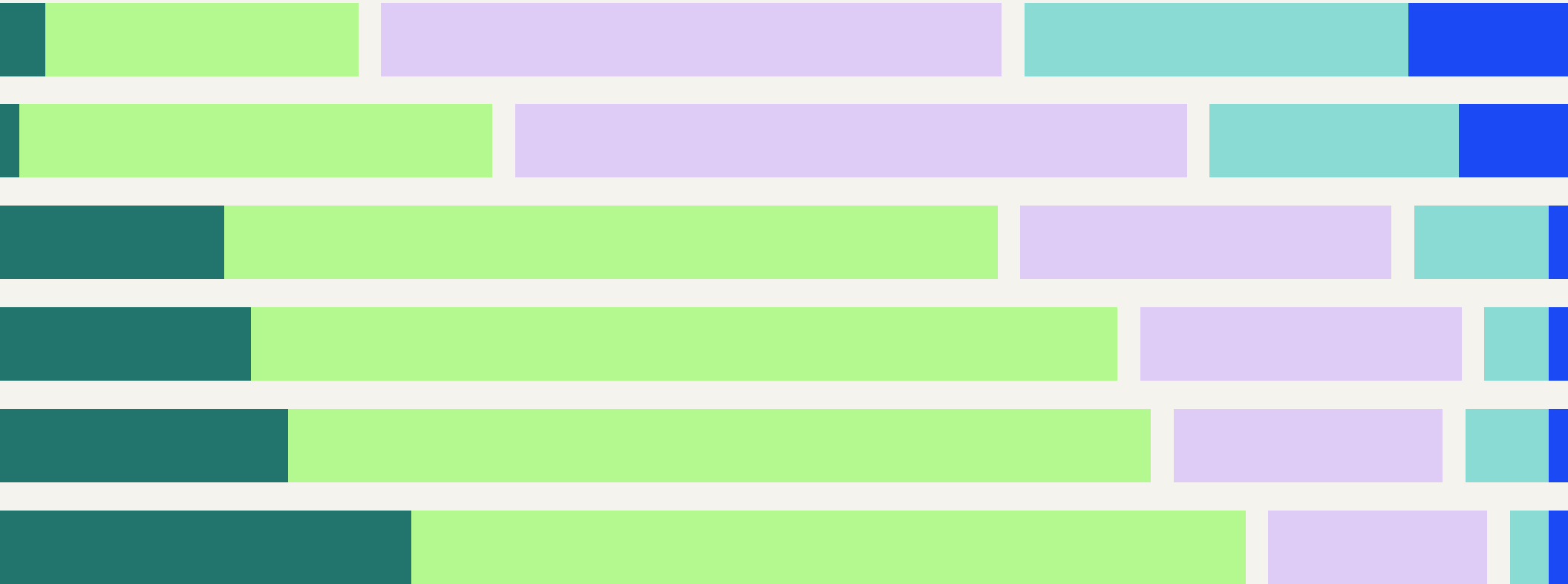


# 2025 Ediscovery Innovation Report



# 2025 Ediscovery Innovation Report

In partnership with the Association of E-Discovery Specialists and the International Legal Technology Association

## Executive Summary

Generative AI is no longer a future consideration for the legal profession – it's a present force, already transforming how legal work is done, billed, and valued. Legal teams are adopting the technology to reclaim time, improve efficiency, and gain a competitive edge, even as concerns around trust, risk, and readiness continue to shape how it's implemented.

By now, every partner, associate, and paralegal has heard the spiel about how generative AI is going to increase efficiency, change the way they work, and save money. And while those might be seen as broader organizational goals, it's also important to focus on the day-to-day impacts this technology is already having. Many legal teams are using generative AI to handle tasks like research and document review at a pace much faster than was thought possible just one year ago.

In the *2025 Ediscovery Innovation Report*, Everlaw sought to explore the ways in which generative AI is being incorporated into legal workflows, in an effort to dig deeper and discover whether this revolutionary technology is actually causing a revolution.

What we found is that, while hesitancy remains, legal professionals are leveraging generative AI in their work at a much faster pace than they were just a year ago, and are using it to find advantages wherever they can. For many, generative AI is already being used to streamline research, accelerate document review, and reclaim hours in the workweek. As this year's results show, more than 80% of respondents said they believe generative AI will make drudge work easier and allow them to prioritize higher-value work, and 75% said it will make their job more efficient.

And beyond its daily capabilities, generative AI is also changing the business model for many legal organizations. In fact, nearly 60% of legal professionals say generative AI will significantly alter billing practices within two years, with almost 20% expecting that shift inside the next 12 months.

Those who are able to get ahead of this shift and begin mapping out a generative AI roadmap now will be able to help their clients and organizations navigate the comprehensive change this technology promises.



## Key Findings

### 1. Generative AI Delivers Major Dividends for Legal Professionals

This year's results show that legal professionals are leveraging generative AI to use their time more efficiently and provide greater value, with just under half of respondents stating that generative AI saves them between one to five hours per week (see figure 10). Taken across an entire year, that equals 250 hours, or 32.5 working days, which is a major game changer for attorneys looking for more time to focus on higher-value work. When extrapolated across the average size of an Am Law 200 firm of 757 employees, those savings amount to more than 196,820 hours per year reclaimed across the organization.

Those numbers aren't just hypothetical. They're also consistent with the overwhelming majority of respondents who believe generative AI will make drudge work easier, allow them to prioritize higher-value work, and make their jobs more efficient (see figure 11). Generative AI has become a proven tool in the day-to-day work of legal professionals.

### 2. Optimism Grows as Generative AI Becomes Essential

The attitude around the proliferation of generative AI in the legal profession continues to improve, with over two-thirds of respondents reporting a positive outlook on its use (see figure 12). A significant share also believe generative AI will make drudge work easier and allow them to prioritize higher-value work, make their jobs more efficient, and help them and their teams deliver greater client value.

This year's results also validate that legal professionals see generative AI as an integral part of their work going forward, with two-thirds of respondents believing generative AI will be standard in ediscovery technology in the next two years, representing a 5% increase from last year (see figure 8).

### 3. Generative AI Rewrites the Billable Hour

The billable hour has long been a bedrock of the modern legal practice, but the introduction of generative AI shows that it might be in for a change.

An incredible 90% of respondents believe that the proliferation of generative AI either already has significantly altered conventional billing practices or will do so within the next two years (see figure 13). This marks a monumental shift in the legal industry, and one that will cause practically every legal organization to restructure how they charge for their services.

If legal professionals' thoughts on the billable hour hold true, generative AI's total restructuring of existing billing practices could leave the industry on the back foot.

### 4. Cloud Adoption Defines Who Leads in AI Adoption

Last year's results introduced a growing divide regarding generative AI use between those whose ediscovery software is deployed on the cloud and those whose software is deployed on-prem. While this year shows that the divide has begun to narrow, it's also clear that cloud adopters continue to drive generative AI use across the profession.

For example, those with their ediscovery software deployed on the cloud are three times more likely to be actively using generative AI in their legal work than those whose ediscovery software is deployed on-prem (see figure 14). Similarly, the attitudes of legal professionals toward the proliferation of generative AI fall along cloud adoption lines, with those whose ediscovery software is deployed on the cloud being four times more likely to feel positively about the proliferation of generative AI in the legal profession than those whose ediscovery software is deployed on-prem (see figure 15).

### 5. Lingering Uncertainty Remains Despite More Tangible Benefits

While the legal profession is making great strides toward generative AI adoption, there's still an underlying feeling that many aren't as prepared as they'd like to be. For the third year in a row, the majority of respondents said they feel the legal profession is unprepared for the impacts of generative AI, with 72% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing in 2023, 68% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing in 2024, and 63% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing this year (see figure 17).

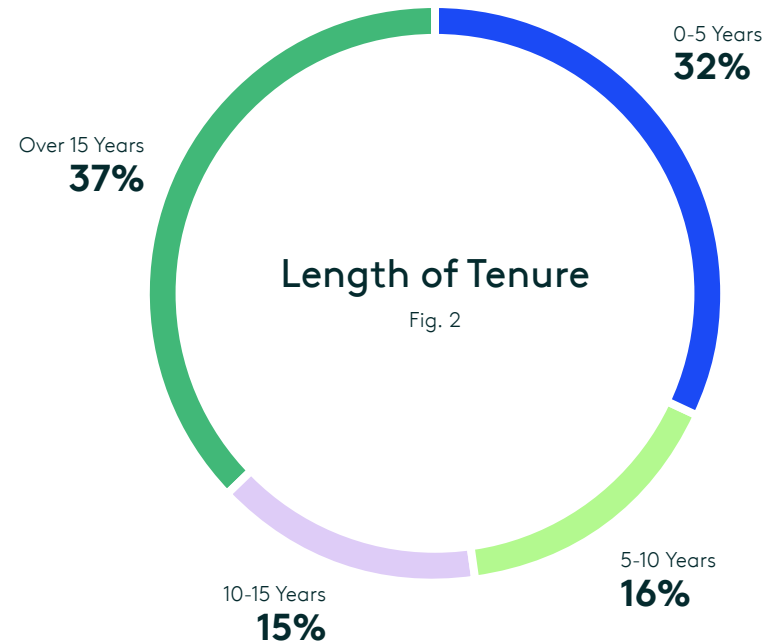
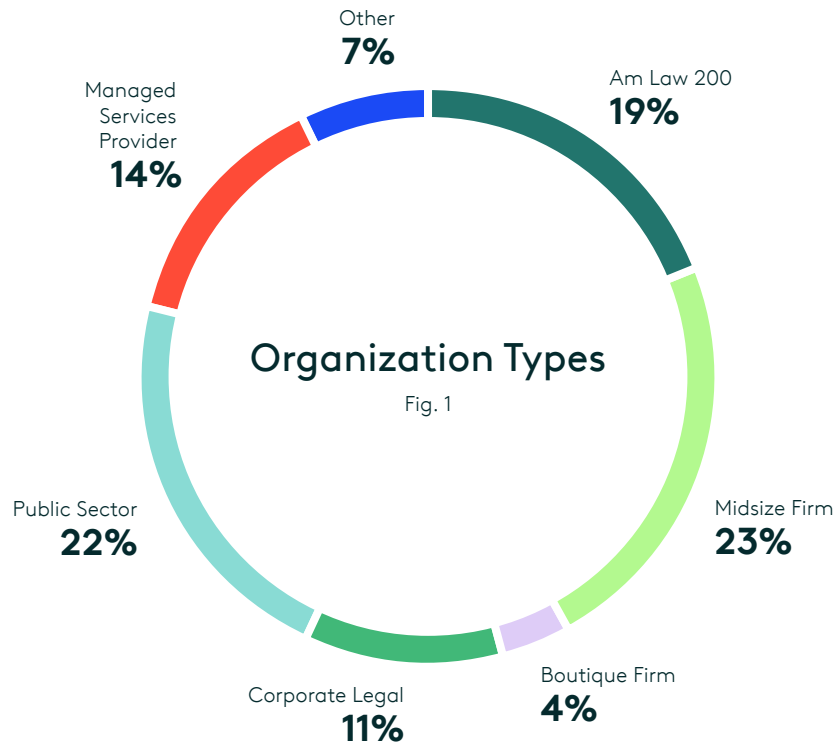
Although these opinions are changing, the fact that nearly two-thirds of respondents still feel the legal profession is unprepared shows there's a continuing need for consistent education and guidance around generative AI's use.

# Methodology

Everlaw conducted this study with the Association of Certified E-Discovery Specialists and the International Legal Technology Association to learn more about key trends in ediscovery innovation. We emailed legal professionals in April and May of 2025 and received 299 completed responses to our survey. Respondents were not provided an incentive for participation; however, Everlaw made a \$5,000 donation to Save the Children and the Innocence Project on behalf of the survey participants. Please note: Due to rounding or multi-select responses, not all charts in this report will total 100%.

## Survey Demographics

299 respondents



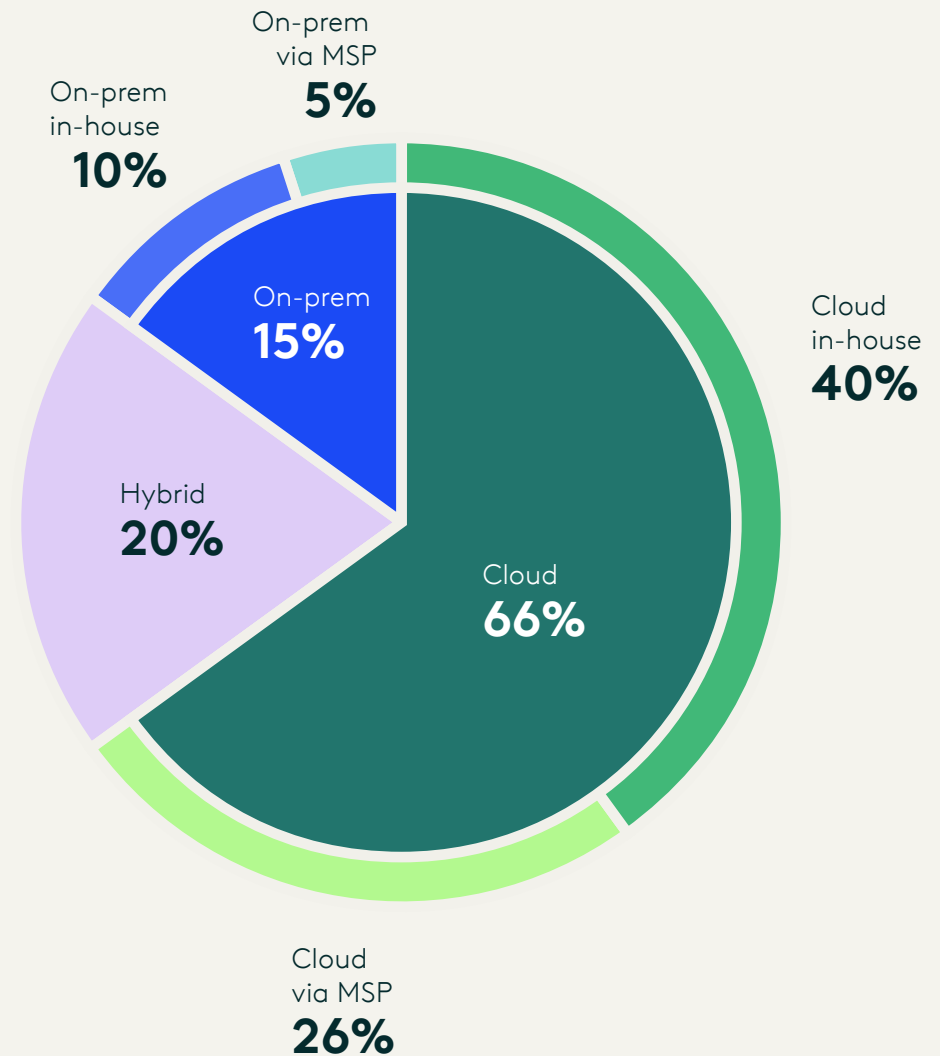
## The Cloud Moves In-House

From the very first *Ediscovery Innovation Report* in 2021, we've highlighted the organizations that are making the transition to cloud-based ediscovery software, and the impact of this transition on the industry. While this year saw growth in cloud adoption slow slightly, there were gains in other areas.

For example, 40% of respondents have their ediscovery software deployed on the cloud and managed in-house, a 5% increase over last year, and the highest share of that category since this survey began in 2021. Although cloud adoption has grown significantly each year, the latest results prove that ediscovery's present is not only in the cloud, but in the cloud and managed in-house.

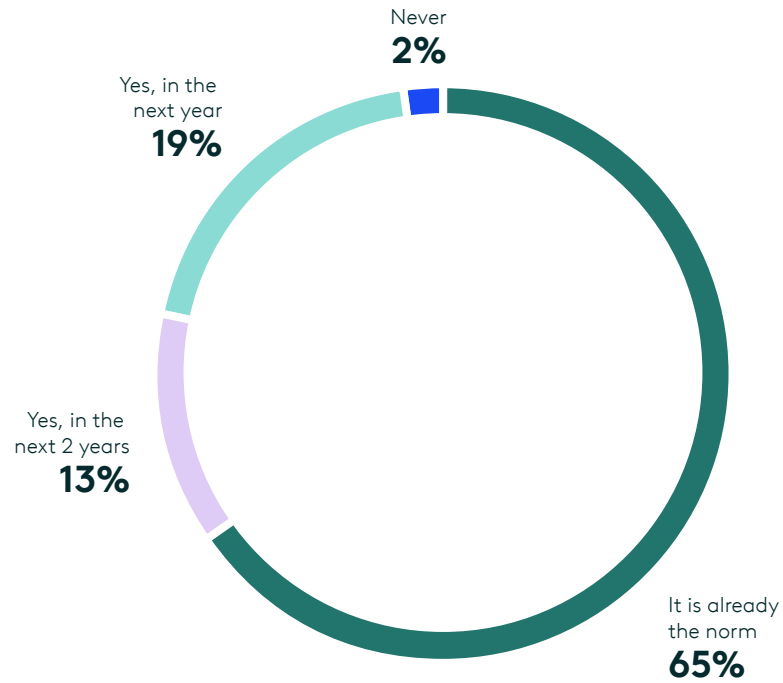
### How is your ediscovery software primarily deployed?

Fig. 3



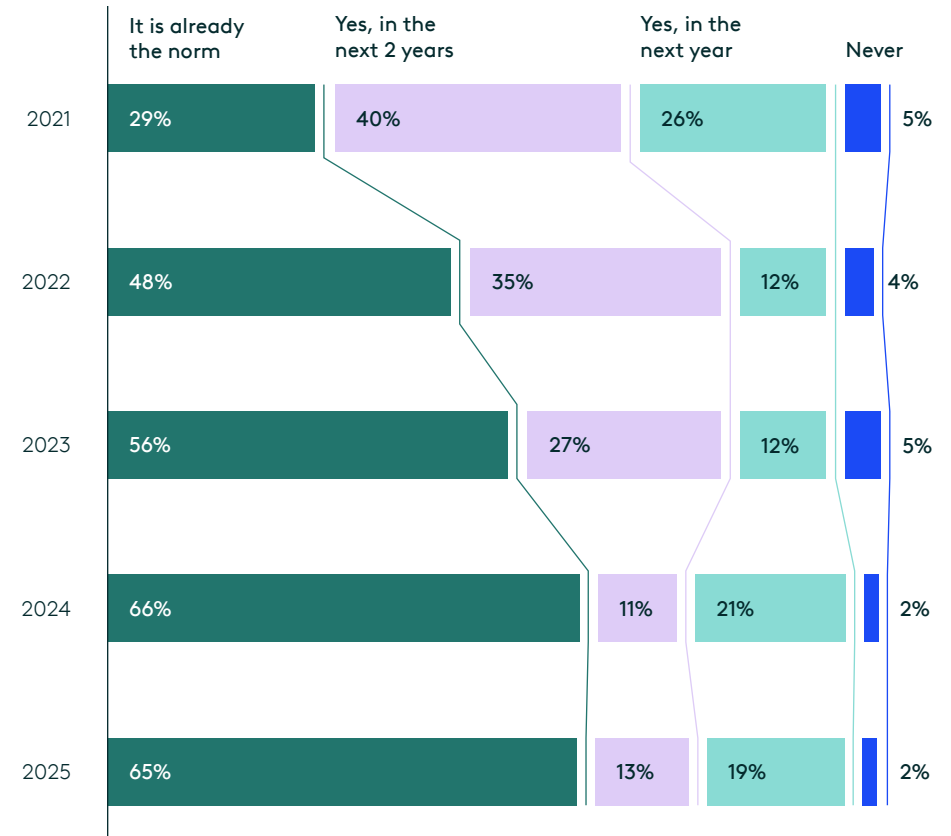
## Do you believe that cloud-based ediscovery will become the standard in the future?

Fig. 4



## Change in attitude toward cloud-based ediscovery over time

Fig. 5



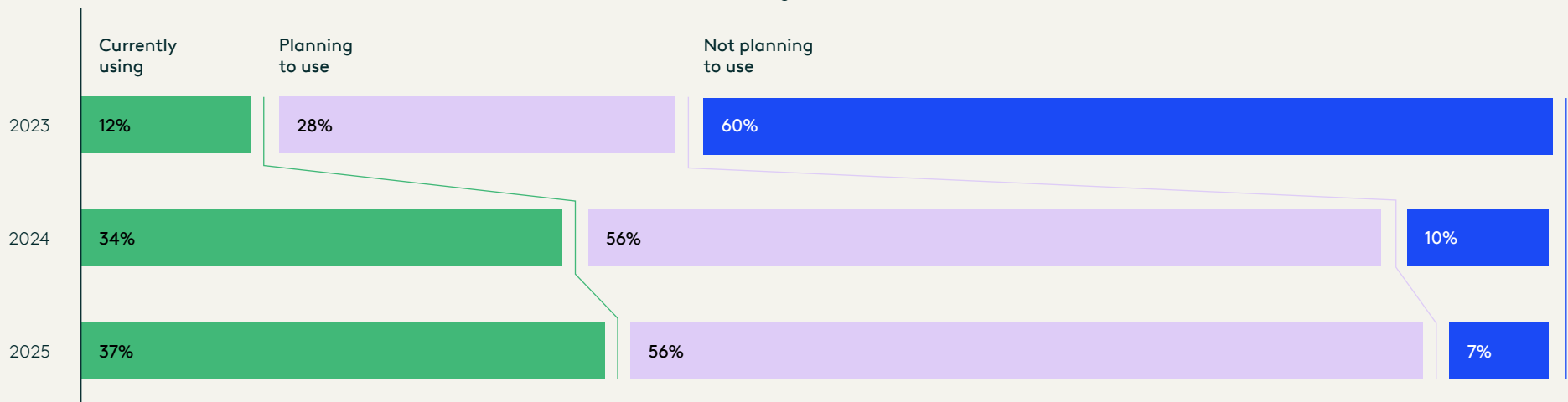
# Cloud Leaders Push Generative AI Adoption into the Mainstream

This year’s results found that 37% of respondents are already using generative AI, either on live matters or in beta, and 56% are either planning to use or passively planning to use it in the future. While the adoption numbers represent a more modest increase compared to last year, the upward trend is still obvious. Additionally, those who see themselves as never planning to use generative AI fell to just 7%, a decrease from 10% last year and another clear indicator of just how necessary this technology has already become.

Cloud users continue to lead the charge in generative AI adoption as well, with 41% of respondents who have their ediscovery software deployed on the cloud also actively using generative AI in their legal work. This represents an 8% increase from last year, and is three times higher than the adoption rate of those with their ediscovery software deployed on-prem.

## Are you currently using or planning to use generative AI in your legal work?

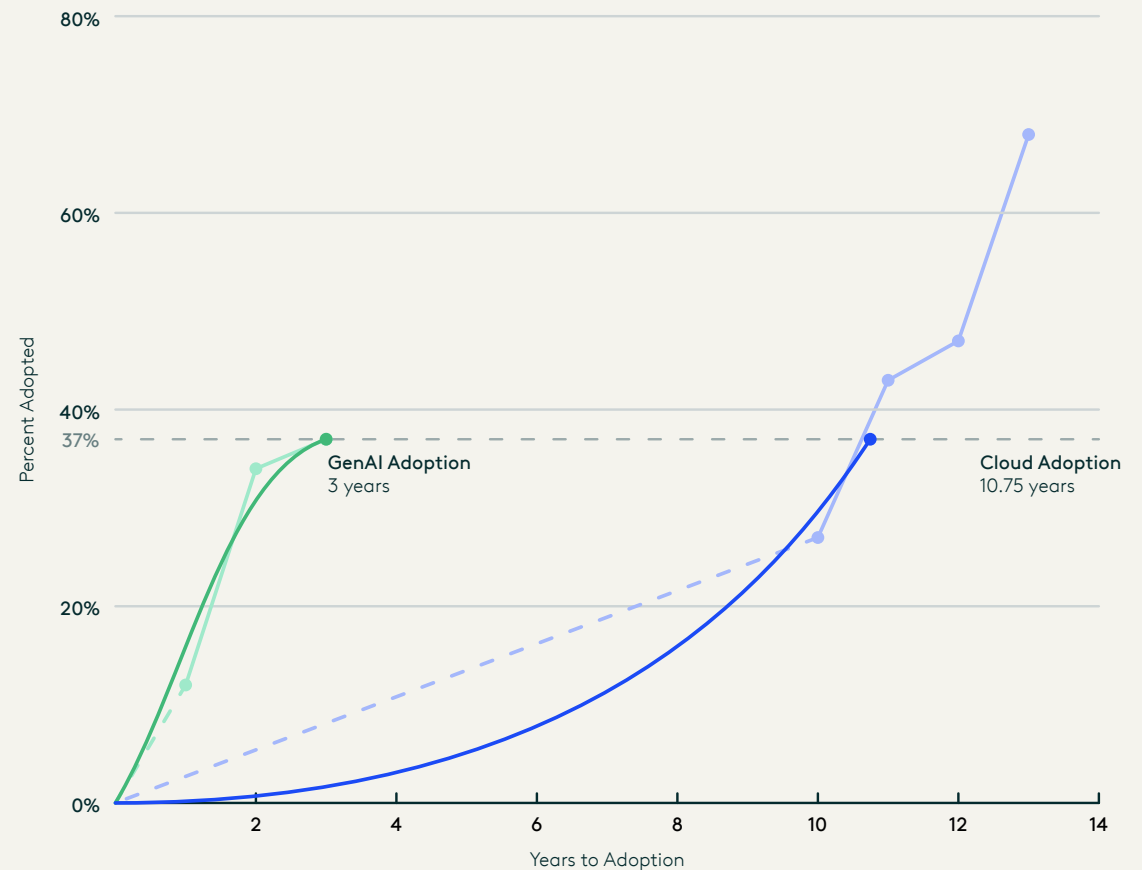
Fig. 6



This adoption curve demonstrates the continued upward trend of generative AI adoption in the legal profession, compared to the rate of cloud adoption. In just three years since the release of ChatGPT, generative AI has reached roughly the same level of adoption as cloud-based ediscovery software in a fraction of the time. This represents a far more rapid technological shift than the legal industry has previously seen.

## Legal Profession’s Adoption of GenAI vs. Cloud-Based Ediscovery

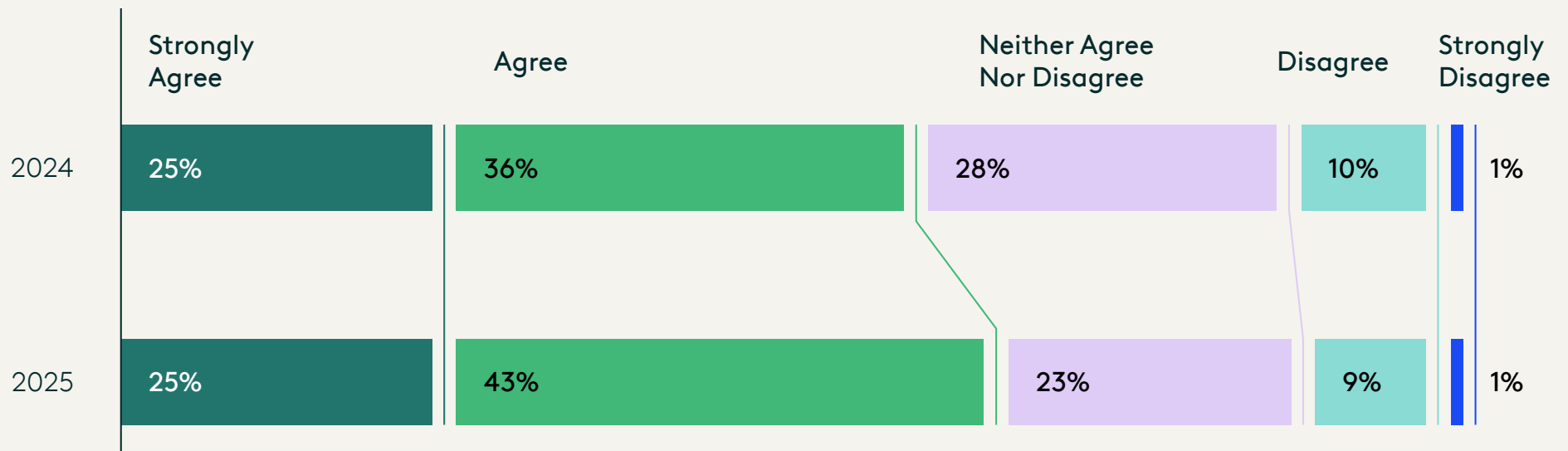
Fig. 7



Note: The stylized curves represent both cloud and generative AI adoption rates, with the cloud adoption curve being extrapolated back to Everlaw’s founding in 2010, and data on industry cloud adoption rates beginning in 2021. For the generative AI adoption curve, that data is extrapolated back to 2022, when this technology first started being leveraged by attorneys in a serious way, and data on adoption rates beginning in 2023.

How do you feel about this statement? The use of generative AI will be standard in ediscovery technology in the next two years.

Fig. 8



# Generative AI Power Users Unlock Major Time Savings

Of the 37% of respondents who are using generative AI in their work, a little over half said they use it on at least a weekly basis, and nearly a quarter stated that they use it either daily or multiple times a day. This is the first year these impacts have been measured, offering new insight into how quickly the technology is taking hold across the profession.

Forty-two percent of survey respondents said that generative AI saves them between one to five hours per week in their legal work, demonstrating the tangible benefits legal professionals are already gaining from its use.

## Expert Perspectives

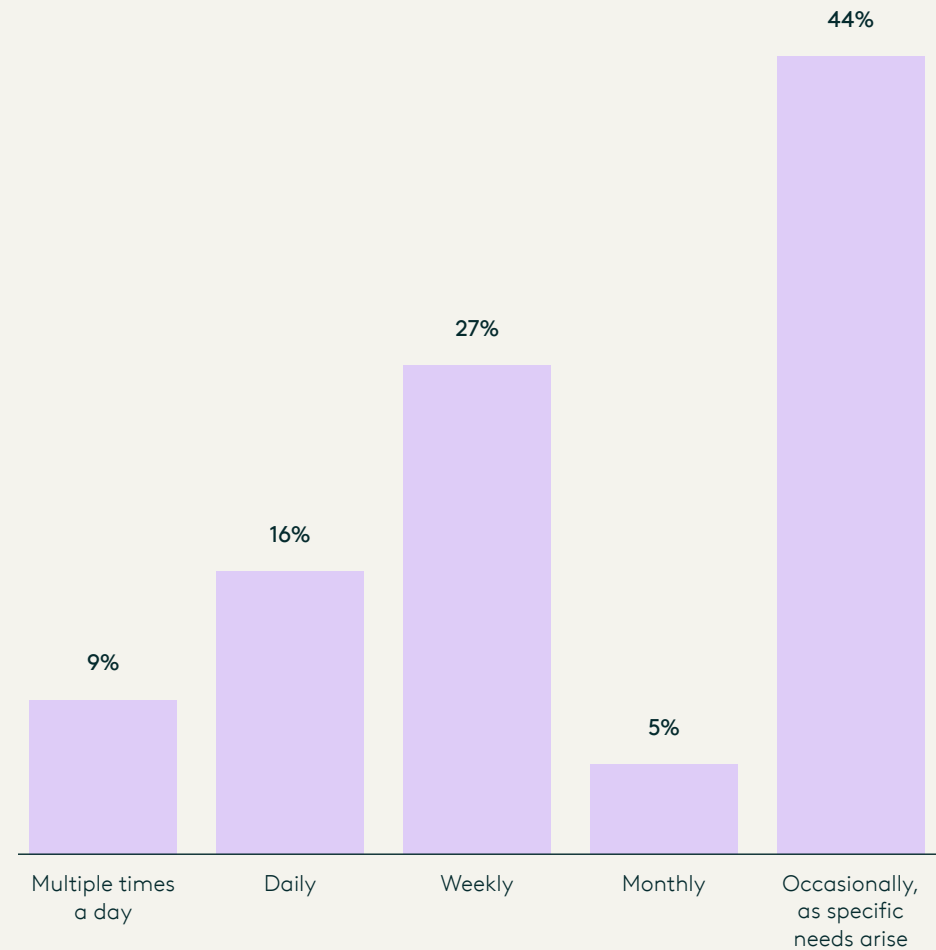
Professor Nancy Rapoport, who serves as the Garman Turner Gordon Professor at UNLV’s William S. Boyd School of Law, provided some commentary on these results.

“Given that many legal professionals (at least in Big Law) work in the 60-80 hour per week range, saving one to five hours per week may not seem like a lot. However, as my co-author Joe Tiano says, not every minute of a lawyer’s billable hour is equally valuable. Joe calls this the ‘fallacy of the billable hour,’ and as we said in a recent article, [a] good, hard “think” for an hour is more valuable than an hour of being the tenth person in a meeting with no reason to be there.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Nancy B. Rapoport & Joseph R. Tiano, Jr., “Fighting the Hypothetical: Why Law Firms Should Rethink the Billable Hour in the Generative AI Era”, 20 WASH. J. L. TECH & ARTS 41, 64 (2025)

## How frequently do you use generative AI in your legal work?

Fig. 9



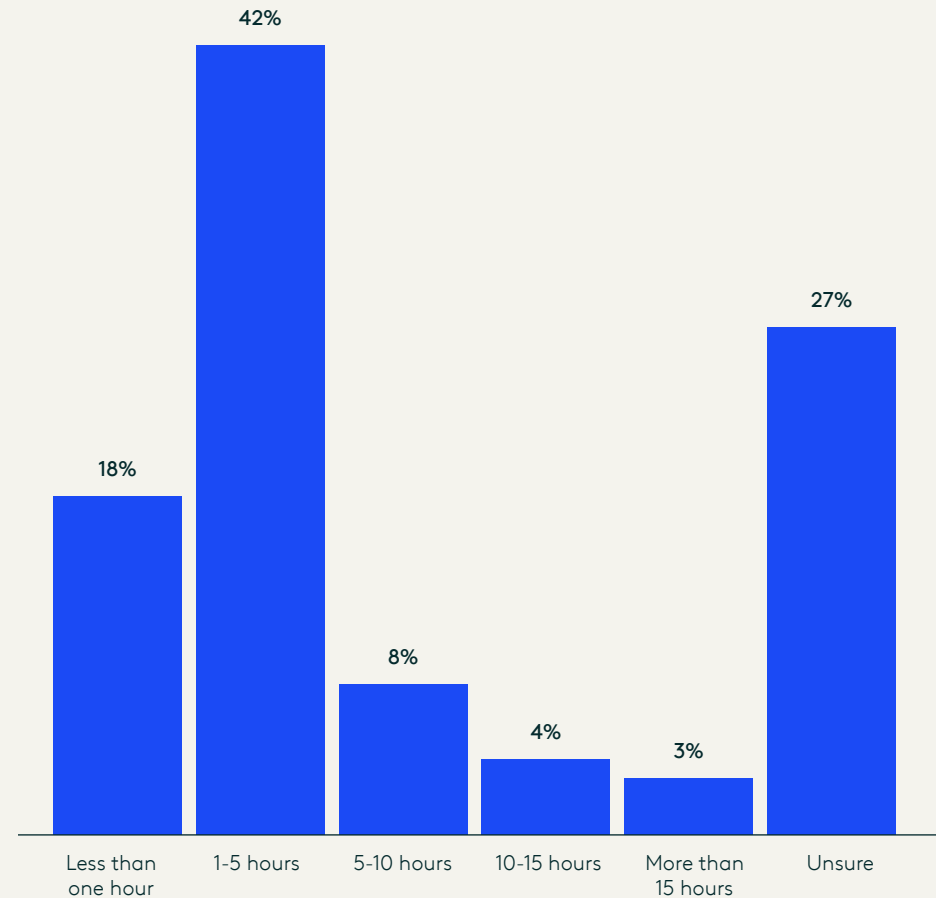
“So if lawyers are saving themselves one to five hours per week by not doing work that generative AI can more easily handle, then they are likely replacing the scutwork that probably isn’t worth their billable rate with work that requires more human levels of creativity.

“Think of it this way: We don’t redline documents anymore by using a ruler and a red pen. Our word processing programs can track changes easily, and those programs don’t get distracted or bored, the way humans do. It would be unreasonable to redline by hand and charge by the hour for doing so, but it’s not unreasonable for a human to spend time sorting through generative AI alternatives for a deal structure to choose the best one for a particular client. By freeing up lawyers from scutwork, lawyers get to do more nuanced work. Generative AI with a human in the loop at appropriate times gives lawyers a more interesting workday and clients a faster, and likely better, work product.”

These results also highlight a new category of generative AI leaders: those who are actively making the technology a regular part of their practice. Of the respondents actively using generative AI in their legal work, 14% are saving over five hours per week, establishing a new way of working that uses this technology as a partner, not a replacement.

## On average, how many hours per week do you believe you save with generative AI in your legal work?

Fig. 10



## Expert Perspectives



Generative AI with a human in the loop at appropriate times gives lawyers a more interesting workday and clients a faster, and likely better, work product.

**Nancy Rapoport**  
Garman Turner Gordon Professor  
UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law



If those who reported saving one to five hours per week were to scale those time savings across an entire year, it would equate to 20 hours saved per month, and 260 hours saved annually. That's 32.5 working days per year that legal professionals would be able to focus on higher-value work, which is invaluable in staying ahead of the competition.

When extrapolated across the average size of an Am Law 200 firm of 757 employees, those savings amount to more than 196,820 hours per year reclaimed across the organization. That's the equivalent of more than 24,600 working days, or the annual productivity of roughly 95 full-time employees, redirected toward strategic legal work.

## Individual Benefits



**260**  
hours

**32.5**  
working days

Time an individual using generative AI would save in their legal work per year

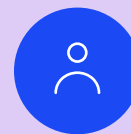
## Organizational Benefits



**197K**  
hours

**24.6K**  
working days

Time an Am Law 200 firm of 757 employees would save per year



**95**  
employees

Annual capacity gained from generative AI

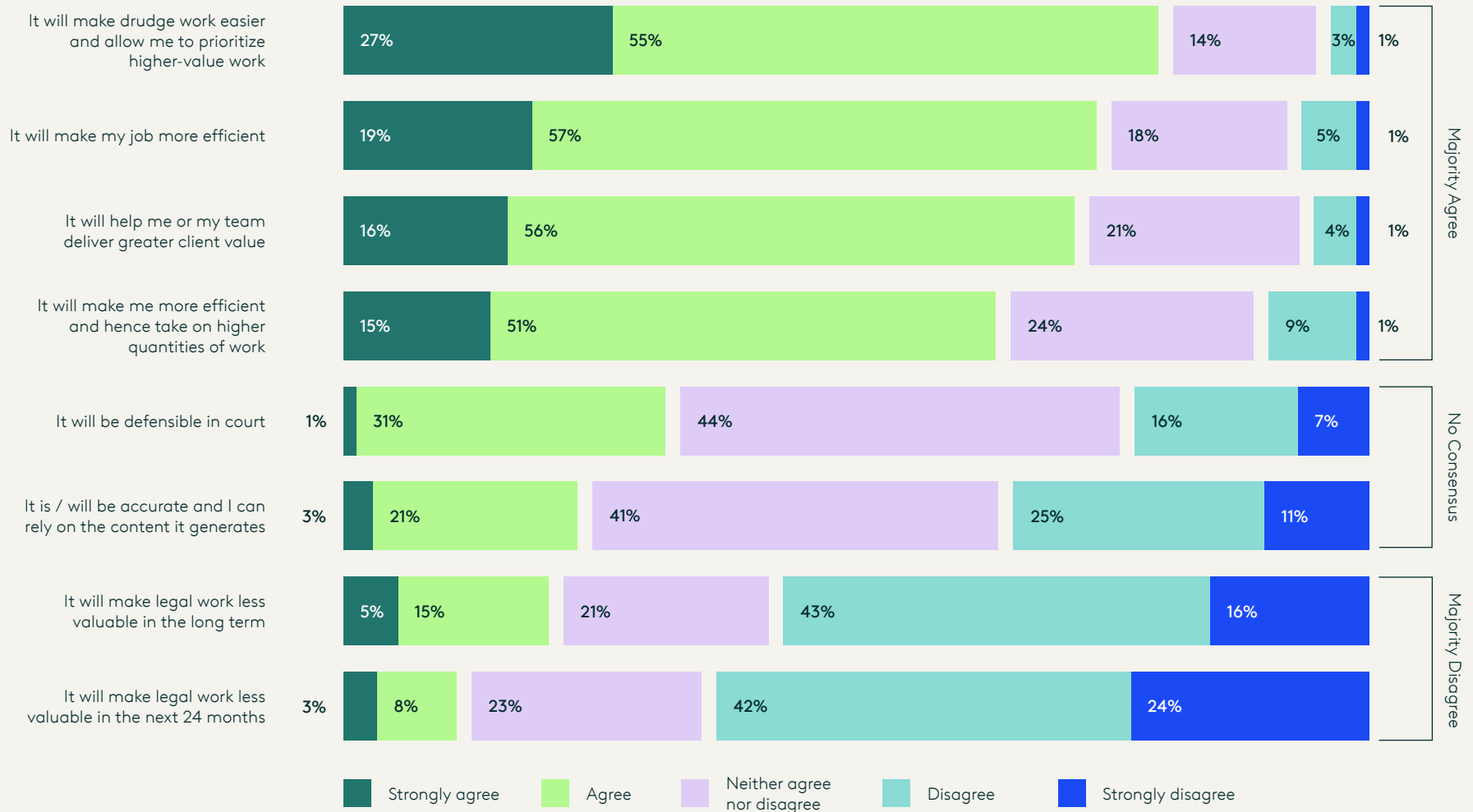
## An Improving Outlook on Generative AI's Capabilities

The increased use and time savings are also reflected in the ways legal professionals are seeing the potential of generative AI across the wider industry. When asked about the impact of generative AI on the legal profession, more than 80% of respondents said they believe it will make drudge work easier and allow them to prioritize higher-value work, and 76% said it will make their job more efficient, which is a 10% increase from last year. Additionally, 72% said generative AI will help them or their team deliver greater client value, which is a 16% increase year-over-year.



## How do you feel about the following statements regarding the impact of AI (such as ChatGPT) on legal technology / the legal profession?

Fig. 11





## Expert Perspectives

Everlaw's Senior Strategic Data Analytics Advisor, Eddie Kim, weighed in on these results, and the ways in which legal professionals are seeing generative AI's potential in their work.

“These findings highlight a pivotal shift in how legal professionals view and utilize generative AI. We're seeing a clear and accelerating trend where legal teams are moving beyond initial curiosity and trepidation. The data shows a strong consensus: over 80% believe AI will alleviate 'drudge work,' freeing them for higher-value tasks, and 75% anticipate increased efficiency. This isn't just about saving time; it's about fundamentally re-shaping the legal practice to be more strategic and impactful, delivering greater client value.

“The report also indicates that the majority of legal professionals do not believe generative AI usage will diminish the value of legal work, either in the short or long term. Generative AI can not only augment, accelerate, and amplify existing legal workflows, but it also possesses the potential to transform and create entirely new ones. It's exciting to see how these insights will continue to inform the development of tools that empower legal professionals to navigate an increasingly complex information landscape with greater precision and confidence.”

## Expert Perspectives



Generative AI can not only augment, accelerate, and amplify existing legal workflows, but it also possesses the potential to transform and create entirely new ones.

**Eddie Kim**

Sr. Strategic Data Analytics Advisor  
Everlaw

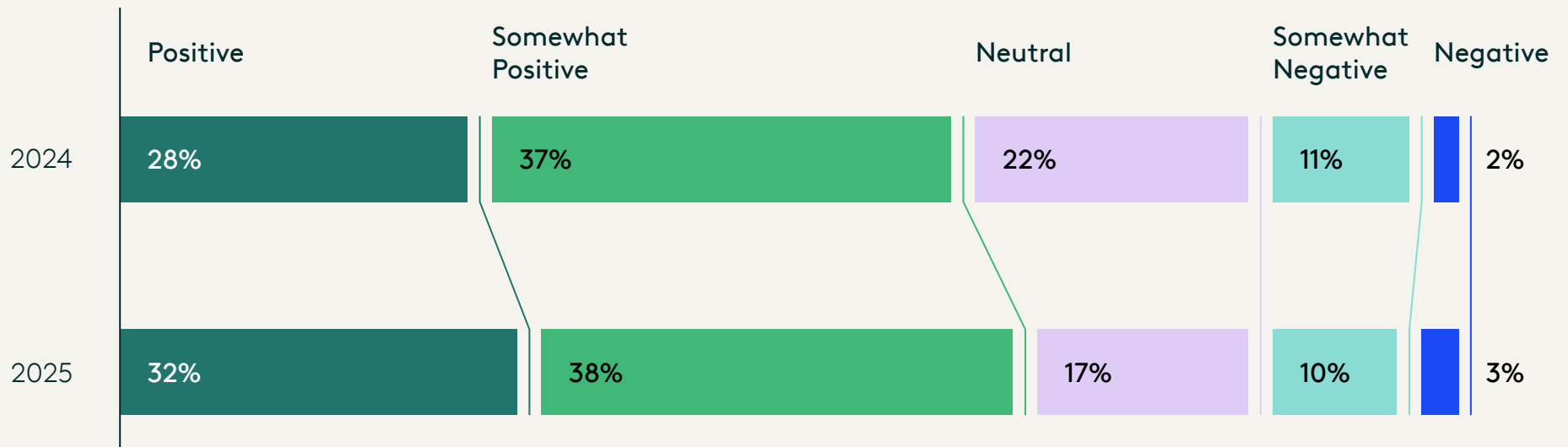


## Positivity Around Generative AI Use Continues to Grow

The overall attitude of legal professionals has also continued to trend positively regarding generative AI. Seventy percent of this year’s respondents said they feel either positive or somewhat positive about the use of generative AI in the legal profession, a 5% increase from last year. The fact that this number has surpassed two-thirds of respondents in just three years since the release of ChatGPT shows just how far generative AI has already come in the legal industry.

### What is your attitude toward the use of generative AI in the legal profession?

Fig. 12

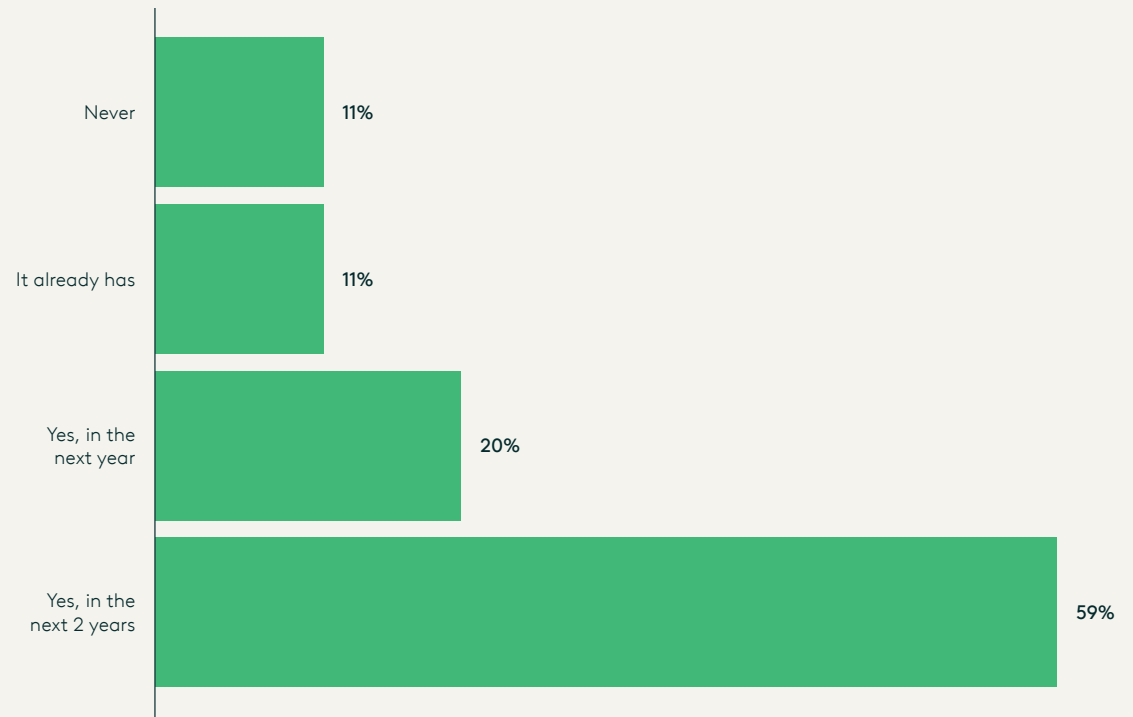


## Generative AI Forecasts Change in Billing Practices

As these generative AI tools have continued to proliferate, a real conversation has begun about how this technology will affect billing practices and the structure of the billable hour. The results from this year's survey show that this is top of mind for legal professionals, with nearly 60% stating that they believe generative AI will significantly alter conventional billing practices in the next two years, and almost 20% believing that change will come within the next year.

### Do you believe the proliferation of generative AI will significantly alter conventional billing practices?

Fig. 13



# The AI Divide Narrows, but Cloud Adopters Still Lead

Last year, the emergence of a so-called “AI divide” in the legal industry took shape between those who were using the technology and those who were not. This year’s results show that this divide is still very prevalent, although it is beginning to shrink.

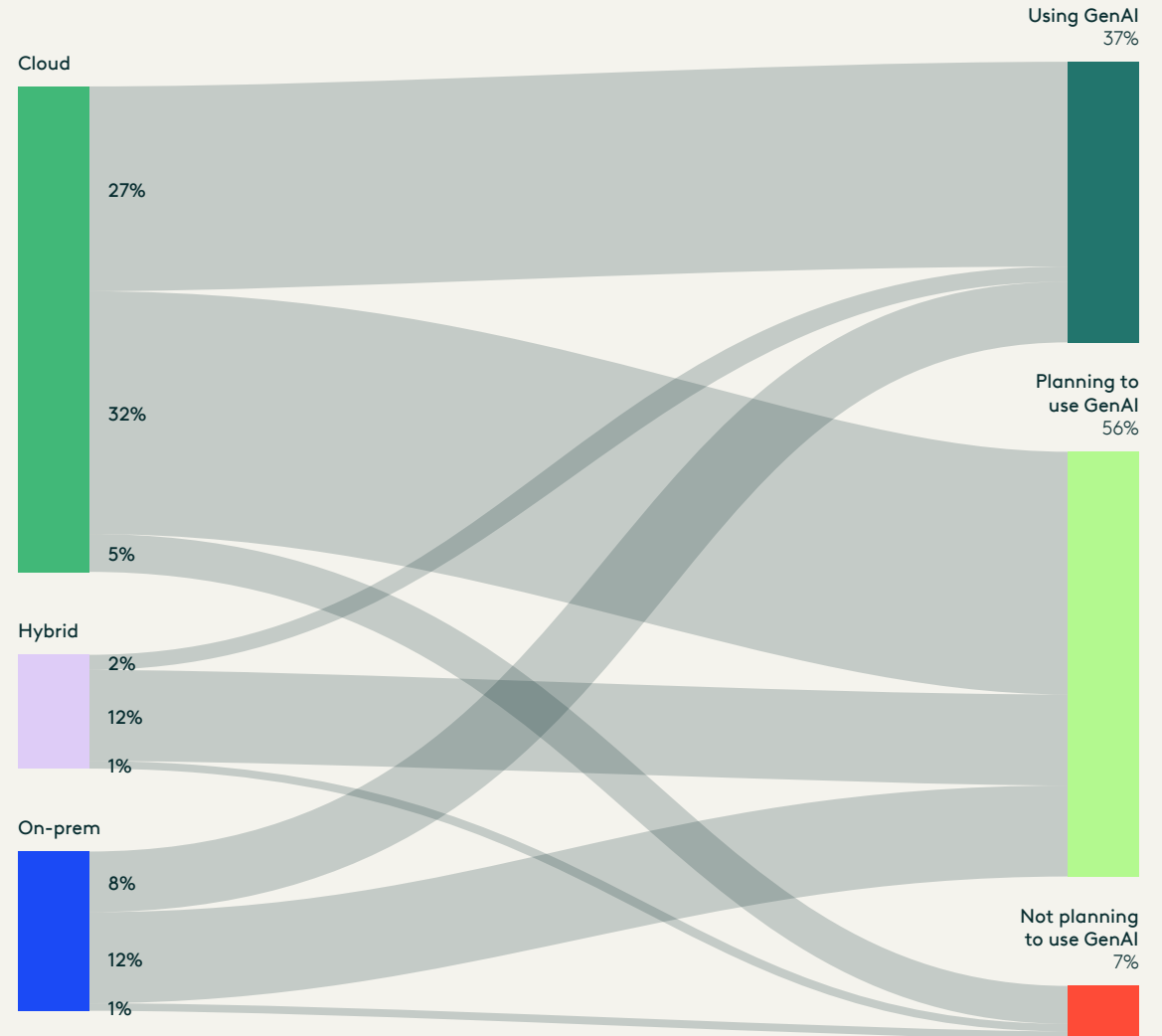
For example, those with their ediscovery software deployed on the cloud are three times more likely to use generative AI in their legal work than those with their ediscovery software deployed on-prem. Although this is down from a five-fold difference last year, cloud users are still leading generative AI adoption in the industry.

**3X**

Those with their ediscovery software deployed on the cloud are three times more likely to be actively using generative AI in their legal matters than those with their ediscovery software deployed on-prem.

## Are you currently using or planning to use generative AI in your legal work? Segmented by ediscovery software type.

Fig. 14



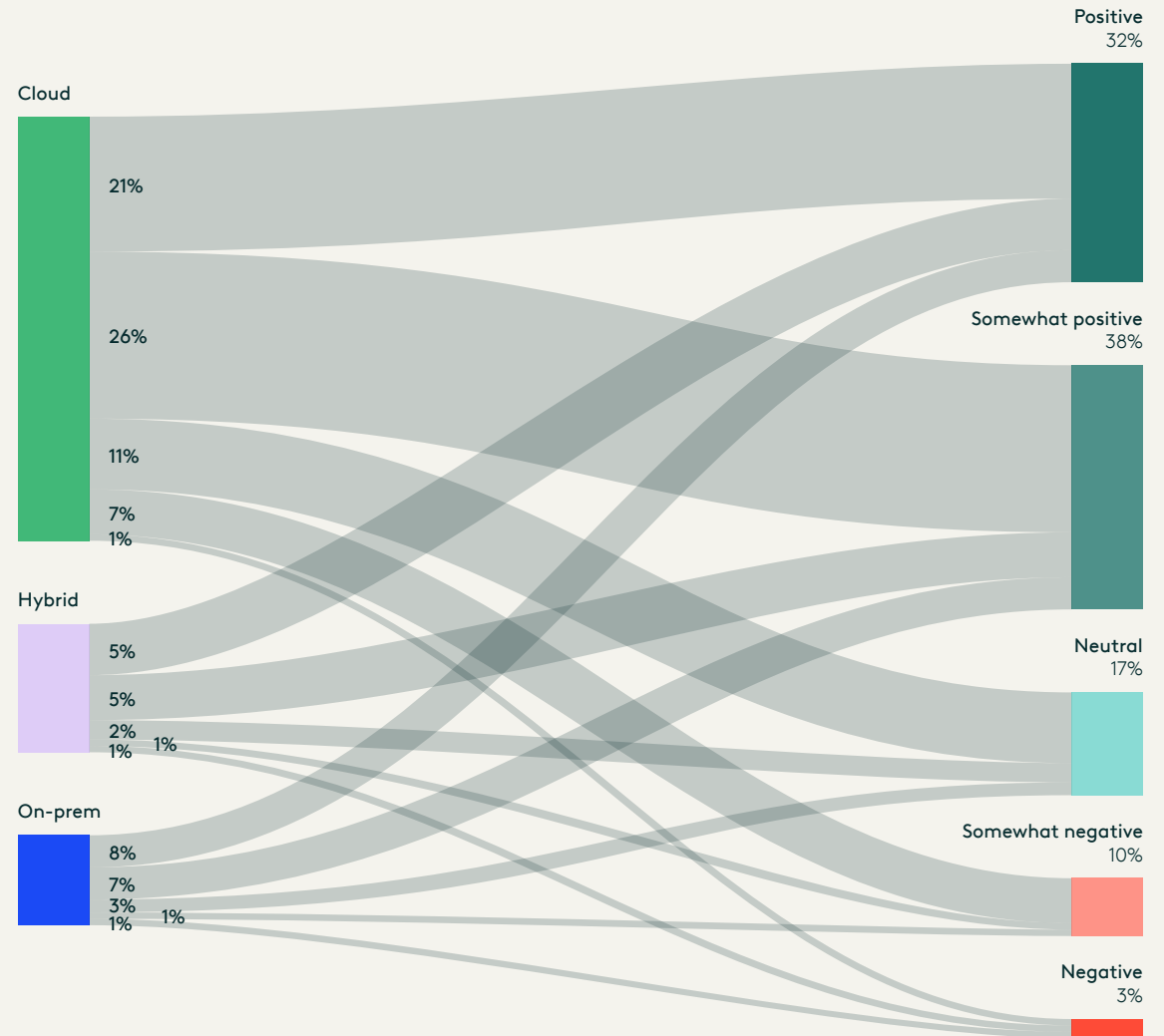
The AI divide also persists when it comes to opinions about the proliferation of generative AI in the legal profession and how they correlate with ediscovery software deployment. For example, respondents with their ediscovery software on the cloud are four times more likely to feel positively or somewhat positively about the proliferation of generative AI than those with their ediscovery software deployed on-prem.

**4X**

Those with cloud-based ediscovery software are four times more likely than those whose software is on-prem to have a positive attitude toward the proliferation of generative AI in the legal industry.

## What is your attitude toward the proliferation of generative AI? Segmented by ediscovery software type.

Fig. 15



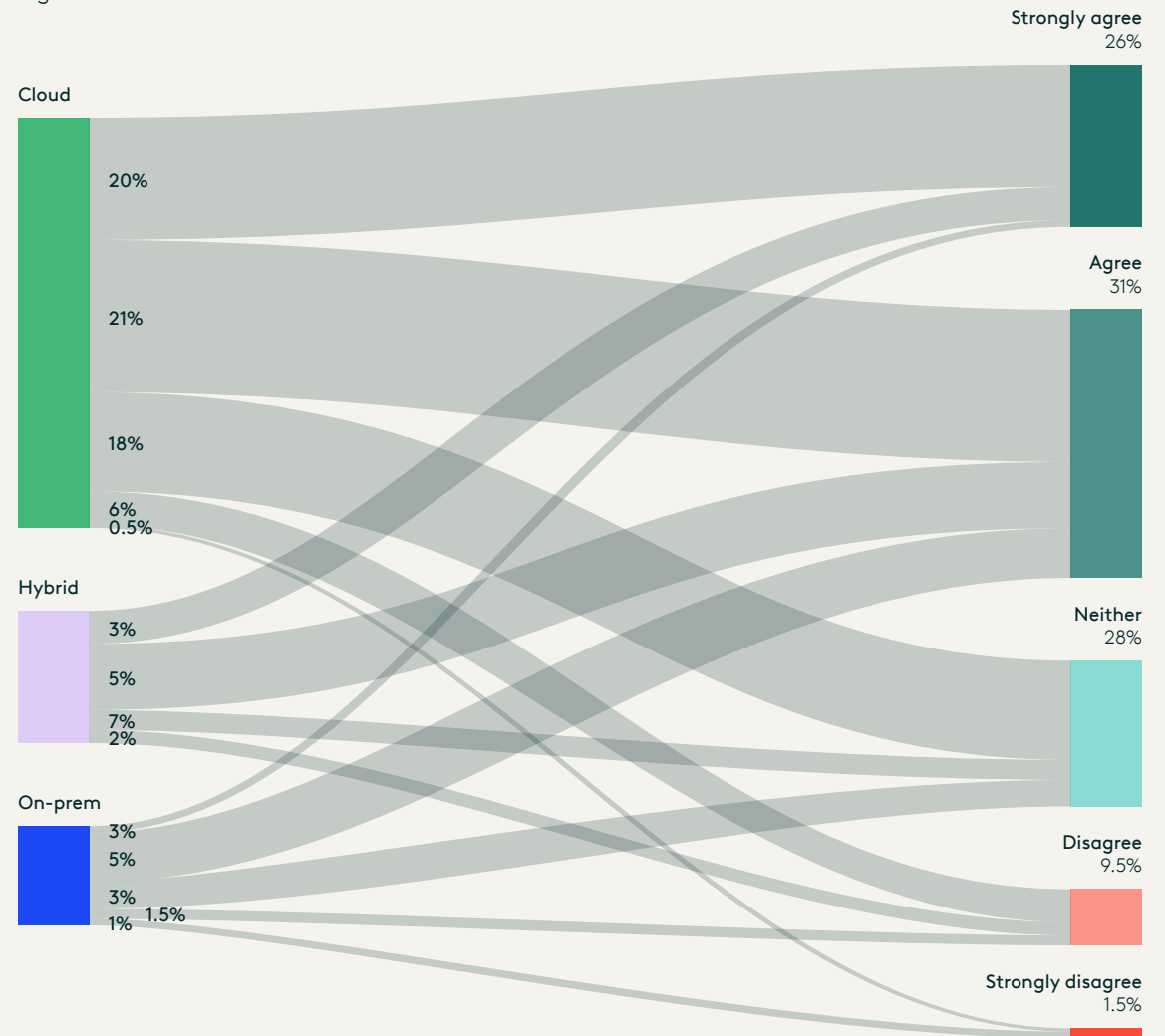
Those results are also consistent regarding the potential of generative AI becoming standard on ediscovery software in the next two years. Respondents with their software on the cloud are four times more likely to agree or strongly agree with that possibility when compared to legal professionals whose ediscovery software was deployed on-prem.

**4X**

Those with their ediscovery software hosted on the cloud are four times more likely to think that generative AI will be the standard in ediscovery technology in the next two years than respondents whose ediscovery software is hosted on-prem.

## How do you feel about this statement? The use of generative AI will be standard in ediscovery technology in the next two years. Segmented by ediscovery software type.

Fig. 16



## Expert Perspectives

As the Chief Revenue Officer at Latitude Legal, Alex Su is interested in the intersection of the law and technology, and has been paying attention to generative AI's potential impacts on billing practices.

“The survey results suggest that while many expect billing practices to change, it’s not clear yet exactly how or when AI will have the biggest effect. Everyone is likely aware of the billable hour’s resilience, despite repeated predictions of its demise.

“What’s obvious to everyone now, however, is that generative AI can do some legal tasks much faster. Work that used to take hours might now only take minutes, which raises questions about how law firms should price their work. I believe that there’s a unique opportunity right now for law firm leaders to experiment with new billing models, like flat fees or results-based pricing.

“This isn’t just top of mind for law firms. Clients may also wonder why they’re still being charged by the hour when AI is driving so much efficiency internally. And while it may take some time for these changes to unfold across the industry, broad sentiment suggests that at this moment, law firms could generate goodwill by offering clients innovative pricing and alternative fee agreements.”





I believe that there's a unique opportunity right now for law firm leaders to experiment with new billing models, like flat fees or results-based pricing.

**Alex Su**  
Chief Revenue Officer  
Latitude Legal



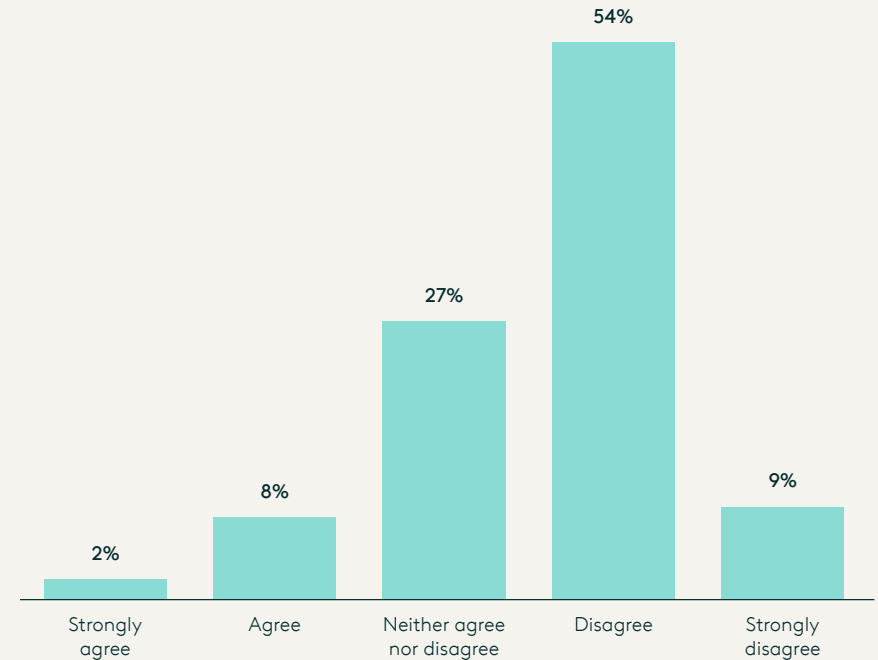
# Generative AI Usage Continues to Outpace Legal Readiness

Despite the positive impacts of generative AI, uncertainty among many legal professionals lingers. More than 60% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that the legal profession is prepared for the impacts of generative AI. Although this is a decrease from last year, it remains an outsized proportion of respondents.

Additionally, out of those who responded that they are not using generative AI in their legal work, liability concerns, lack of trust, and high costs were listed as the top reasons why.

## How do you feel about this statement? The legal profession is prepared for the impacts of generative AI.

Fig. 17



# Discover the difference

For deeper insights into generative AI's role in shaping the legal landscape, visit [Everlaw.com](https://everlaw.com)

## About Everlaw

Everlaw helps legal teams navigate the increasingly complex ediscovery landscape to chart a straighter path to the truth. Trusted by Fortune 100 corporate counsel, 91 of the Am Law 200, and all 50 state attorneys general, Everlaw's combination of intuitive experience, advanced technology, and partnership with customers empowers organizations to tackle the most pressing technological challenges—and transform their approach to discovery and litigation in the process. Founded in 2010 and based in Oakland, California, Everlaw is funded by top-tier investors, including Andreessen Horowitz, CapitalG, HIG Growth Partners, K9 Ventures, Menlo Ventures, and TPG Growth.

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