools' selection, deployment, and perceived impact, with notable changes across several categories from the 2023 data.

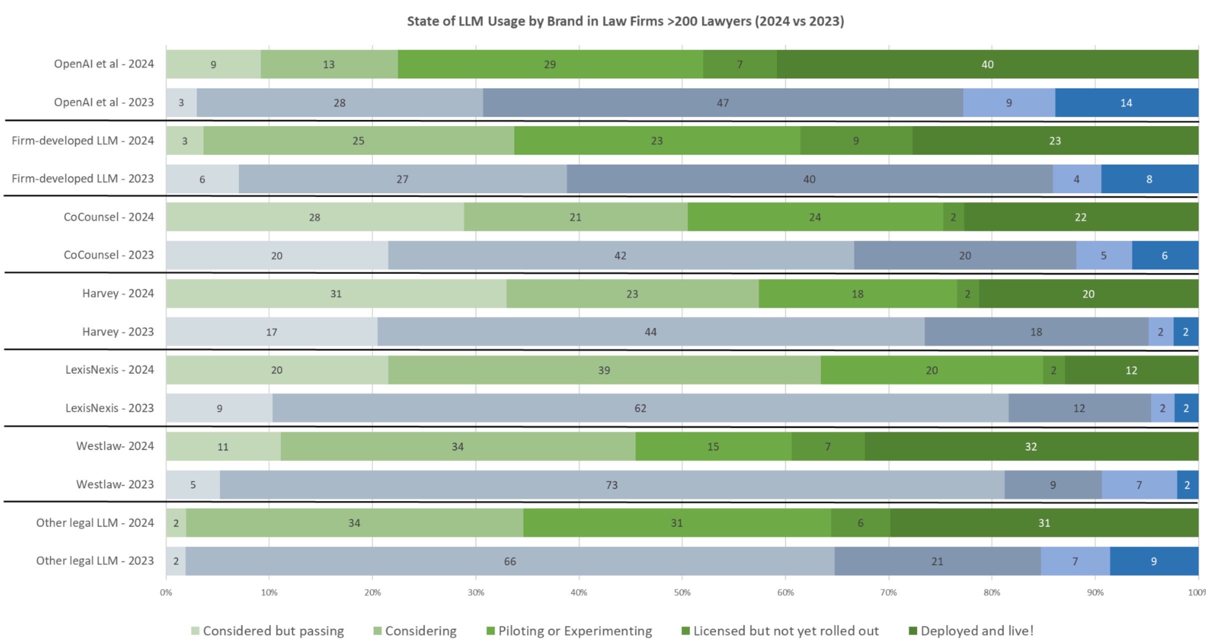
This report analyzes responses to Generative AI questions in our survey. We also continued our survey that asks the same group what they worked on in 2024, what they plan to work on in 2025, and what they want to discuss at the conerence. The analysis of those results can be fould at SKILLS.law.

LLM Testing, Licensing, and Deployment

State of Use by Brand in Law Firms with >200 Lawyers

We asked, "Has your firm licensed a large language model?" The 2024 data reveal a marked evolution in LLM adoption, with firms decisively moving from the experimental phase that dominated our previous survey toward deployment.

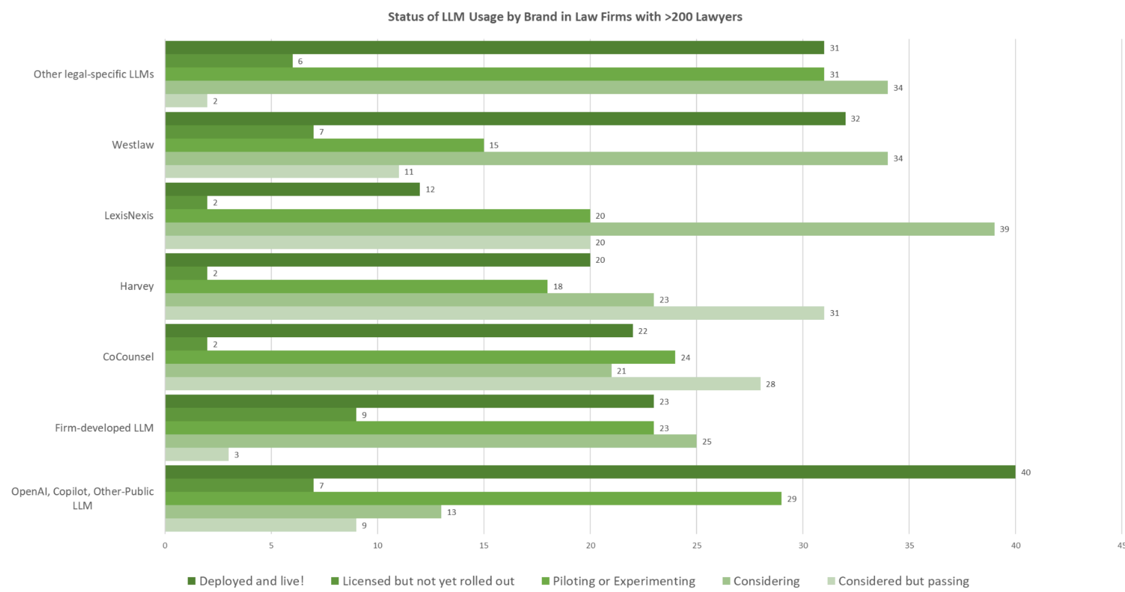
OpenAI, Copilot, and Other-Public LLMs have established themselves as leaders, achieving a 41% deployment rate across surveyed firms. Westlaw follows with a 32% deployment rate, demonstrating strong adoption from emerging platforms and established legal technology providers.

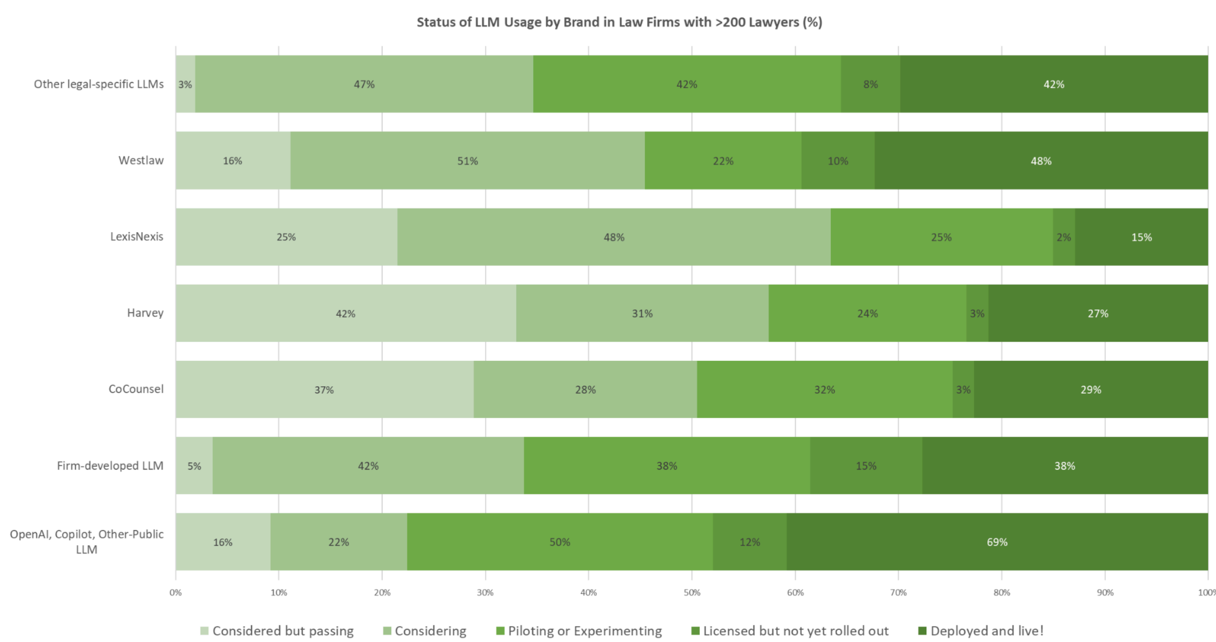


What's particularly interesting is how broadly firms are embracing these tools. When we look at the combined numbers for firms actively engaging with LLMs (combining deployed, licensed, or piloting categories), we see robust adoption across several platforms:

- OpenAI, Copilot, and Other-Public LLM: 78%
- Firm-Developed LLM: 66%
- Other legal-specific LLMs: 65%
- Westlaw: 55%
- LexisNexis: 37%

These figures highlight a significant shift from a predominantly experimental approach in 2023. Notably, firms are pursuing a multi-platform strategy, suggesting a sophisticated understanding of how different LLM solutions can address specific operational needs (something we review in the Use Case section of the report).



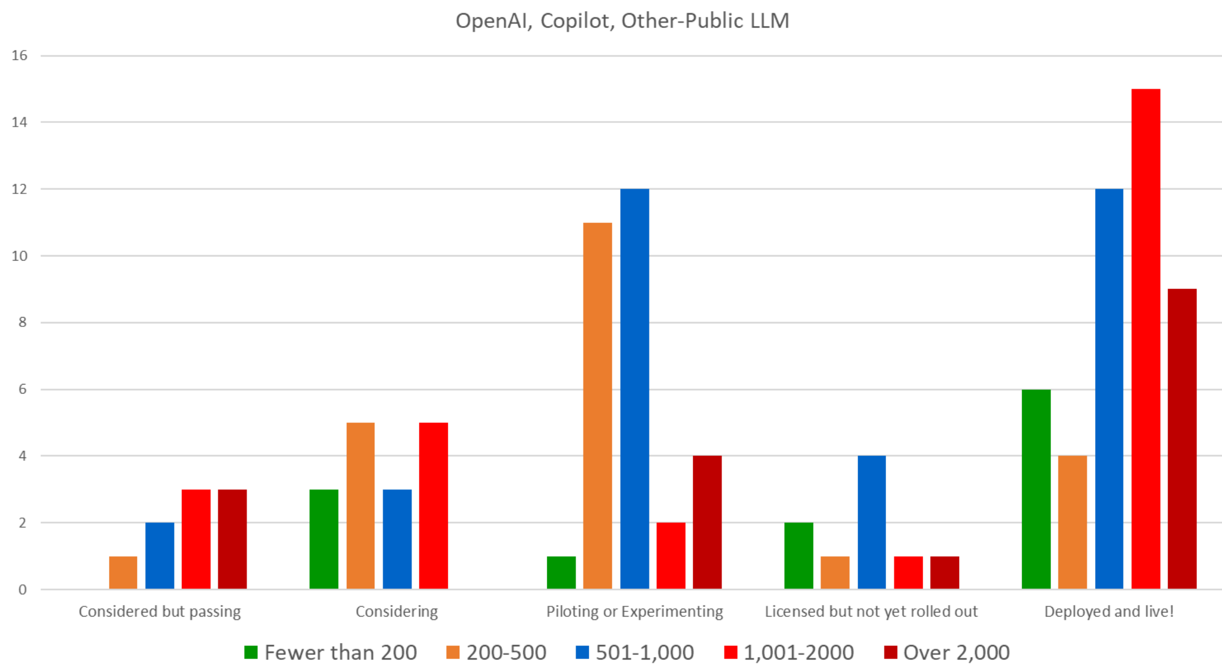


Use of Selected Products, by Firm Size

To answer “Has your firm licensed a large language model?”, we provided seven choices and allowed multiselection. We include here data for OpenAI et al, Westlaw, LexisNexis, and Firm-Developed LLM.

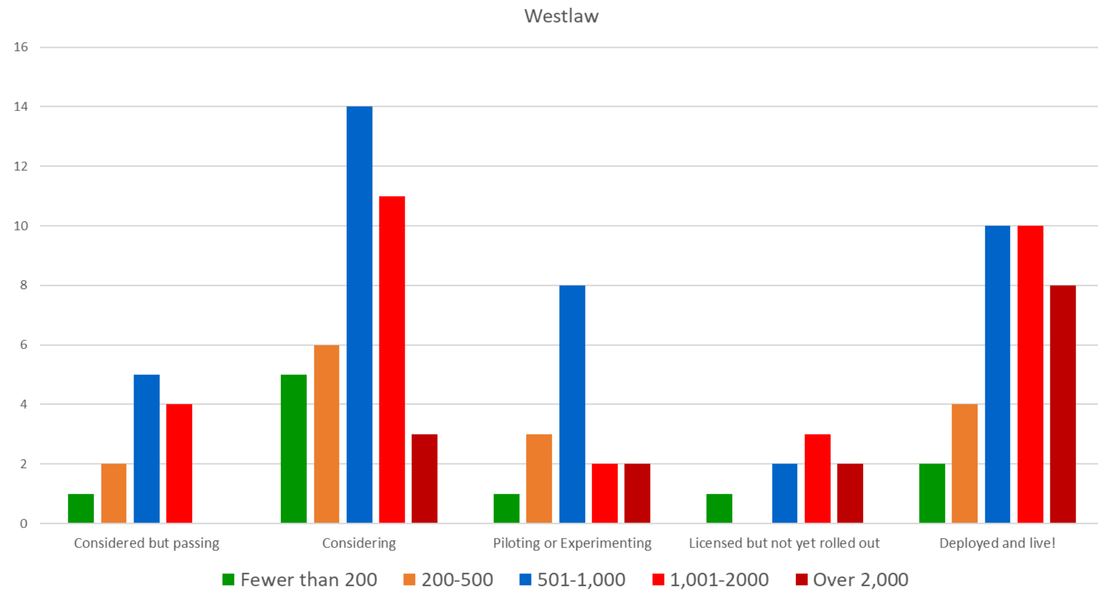
OpenAI, Copilot, and Other-Public LLM

The public LLM category shows the most dramatic evolution from our previous survey. With 41% of firms reporting "Deployed and live!" status, these platforms demonstrate the highest deployment rate across all categories. The "piloting or experimenting" category remains robust at 30%, suggesting continued exploration of new use cases. Notably, only 13% of firms report "considering" status - a significant decrease (-13% percentage points) from the evaluation phase in 2023, indicating decisive movement toward implementation.



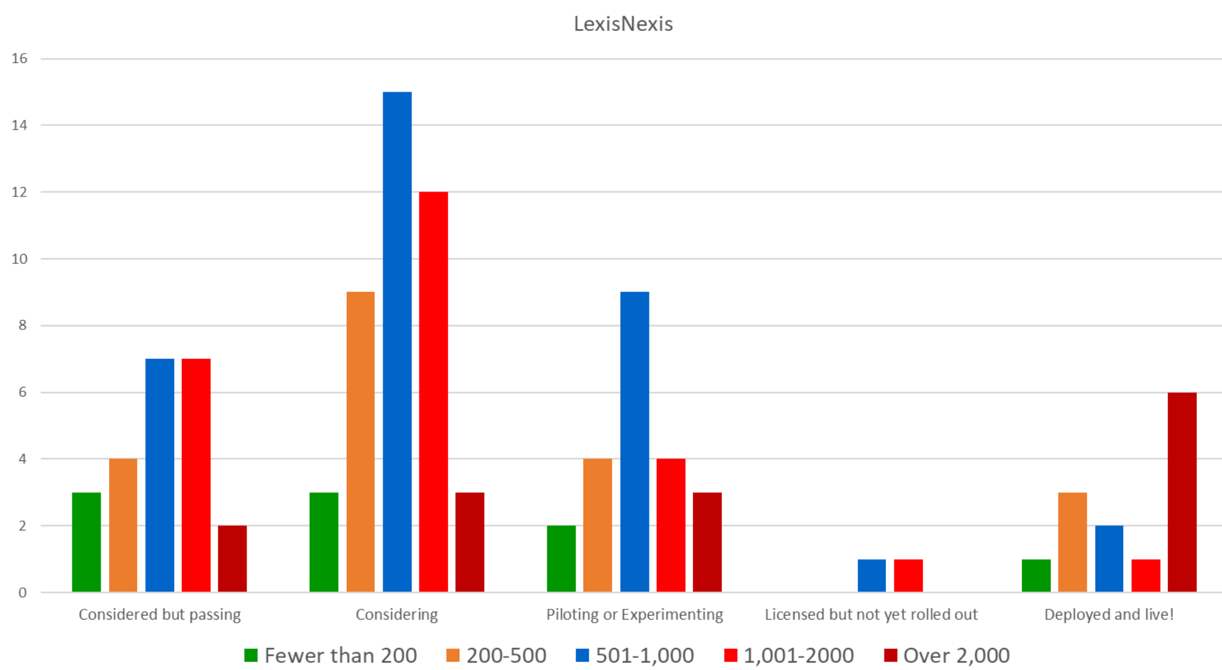
Westlaw

Westlaw's LLM integration presents an interesting adoption pattern, with 32% deployment, 7% licensed but not rolled out, and a relatively low "piloting or experimenting" rate (15%) compared to other platforms. This may be influenced by the nature of the pilots for GenAI tools (as this pattern is also present for LexisNexis and Harvey), where the process might be shorter and more streamlined, unlike traditional LegalTech solutions with significantly longer pilot phases.



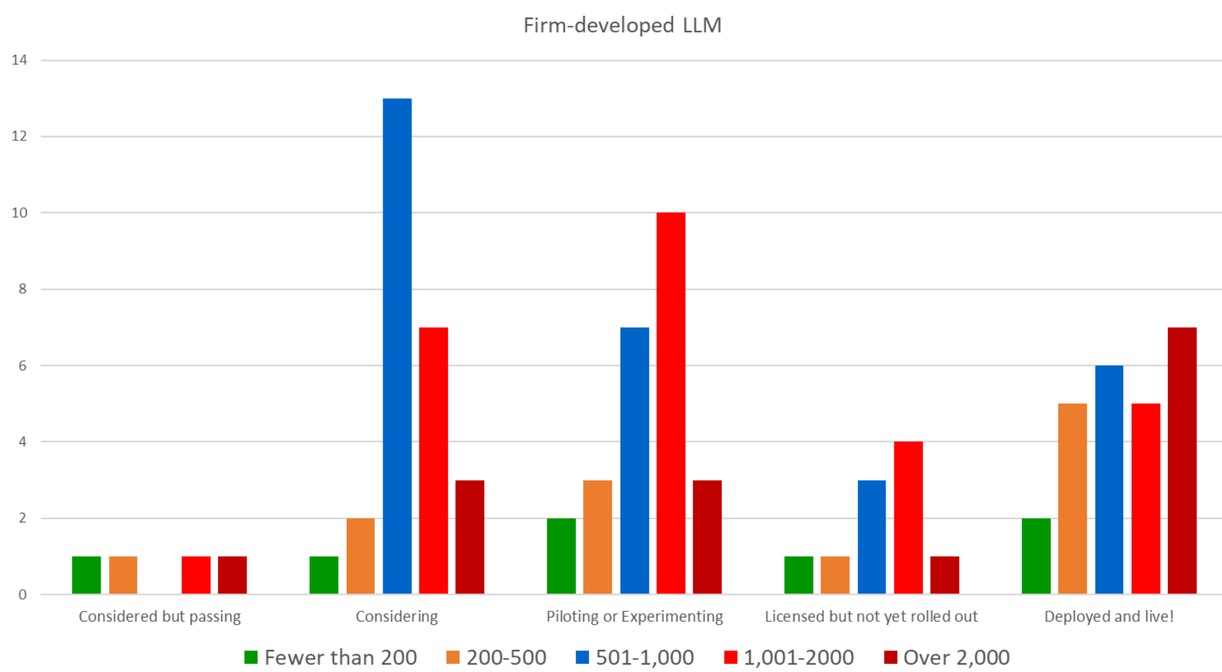
LexisNexis

LexisNexis shows a distinct pattern, with the highest "considering" rate (42%) among all platforms. Only 13% report deployment, with 2% licensed but not rolled out.



Firm-Developed LLM

Firm-developed solutions maintain significant traction, with 28% deployment and 11% licensed but not rolled out. The balanced distribution across categories (28% piloting, 30% considering) suggests firms pursue customized implementations while carefully evaluating their effectiveness. This represents a maturation from 2023 data, where we noted some ambiguity about what constituted "firm-developed" solutions.



Scope of LLM Deployment

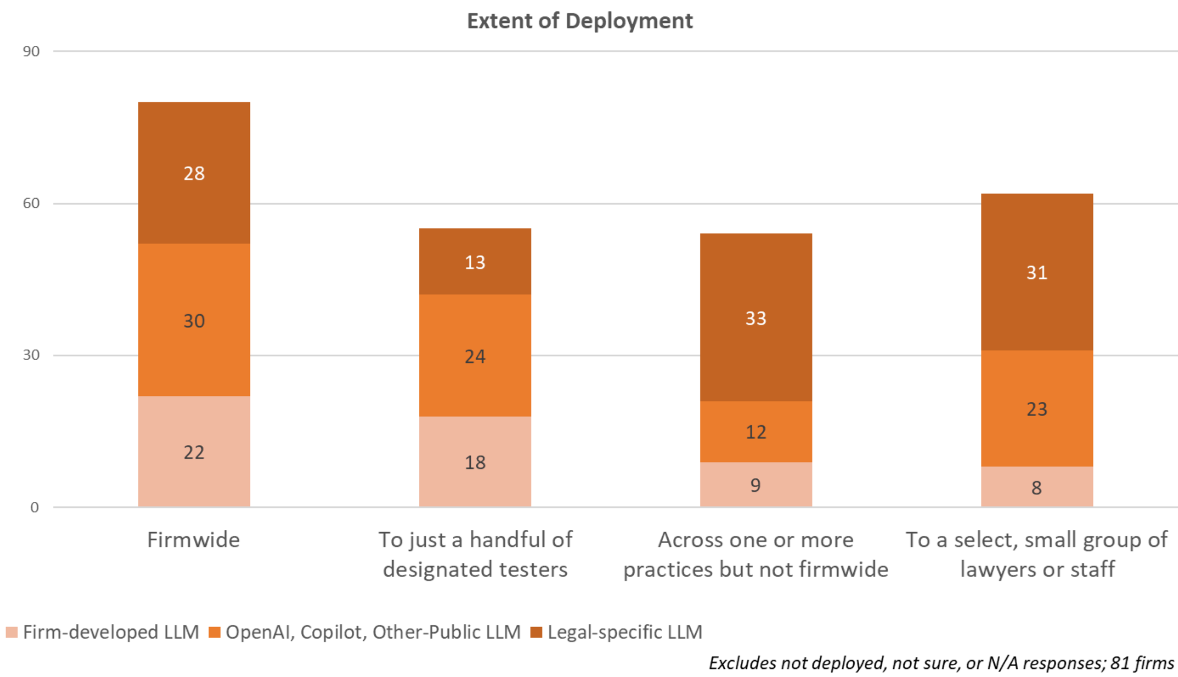
We asked, “How broadly used is the licensed product?” and offered six options for each of the three LLM product types. For this analysis, we excluded responses of “Not Deployed,” “N/A,” or “Not Sure.”

The data shows varying deployment patterns across the three LLM categories:

- **Firmwide deployment:** Shows strong adoption across all three LLM types, with OpenAI/Copilot/Other-Public LLMs selected by 30 respondents, legal-specific LLMs by 28 respondents, and firm-developed solutions by 22 respondents. This relatively even distribution suggests firms are confident in deploying all types of LLMs across their organizations, with public LLMs having a slight edge in widespread implementations.
- **Across one or more practices**: Legal-specific LLMs lead in this category with 33 respondents indicating that they adopted this approach, significantly outpacing both

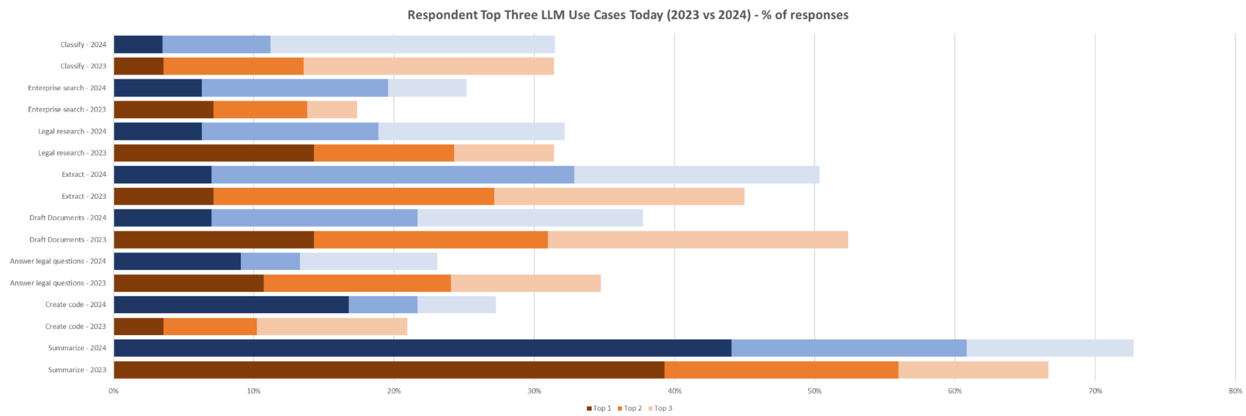
OpenAI/Copilot/Other-Public LLMs (12 firms) and firm-developed solutions (9 firms). This pronounced preference for legal-specific solutions in practice-focused deployments may reflect their specialized capabilities in addressing practice-specific needs.

- **Handful of designated testers**: Shows a distinct pattern where OpenAI and similar public LLMs lead with selections by 24 respondents, followed by firm-developed solutions (18 responses), with legal-specific LLMs showing lower adoption (13 responses). This distribution suggests firms might prefer to experiment with public LLMs as well as testing their self-developed solutions before wider rollout.
- **Select group of lawyers or staff**: Reveals a strong preference for specialized and public solutions, with legal-specific LLMs leading with 31 responses and OpenAI/Copilot/Other-Public LLMs following in 23 responses.



Top Use Cases

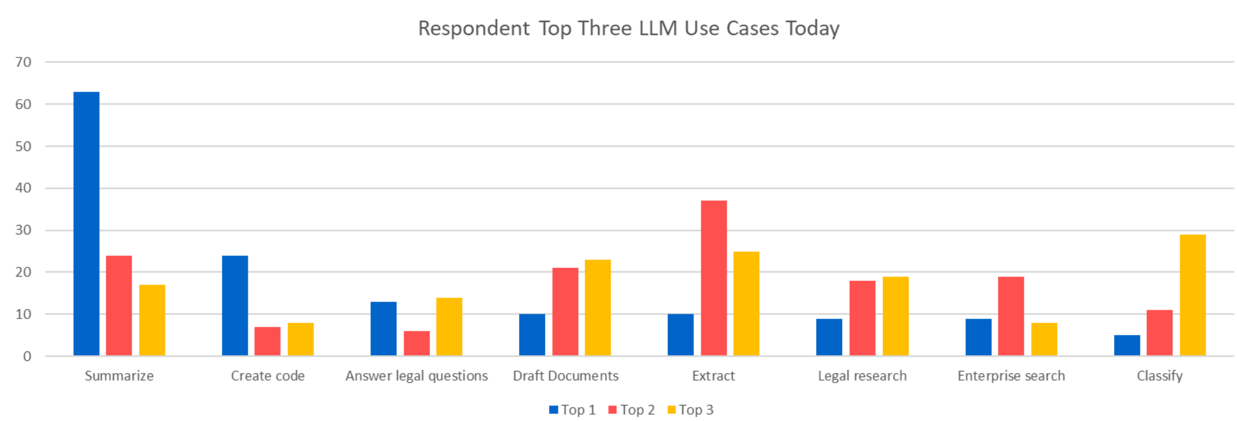
We asked respondents to rank the value of eight use cases for LLMs, both for current implementation and future outlook (2027). The results demonstrate consistency in certain core applications and evolving priorities for future development.



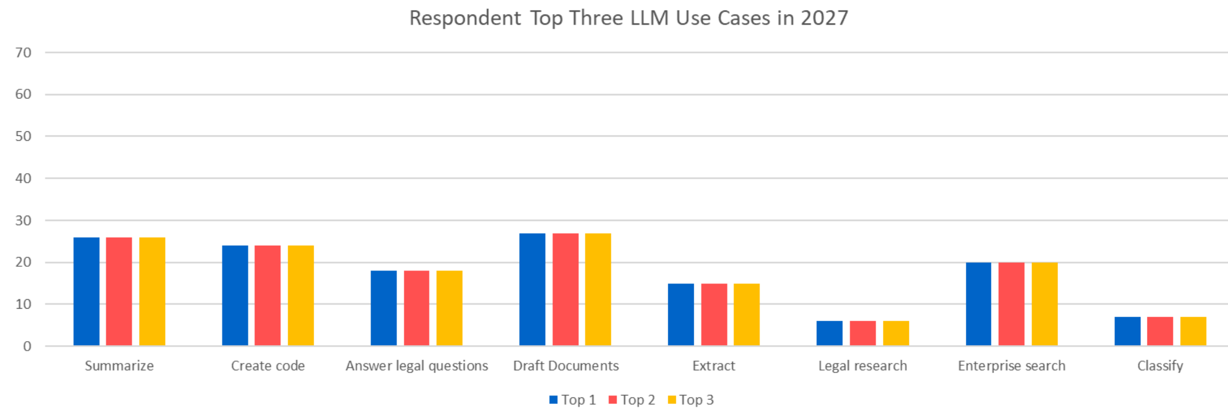
Today

Summarization maintains its position as the primary use case, with 62 respondents ranking it as their top choice. This is followed by code creation (23 top rankings) and answering legal questions (13 top rankings). The dominance of summarization aligns with our previous survey findings, suggesting this remains the most mature and trusted LLM application.

Code creation had one of the lowest top rankings in our previous survey. While LLM-assisted coding had previously been established in other sectors, it looks to be becoming a key use case of LLM in law firms, too.



2027

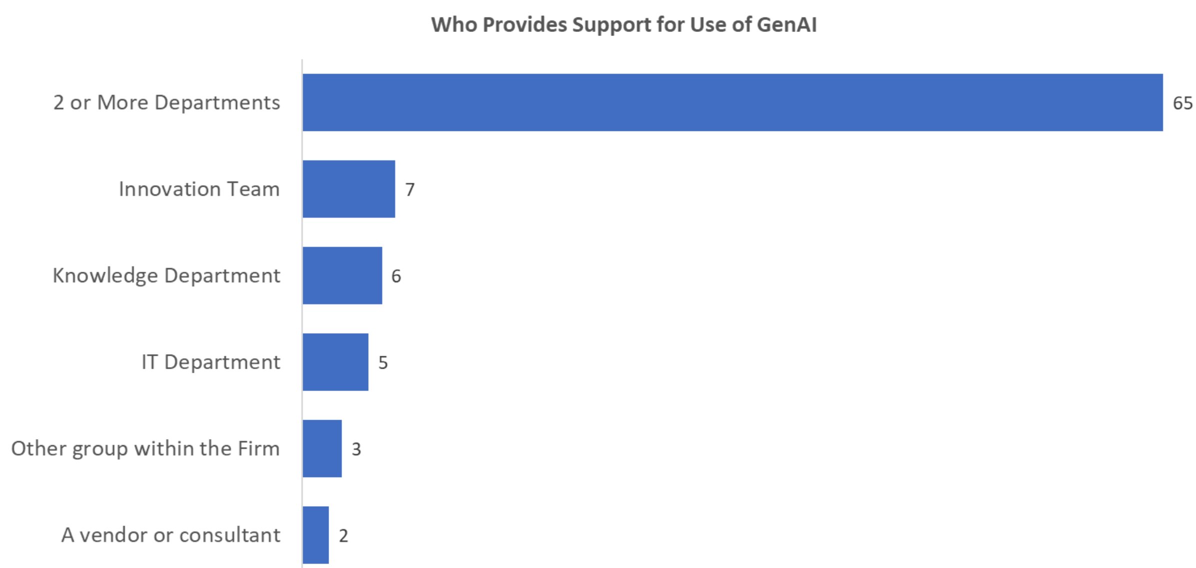


The projected landscape for 2027 shows a notable redistribution of priorities. Document drafting gains prominence (27 top rankings), while summarization maintains strong positioning (26 top rankings). Code creation continues to show significant importance, with 24 top rankings suggesting firms anticipate increased integration of technological solutions.

This evolution in priorities indicates that while summarization currently dominates LLM applications, firms are beginning to explore their use for more complex and specialized tasks, such as coding and document drafting. LLMs are already proving to be significant time-savers for coding and related tasks, and their reliability in practice-oriented applications is expected to improve over time, further expanding their utility.

Who Supports GenAI Use

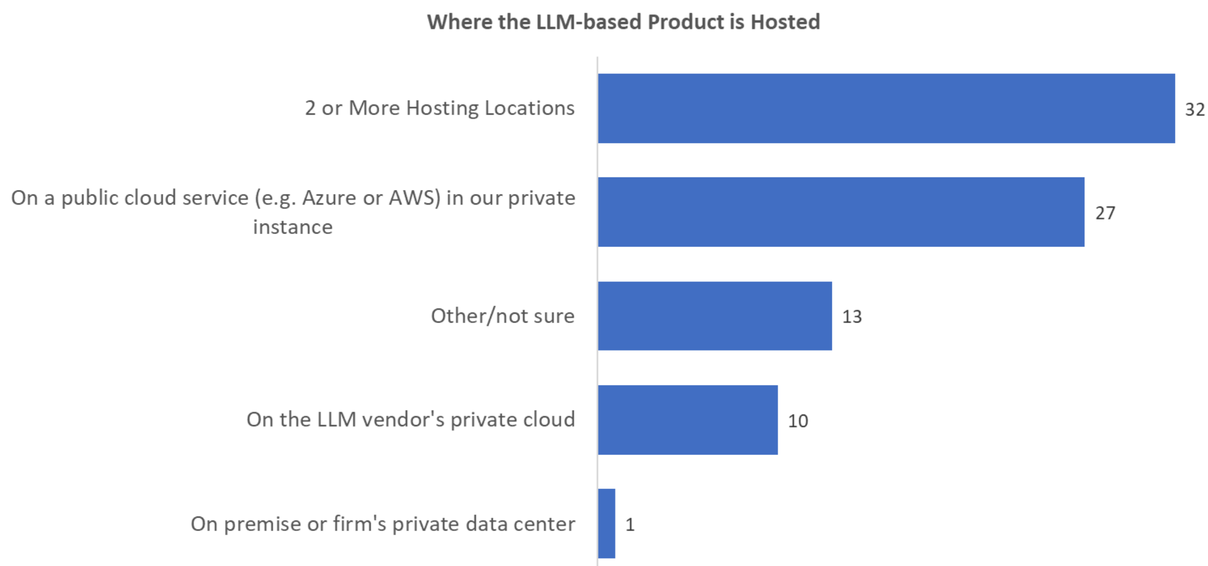
We asked who supports GenAI use. This was a multi-select question. As the chart below indicates, the overwhelming number of respondents chose two or more departments. The conclusion, as in 2023, is consistent with our own experiences that GenAI is a team sport.



Where the LLM is Hosted

Our 2025 survey continued to examine this through a single-select question, allowing us to track definitive shifts in deployment preferences. In 2023, we observed 10 firms running LLMs on their own equipment—a finding that surprised us, given the computational intensity of these models. However, by 2024, that figure fell to nearly zero (1 response), while the most popular response was “two or more hosting locations” (32 responses), followed by private instances on a public cloud (27 responses).

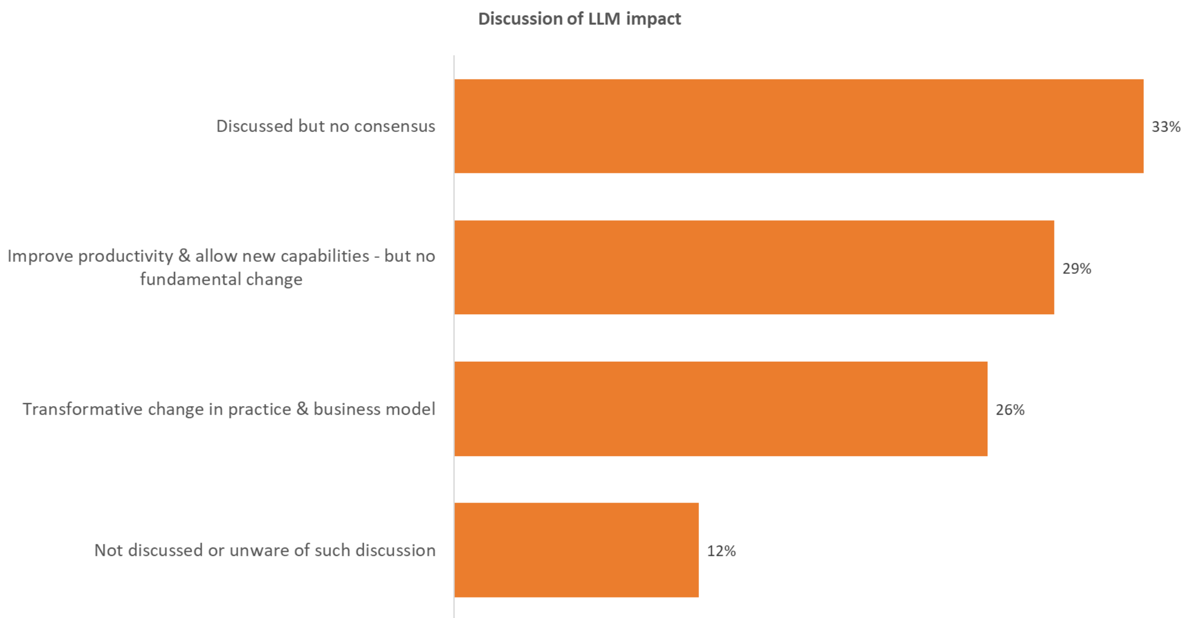
This shift may reflect a growing reliance on multiple LLM-based products from different vendors, each with its own hosting requirements, rather than firms' international multi-hosting strategies. The increased adoption of public cloud services could also indicate growing confidence in their security offerings.



Firm Discussions of the Impact of LLMs

We asked, "Has your firm discussed the business impact of LLM-based products on the firm's business and operating model?" The 2025 responses show remarkable consistency with our 2024 findings, suggesting stable perspectives across the industry as firms gain more hands-on experience with these technologies.

The distribution remains largely unchanged: 33% report discussions without consensus (down slightly from 35%), 29% see improved productivity without fundamental change (compared to 30%), and 26% anticipate transformative impact (versus 27%). The proportion of firms reporting no discussions increased marginally to 12% from 9%. This stability in viewpoints, even after another year of implementation experience, reinforces our 2024 observation that the true impact of LLMs on legal practice will only become clear over time.



Conclusions

The legal profession's engagement with LLM technology has evolved significantly since our initial survey in 2023. Where 2023 marked widespread experimentation and evaluation, 2024 data reveal a decisive shift toward strategic implementation and operational integration.

Several key developments stand out. First, the multi-platform approach adopted by firms—with 78% actively engaging with public LLMs and 66% pursuing firm-developed solutions—indicates a sophisticated understanding that different LLM platforms serve distinct operational needs. This marks a notable maturation from the experimental phase that characterized 2023.

Second, deployment patterns have crystallized. The near-complete shift away from on-premises hosting (from 10 firms to 1) toward cloud-based and hybrid solutions suggests firms have found pragmatic answers to their initial security and infrastructure concerns.

Use cases show both consistency and evolution. While summarization maintains its position as the primary current application, code creation—rising from one of the lowest rankings in 2023 to the second-highest in 2024—has emerged as a significant use case. This demonstrates how rapidly firms are discovering and validating new uses. The projected 2027 landscape, with document drafting gaining prominence, suggests that firms anticipate increasingly sophisticated applications of these tools.

Our collective market-informed view is that in 2023, management feared big and potentially disruptive changes in the near future. There was a bit of a panic or crisis moment, which we think passed by 2024. Management realized that whatever changes occur will take longer than many initially thought. Now, they see both opportunities and threats and continue to understand that paying attention and investing remains critical.

As we start 2025, the data suggest we're entering a phase in which the focus shifts from whether to implement LLMs to optimizing their integration into legal practice. The multi-departmental support structure reported by most firms indicates that successful LLM implementation requires a coordinated effort across technical, operational, and practice groups.

According to the survey data, 2024 marked the year when law firms moved from LLM experimentation to strategic deployment, setting the stage for transformative legal innovation. We are excited by what this next year will bring.

Appendix: More About the Methodology

Our selection of one respondent per law firm favored senior titles over junior ones. In addition, we chose titles suggesting work in innovation and technology over pure KM, where titles appeared to be equally senior.

Given the subjective nature of the choices, aggregate responses may not always accurately reflect the actual reality in some respects. Moreover, the LLM landscape and each firm's experience with it continue to evolve rapidly. As such, we suggest you treat our analysis here primarily as a recent snapshot of the evolving market.