



ILTA'S 2024 TECHNOLOGY SURVEY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SPONSORED BY:



Simply
Intelligent

Seamless AI Powerful Workflows Smarter Experiences

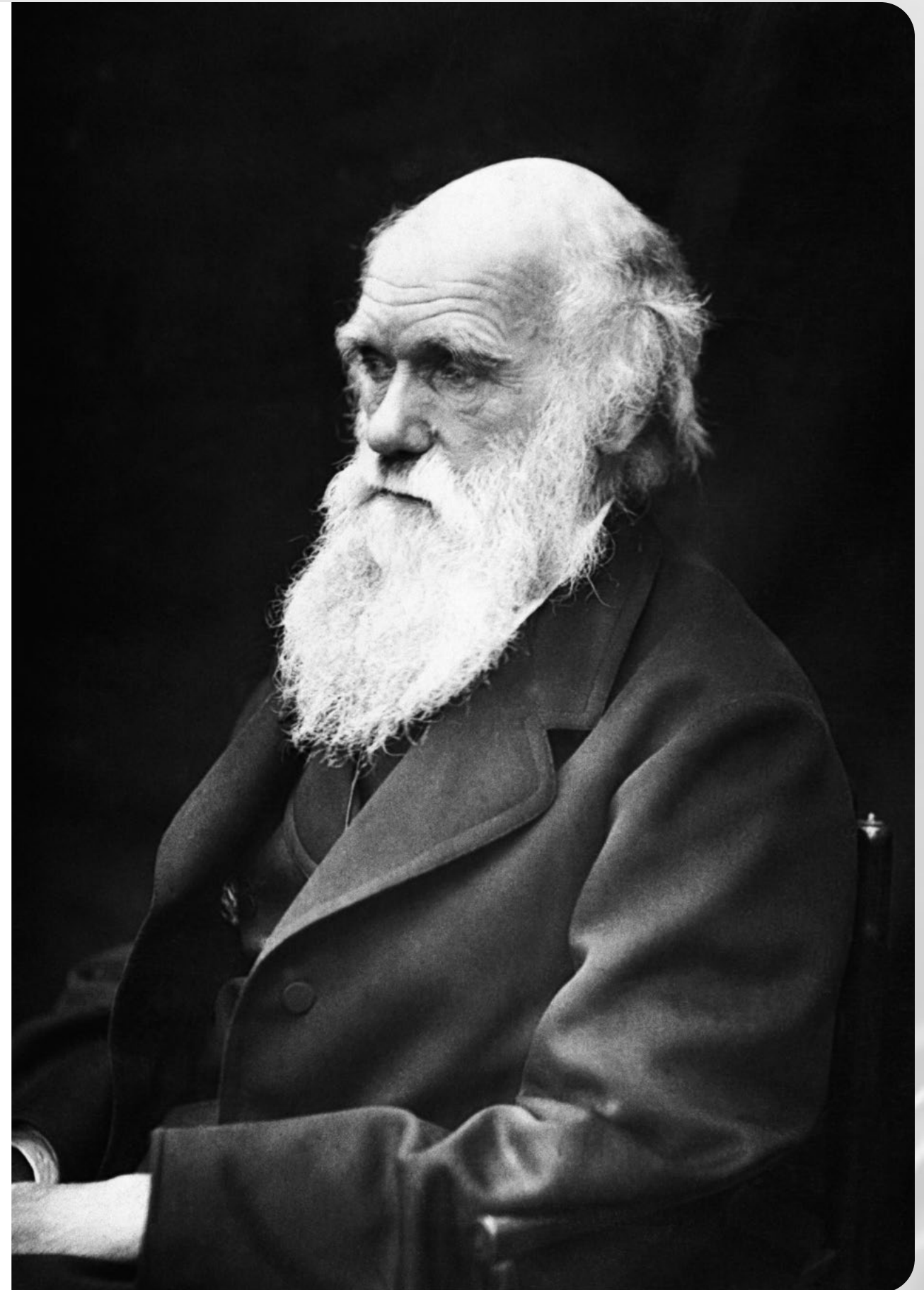
Build a Winning Future with
NetDocuments + Microsoft

[LEARN MORE >](#)



“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”

— Leon C. Megginson, about Darwin's *Origin of the Species*.



The Supercycle Vortex

Regular readers of the technology press are likely familiar with Amy Webb (futurist and founder of the Future Today Institute) and her predictions about technology “supercycles.” These waves of technology evolution represent “a sustained period of expansion, usually driven by robust growth in demand for products and services.” Such cycles, according to Webb, “reshape the very fabric of our existence, from the intricacies of global supply chains to the minutiae of daily habits, from the corridors of power in global politics to the unspoken norms that govern our social interactions.” [TR2024_Executive_Summary_FINAL_LINKED.pdf \(futuretodayinstitute.com\)](#)

Over the years, the pages of ILTA’s annual Technology Survey have illustrated both shorter, more distinct cycles, as well as these supercycles Webb proposes, even if they weren’t described in these terms. Ultimately, the legal industry is a part of the global technology ecosystem and therefore mirrors most of these evolutionary changes (although legal may lag in some areas due to conservative tendencies).

Legal technologists who transitioned from paper-based discovery to digital eDiscovery will recognize the slow but definitive processes and technologies characterizing that particular cycle. Some will remember the early client/server technology offered by the Wang VM computing systems that served as a precursor to distributed computing with networked PCs. The adoption of Internet technologies and mobile computing certainly constitute cycles that have deeply altered the legal industry and the way legal professionals practice law. We are now arguably immersed in an ongoing cycle around migration to the cloud and a transition to SaaS (Software as a Service) computing. Some organizations are well along in that transition.

This year’s survey offers new evidence of the legal technology journey through these cycles and supercycles, and where most evident, we will highlight them. As we remind our readers every year, please keep in mind that our survey team does its level best to craft survey questions designed to draw out data points that we hope will be useful to you. We also emphasize the fact that our interpretation of that data is



Written by:



Todd Corham
Chief Information Officer at
Saul Ewing Arnstein & Lehr



Chris Owens
Chief Technology Officer
Kraft & Kennedy, Inc.

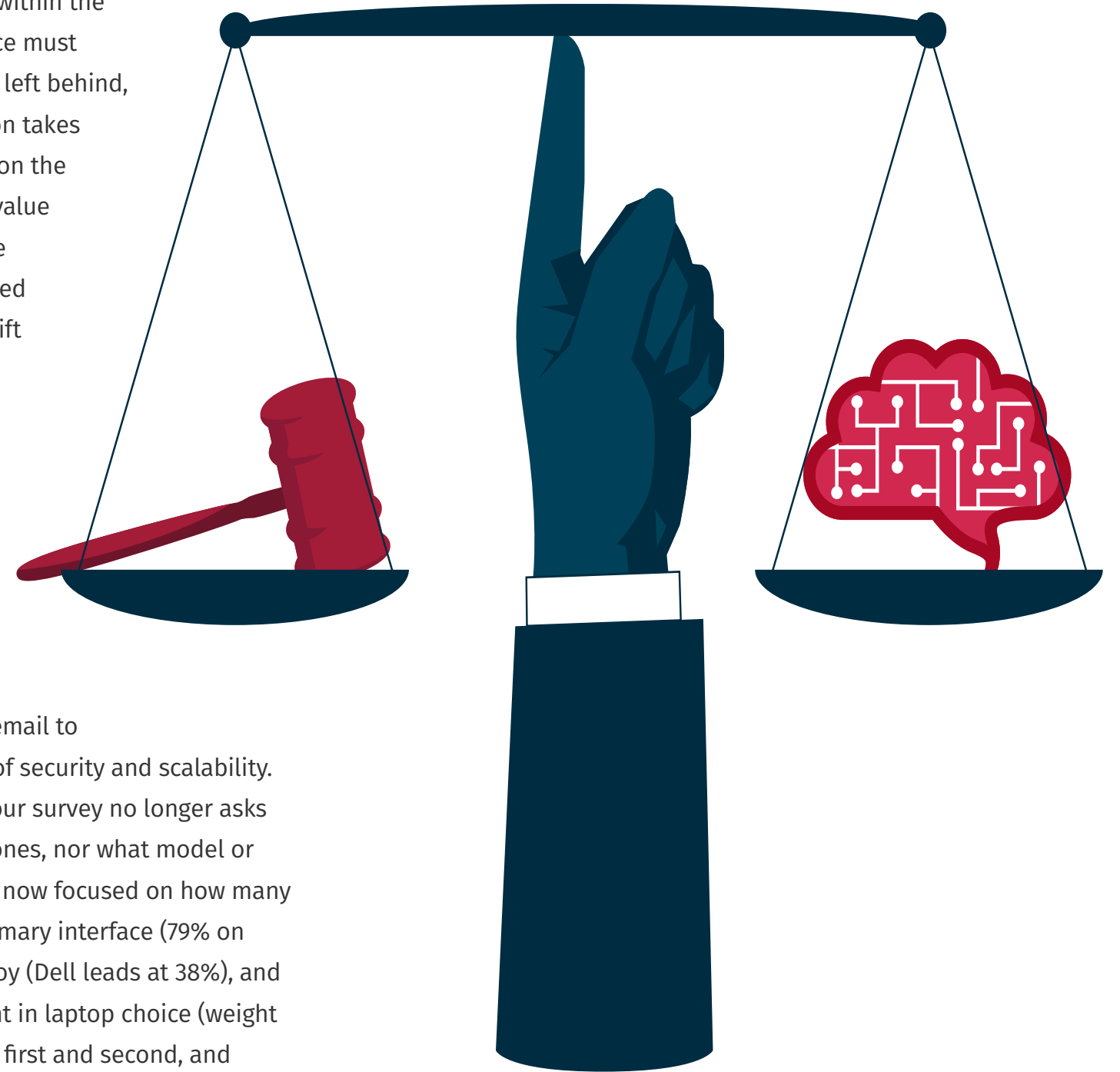
just that – an interpretation – and we do not assume our reading of the survey is the only way to see the findings. We encourage readers to evaluate the survey in depth, then make assessments and draw unique conclusions from their perspectives.

Each year, a number of distinct themes emerge as we evaluate the feedback from participants. The most easily recognizable has been around the legal industry's ability to affect and embrace – the driving force behind cycles of any size. We certainly see change as a theme in the response to the question, "What are the top three technology issues or annoyances within your firm?" Historically, the perennial leader among responses has been "Users' acceptance of change," and this year was no different, with that answer selected by 44% of survey participants. Although inevitable, change can be both an issue and an annoyance when our users resist. The change will take place whether users embrace it or not, and leaving them behind is not an option. One of the most important imperatives we have as legal technologists is to make change happen without disrupting the practice.

The business of law has always been competitive, and in today's shifting legal landscape, more than ever, law firms need to leverage technology to enable the workforce and, when possible, to create an "edge" that differentiates

and enhances the firm's image within the marketplace. The legal workforce must adapt to cycles of change or be left behind, and the speed at which adoption takes place varies greatly depending on the needs of the business and the value a given technology brings to the practice. When change is imposed on us, such as in the sudden shift to a remote work model during the pandemic, we can witness the rapid adoption of new technology and processes.

A more gradual change was evident in the adoption of smartphones. In the late 2000s, IT departments resisted pushing email to smartphones due to their lack of security and scalability. We've come a long way. Today our survey no longer asks how many users have smartphones, nor what model or brand they use. Instead, we are now focused on how many lawyers use laptops as their primary interface (79% on average), what brand they deploy (Dell leads at 38%), and what criteria are most important in laptop choice (weight and durability remain solidly at first and second, and



A+I: YOUR INTELLIGENCE AMPLIFIED

The collective knowledge of your organization,
enhanced with AI.

Connected knowledge:
Unified information powers smarter work

Practical AI:
Delivered at scale, securely, on the platform you rely on every day

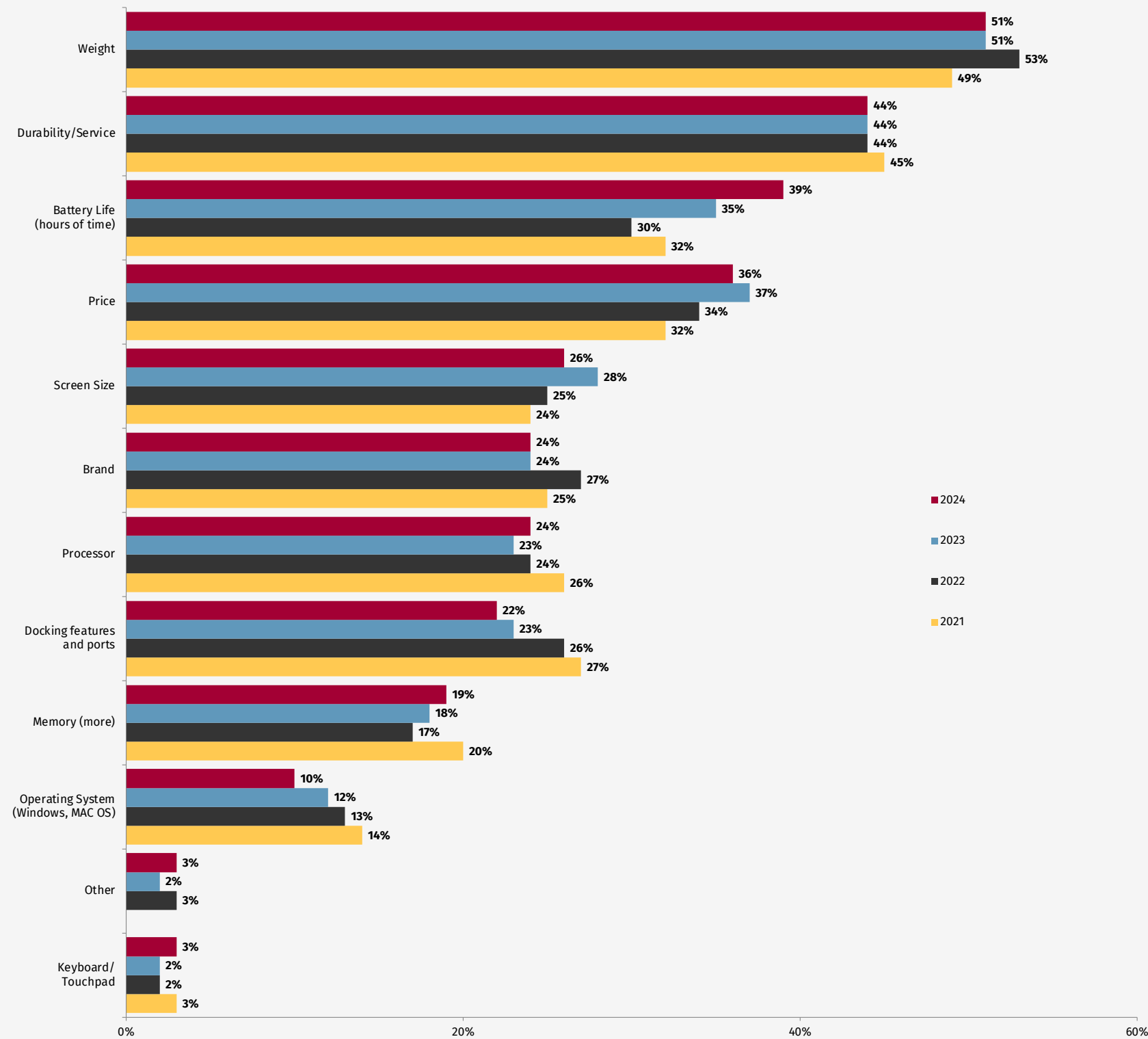
Boost performance:
AI-assisted apps boost productivity and collaboration

Strategic advantage:
Turn collective knowledge into a competitive edge

[Learn More](#)



When selecting laptops, what are your firm's top three most important criteria?



Multple response question; chart excludes responses less than 2%

this year battery life replaced price as the number three criterium).

In an environment founded on cycles of constant change, technology can often do more than merely support the practice. It can enable new services and offerings and accelerate business growth. Furthermore, as legal technologists, we must also provide core IT services as technological evolution rapidly unfolds. Replacing hardware, rolling out updates and enhancements, and keeping pace with the needs of a dynamic practice are the foundation of our work.

We also must train our users on those updates, support the platform through the Help Desk (and through escalated tiers of support), and see to the everyday “blocking and tackling” that moves documents out the door. Not to belabor the point, but software integration consumes additional resources, as it relies on finding the magic mixture of compatible software versions without breaking the build.

Although it may feel as if we are being asked to perform feats of alchemy, change is our business. Perhaps it is because legal technologists are truly change managers who are tasked with identifying “best-of-breed” systems and services, maintaining their security, as well as ensuring that they – and the organization’s workforce – are consistently updated within an incredibly dynamic and fast-paced

environment. This level of detail-dependent, highly complex activity can feel dizzying at times. This has only intensified over the past few years as the pace of change accelerates. Based on this year's survey results, we see no evidence that the pace will moderate any time soon.

Our publication has been rearranged slightly this year and is presented in 10 categories. These categories represent the various domains we felt were most appropriate when asking our membership to respond, and also most useful in presenting data to readers. Some strategic decision-making was employed by our team in efforts to refine the categories down to ten. We considered:

- 1 **who would be answering survey questions**
- 2 **who would be reading the survey**
- 3 **whether the given questions are interrelated in scope.**

Only one section of the 2024 Legal Technology Survey contains questions on Generative AI ("Gen AI"). You might have noted that this is the first reference to the term

Generative AI in this Executive Summary. Does that mean that Gen AI is only one-tenth of what legal technologists are focused on? Perhaps, but as stated above, legal IT teams have a vast portfolio of "core" technology to manage. Granted, many readers in roles such as innovation, data science, research, knowledge management, or cybersecurity likely spend some or even much of their day dealing with Gen AI. Nevertheless, legal technology still runs on core IT, and we therefore address the majority of questions to these components.

Although slight changes were made this year, we retained descriptor pages restating the data by firm size, as we have found that organizations of similar size share similar challenges and needs. One must only look at the firm size view of the question, "What are your firm's plans for Microsoft Copilot for Microsoft 365?" to illustrate that point. The response "None" ("we have no plans") was 37% among smaller firms and was 0% among the largest firms. When you also consider that responses to "A pilot [of Copilot for M365] is already underway" ranged from 4% among smaller firms to 50% among the largest, it is easy to see the value of visualizing the data in a more granular fashion. Cost, expertise, depth of experience, and overall resources can impact the speed at which organizations can absorb technological change.



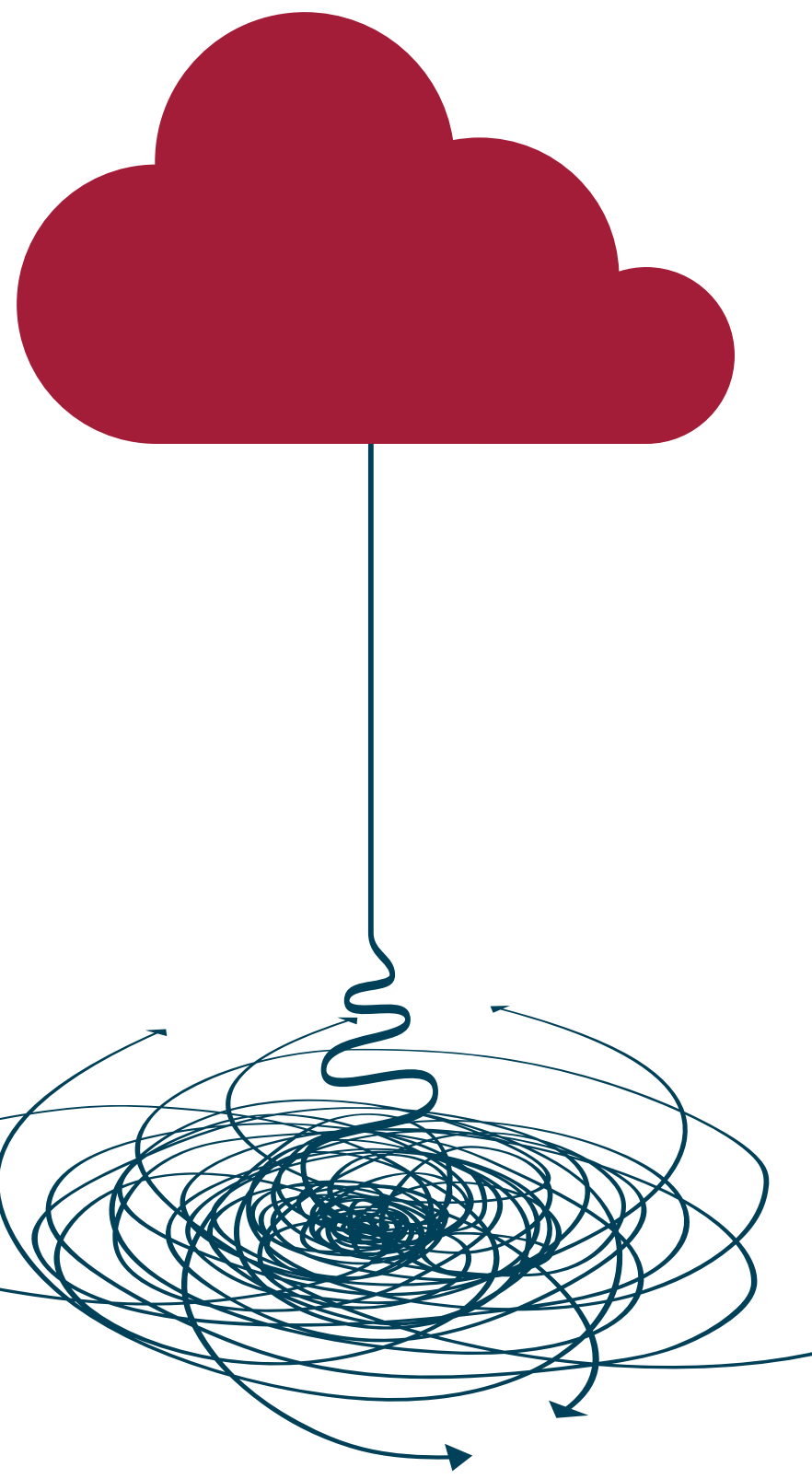
That brings us to the issue of where resources are being spent at the average law firm. One of the more mundane questions on our annual survey is, "Which primary brand of server is your firm currently deploying?" This is the type of question that may only be referenced by the engineering segment of our readership, as they look to identify strong hardware vendors. Inertia (why switch now, if we're happy?) tends to keep these choices consistent, as we generally stick with technology we know and trust.

What are your firm's plans for Microsoft Copilot for Microsoft 365?

Table by firm size	Under 50 lawyers		50 to 149 lawyers		150 to 349 lawyers		350 to 699 lawyers		700 or more lawyers	
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
	None / Not applicable	52	37%	41	23%	10	10%	2	4%	1
Investigating	81	57%	116	64%	66	63%	24	44%	22	44%
Preparing for pilot	6	4%	16	9%	16	15%	10	19%	14	28%
Plan to rollout this year	4	3%	5	3%	4	4%	7	13%	4	8%
Pilot underway	6	4%	22	12%	27	26%	22	41%	25	50%
Using it in production for timekeepers	0	0%	2	1%	4	4%	2	4%	7	14%
Using it in production for staff	1	1%	3	2%	6	6%	4	7%	9	18%
Other	2	1%	3	2%	3	3%	0	0%	0	0%

This year, however, all options for this question of server brand are either flat or falling – except one – “Cloud/Virtual” rose three points to 19%. It is the only response to gain ground over recent years. When we combine those numbers with the response “None, we use a Managed Service Provider (MSP)” (at 2% and appearing for the first time on this chart), it appears that one in five law firms have transitioned much of their data center to the cloud. Consistent with prior years, cloud/SaaS migration appears as a strong theme. Moreover, when considered in combination with other indicators listed below, traditional on-premises services seem a bit old-school:

<p>67%</p> <p>now report their DMS libraries are in the cloud – rising ten points over last year</p>	<p>61%</p> <p>of phone systems are in the cloud – jumping at least 10 points per year over the last four surveys</p>	<p>89%</p> <p>of those replacing their time and billing system this year say it will be in the cloud</p>	<p>82%</p> <p>are now using “MS Office 365 or Exchange Online Subscription” as their primary email platform</p>
---	---	---	--



These are enormous jumps and demonstrate a determined effort on the part of many law firms to exit the data center. In fact, when we ask, “How would you describe the cloud philosophy at your firm?” the response “Not yet comfortable with the cloud,” is down to 2%, which is the lowest threshold for appearing on this survey. It’s not the end of the on-prem era, but the transition to cloud/SaaS is a cycle that certainly seems to be drawing to a close.

“Speed is useful only if you’re running in the right direction.”

— Joel Barker (also attributed to Mahatma Gandhi)

This cycle, from ground to cloud (or “G2C”) with apologies to those who follow lightning science, is in full swing, and in that same question referenced above, (“How would you describe the cloud philosophy at your firm?”) the response

“Mostly in the cloud” (43%) was almost tied with “Cloud with every upgrade” (42%). This data indicates that 85% of respondents appear to be embracing this transition. A shrinking 13% percent are still in the rumination phase and still “Considering cloud.”

From the preceding data, we can see evidence that a large portion of our colleagues are experiencing a skills transition, and it is here that we should focus our attention – the

demands of our work require a different skill set than in the past. This transition is not solely focused on learning new skills. It also includes learning entirely new concepts – shifting one’s perspective – and increasingly envisioning a career that involves the implementation, integration, and configuration of cloud-based components.

For many, this significant change has begun already. The actual nervous system of our networks, Active Directory, is moving to the cloud. Our data and services will be in Azure, Google Cloud, or AWS. And most of the Gen AI platforms utilized by law firms will be SaaS – rarely hosted in our own data centers. Those same Gen AI applications will be accessing data in cloud services, such as SharePoint Online (52%), cloud-based DMS (67%), Exchange Online (82%), and third-party data providers via their cloud services.

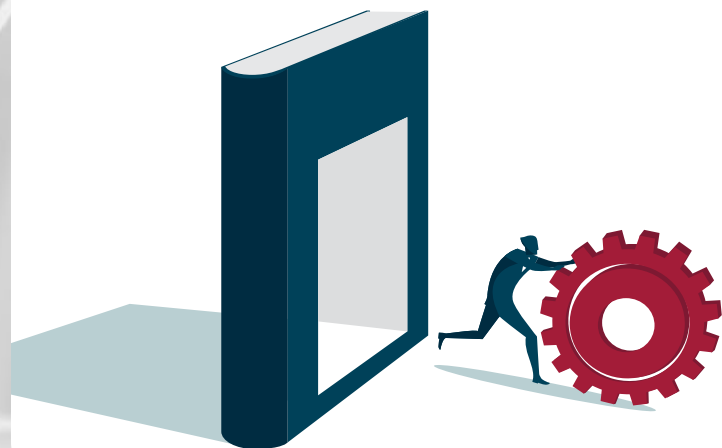
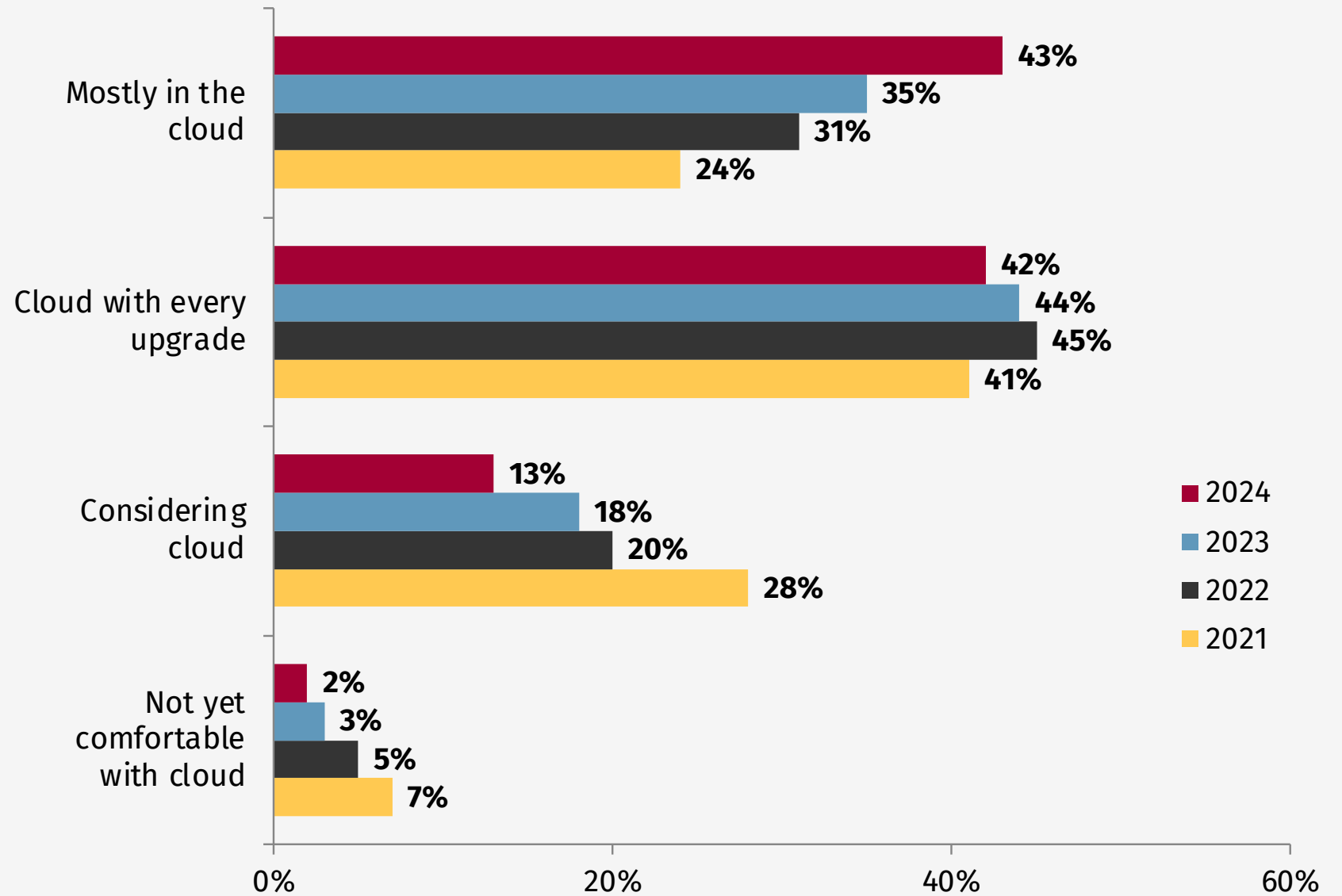
There appear to be some lingering reasons for a few law firms to slow-walk the G2C journey. When we asked “What reason(s) does your firm have for NOT using a cloud-based Document Management System (“DMS”)?” some 36% indicated it was a cost issue, while 22% cited security concerns. It should be noted in the following question, that asked for the reasons firms DID move the cloud, 38% gave “security concerns” as a reason they already made the move, so there seems to be some disagreement about where work product is safer. For those avoiding G2C transitions, “Performance concerns” was given as a reason by 18% of respondents, while 16% reported that it is simply “Not a priority yet.” A final 9% responded that they are avoiding a cloud migration, “Due to client concerns.” We can assume this counts as a security concern.

When we probed for the drivers toward the DMS cloud (“What reason(s) does (or did) your firm have for choosing to move to a cloud-based DMS?”), the top two reasons were “maintenance” (61%) and “remote access” (60%). “Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity” was the next most common response (54%). “New features,” which will increasingly be a driver, was at 52%.

This issue of where vendors are going to spend their Research and Development resources is vital to consider as we begin to explore and pilot the coming generation of Gen AI tools. The various Copilots do work in legacy versions of Office, but not optimally, and vendors will be increasingly biased toward their cloud releases when developing new features and even when strategizing on integration points with other software.

What about cloud-based remote access? When asked, “With Hybrid work, what functionality, tools, or technologies have been most helpful with collaboration between your

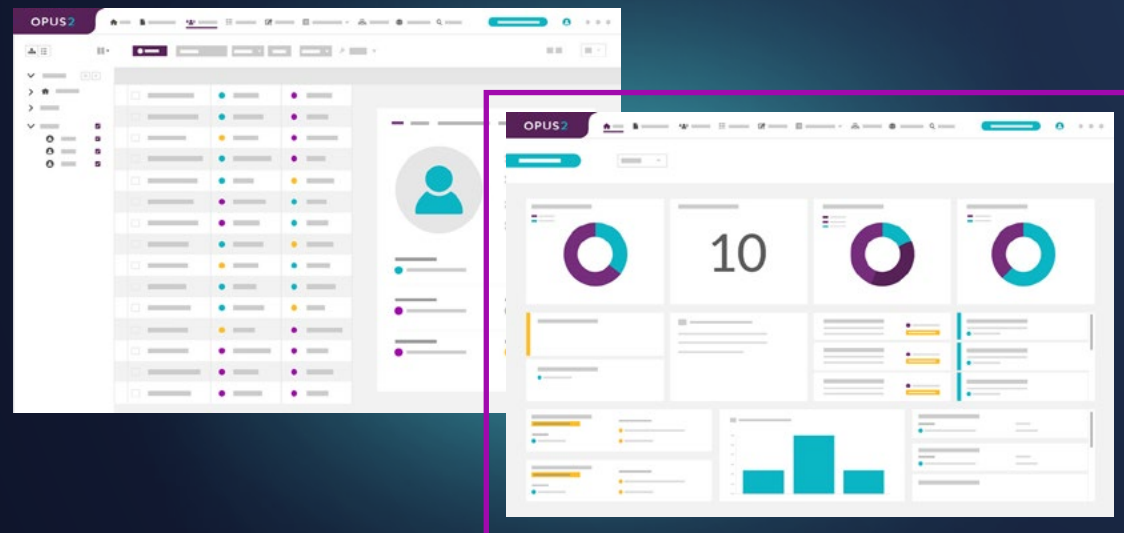
How would you describe the cloud philosophy at your firm?



OPUS2

Case management software trusted by the world's top litigation teams

Opus 2's award-winning, AI-assisted case management, analysis, and preparation platform gives your team an edge. Build winning case strategies and deliver more client value with enhanced collaboration, organization, and efficiency.



Transform the litigation lifecycle from beginning to end:

- Analyze and organize case documents and evidence with ease
- Develop chronologies, events, and facts to build a winning strategy
- Accelerate transcript and designation management
- Collaborate with your team in real time

See it in action and discover the difference today.

Upgrade with Opus 2

firm's team members?" the response "Videoconferencing" (presumably platforms like Zoom, Webex, and Teams) continues to lead at 89%. "Chat," a helpful feature in hybrid work (and a feature in the aforementioned videoconferencing platforms), seems to be holding ground at about the same rate as last year (71%). Most importantly, the response "Cloud-based systems" continues to rise steadily – climbing 13% over the past four years. We will continue to see this trend as hybrid models and general mobility become the norm. Even the response "Co-editing" (a driver for hybrid collaboration cited by 22% of respondents) has more than doubled over the last four years.

For organizations that had the opportunity to test their business continuity plans in the Great CrowdStrike "Own Goal" of '24, many learned the lesson that a cloud model provides a bit of micro-segmentation, since a portion of the workforce was able to work via Exchange Online and cloud DMS solutions while the operations teams resuscitated the data center. There are also some lessons to be learned about resilience and platform diversity, which seemed to be a theme in some of the tech community discussions.

Ground-to-cloud initiatives are rewriting IT job descriptions. As Gen AI begins to consume an increasingly significant portion of firm resources, we would do well to heed the

“Change is the only constant. Hanging on is the only sin.”

— Denise McCluggage

words of the celebrated author and race car driver Denise McCluggage. She navigated the motorsports supercycles and advocated for women's rights within traditionally (and currently) male-dominated fields. These cycles in the evolution of technology are easiest to see in retrospect: Mainframe computing in the 1960s and 1970s, networked PCs in the 80s and 90s, the rise of the Internet and "mobile Web," and now the transition to cloud/SaaS is well underway.

While there is a lot of work to do at most firms around G2C efforts, this year's survey is demonstrating that making that shift is consuming cycles in our departmental clocks.

Whether or not shifting to a hosted model will free up resources is yet to be seen, but it is certainly a trend. Unless your organization is fully managed via MSP, there is still a great deal of infrastructure that needs care & feeding in our data centers and within our application portfolios, and this may continue for some time. Supercycles may be easier to recognize in hindsight, but the cycle that's coming is hard to miss.

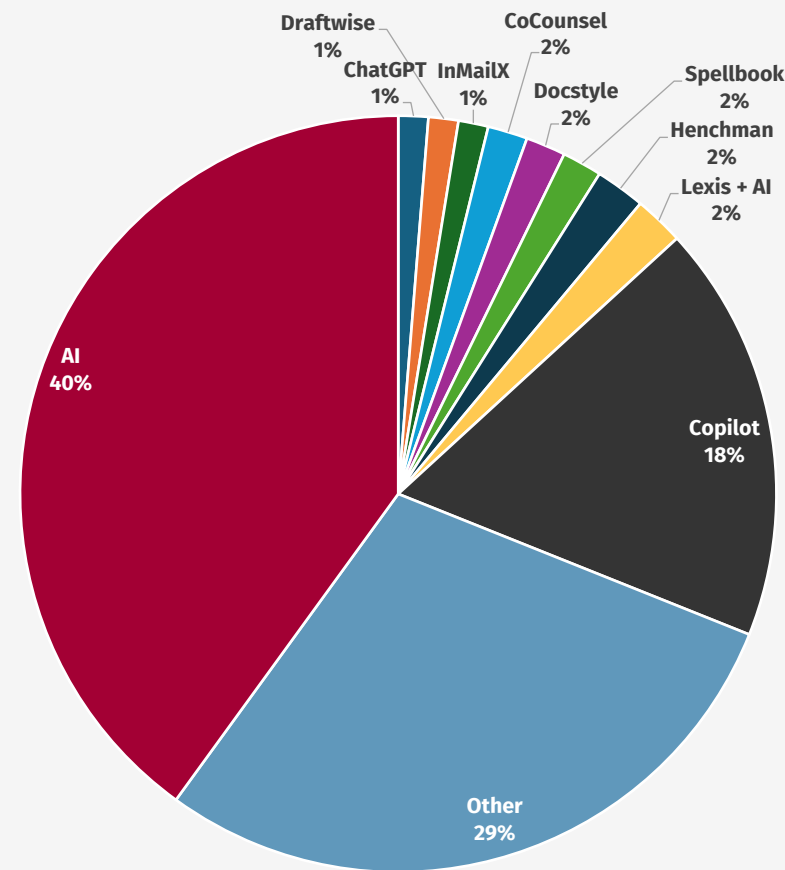
When talking about supercycles, there is no avoiding the coming wave of Gen AI in our application portfolios. Again, these platforms are only brushing the day-to-day responsibilities of many in the IT workforce, but for others, it is already all-consuming. Tools like CoCounsel, Harvey, and Gen AI-infused legal research platforms can be delivered directly to the practitioners, with minor intervention from IT. Although Gen AI is poised to transform the legal industry, it is still in an introductory stage for most IT professionals while the core responsibilities continue to take priority. Servers must still be maintained, operating systems patched, software upgrades and enhancements rolled out, and the workforce must be trained and receive needed IT support to keep things running smoothly.

Our charts will show that Gen AI seems to have snuffed out conversations around the Metaverse and immersive Virtual Reality (VR) technologies. When we asked "What

do you believe the Metaverse and immersive VR will be used for in the next 12 months at law firms?" the leading answer was "For fun, not for work" (53%). The second most popular response was "Unknown" at 33%. (Multiple responses were permitted on this question and survey participants could have chosen both). On the question, "Please share any new-to-market and emerging desktop applications your firm is experimenting with or that you see as emerging players," there were 71 different technologies mentioned, but all were overwhelmed by AI. If you add the responses for "AI" and "Copilot," they represented 58% of all responses (respondents were able to mention more than one technology and frequently did). Many of the other technologies on the chart are also Gen AI tools that received four or more mentions.

When we asked, "Is your firm using generative AI tools (ChatGPT, Dall-E, Harvey, etc.) for business tasks?" 37% of respondents said yes. That represents a 22-point increase over last year. When we asked which Gen AI tools they were using, the top response was Microsoft Copilot for Office 365 (55%), but that response was a little deceptive. We know this because we also asked, "What are your firm's plans for Microsoft Copilot for Microsoft 365?" and on that question, 58% of respondents chose "Investigating." Only 3% are using it for timekeepers, although 19% indicated a pilot was underway. In fact, of those who indicated that a

New to Market/Emerging Tech



Gen AI platform was in use for "business tasks," the top four responses were non-legal-specific (publicly available) apps (Microsoft Copilot – formerly MS Bing, ChatGPT, etc.). Westlaw AI-Assisted Research and CoCounsel (owned by Thomson Reuters) were tied at 22% in positions five and six on that list. Lexis + AI appears at 16% and Harvey at 9%. There were several other legal-specific platforms on the list as well. Keep in mind that these responses represent the percentage of the 37% who indicated they're using Gen AI tools for

business tasks, not the percentage of total respondents. We will undoubtedly see those numbers increase again in next year's results.

“The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence; it is to act with yesterday’s logic.”

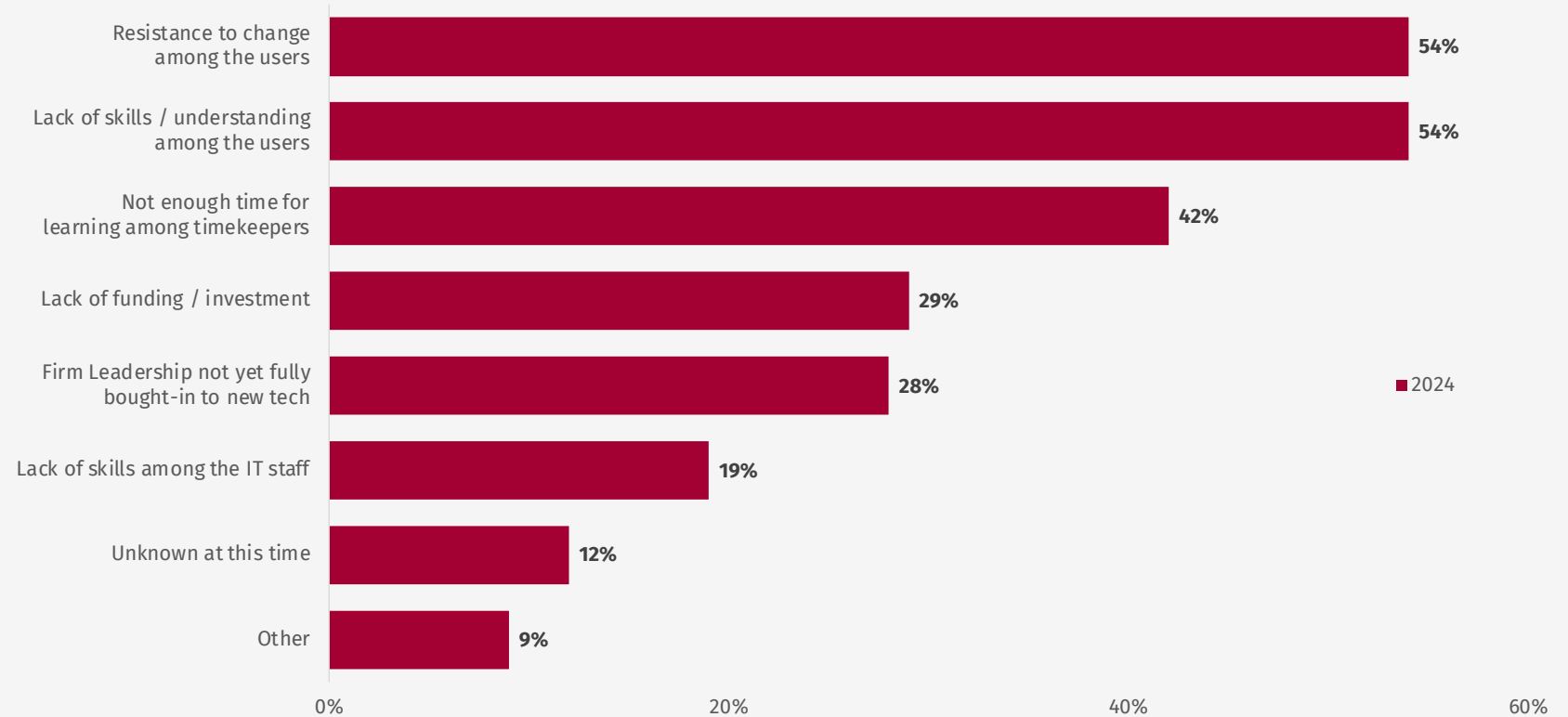
— Peter Drucker

For the second time on this survey, we asked, “What do you believe generative AI tools will be used for in the next 12 months at law firms?” This year there was a bit more clarity, as respondents had a better feeling for the strongest skills within Gen AI apps. The number one response was “Research” (73%). This makes sense, as the AI components of Lexis + AI and Westlaw AI-Assisted Research are better known now than they were a year ago. We can also expect that a great many lawyers are using tools like ChatGPT or Google Gemini for research, although these platforms may be more prone to hallucination than some of the narrowly focused legal platforms. “Summarization” placed second with 70%. This is a skill we now know is one of the strongest in the Gen AI toolbox. “Creating initial drafts of documents” (69%) represented a close third. This may surprise readers, as it is a more recent skill just beginning to appear on legal platforms. It is not surprising, however, that respondents would list it, as it is a promising use of Gen AI. Many lawyers looking to generate a first draft quickly will view this skill as the Holy Grail for reducing overall turnaround time, especially if the matter is being billed as a project, rather than hourly.

Among the charts in this section of the survey, we included one that looks at the use of AI for administrative tasks. Our question “Where is your firm looking to use Generative AI on the business side?”, highlights the fact that the business side may be experiencing this supercycle earlier than the

practitioners. At the top of the list are “Litigation Support (eDiscovery, training programs, etc.)” and “IT Department (Security Awareness Training, Security, Phishing, etc.)”. The use of Gen AI in eDiscovery appears to be far more prevalent at larger firms (76% at the largest) than at our more modestly sized organizations (28% at the smallest firms). An even broader discrepancy exists between the largest and smallest firms when reporting on whether Gen AI was used for Marketing and Business Development (14% up to 78% – one of the broadest gaps in this year’s survey). It may be that business-side use cases become the thin end of the AI wedge at many firms in which efforts at risk mitigation (or avoidance) have deemed Gen AI unfit for the practice. Be that as it may, the use of publicly available Gen AI tools may be far more widespread than this survey reports, as the tracking of “stealth” Gen AI use can be elusive.

With regard to emerging technology, what will be the biggest hurdles for your firm in adopting or making use of these technologies?



Multiple response question; chart excludes responses less than 2%

As any technologist will readily tell us, the most challenging aspect of change is driving user adoption. When asked “With regard to emerging technology, what will be the biggest hurdles for your firm in adopting or making use of these technologies?” unsurprisingly, the two top responses were “Resistance to change among the users,” and “Lack of skills/ understanding among the users,” both with 54%. Related to the above, 42% of participants chose “Not enough time for learning among timekeepers,” reflecting the main challenges of driving technology into the practice. We can make all the effort in the world to provision these apps, but it will require extensive effort to change the fundamental aspects of the way the practice operates. Related to this question, the Gen AI section also includes some revealing questions on current policies around the use of Gen AI and what firms are doing to promote (or discourage) its use.

This convergence of technology cycles creates new challenges, as well as new opportunities, for the law firm. Certainly, there will be efficiencies gained and, where Gen AI is applied to non-billable or low-margin work, significant savings. At many firms, these emerging technologies have already spawned new practices, AI-adjacent services, and advisory opportunities. This manifestation of supercycles will be reflected in the infrastructure, the software, the processes, and training we deliver to our users. And as technology changes, so do the navigational markers we

must heed as we chart our course for the coming years. If we continue to conduct the prosecution of our tech strategies in the same manner as we have in even the recent past, we may never catch up. We can expect that same risk if we fail to enhance our expertise in emerging technologies. Change is coming fast, and our course corrections will have to be more frequent as this evolution materializes and new opportunities, and hazards, present themselves.

As always, many thanks go out to all the ILTAns who responded to our survey. Without you, there would be no findings, no data, no insights, and this summary would undoubtedly be very poorly informed! The community that drives our ILTA “peer-powered” organization is truly unique in the business world. The generosity of its members (especially the 536 that contributed to this year’s survey) is remarkable and deeply appreciated. We encourage law firms that did not participate in the survey to purchase the full publication through the ILTA website and to participate next year so you can receive a free copy.

One final note: Thanks go out to June Ragone of the Bench Survey Group, our tireless data analyst and master of polling protocols, and to Teresa Laird, who provides the ILTA Survey team with fearless leadership, emotional support, and practical advice on how to make the endeavor valuable to our readership. We would also like to thank all the members

of the Tech Survey team who volunteer their time every week of every month to ensure the survey is accurate and delivers the value participants have earned.

Please consume the survey responsibly! **ILTA**

About ILTA

The International Legal Technology Association (ILTA) serves the professional needs of more than 25,000 international legal technology professionals and their organizations. Since its founding in 1980, the association’s focus is to achieve results for our membership and the legal technology profession at large. Much of the value we provide as an association occurs through the coordinated efforts with our global volunteer membership teams.

Copyright Notice

Copyright ©2024 International Legal Technology Association (ILTA)