

## Nokia Adopts AI Technology for Contract Review as Legal Chief Takes New Business-Focused Role

Maria Varsellona, who is now also president of Nokia Technologies, said the telecom giant is also considering the use of AI to analyze law firm bills.

By Anna Ward

Nokia has launched a new artificial intelligence (AI) tool for its global legal team.

The global telecom company began using Seal Software—which enables lawyers to analyze legal contracts more quickly—last month.

The Finland-based business initially began using the software in its India legal services center but has plans to extend its use to its global legal team over time.

---

The main advantage of training the AI is that it speeds up our lawyers and makes them more accurate.

“We are at the beginning of the legal AI revolution. We decided to invest in AI now so that our operations can evolve at the same time the technology evolves,” said Nokia chief legal officer Maria Varsellona, who recently took on the additional title of president of Nokia Technologies. “AI will enhance the abilities of our legal professionals and help them focus on more value-added tasks.”

In her new role, which she will carry out in tandem with her CLO responsibilities, Varsellona will take the lead on delivering a long-term plan for profitability for Nokia Technologies, the telecoms company’s advanced technology and licensing business.

Nokia first signed up to Seal in December but has spent the past six months training the AI technology ahead of the May launch.

“We had a group of eight legal professionals training the AI,” said Tony Owens, the head of AI for legal, who also heads up the company’s Malaysia and Brunei legal operations. “It needs 50-200 examples per clause you wish it to find and it takes time, just like a human needs training time. The



**Maria Varsellona, Nokia chief legal officer and president of Nokia Technologies.**

main advantage of training the AI is that it speeds up our lawyers and makes them more accurate.”

Owens said they are starting in India but will definitely roll it out to other legal departments this year.

Previously, Nokia had spent two years exploring AI options for its legal team, first building its in-house software before moving on to find a larger-scale system.

“In early 2016 we realized we have everything we need at Nokia to build our own artificial intelligence,” Owens said. “However, building our own system on a bigger scale would be too much work, so we took a year to analyze all the major companies.”

Nokia looked at 15 vendors between the end of 2016 and early 2017 before whittling its list down to two. In order to decide between the two, the company undertook a “man vs. machine” test.

“We had two teams; one lawyer analyzing the contract and another checking his work,” Owens explained. “The other team included the AI system with a human checking the work.”

Both teams were given one contract and a checklist of 22 risks or factors to look for. Nokia then assessed how long it took them and how accurate their work was. Ultimately, it decided Seal would

---

Ultimately, it decided Seal would save the business the most money.

save the business the most money. Going forward, the company is also exploring whether it could use AI to change its billing processes.

“This is not a feature of Seal, but it is possible through AI to analyze bills that we receive from law firms. We are exploring that option,” Owens said. “You have thousands of bills from law firms and you can train the AI to work out how long a task typically takes. It can analyze what amount of time is reasonable and also see if a task should be carried out by a more junior lawyer at a lower billable rate.”

Varsellona, who joined Nokia Siemens Networks as general counsel in July 2013, became chief legal officer and executive vice president of Nokia in May 2014. She took on the new title of president earlier this month, replacing Gregory Lee, who will remain at Nokia for a transition period but is no longer on the company’s leadership team.

Varsellona recently talked to Corporate Counsel about her new role and leadership development in law, and offered some advice for business-inclined lawyers.

**Anna Ward** is City editor at *Legal Week*. She joined the title in January 2015 after spending three years with energy information provider *Platts*. She writes news and features about a number of leading UK and US law firms, as well as covering the Middle East and private equity.