# SDS PODCAST EPISODE 926:

# AI IS DISRUPTING THE LEGAL INDUSTRY: ARE PARALEGALS DOOMED?

| Jon Krohn: | 00:00 | This is episode number 926 on AI disrupting the legal industry. |
|---|---|---|

00:08 Back in episode number 896. I argued that AI probably won't be taking your job anytime soon. I followed that up in episode number 904 by discussing how some industries are nevertheless being rapidly and thoroughly disrupted by ai. In that episode, I focused on how AI is overhauling the advertising industry. In particular, that episode generated a huge amount of social media buzz, and so I came back in episode number 910 to cover how AI is disrupting journalism. In future episodes, I'll cover how AI is disrupting software development, graphic design, education, entertainment, and of course data science itself. In today's episode, we're diving into how AI is disrupting the legal industry. For centuries, law has been synonymous with mountains of paperwork, dense contracts, and endless case research. But now AI is transforming that landscape. The most common uses today are contract review, legal research, and document automation.

01:07 Instead of spending hours coming through precedents or redlining agreements, lawyers can now use AI to scan documents, flag risks, and draft memos in seconds. Some tools even provide litigation predictions, crunching past case data to forecast outcomes. The effect attorneys save hundreds of hours each year, work more accurately and deliver faster services to clients. Now, what does that mean for legal jobs? The short answer, and I'll get to more nuance later, is augmentation. Not so much replacement. AI is handling the grunt work while lawyers focus on high level strategy, advocacy, and client advice. We're seeing the rise of legal technologists and other hybrid roles professionals who sit between law and tech to deploy AI solutions effectively. Law schools are even updating their curricula to prepare the next generation for lawyers

willing to embrace these tools. AI isn't a threat, it's a superpower, but let's address the elephant in the room.

02:02      What about paralegals and entry-level associates? Aren't their jobs at risk? After all, those roles have traditionally centered on things like document review, discovery, and due diligence. Exactly the tasks that I already described early in this episode, AI now automates, and yes, it's true. The demand for traditional paralegal work may shrink, but many firms are already redeploying paralegals into new capacities. Instead of coming through boxes of evidence, they're being trained to supervise AI systems, validate outputs, and manage data workflows. In other words, they're becoming legal technologists. At the same time, brand new opportunities are opening up around compliance, data privacy, and AI regulation areas where human judgment, ethical reasoning, and contextual understanding are indispensable. Entry-level lawyers who adapt to these needs may actually find themselves in greater demand than before, so while some tasks certainly disappear, the people in those roles aren't necessarily being left behind provided they evolve with the times.

03:01      Let's now look at a couple of startups that are driving the change. First, let's talk about Harvey backed by OpenAI. Harvey is like a natural language copilot for attorneys. Major firms have rolled it out to thousands of lawyers for tasks like drafting contracts or summarizing case law in minutes. Then there's co-counsel, which can handle research, deposition prep, and contract analysis. The giant content conglomerate, Thomson Reuters was sufficiently impressed by co-counsel that they spent 650 million acquiring the company that built the platform. So where does this leave? All of us, the legal profession is at a turning point. AI is reducing drudgery, enhancing accuracy, and even creating new career paths in law. Lawyers and paralegals who adopt these tools are already

outpacing those who don't, and far from making attorneys obsolete. AI is allowing them to focus on the uniquely human skills of persuasion, judgment, and empathy.

03:55    If you'd like to hear more of the nitty gritty about AI tools being applied in the legal industry, I highly recommend checking out episode number 901 of this podcast with Lilith Bat-Leah, a phenomenal speaker who has a ton of direct experience in the space. Alright, that's it for today's episode. I'm Jon Krohn and you've been listening to this SuperDataScience podcast. If you enjoy today's episode or know someone who might consider sharing this episode with them, leave a review of the show on your favorite podcasting platform. Tag me in a LinkedIn post with your thoughts, and if you haven't already, be sure to subscribe to the show. Most importantly, however, I just hope you'll keep on listening. Until next time, keep on rocking it out there, and I'm looking forward to enjoying another round of the SuperDataScience Podcast with you very soon.