

 [Click to Print](#) or Select 'Print' in your browser menu to print this document.

Page printed from: [Corporate Counsel](#)

IBM's Watson Makes New Inroads Into Legal With Discovery, Business Research Offerings

IBM's announced expansion of Watson Discovery Service and the launch of Watson Company Profiler looks to further the AI platform's e-discovery and search technology.

Rhys Dipshan, Law Technology News

March 22, 2017

IBM's artificial intelligence-powered cognitive computing platform Watson has come a long way from its days [playing "Jeopardy."](#) Deployed last year for legal professionals as the engine behind [legal research platform ROSS](#), Watson has recently made further inroads into the legal space with the [December 2016 launch of Watson Discovery Service](#).

In an email, IBM told Legaltech News that the updates to Watson Discovery Service enable developers to implement a "machine learning model" in their search tools, which allows the tools to understand how certain language terms are related on a deeper level. The service allows developers to create search and e-discovery tools using Watson's technology—which can comprehend language and data on an almost human level—to find relationships in structured data and unstructured data, and categorize and index such data into a searchable database.

For example, in a database of real estate agreements, an e-discovery tool powered by Watson Discovery Service could essentially "learn" the language of these agreements, thereby making it easier to search for, and associate, specific related terms, such as "foreclosure" and "lien." Such search capabilities are in contrast to keyword searches that only looks for documents containing exact words or phrases.

IBM said when using this technology a legal team "can quickly extract relevant details from dense legal briefs, past legal proceedings and other lengthy documents."

Watson's machine learning search capabilities are also the backbone behind Watson Company Profiler, a pre-built knowledge repository that searches through Dun & Bradstreet Inc.'s commercial database and other data sources to extract actionable information on a variety of corporations.

In a statement, IBM noted that this tool can help M&A counsel and attorneys "acquire market intelligence needed to better understand the competitive landscape," as well as potentially "identify new targets for a merger or acquisition."

While Watson's move deeper into the legal space has been anticipated for some time, it is far from the only solution leveraging machine learning technology to empower legal professionals in their day-to-day tasks. AI solutions provider Brainspace Corp., for example, [has released](#) a machine learning-powered e-discovery solution and [partnered with other e-discovery providers](#) to further integrate the technology into the e-discovery space.

Information governance solutions provider ZL Technologies has also [released a data management tool](#) that deploys machine learning to find and manage unstructured data in a corporation's information repositories.

There are also solutions on the market similar to Watson Company Profiler that deploy machine learning on data repositories to harness actionable insights for legal users. These include OutsideIQ's DDIQ, an [anti-bribery compliance tool](#) and [Lex Machina](#) , which provides legal analytics.

When asked how Watson differs from competitors, IBM argued that Watson "offers the best set cognitive services to combine private data and pre-enriched public data."

What future inroads Watson will make into legal remains to be seen, though it is likely to include a focus on consumers priced out of the traditional legal services market. At the recent [Legalweek conference](#). IBM's Brian Kuhn, consultant, Watson Legal noted that "IBM is very interested in exploring access to justice, giving people of limited means greater access to the civil and criminal justice system."

Using technology like Watson, he said, can help consumers "understand legal documents, can help them understand legal document, [and] can help them determine if they have a legal right or a legal issue."

Copyright [Legaltech News](#). All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

Copyright 2017. ALM Media Properties, LLC. All rights reserved.