

ROSS

CASE STUDY

# How a Law Librarian Uses Artificial Intelligence in Legal Education



ROSS INTELLIGENCE

## Training the Next Generation of Lawyers



Kenton Brice, Director of Technology Innovation at OU College of Law

Kenton Brice graduated from University of Oklahoma College of Law in 2009—into the worst legal job market in history. While working for a law firm that was using technology to automate its processes, he realized the power of applying technology to legal practice. At his next firm, they took it a step further.

“We leveraged technology to be everywhere at all times and to automate as many processes as possible, whether it be form creation and automatic form generation to having our phone system in the cloud; that was back in 2010. After a few years, it became apparent that most law firms were not doing what we were doing, and the legal profession was suffering because of it.”

His interests shifted, and he realized he wanted to help educate the next generation of lawyers. He went back to school for his master’s degree in library science and started teaching practical technology to students as a Digital Resources Librarian at his alma mater.

He has been there ever since and is now Director of Technology Innovation.

“That job has evolved to investigate innovative technologies that could be in place in the next year to 10 years that lawyers should be taking advantage of to make their practices better, and in turn make the legal system better, and in turn make society better.”

## Using Artificial Intelligence With Students

When [ROSS Intelligence](#) was launched in 2015, Brice was immediately interested in the product, because he knew that artificial intelligence was revolutionizing other fields.

“When I first heard of ROSS it was a no-brainer; artificial intelligence and legal research makes complete sense. Legal has the necessary massive data sets to power an AI system.”

He started using [EVA](#) after seeing it at a technology innovation meetup in Dallas organized by a community of lawyers in the area. He was impressed by the ability to highlight a piece of text, in addition to related cases.

“The thing I really like about EVA is highlighting a piece of text and a bunch more cases that look like that text, and not just the text, the content and the ideas expressed. That to me is huge. Being able to take a point of law that you’re researching or an idea and then highlighting it, saying, ‘show me more cases about this idea,’ not a keyword search.”

He said his experience using EVA was significantly different compared to traditional legal research systems such as Westlaw and Lexis, because their queries rely on keyword searches.



Brice and his colleagues using the ROSS Intelligence platform.

“This felt more like a machine learning the ideas and expressions in the text. And that was what I really liked about EVA. What I tell my students is when you’re doing a keyword search, you’ve got to come up with a bunch of synonyms for the main idea to make sure you’re finding the right cases, and EVA was able to learn that faster using natural language search. Really impressive.”

Brice says he has been trying new tools like EVA with a small group of students. Unlike when he was in school, it’s not difficult getting students to use new legal technology tools. One of his students saw EVA at a tech show and decided, unprompted, to use it to check a brief for school.

“It wasn’t me saying, ‘you have to look at this tool,’ which happens a lot. As a professor, you’re always trying to dive into the tool and then just pray that they use it, instead of the old, ‘I’m just going to Google this point raw.’ This student used EVA on his volition; nobody told him to, nobody asked him to. And I love seeing that.”

If anything, he has had to curb students' enthusiasm for legal technology, especially during their first semester. Students are aware of the plethora of tools that exist, and they want to use them to succeed. But he and his colleagues want students to first develop basic research and writing skills before they start using legal technology.

"A good example for this would be Tesla's autopilot. It's a really cool tool when used well, but if you don't know how to drive, you can't just get into a Tesla, turn on autopilot and expect to get where you're going."

## Using Technology as a Lawyer

Back when Brice was an attorney, he was always nervous about leaving important information out of his briefs.

"It's the idea that there is something that I don't know about hidden in case law. When I'm relying on my own research—is it adequate? I don't think you ever get over that. EVA can be a tool that helps with that anxiety."

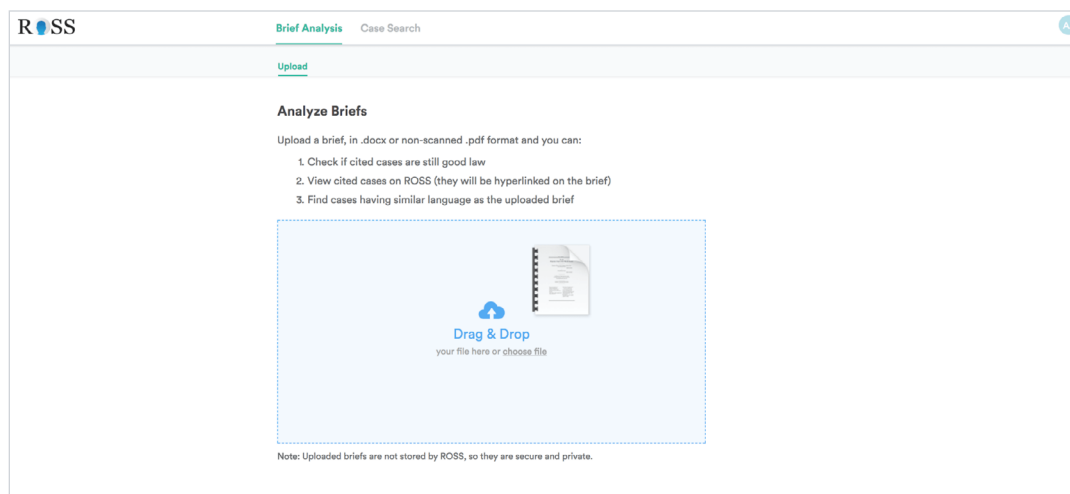
He says that being able to use EVA is similar to being able to ask a colleague at a law firm to quickly check a brief. But in this case, you don't have to bother a busy partner or associate.

"It's just that extra level of confidence that comes from confirming your own research. And EVA is also a teaching tool. If you're getting a bunch of red or yellow, you're probably not that good of a researcher."

Firms should consider these benefits when adopting new technology, he says. "Whatever can help instill confidence, control quality and save time; those are all bonus things. And that's what you want to look to when you're implementing some sort of technology tool in your practice."

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