

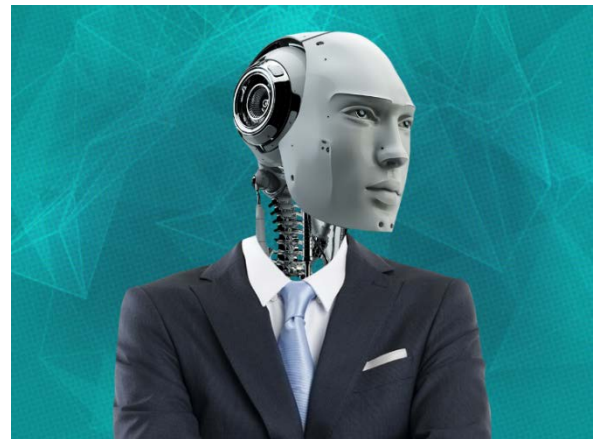
The world's first artificially intelligent lawyer was just hired at a law firm



Chris Weller
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Lawyers often get a bad reputation for being slimy and conniving (deservedly or not), but ROSS has neither of those qualities.

Ask ROSS to look up an obscure court ruling from 13 years ago, and ROSS will not only search for the case in an instant - without contest or complaint - but it'll offer opinions in plain language about the old ruling's relevance to the case at hand.



A well-dressed humanoid not named Ross.
Skye Gould/Tech Insider

Just about the only thing it can't do is fetch coffee.

Not that anyone should blame it, seeing as ROSS is a piece of artificial intelligence software. It uses the supercomputing power of IBM Watson to comb through huge batches of data and, over time, learn how to best serve its users.

"Judges' decisions are written in everyday language and not issued in columns and rows, which is what current computer systems digest best," Andrew Arruda, the CEO and co-founder of ROSS Intelligence, tells Tech Insider.

The challenge in building ROSS, he says, was finding a way to make it as intuitive as an actual colleague. That meant programming it to respond to people's normal manner of speaking, not just keyword-loaded fragments.

But the hard work seems to have paid off, as [ROSS was just unveiled](#) as a "new hire" at the law firm Baker & Hostetler, which handles bankruptcy cases. Arruda says several other firms have

signed licenses to employ ROSS' services, and their announcements will be made in the coming weeks.

In Arruda's perfect world, all law firms would harness the power of AI in order to serve justice. Right now, [about 80% of Americans who need a lawyer can't afford one](#), he says. This is despite the country having a surplus of attorneys on tap.

"With ROSS, lawyers can scale their abilities and start to service this very large untapped market of Americans in need," Arruda says.

In other words, by using AI lawyers like ROSS, law firms could charge lower fees since they wouldn't be paying humans (who generally prefer to get paid for their work) to handle clients' cases. In addition, those lawyers currently out of work could use AI services like ROSS, which offer a lower barrier of entry into the market, to create more affordable options for clients.

And when it comes time for opposing law firms to battle it out in court, it'd be in everyone's best interest to have a computing whiz at both parties' disposal, Arruda says.

"The law is the same for both parties," Arruda says. "No matter if you have 20 associates doing research on a case, or just one equipped with ROSS, the relevant passages will be found for you."

In that way, the company sees the software as a force that levels a playing field that many tend to see as unfairly tilted depending on who's got the deepest pockets.

"With ROSS," Arruda says, "lawyers can focus on advocating for their client and being creative rather than spending hours swimming through hundreds of links, reading through hundreds of pages of cases looking for the passages of law they need to do their job."

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