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ENHANCING ACCESS TO FREE LEGAL AID THROUGH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies have rapidly evolved, significantly influencing various aspects of daily life, including the legal and criminal justice systems. The Republic of Serbia's adoption of the Law on Free Legal Aid in 2019 highlights the need for systemic reorganisation to address practical shortcomings. This article argues that AI holds significant potential to enhance free legal aid systems, offering solutions to improve efficiency, accessibility, and fairness. By analysing the legal and procedural implications of AI within the Serbian context, the article provides insights into how AI can be leveraged to uphold fundamental rights while addressing the complexities of modern criminal justice.

Key words: free legal aid, artificial intelligence, victims, communication technology.

УНАПРЕЂЕЊЕ ПРИСТУПА БЕСПЛАТНОЈ ПРАВНОЈ ПОМОЋИ КРОЗ ВЕШТАЧКУ ИНТЕЛИГЕНЦИЈУ

Апстракт

Технологије вештачке интелигенције су брзо еволуирале, значајно утичући на различите аспекте свакодневног живота, укључујући системе правног и кривичног правосуђа. Аутори у раду разматрају значајне потенцијале за унапређење система бесплатне правне помоћи кроз потенцијале које нуди вештачка интелигенција. Анализом правних и процедуралних импликација вештачке интелигенције у контексту законодавства Републике Србије, аутори пружају увид у то како се вештачка интелигенција може искористити за очување основних права.

Кључне речи: вештачка интелигенција, бесплатна правна помоћ, савремене комуникационе технологије, жртве кривичних дела.

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INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence, commonly referred to as AI, is defined in various ways, generally emphasising its capability to perform tasks traditionally requiring human intelligence. Turner describes AI as "the ability of a non-natural entity to make choices by an evaluative process" (Turner, 2019, p. 16). Artificial intelligence technologies, which have rapidly progressed and reached full-scale deployment in recent years, are increasingly influencing various aspects of everyday life. Numerous companies make significant investments in technological innovation, and society holds great expectations for their future capabilities. However, as the adoption of AI systems expands, a multitude of legal challenges are likely to emerge (Hodge, 2021, p. 33; Creese, 2021, pp. 201-221; Dsouza, 2021, pp. 247-264; Škorić & Galetin, 2024). In other words, with the rapid evolution of technologies, legislative and judicial bodies responsible for criminal law face significant challenges in keeping up. Their primary objective is to strike a balance between effectively combating illicit activities and steadfastly safeguarding citizens' rights. These rights encompass personal and family life, liberty, privacy, and data protection (Turanjanin, 2023; Foti, 2022). They are particularly at risk from surveillance activities conducted by private entities handling citizens' data for commercial purposes, as well as by law enforcement agencies (Militello, 2022, p. 20). Accordingly, AI brings numerous benefits, but also risks (Chan, 2021). These challenges span across diverse areas of law, such as contract law, tort law, labour law, and criminal law (Fincan, 2023, p. 17). Some challenges are even related to robots (Mamak, 2024, p. 109; Hallevy, 2013).

The progress of the information society has introduced a new landscape where combating crime presents fresh challenges. Perpetrators increasingly exploit advanced technologies, particularly digital communication, to facilitate their illegal activities. Both criminal organisations and individuals actively leverage digital tools and platforms to commit offenses. Furthermore, traditional crimes like fraud, money laundering, and harassment have gained a broader platform for proliferation in the digital realm, particularly in cyberspace (Winter, 2022, p. 4).

From a strictly legal perspective, the digitalisation of criminal proceedings has not always been viewed positively, as it often raises substantial concerns, particularly regarding digital investigative measures. These measures either enhance the capabilities of existing tools or introduce entirely new risks to individual rights. Such concerns are indeed valid, as many digital instruments significantly increase the potential for criminal processes to infringe upon fundamental rights. One of the key outcomes of the widespread use of information and communication technology (ICT) in criminal investigations is the expansion of the intrusive nature of criminal proceedings. Today, criminal inquiries have the potential to affect the rights and freedoms of not just the individual suspected of

wrongdoing, but also those of others who may not even be directly involved in the investigation. This broadening of the scope of intrusion raises critical legal and ethical questions about the balance between effective law enforcement and the protection of individual rights (Ruggeri, 2022, p. 214; Spalević & Ilić, 2024).

However, there is one area of law that intersects with several branches, including criminal, civil, and administrative law: the right to free legal aid. This right is implemented through various systems for providing free legal services. The Republic of Serbia adopted the Law on Free Legal Aid, which has been in effect since 2019. Nevertheless, due to numerous practical challenges, it is widely recognised that this area requires reorganisation and improvement (Turanjanin & Čanović, 2022). In this context, artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to significantly enhance the system of free legal aid provision. Therefore, after a brief overview of the interplay between artificial intelligence and criminal law, we will propose directions in which AI can improve the concept and implementation of free legal aid.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND CRIMINAL LAW: AN OVERVIEW

As artificial intelligence technologies continue to advance and grow increasingly sophisticated, scholars have begun to explore whether additional criminal legislation is necessary to address potential challenges that may arise in the future and pose risks to society (Fincan, 2023, p. 105). In the first place, the unauthorised collection and use of biometric data, without proper consent or legal justification, can result in significant harm and necessitates stronger deterrents than those offered by civil penalties (Baker & Robinson, 2021, p. 8). Secondly, AI can have a multiple effects to the criminal procedure (Quattrocolo, 2020).

Police departments are increasingly utilising surveillance technologies to address public security concerns in smart cities. Automated facial recognition systems are employed in public spaces to identify suspects and individuals with outstanding warrants in real-time, while some law enforcement agencies have begun using emotion recognition technologies aiming to infer individuals' emotional states through the analysis of facial muscle movements. This technology is applied in preventive operations to detect suspicious behaviour in public or strategic locations such as train stations and airports (Rezende, 2022, p. 67).

In recent decades, the use of technological tools for investigative purposes has significantly expanded, driven by the digitalisation of nearly every aspect of private and social life. Among the most prominent investigative methods is the search and seizure of digital evidence, which enables the swift retrieval of both communicative and non-communicative

data from electronic devices. As modern technology facilitates constant connectivity, the application of such measures raises substantial concerns about fundamental rights. These measures impact not only the individuals under investigation but also third parties. Online searches, in particular, pose a serious risk to privacy, intruding deeply into the most personal aspects of an individual's life (Nuzzo, 2022, p. 119). In contrast to more traditional investigative approaches, particularly those associated with predictive policing, Multi-Agent Systems present new opportunities for integrating automated technologies into the core structure of investigative processes. MAS technology enables a higher level of automation, coordination, and decision-making in investigations, potentially transforming how cases are approached, analysed, and resolved. This shift highlights the growing role of sophisticated algorithms and interconnected systems in shaping the future of criminal investigations (Lasagni, 2022, p. 169).

From a criminal procedure perspective, the integration of online hearings introduces significant challenges and risks, particularly concerning the right to an effective defence. Remote attendance to hearings cannot be equated with physical presence, as it may inadequately address the specific needs of suspects and defendants. These risks are further influenced by factors such as the quality of videoconferencing technology, the roles and preparedness of the involved parties, the nature of procedural activities, and the characteristics of individual legal systems. The fact-finding process during criminal proceedings may be reshaped by the influence of ICTs, potentially altering traditional dynamics. However, it is imperative that the deployment of such technologies does not compromise the fundamental values underpinning criminal procedures. Safeguarding the principles of fairness, transparency, and accessibility is essential, ensuring that the digitalisation of judicial processes does not erode the rights of individuals involved in criminal proceedings (Falcone, 2022, p. 189).

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND FREE LEGAL AID

The right to free legal aid is one of the elements of the right to a fair trial, which embodies all its importance. As free legal aid includes the right to general legal information, initial legal advice, legal advice, drafting submissions, drawing up documents and representation, it is very important to determine the scope of its application in each state. Namely, although there are legal matters, which by their nature are simple, and do not require free representation by a lawyer, there are legal matters which are by their nature complex. In such cases, it is very important to give a certain person the right to free legal representation, especially in criminal matters. The ECtHR's rulings are especially important in this field (Dimovski, Ilić, Tilovska Kečeđi, 2017, p. 193). We could say that artifi-

cial intelligence (AI) has the potential to significantly enhance the availability and effectiveness of free legal aid in Serbia, particularly for victims of gender-based violence and other vulnerable populations. The question arises in what aspect artificial intelligence can facilitate the provision of free legal aid. Through the examination of AI and the free legal aid system in Serbia, we have recognised seven potential areas where AI can help in increasing the availability of free legal aid.

In the first place, we can talk about the automating initial case assessment and triage. In that sense, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants can help screen legal cases by guiding users through structured questions to assess their eligibility for free legal aid. This type of automated triage can help potential clients identify their legal issues and navigate resources without needing to wait for human assistance. For example, chatbots can provide preliminary advice, direct users to relevant legal resources, and connect eligible individuals with human advisors. This process reduces workload on legal aid providers and allows them to focus on complex cases. Chatbots can handle multiple cases simultaneously and be available 24/7, increasing accessibility for people who may otherwise face long wait times or limited office hours. For many legal aid cases, there are clear eligibility criteria based on factors such as income level, type of legal issue, and urgency of the matter. AI systems can use decision trees or rule-based algorithms to assess eligibility, providing users with preliminary advice or directing them to the appropriate resources. Then, AI can help through natural language processing (NLP). In this case, NLP allows AI to understand and analyse user input in plain language. This enables users to describe their issues in their own words rather than selecting from predefined categories, making the system more accessible to non-experts. NLP models can identify key terms, legal issues, and relevant facts from a user's description to aid in case assessment and assign cases to appropriate legal aid services. Automated triage can provide a standardised approach to eligibility assessment, reducing the risk of human error or bias. AI can objectively assess criteria and apply them uniformly, improving fairness in the legal aid system.

Secondly, enhancing access to legal information through AI-driven platforms could significantly improve the availability and quality of free legal aid in Serbia. Given that the legal system can be difficult to navigate for the general public, AI tools can make it easier for people to understand their rights, access relevant legal information, and find pathways to assistance. Namely, AI can create user-friendly, interactive platforms that provide individuals with tailored legal information based on their specific needs. Users can input details about their situations, and the AI system can guide them through legal concepts, potential remedies, and available resources, all in simple language. This kind of platform could include FAQs, decision trees, and personalised recommendations based on the

user's location, income level, and legal issue. As it said, NLP enables AI systems to process and understand legal questions posed in plain language, making it possible to create conversational agents or virtual legal assistants. Users can ask questions in their own words, and the AI can provide information that is relevant and accurate. Additionally, some AI tools can assist users in generating simple legal documents, such as applications for legal aid. Guided document generation can reduce the time and cost of seeking legal help for common issues, such as applying for protection orders or submitting complaints. AI-powered mobile apps can provide on-the-go access to legal information. These apps could be particularly beneficial in Serbia's rural and underserved regions, where residents may have limited access to legal aid offices. With offline capabilities, mobile apps can reach users without constant internet access, providing a practical tool for underserved communities to access basic legal guidance.

Thirdly, automating document preparation and translation through AI offers significant potential for expanding free legal aid in Serbia. By enabling the quick, efficient, and accurate creation of legal documents and providing translation services, AI can reduce the administrative burden on legal aid providers and make the legal process more accessible to people who may not be familiar with legal terminology or who do not speak Serbian as a first language. AI-driven systems can help users complete legal forms and draft basic legal documents by asking them a series of structured questions. Once the information is provided, the AI can generate the required legal documents, such as affidavits, protection order applications, or basic contracts. Through intelligent templates and document generation capabilities, AI can reduce time-consuming and repetitive paperwork, allowing legal aid providers to focus on more complex legal tasks that require direct human involvement. With NLP and machine translation capabilities, AI can quickly translate legal documents, forms, and informational resources. This can greatly aid people who speak minority languages or who are more comfortable with a different language, helping them better understand their rights and the legal processes involved. In Serbia, where multiple languages are spoken, AI translation tools can help bridge language gaps, ensuring that individuals who need free legal aid can engage with legal services without language barriers. AI systems can pull data from existing legal databases to ensure the accuracy of generated documents. This ensures that forms and documents comply with current Serbian law and include the latest templates or regulatory requirements. For instance, if Serbian regulations for domestic violence applications change, AI tools can update their templates automatically, reducing the risk of outdated forms being used. There are numerous benefits of this use of AI: increased efficiency and reduced workload, reduced costs for legal aid providers, improved accuracy and stand-

ardisation of legal documents, and expanded accessibility for non-Serbian speakers.

AI-enhanced legal aid case management can play a transformative role in Serbia's free legal aid system by streamlining administrative processes, improving case tracking, and enhancing communication between legal aid providers and clients. This approach could significantly improve efficiency, accountability, and accessibility, which are critical for addressing the high demand for free legal assistance. Namely, AI-powered systems can streamline the tracking of legal cases from intake to resolution, helping legal aid providers monitor case progress in real-time. This allows for quick updates, alerts on approaching deadlines, and better management of case timelines. Automated tracking also provides easy access to case histories, enabling legal aid providers to review past interactions, document submissions, and case milestones without manually sifting through files. Furthermore, AI algorithms can analyse case characteristics and client demographics to help legal aid providers prioritise cases based on urgency, complexity, or potential impact. Efficient prioritisation ensures that limited resources are allocated where they are most needed, allowing legal aid organisations to maximise the support they can provide to vulnerable populations.

AI can assist in managing documents and evidence related to each case, organising them in a centralised, accessible digital format. This helps legal aid providers quickly access important information and retrieve relevant documents during consultations or court proceedings. Document management systems can also include automated reminders for document submission deadlines or for upcoming hearings, reducing the risk of missed deadlines and enhancing case outcomes. AI-driven case management platforms can integrate communication tools for secure messaging between legal aid providers and clients. This can facilitate faster updates, improve client engagement, and reduce the need for in-person meetings, which is especially valuable for clients in remote areas. In cases involving multiple stakeholders, such as lawyers, social workers, and healthcare providers, AI systems can facilitate collaboration, allowing authorised users to access the same case files and share information seamlessly. Then, case management systems powered by AI can generate data analytics and reports on case outcomes, client demographics, and service trends. These insights enable legal aid organisations to evaluate their impact, identify service gaps, and allocate resources more effectively. By analysing data on case types, resolution times, and outcomes, legal aid providers in Serbia can better understand the needs of their clients, which can inform policy decisions and advocate for further support from government agencies.

Fifthly, predictive analytics can serve as a transformative tool for optimising resource allocation within Serbia's free legal aid system. By

analysing historical and real-time data, AI-driven predictive models can forecast future demands, identify resource bottlenecks, and assist in distributing resources more effectively. This approach enables legal aid providers to prioritise cases, plan strategically, and make data-informed decisions, ultimately improving service delivery for vulnerable populations. Predictive analytics can assess patterns in case types, geographic locations, and seasonal variations, offering insights into the anticipated demand for legal aid services. By identifying when and where the need is likely to be highest, legal aid providers can proactively allocate resources, ensuring adequate staffing and support in high-demand areas. For example, predictive models could reveal an increase in family law cases during certain months or an uptick in domestic violence cases in specific regions. With this foresight, resources such as specialised lawyers, social workers, or translation services can be deployed effectively. By analysing factors such as case urgency, client vulnerability, and potential social impact, predictive analytics can help prioritise cases that are more complex or time-sensitive. This enables legal aid organisations to allocate resources more strategically, focusing on cases where timely intervention can make a substantial difference. Predictive models can assess historical data to identify characteristics associated with complex or high-priority cases, such as cases involving gender-based violence or those with high legal risk. This information aids legal aid providers in allocating experienced staff and necessary resources to these cases, improving client outcomes.

Predictive analytics can assist in projecting budget needs and optimising staffing levels based on anticipated case volumes. By analysing trends in case types and geographic distribution, legal aid organisations can make informed budget allocations, avoiding underfunding in high-need areas and reducing overspending where demand is lower. Also, predictive models can highlight areas where the demand for legal aid consistently exceeds available resources, enabling organisations to address service gaps proactively. For instance, if data shows recurring delays in case processing within a specific jurisdiction, resources can be reallocated or supplemented to alleviate these bottlenecks. Understanding service gaps also helps legal aid organizations advocate for policy changes or additional funding, as they can present data-backed insights into areas needing immediate attention, such as rural regions with limited legal support infrastructure.

At the sixth place, we have to mention potential for training improvement. To improve training and support for legal aid providers using artificial intelligence in Serbia's free legal aid system, AI-driven solutions can play a significant role in enhancing the efficiency, accessibility, and consistency of training for lawyers, paralegals, and support staff. AI-powered e-learning platforms can offer tailored training modules that legal aid providers can access at any time, catering to the specific needs of

individuals in Serbia. By employing adaptive learning technology, AI can adjust the training content based on the user's progress, strengths, and weaknesses. For instance, an interactive training module could adapt to focus more on trauma-informed practices or handling cases of domestic violence, depending on the lawyer's prior experience or performance in related quizzes. This approach ensures that providers receive relevant, up-to-date training, which is especially important for legal aid providers dealing with complex gender-based violence cases. Secondly, AI can create virtual case-based simulations that mirror real-life scenarios legal aid providers are likely to encounter, particularly cases involving domestic violence or complex family issues. These simulations can be adjusted for complexity, allowing providers to practice decision-making and client interactions in a safe, controlled environment. They can receive feedback immediately, with AI tracking their choices and responses, highlighting areas for improvement, and offering insights into best practices. Such simulations prepare providers for real-world cases, improving their responsiveness and effectiveness when assisting victims of gender-based violence.

AI can provide personalised content recommendations, such as new legal precedents, guidelines on free legal aid regulations, or GREVIO report findings relevant to gender-based violence (see Turanjanin, 2024). By analysing past queries or training materials accessed by the user, AI systems can suggest materials that enhance the lawyer's knowledge in areas they may have previously missed. This targeted approach ensures that legal aid providers are constantly learning, without needing to search manually for updates, helping them stay informed on evolving legal standards and practices. Also, AI-enabled collaboration tools can facilitate communication and knowledge-sharing between legal aid providers in different regions of Serbia. This would be especially beneficial in areas where resources are limited or specialised knowledge (e.g., in gender-based violence) may not be readily accessible. AI can enable virtual 'case consultation sessions' or peer-support networks, connecting lawyers and allowing them to discuss challenging cases or share resources and strategies. By fostering an interconnected network of legal aid providers, AI can ensure that lawyers have access to collective knowledge, thus reducing isolation and promoting a stronger, more cohesive support system.

AI-driven systems can assess the performance of legal aid providers by analysing case outcomes, client satisfaction surveys, and adherence to legal guidelines. This data can be used to provide constructive feedback, which may include identifying specific areas for improvement, such as interviewing skills or knowledge of certain legal provisions. With performance tracking, providers can see tangible progress over time, understand where they may need additional support, and take targeted steps to improve their skills and effectiveness. This method of feedback is less

subjective and more data-driven, ensuring that feedback is fair and focused on measurable outcomes.

For providers working with clients who speak minority languages or have limited Serbian proficiency, AI-driven translation tools can aid in communication. Training providers in the use of these tools can expand their reach, allowing them to serve a broader range of clients effectively. AI translation systems, integrated into a training platform, could help providers develop sensitivity and awareness when dealing with non-native speakers, equipping them with the skills to offer more inclusive services.

Implementing AI-driven training and support initiatives can transform the quality and reach of free legal aid services in Serbia. By providing continuous learning opportunities and performance-based feedback, legal aid providers are more likely to stay engaged and committed to improving their skills. Additionally, with AI facilitating collaboration, providers in rural or underserved areas can connect with peers and access resources that would otherwise be unavailable to them. As a result, legal aid services become more standardised, reliable, and capable of meeting the needs of diverse client populations, particularly victims of gender-based violence who require nuanced, trauma-informed support.

Finally, monitoring and evaluating legal aid outcomes through AI in Serbia's free legal aid system can offer a data-driven way to improve service delivery, ensure accountability, and promote continuous improvement. AI can automate data collection and analysis across multiple dimensions, including case outcomes, client satisfaction, efficiency of case processing, and demographics of clients served. By integrating AI systems into case management software, legal aid providers can capture and analyse data points such as case duration, types of cases handled (e.g., domestic violence), and success rates. This information provides insights into the strengths and weaknesses of legal aid services and helps identify areas for improvement. In Serbia, where data-driven policymaking is still evolving, these insights could be valuable for optimising resource allocation and targeting underserved populations.

Using historical data, AI can identify trends and predict likely outcomes for future cases. For instance, AI might reveal that cases with certain characteristics (e.g., type of legal aid requested, prior legal history) have higher success rates when particular strategies or interventions are used. This information can guide legal aid providers in applying effective methods in similar cases, increasing the likelihood of favourable outcomes. Predictive analytics could be particularly beneficial in cases involving domestic violence, where specific patterns or risk factors may need proactive interventions.

AI systems can monitor case progress in real-time, automatically flagging cases that exceed typical processing times or appear to be at risk of unfavourable outcomes. This can trigger alerts for supervisors or case

managers, enabling timely interventions that can improve client experiences and case results. In Serbia, where administrative delays and resource limitations may hinder timely access to legal aid, real-time monitoring can help prevent cases from stalling, ensuring that clients receive the support they need promptly. Gathering client feedback is crucial for understanding the quality-of-service delivery. AI-powered tools like sentiment analysis can interpret client feedback from surveys, interviews, or case notes, identifying themes such as client satisfaction, perceived fairness, or areas where clients feel underserved. Legal aid providers can gain a clearer picture of how clients perceive the quality of legal aid services and pinpoint specific issues to address. In Serbia, where public trust in institutions can vary, using client-cantered data can enhance transparency and accountability, ultimately fostering greater trust in the legal aid system.

AI can help establish benchmarks for service quality by aggregating data across cases, regions, or types of legal aid. Then, AI-driven evaluation tools can assess program effectiveness by measuring how well legal aid services align with the intended outcomes, such as increasing access to justice for vulnerable groups or reducing case backlogs. AI can reveal patterns of success or identify persistent gaps in the system. For instance, AI might show that legal aid is highly effective for certain demographics but does not reach others as effectively. Such insights can inform strategic adjustments to programs, policies, or resource distribution, ensuring that legal aid fulfils its objectives and reaches those most in need. One of the most valuable applications of AI in monitoring and evaluation is its ability to generate detailed, data-driven reports quickly and accurately. AI can consolidate case data, trends, and outcomes into visual reports or dashboards that are easy to interpret. Policymakers and stakeholders in Serbia could use these reports to make informed decisions on legal aid funding, policy reforms, and resource allocation. This also supports Serbia's compliance with international human rights standards, as these reports can demonstrate Serbia's commitment to improving access to justice for all citizens, especially vulnerable populations.

Implementing AI in monitoring and evaluating legal aid outcomes can significantly impact Serbia's free legal aid system. By providing a continuous feedback loop, AI-driven monitoring allows for immediate improvements and long-term strategic planning. With enhanced data insights, the system can evolve to better meet the needs of diverse client populations and ensure resources are allocated efficiently. Moreover, AI can help Serbia align with international standards on access to justice, such as the GREVIO recommendations for supporting victims of gender-based violence. By documenting improvements and addressing gaps in service delivery, AI-assisted monitoring can demonstrate Serbia's commitment to improving legal aid, which may positively influence public perception and enhance trust in the system.

CONCLUSION

Artificial intelligence inevitably affects the system of free legal aid and its benefits are numerous. Automating the initial case assessment and triage process using AI could enhance Serbia's free legal aid system by making it more accessible, efficient, and data-informed. However, achieving these benefits requires thoughtful implementation, sensitive to legal, linguistic, and cultural factors specific to Serbia. With the right approach, AI could become a valuable tool in addressing the legal needs of underserved populations. Many people in Serbia, especially in rural areas, may not have easy access to legal aid offices. AI-driven platforms can provide initial support online, giving remote users a way to engage with the legal aid system. Additionally, automated triage can be available outside regular working hours, which benefits people who cannot seek help during typical office times. The collection and processing of sensitive data (like legal issues and personal information) require strict data protection measures, especially under laws like GDPR in the EU. For Serbia, where there may be distrust in online systems, ensuring data security is essential to build user confidence. Then, Serbia's diverse linguistic landscape may require NLP models to understand Serbian, minority languages, and local dialects. For AI triage to be effective, it should accommodate these language variations, ensuring inclusivity and accessibility.

Enhancing access to legal information through AI can significantly bolster Serbia's free legal aid system, empowering individuals with knowledge about their rights and options. By creating scalable, accessible, and user-friendly platforms, AI can help bridge gaps in legal literacy and service availability, particularly for marginalised populations. Although challenges around language, privacy, and public acceptance exist, thoughtful implementation and collaboration with local stakeholders can make AI a valuable ally in promoting justice and equity in Serbia. AI-powered platforms are cost-effective compared to traditional legal education and outreach programs. Once developed, they can handle large volumes of inquiries with minimal additional costs, making them scalable and sustainable. In Serbia, where funding for legal aid services is often limited, AI-based solutions could stretch resources further and enable legal aid providers to focus on more complex cases. Serbia's rural and remote regions often lack legal aid services. By leveraging mobile or online platforms, AI can bridge these geographic gaps, allowing people in distant areas to access legal information without needing to travel to urban centres. This can help address inequalities in access to justice across different regions in Serbia, ensuring that everyone, regardless of location, has access to legal information and assistance.

AI-based document preparation and translation tools have the potential to significantly enhance Serbia's free legal aid system. By making document drafting more efficient and improving access for non-Serbian speakers, these tools can help legal aid providers reach a wider audience

and serve marginalised populations more effectively. While challenges such as translation accuracy, privacy concerns, and public trust need to be carefully managed, thoughtful implementation and collaboration with legal experts can make AI-driven document preparation and translation a valuable asset in promoting access to justice across Serbia.

AI-powered legal aid case management systems hold tremendous potential for improving access to justice in Serbia. By automating administrative tasks, enhancing communication, and providing data-driven insights, AI can help legal aid providers manage cases more efficiently and reach more clients. While challenges such as data privacy, training, and ethical considerations need to be carefully addressed, the benefits of streamlined case tracking, improved client experiences, and better resource allocation can significantly strengthen Serbia's free legal aid system. With thoughtful implementation, AI-driven case management could be a powerful tool for expanding access to justice for all.

Predictive analytics holds significant potential for optimising resource allocation in Serbia's free legal aid system. By forecasting demand, prioritising cases, and optimising budgets, predictive models can help legal aid providers allocate resources more efficiently and effectively. While challenges related to data quality, privacy, and technical expertise need to be carefully managed, the benefits of improved service quality, cost-effectiveness, and data-driven advocacy make predictive analytics a valuable tool. With gradual implementation, strategic partnerships, and ongoing oversight, predictive analytics can play a crucial role in expanding access to free legal aid and addressing Serbia's most urgent legal needs.

AI-powered monitoring and evaluation can transform Serbia's free legal aid system by enhancing accountability, optimising service delivery, and supporting evidence-based policy-making. With a robust evaluation framework, Serbia can build a more responsive, equitable, and effective legal aid system that meets the needs of all citizens, particularly those in vulnerable situations.

In sum, AI can play a pivotal role in enhancing the availability, accessibility, and efficiency of the free legal aid system in Serbia. By automating routine tasks, enabling data-driven decision-making, and providing accessible legal information, AI could support a more inclusive, responsive legal aid system that is better equipped to address the needs of marginalised and vulnerable populations.

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УНАПРЕЂЕЊЕ ПРИСТУПА БЕСПЛАТНОЈ ПРАВНОЈ ПОМОЋИ КРОЗ ВЕШТАЧКУ ИНТЕЛИГЕНЦИЈУ

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Резиме

Вештачка интелигенција представља једно од савремених средстава које стоје на располагању кривичном правосуђу. Неминовно је да ВИ носи како позитивне тако и негативне аспекте, те је стога преко потребно искористити све потенцијале које нуди, истовремено штитећи људска права и загарантоване слободе. У Републици Србији, Законом о бесплатној правној помоћи је на нормативном нивоу гарантовано истоимено право, али на практичном плану постоји мноштво проблема. Стога аутори у раду анализирају могућности ВИ у побољшању система пружања бесплатне правне помоћи. Анализирајући празнине које постоје како у правном регулисању бесплатне правне помоћи тако и проблеме у њеном пружању, аутори сумирају више начина на које ВИ може да подигне степен квалитета услуга које жртве одређених кривичних дела добијају кроз наведени систем. На тај начин даје се предлози у погледу начина на који се ВИ може искористити како би се побољшало обезбеђивање права на бесплатну правну помоћ у Републици Србији. Уколико би се искористили понуђени предлози у погледу употребе ВИ у пружању бесплатне правне помоћи припадници-

ма социјално угрожених категорија становништа, степен заштите њихових права би био на знатно већем нивоу. Стога овај чланак треба да представља путоказ који треба да следе не само законодавац приликом регилисања употребе ВИ у пружању бесплатне правне помоћи, већ и практичари који треба да олакшају примену ВИ у поменутој сврси.