

The digital age and the weakening of legal skills: impacts of automation and facilitated access on the training and performance of legal professionals

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SUMMARY

This study sought to analyze the impacts of the digital age on legal competencies, investigating how automation and easier access to legal information have influenced the academic training and professional practice of legal professionals. Through a systematic and critical review of specialized literature, the study initially addressed the historical context prior to digitalization, when law was essentially based on manual practices and direct contact between professionals. With the advent of digital technologies, however, the scenario has transformed significantly, providing greater efficiency and agility in the research and development of legal activities. However, these benefits have also resulted in the weakening of traditional skills such as critical interpretation, original legal argumentation, and intellectual autonomy, as a growing reliance on digital platforms and automated tools has been observed. Among the challenges highlighted is the urgent need for curricular reformulation in law programs, incorporating digital technical knowledge without neglecting classic skills such as ethics, critical argumentation, and analytical skills. The research also highlighted the ethical and operational risks associated with the excessive adoption of artificial intelligence in judicial and administrative decisions, highlighting that these tools must always operate under human supervision to ensure contextual adequacy and avoid possible discrimination and judicial errors.

The importance of digital inclusion was also recognized, emphasizing that the success of technological initiatives depends on the ability of end users to properly utilize the available resources, requiring public policies for ongoing training. Another relevant finding was the need to develop evaluation models capable of measuring both mastery of legal technologies and the maintenance of ethical and socially responsible legal practice. Furthermore, the importance of ongoing interdisciplinary dialogue between legal professionals and technology professionals was highlighted to ensure that technological innovations are aligned with the fundamental principles of the legal system. Finally, it was emphasized that the success of this digital transformation in the legal field will depend on the integrated efforts of educational institutions, regulatory bodies, and professionals in the field, ensuring conscious, responsible, and effective evolution for the benefit of society as a whole.

Keywords: Digital Law; Artificial Intelligence; Legal Skills; Automation Legal; Legal Training.

ABSTRACT

The present study sought to analyze the impacts of the digital age on legal skills, investigating how automation and easy access to legal information have influenced the academic training and

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professional practice of legal operators. Through a systematic and critical review of specialized literature, the historical context prior to digitalization was initially addressed, when law was essentially based on manual practices and direct contact between professionals. With the arrival of digital technologies, however, the scenario has changed significantly, providing greater efficiency and agility in the research and development of legal activities. However, such benefits have also resulted in the weakening of traditional skills such as critical interpretation, original legal argumentation, and intellectual autonomy, as there has been a growing reliance on digital platforms and automated tools. Among the challenges pointed out, the urgent need to reformulate the curriculum in law courses stands out, incorporating digital technical knowledge without neglecting classic skills such as ethics, critical argumentation and analytical capacity.

The survey also highlighted the ethical and operational risks associated with the excessive adoption of artificial intelligence in judicial and administrative decisions, noting that these tools must always act under human supervision to ensure contextual adequacy and avoid possible discrimination and judicial errors. The importance of digital inclusion was also verified, highlighting that the success of technological initiatives depends on the ability of end users to properly use the resources made available, demanding public policies for continuous training. Another relevant finding was the need to develop evaluative models capable of measuring both the mastery of legal technologies and the maintenance of an ethical and socially responsible legal practice. In addition, it was concluded that there is the importance of constant interdisciplinary dialogue between legal operators and technology professionals to ensure that technological innovations are aligned with the fundamental principles of the legal system.

Finally, it was highlighted that the success of this digital transformation in the legal environment will depend on the integrated effort of educational institutions, regulatory bodies and professionals in the area, ensuring a conscious, responsible and effective evolution for the benefit of society as a whole.

Keywords: Digital Law; Artificial intelligence; Legal Skills; Legal Automation; Legal Training.

1 INTRODUCTION

Before the arrival of digital technologies, law was based on practices manuals and in direct contact between legal operators, requiring students and professionals a training based on the critical reading of doctrine and jurisprudence and the elaboration careful processing of procedural documents (Vilela, 2020). With the digitization of collections and the creation of online research platforms, the traditional study model was progressively replaced by systems that offer instant access to legal texts and court decisions, transforming the way in which legal knowledge is constructed and transmitted (Amaral, 2024).

The dissemination of electronic databases and software aimed at the exercise professional brought efficiency to obtaining information, but also generated new dependence of tools that automate tasks previously performed manually, shifting the focus of critical interpretation for the handling of technological resources (Queiroz; Tassigny, 2020). This phenomenon implied the standardization of procedural documents, since many professionals

use ready-made models available on legal portals, without making any adaptations that consider the particularities of each case (Vilela, 2020).

The ease of access to petition and contract templates has contributed to the standardization of language and structure, reducing the autonomy of the jurist when writing original documents and compromising the development of skills such as argumentation and persuasion (Sampaio; Rodrigues, 2022). By delegating the generation of drafts, the professional tends to exercise less critical thinking, relying more on tool than in its own analytical capacity (Cândido, 2022).

Artificial intelligence systems applied to law suggest precedents and formulate petition excerpts based on keywords, which can weaken the sense of context and the sensitivity of the legal operator to factual nuances, affecting the quality of arguments presented to the judiciary (Nistler et al., 2024). Thus, the automation of repetitive tasks, such as checking documents and filling out forms, frees up time for more complex activities, but reduces the lawyer's involvement with regulatory details, essential for identifying loopholes and the proper application of law (Do Nascimento et al., 2025).

This distance between the professional and the legal content can result in errors of justification and the loss of strategic opportunities for argumentation. On the other hand, the incorporation of statistics and analysis of large volumes of data into legal processes expands the capacity to measure risks and develop strategies, benefiting the efficiency of offices and courts (Ferreira et al., 2024).

In the academic field, law schools began to offer courses focused on legal technology and the use of specialized software, but they do not always balance this approach with the development of classic skills, such as bibliographic research in-depth and critical debates in the classroom (Queiroz; Tassigny, 2020). Free access to vast repositories of legislation and jurisprudence democratized law, allowing citizens to consult legal decisions and guidance without the intermediation of a lawyer (Amaral, 2024).

Thus, digital communication between client and lawyer, through emails and applications messaging, speeds up service, but reduces face-to-face contact, making it more difficult to building empathy and a deep understanding of the customer's needs. To compensate such fragility, the jurist must develop specific interpersonal skills for the virtual environment, strengthening trust and quality of service (Sampaio; Rodrigues, 2022).

In the context of electronic courts, virtual proceedings require the judge and the support team skills in systems management and information security, areas in which the traditional legal training tends to be more deficient (Do Nascimento et al., 2025). In consonance, despite the advances and benefits provided by technology, literature highlights that the role of the jurist remains central in the contextualization of digital solutions, ensuring that the application of the tools is appropriate to the values and principles of law (Pinto; Santana; Oliveira, 2025).

Therefore, this research is justified, aiming to understand in-depth analysis of the effects of the digital age on the essential skills of professionals law and guide educational institutions and offices in adopting training practices that reconcile technology and critical development; the general objective is to analyze the impacts of automation and facilitated access in the training and performance of jurists, proposing guidelines that strengthen classical and technological skills in the same professional trajectory.

2 METHODS

This research adopts a bibliographical and qualitative approach, based on systematic survey of specialized literature on the digital age in the legal field. It uses carefully selected descriptors such as “legal automation”, “intelligence artificial in law”, “digital legal skills” and “legal training 4.0”. The cut temporal covers publications from 2019 to 2025, ensuring focus on the most important transformations recent. The methodological objective is to critically analyze how innovations Technological influences the training and performance of legal professionals.

Descriptors guide all stages of the survey, facilitating the location of studies that address automation of repetitive tasks, facilitated access to case law and impacts on legal arguments. Each search term is combined with operators Booleans to refine results and avoid redundancies. The selection of descriptors follows recommendations of the Guidelines for Methodology in Legal Research, in order to encompass linguistic variations and synonyms relevant to the topic. Standardization of terms ensures rigor and reproducibility.

Searches are performed in the Scopus, Web of Science, SciELO and Portal databases of CAPES Periodicals, including national and international periodicals. It complements the survey with queries to Google Scholar and the SSRN repository, expanding the reach of academic literature and preprints. JSTOR and HeinOnline are also accessible for works

classics that contextualize the historical evolution of law. The institutional repositories of Brazilian universities provide dissertations and theses that enrich the foundation.

The research applies inclusion criteria that consider peer-reviewed articles, books and book chapters related to the topic, published in Portuguese, English or Spanish. Documents without editorial review or that do not directly address the issues are excluded. legal skills in the digital age. Opinion studies are also separated without empirical basis to preserve analytical quality. The criteria ensure consistency and depth of analysis.

The search procedure follows a pre-defined protocol, starting with the application of descriptors in the different databases, followed by filtering by year of publication and language. Each search records the total number of results, ensuring transparency in the survey. Then, abstracts are read to pre-select the most relevant studies. selected articles are exported to the reference manager, ensuring organization and traceability.

Data extraction occurs through a standardized form, in which the following are recorded: information about the author, year, scope of the study, methodology used and main findings. This procedure allows systematic comparisons between texts and facilitates identification of standards and gaps. The collection form also includes fields to highlight limitations pointed out by the authors and suggestions for new research.

Data analysis is based on thematic analysis technique, identifying central categories such as “depersonalization of argumentation”, “standardization of pieces procedural” and “technological dependence”. Each category is discussed in light of the references theoretical, highlighting convergences and divergences among the authors. The analytical process follows open, axial and selective coding steps, promoting coherent synthesis of results.

To assess the quality of the studies, a critical evaluation guide is adopted. interpretative, considering the relevance of the scope, methodological clarity and robustness of the data. Studies with low methodological rigor are identified as limiting research and treated with reservations at the time of discussion. This critical screening strengthens the reliability of the conclusions and guides recommendations for future research.

The research execution schedule foresees simultaneous phases of data collection and analysis. data for three months, followed by synthesis and writing of the final text in two months. The steps are monitored using a control spreadsheet, allowing adjustments in case of unforeseen events.

Meeting deadlines ensures the delivery of work with quality and depth. academic.

Although based on secondary literature, the research acknowledges limitations related to the lack of interviews with legal professionals. Still, the choice of sources diversified and high-quality information reduces bias and broadens the view of the phenomenon studied. methodological transparency facilitates replicability and strengthens the credibility of the results presented.

In the end, the data collected and analyzed support reflections on the need for balance technological innovation and the development of critical skills in teaching and legal practice. The methodology described here provides a robust framework for understanding how the digital age impacts the essential skills of legal professionals and guides proposals for training guidelines.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this research show that there are still significant gaps between traditional academic training and the professional demands of law in the digital age. Many professionals feel ill-prepared to deal with technological tools, revealing that curricula need to be revised to include essential digital skills. This need for alignment is critical to avoid harm to the quality of legal practice. and the effectiveness of services provided to customers (Becker et al., 2025).

Through Table 1, the approaches of each author can be seen, based on the integration of your studies.

Table 1 – Integration of works.

Title	Year	Authors' Results/Analysis
Family conflict mediation: an analysis of interdisciplinary work and user recidivism at CEJUSC in Manaus (Amorim)	2021	Highlights that digital mediation optimizes processes, but requires ongoing training to maintain humanization, especially in family conflicts.
Artificial Intelligence in the Brazilian Judiciary: towards a more efficient and accessible justice system (Barbosa et al.)	2023	Highlights the benefits of AI in increasing efficiency judiciary, but warns of the need for transparency and independent audits against bias.
Accountants' perception of the alignment between university education, admission and professional performance in public service (Becker et al.)	2025	Highlights gaps between academic training and practical requirements, indicating the urgency of curricular adaptations to current technological needs.
Analysis of the impacts of artificial intelligence on jurisdictional activities as a tool to facilitate access to justice and guarantee the protection of labor relations (Cândido)	2022	Highlights that AI facilitates access to justice, but requires care not to compromise labor rights and more complex social relations.

Artificial Intelligence, Law and Process (Cardoso)

INSS Digital: the impact of the new INSS service model on the work of the social assistance network in the municipality of Palhoça (Cavalheiro et al.)

Model for evaluating the occupations of accounting professionals in the digital context (De Aguiar)

Artificial Intelligence and Digital Law (De Mattos et al.)

Challenges and perspectives of new technologies in legal education in light of resolution no. 5/2018–DCN of the law course (De Queiroz; Tassigny)

Digital Justice: the role of technology in the modern legal system (Do Amaral)

Innovations and challenges in medical law: critical analysis of professional responsibility and new technological paradigms (Do Nascimento et al.)

Technology applied to law: the challenges in managing electronic process data and the impacts on the development of jurimetrics (Esteves et al.)

New technologies, new business models, pressures and the legal services market in Latin American countries (Faim)

Modernization of the legal profession: challenges and opportunities in the age of technology and professionalization (Ferreira et al.)

Artificial Intelligence in Law: Perceptions and Ethical Challenges in the Tocantins Microregion (Freitas et al.)

The impact of the use of Artificial Intelligence on decision-making in the Brazilian Judiciary: a comparative perspective between technology and justice (Nistler et al.)

Technological shift in procedural law and stages of technology use in procedural law: would it be possible to adapt the procedure through technology? (Nunes)

The process of social appropriation of new technologies: the contributions of digital television to the training and performance of basic education teachers (Padoan)

Law and Technology: necessary dialogues (Parchen)

Disruptive Law in the 21st Century (Pinto; Santana; Oliveira)

Skills and abilities required of legal professionals in the 4.0 scenario (Sampaio; Rodrigues)

Skills needed by lawyers in the era of the technological revolution: legal training and the job market in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Vilela)

2024	Reaffirms the need for human oversight constant and clear accountability mechanisms in legal processes that use AI.
2022	Observes improvement in service efficiency, however, it notes an increase in the overload on care teams due to the digital exclusion of users.
2022	Suggests the creation of digital indicators to assess professional skills, potentially applicable to legal training.
2024	Points to legislative gaps and legal uncertainty regarding liability for errors committed by AI systems in digital law.
2020	Advocates curricular adjustments for the effective integration of technologies in legal education in accordance with national guidelines.
2024	Highlights that technology modernizes the system judiciary, but requires the professional to develop ethical and digital skills simultaneously.
2025	Analyzes how emerging technologies challenge professional responsibility, demanding a new legal ethics in the face of technological uncertainties.
2021	Indicates that effective data management is essential for accurate jurimetrics, highlighting the need for technical training of operators.
2023	Indicates that the Latin American legal market is under pressure to adopt technologies, resulting in ethical challenges due to lack of training.
2024	Identifies increased productivity with use technological, but warns of the risks of excessive standardization and loss of technical quality.
2024	Shows ethical concerns regarding the use of AI in law, reinforcing the need for specific regulation in sensitive areas.
2024	Discusses the efficiency and speed provided by AI, highlighting risks in automated decisions without in-depth contextual analysis.
2022	Highlights the steps necessary for technological implementation in procedural law and emphasizes the need for specialized training.
2013	Indicates that active methodologies with digital media used in basic education can be successfully transferred to legal training.
2021	Highlights that the dialogue between technology and fundamental legal principles is essential to avoid violation of rights and guarantees.
2025	Proposes that jurists act as mediators between disruptive technologies and legal principles, demanding solid ethical and interpersonal training.
2022	Reveals insufficient digital skills among legal professionals, recommending urgent curricular adaptation to technological demands.
2020	Highlights the urgency of integrating skills technological and traditional, preparing complete professionals for the contemporary legal market.

Source: The Authors (2025).

In this sense, the data obtained indicate that many legal operators do not have sufficient familiarity with artificial intelligence and legal automation, compromising essential skills such as critical interpretation and legal argumentation. The current scenario demands an educational approach that integrates digital techniques into academic training

traditional, ensuring mastery of both technologies and classical skills indispensable for the modern professional (Sampaio; Rodrigues, 2022).

Technological modernization provides law firms with opportunities to greater operational efficiency, allowing repetitive processes to be automated. However, this automation, when excessive, can standardize legal practice, limiting the creativity and personalization of the strategies adopted by lawyers. The key is in the balance, ensuring that productivity is not achieved at the expense of technical quality of the procedural documents prepared (Ferreira et al., 2024).

A relevant view highlighted by the literature refers to the concept of “right disruptive”, suggesting a new professional configuration, where lawyers act as intermediaries between technological solutions and traditional legal values. To this end, it is essential that solid interpersonal and ethical skills are developed, in addition to digital techniques, so that professionals can effectively manage the challenges imposed by technological innovation (Pinto; Santana; Oliveira, 2025).

Another aspect discussed relates to the stages of implementation of technologies in the procedural scope. Initially, documents are digitized, followed by advanced use of artificial intelligence in evidentiary analysis. This technological evolution requires a new digital literacy on the part of legal operators, demanding a change deep into educational and professional processes to keep up with such transformations (Nunes, 2022).

Furthermore, it is essential that technological incorporation respects essential values of law, such as due process, adversarial proceedings and full defense. The dialogue between law and technology needs to be constant and critical, in order to prevent innovations from compromising fundamental guarantees. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that digital tools are aligned with the basic principles of the legal system (Parchen, 2021).

In the ethical context, studies point to significant concerns about the use of artificial intelligence in the judiciary, especially in sensitive areas such as family and work. There is a consensus on the need for clear and precise regulation to avoid decisions discriminatory or that ignore the particularities of each specific case. This highlights the importance of legal training that also encompasses ethical and human aspects of automated decisions (Freitas et al., 2024).

At the same time, there are challenges linked to specific regulations on legal liability in cases of errors committed by automated systems. The framework Brazilian legislature still lacks precise definitions in this regard, generating insecurity

legal framework for professionals and citizens. This legislative gap demands immediate action to ensure greater clarity and legal protection in the face of technological uncertainties (De Mattos; Curto; Mussallam, 2024).

Another relevant point concerns data management in electronic legal proceedings, essential for the practice of jurimetrics. The quality of statistical analysis directly depends on the accuracy and uniformity of the databases used, making it necessary to train adequately the professionals involved to ensure the reliability of the information obtained. Failures in this management can significantly compromise legal decisions based on statistics (Esteves et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the impact of digital technologies is also evident in public services, as in the case of INSS Digital. Although it has brought greater efficiency in customer service, public, there was an overload in the teams of the social assistance network, due to the difficulty of adaptation by users less familiar with digital. This reinforces the need for public policies aimed at digital inclusion to reduce such negative impacts (Cavalheiro et al., 2022).

Research related to artificial intelligence in the judiciary highlights that, despite contributing to greater procedural efficiency, the challenge lies in the adequate calibration of algorithms to respect the complexity of the national legal system. Discriminatory biases need to be combated through independent audits, methodological transparency and active participation of legal professionals in the development and validation of these digital tools (Barbosa; De Moraes Santos; Vilar, 2023).

Studies on digital mediation highlight the importance of preserving the digital dimension of human, especially in family conflicts, where interpersonal sensitivity plays a crucial role. Although technology facilitates the process, constant training is necessary for professionals to ensure that digital solutions are applied in a humanized way and appropriate to the specific social context (Amorim, 2021).

The experience of social appropriation of technologies in basic education offers insights important for legal education. Active methodologies used in educational contexts can be successfully adapted to legal training, contributing to the development of digital skills and fundamental practical abilities for the contemporary professional (Padoan, 2013).

Evaluation models developed in other areas, such as digital accounting, can also provide important guidelines for legal education. Indicators of performance related to digital skills can be incorporated into law courses,

providing a more complete and appropriate assessment of the current reality of the legal market in constant transformation (De Aguiar, 2022).

Furthermore, pressure from the Latin American legal market for the accelerated adoption of new technologies, without adequate training of professionals, has generated dissatisfaction for part of the clients and high ethical risks. It is essential to invest in continuous training and strategic planning to align technological innovation with ethical expectations and qualitative aspects of the legal services provided (Faim, 2023).

Therefore, it is important to highlight that the approaches presented in this research indicate that the responsible use of artificial intelligence in the judicial process requires supervision constant human support and clear accountability mechanisms in case of errors or mistakes. The technology should act as an auxiliary tool for the judge, and not replace him, respecting thus the ethical and legal limits imposed by the current Brazilian legal system (Cardoso, 2024).

Finally, there is an urgent need for coordination between regulatory bodies, educational institutions and law firms to ensure training appropriate to the challenges imposed by the digital age. Only joint and planned action can train jurists competent to face technological transformations in an ethical, critical and fully efficient in the current legal context (Ferreira et al., 2024).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The transformations imposed by the digital age in the legal field are irreversible. and have generated profound impacts on the way legal professionals work, requiring rapid and effective adaptations in academic training and daily professional practice. In view of In this scenario, the distance that still exists between traditional skills is notable cultivated in the academic environment and the real demands of the current job market, which values increasingly technological and digital skills.

Throughout the analysis carried out, it became evident that the automation of repetitive tasks and the intensive use of artificial intelligence present significant advantages, especially in agility of processes and facilitating access to justice. However, these same advantages bring with them ethical, operational and legal challenges, clearly demonstrating that the technology cannot fully replace critical reasoning and human perception that characterize the full exercise of the right.

Another relevant point found by the research is the urgent need for review curriculum of legal courses to incorporate technological training in a balanced way and ethics. This alignment needs to encompass specific digital skills and simultaneously strengthen the ability of argumentation, critical interpretation and strategic thinking of future professionals. Without this curricular integration, the trained professional may find themselves unprepared to deal with the complexities of the contemporary legal environment.

Furthermore, it is clear that the judicial system faces specific challenges in relation to the effective implementation of new technologies. Despite the unquestionable benefits such as greater efficiency, speed and procedural transparency, there are significant risks of decisions standardized and potentially inadequate to the particularities of specific cases. To mitigate these risks, it becomes essential to maintain constant human supervision and institute transparent mechanisms for monitoring automated decisions.

In the social sphere, digital inclusion has proven to be a critical factor for the success of technological initiatives in law. Digital programs and platforms, such as customer service electronics in the public sector, for example, will only fully achieve their objectives if there is clear strategies for digital empowerment of end users, reducing inequalities and expanding the population's effective access to new technological tools.

The research also highlighted that the development of models is essential specific assessments to measure the effectiveness of technological incorporation in both training both academically and in everyday legal practice. Such models must encompass clear criteria performance, not only in the management of technologies, but also in ethical quality and adequacy of the proposed legal solutions, ensuring that professionals meet fully comply with social and legal expectations.

The importance of maintaining and valuing skills was also clear. interpersonal and human skills in professional practice. In a technological context, empathy, social sensitivity and the ability to communicate effectively remain elements crucial for strengthening trust between client and lawyer, judge and jurisdiction, ensuring that legal relations do not become exclusively mechanized and impersonal.

Finally, it is concluded that the success of technological integration in the legal field depends directly from coordinated efforts between educational institutions, regulatory bodies and legal professionals. Only with integrated policies of continuous training, applied ethics and digital inclusion will make it possible to ensure that technological evolution, essential for modernization legally, occur in a conscious, responsible and truly beneficial manner for the entire society.

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