

AI in Chambers: A Framework for Judicial AI Use

Using Generative AI for Iterative Legal Drafting

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Judge Scott Schlegel
Louisiana Fifth Circuit Court of Appeal
www.JudgeSchlegel.com

Purpose and Disclaimer:

This internal-use guide reflects one judge's evolving approach to incorporating GenAI tools into chambers' workflows. It is intended to help judges leverage available GenAI tools while preserving the essential human elements of judicial decision-making: wisdom and independent, human judgment. It is not official policy, nor a substitute for court-approved protocols.

Importantly, this guide is a starting point, not a final destination. It was written to meet judges where they are. I wish every court had a technologist on staff and a budget that afforded them an enterprise-level LLM designed specifically for the law. But that's not the reality for most courts today. This resource does not endorse any particular tool or guarantee compliance with every rule or policy. Instead, it offers a foundation for beginning this work thoughtfully, cautiously, and with eyes wide open. Each judge must make his or her own decision about what to use, when to use it, and how to proceed responsibly.

Confidentiality Requirements

Critical Security Notice

Sealed or confidential filings should never be uploaded to a public AI platform. The best practice is to use an enterprise-grade generative AI with robust privacy and audit controls if you are going to use GenAI in your chambers.

Most court filings are public record, so if you decide that using a commercial-grade GenAI tool (e.g., ChatGPT Plus, Claude Pro & Gemini Pro) is sufficient, ensure the following settings are properly configured in the GenAI tool you are using:

- Toggle "Improve the model for everyone" off in settings. This ensures your content is not used to train future models
- Use "Memory" only in single-user accounts. It can improve tone and workflow alignment for a consistent user but should be disabled or reset in shared environments
- "Reference Chat History" can remain on, allowing the AI to carry context across chats. This does not affect model training
- Make sure to never share a link to your chats. It was reported that shared chats in ChatGPT were (at least temporarily) available in Google searches, compromising confidentiality and privilege

Note: These specific setting instructions reference ChatGPT, but similar privacy and data handling options should be reviewed and configured appropriately in Claude Pro, Gemini Pro, and other commercial GenAI platforms.

Maintaining Judicial Independence

Judges do much more than review filings. We interpret the law. We exercise discretion. We weigh and assess credibility. And we make decisions that carry real consequences. GenAI can help with structure, clarity, and speed, but it cannot replace judgment.

GenAI tools can sound confident even when they are factually or legally incorrect. That is why we must stay in control. Every citation must be checked, and every conclusion must be ours. Remember, a GenAI tool may be able to help us write, but it cannot decide for us. The "human in the loop" is an essential component in maintaining judicial independence.

The 2025 [Sedona Conference Guidelines on AI in the Judiciary](#) make this clear. We caution against overreliance, automation bias, and the illusion of accuracy. Most importantly, we reaffirm that the final responsibility belongs to the judge and cannot be delegated.

Reference: Hon. Herbert B. Dixon, Jr., et al., Navigating AI in the Judiciary: New Guidelines for Judges and Their Chambers, 26 SEDONA CONF. J. 1 (February 2025)

We can use GenAI. But we cannot outsource our judgment.

Note: Although this guide is written with appellate review in mind, it can be readily adapted for trial court judges, particularly for routine motions with limited filings. The goal is to start small and scale thoughtfully.

Ten-Phase Implementation Framework

PHASE 1: INITIAL HUMAN REVIEW

Goal: Understand the filings and relief sought and then determine the analytical direction. No GenAI should be used during this phase.

Steps:

- Review the briefs and record
- Identify the assignments of error and the responses to those claims of error
- Conduct preliminary legal research
- Clarify the intended direction and scope of judicial review
- Assess the case to determine if GenAI assistance is appropriate

PHASE 2: NEUTRAL AI BENCH MEMO PROMPTING (No Conclusions)

Goal: Use GenAI to scaffold a neutral bench memo by summarizing facts, issues, and procedural posture without requesting any legal conclusions or directional analysis.

Sample Prompts:

- Draft a neutral bench memo summarizing the appellant's/relator's arguments and the appellee's/respondent's opposition. Do not take a position.
- Summarize the procedural posture and key facts. No legal conclusions.
- List the appellant's/relator's assignments of error verbatim from the appeal/writ application.
- Create a timeline of facts based on the filings.
- Identify any facts that are disputed versus those that appear undisputed by the parties.
- List each exhibit referenced and summarize what each party claims it proves.

PHASE 3: AI ALIGNMENT TEST

Goal: Evaluate whether the GenAI has captured the legal context and factual nuance.

Sample Prompts:

- What is the strongest argument supporting the trial court's ruling?
- Now take the opposite position. What's the best counterargument?
- Does either side raise a statutory interpretation issue?
- List all arguments, if any, that were raised for the first time on appeal.
- What factual disputes, if any, were resolved by the trial court?
- What facts does one party emphasize, and the other ignore? List those for each party.
- What procedural arguments does each party make about the appropriateness of this review?
- Identify arguments that appear in the reply but not in the original writ application.

PHASE 4: ERROR CHECK & DOCUMENTATION

Goal: Create institutional knowledge about GenAI reliability patterns.

Steps:

- Document any errors or misunderstandings the GenAI exhibited
- Note which types of arguments the GenAI struggled with
- Save these observations for chambers' GenAI knowledge base
- Identify any GenAI-generated factual assertions not supported by the record

PHASE 5: FIRST DRAFTING PASS

Goal: Begin writing in the direction the court has chosen.

Steps:

- Once a position is set, request GenAI to prepare an initial draft
- Focus on clarity, accuracy, and neutral tone
- Provide editing and feedback to align with chambers' style

Sample Prompts:

- Draft a writ disposition granting/denying (affirming/reversing) the relief sought for the following reasons: ____.
- Insert a paragraph summarizing the trial court's oral and written reasons.
- This is too conclusory, expand factual basis for clarity.
- Reframe this: the facts aren't relevant for ____ they are relevant because ____.
- Check whether each assignment of error has been addressed in this opinion. If any were missed, list them and then ask me how to address each one.

PHASE 6: ITERATION & TONE ALIGNMENT

Goal: Refine voice, rhythm, and clarity to match the judge's style and institutional expectations.

Steps:

- Share previous decisions as tone models
- Make adjustments to word choice and syntax
- Incorporate additional caselaw, statutory, regulation or rule language

Sample Prompts:

- Analyze these samples for common stylistic patterns and apply them here.
- Match the tone and cadence of these prior rulings.
- Shorten this section and eliminate passive voice.
- Make this sound more like a judicial ruling and less like a law review article.
- Convert this passive voice construction to active voice while maintaining judicial formality.
- Eliminate redundant phrases while preserving legal precision.

PHASE 7: FINAL AI REVIEW & CLEANUP

Goal: Use GenAI for comprehensive final review to ensure factual and legal precision before human verification.

Steps:

- Use GenAI for detailed final pass
- Check factual assertions against the record
- Verify quoted legal authority for accuracy
- Check for substantive logic and overstatement
- Verify jurisdictional requirements are properly addressed
- Confirm procedural prerequisites are satisfied
- Ensure standard of review is correctly applied

Sample Prompts:

- Review this draft and flag any citations or factual assertions that might be incorrect, misleading, or overstated. Be especially cautious with legal authority that appear too on-point.
- Review this draft and flag any potential overreliance on a single source.
- Verify that all quotes accurately match their original sources.

PHASE 8: CITE CHECK & HUMAN RECORD VERIFICATION

Goal: Conduct final cite check and record integrity check through human review.

Steps:

- Upload the document to Westlaw, Lexis, or other trusted tools designed for legal citation checking
 - Check for fabricated citations (hallucinations)
- Human review to confirm:
 - Every factual assertion is supported by the record
 - Every assignment of error is faithfully addressed
 - No citations are inaccurate, overruled, or improperly quoted

PHASE 9: POST-DECISION REVIEW (Monthly Practice)

Goal: Create a feedback loop for continuous improvement.

Steps:

- Track efficiency metrics: Did GenAI assistance reduce drafting time? Were fewer revisions needed? Did organizational assistance improve clarity?
- Conduct quality assessment: Compare GenAI-assisted dispositions to traditionally drafted ones for consistency
- Identify recurring GenAI error patterns and adjust prompting strategies
- Refine and document successful prompts to build a chambers-specific library

PHASE 10: PROMPT LIBRARY MAINTENANCE

Goal: Create a sustainable, organized system for managing successful prompts across chambers staff.

As prompts are refined through use, consider developing a prompt library. This can be as simple as a shared document or spreadsheet, versioned over time. Tag prompts by task type (e.g., transcript summary, timeline creation, tone edit) and annotate them with notes on effectiveness or caveats. This helps ensure consistency as clerks rotate and workflows evolve.

Prompt libraries are not static. Review and update them periodically to reflect changes in case types, writing style preferences, or tool capabilities. Some judges may wish to maintain multiple versions for different legal tasks.

This step is optional, but highly recommended for chambers seeking long-term efficiency and continuity.

Implementation Checklist

- ☐ Interlocutory appeal/writ application, opposition, and reply reviewed
- ☐ Assignments of error identified
- ☐ Preliminary legal research conducted
- ☐ Bench memo drafted neutrally
- ☐ GenAI comprehension tested with Socratic questioning
- ☐ GenAI errors documented for future reference
- ☐ Position-set draft written
- ☐ Draft iterated for tone, legal reasoning, and clarity
- ☐ Final factual and legal review conducted using GenAI prompt
- ☐ Jurisdictional and procedural prerequisites verified
- ☐ Human cite-check complete and record verified by a human

Important Limitations

Legal Reasoning: Generative AI should not be relied upon to resolve ambiguous legal standards or interpret controlling precedent. Its value lies in summarizing, synthesizing arguments, and aligning tone, not in substituting judicial reasoning.

Technical Constraints: Technologists have cautioned that some commercial-grade AI tools may struggle with large or complex records. These models have context limitations and are not yet reliable for synthesizing extensive filings, exhibits, or transcripts. That's why this workflow focuses on narrower tasks like summarizing arguments, organizing facts, preparing initial drafts related to interlocutory rulings or tone alignment—always under human supervision. For broader, record-intensive matters like appeals related to final judgments rendered after trial, more advanced or enterprise-grade tools may be necessary.