NCSC

AI 101, Challenges, and Opportunities

AI & ATJ Summit – Learning and Innovating Together, September 2026

Angela Tripp, National Center for State Courts

Agenda

01 What is AI really?

02 Challenges & Opportunities

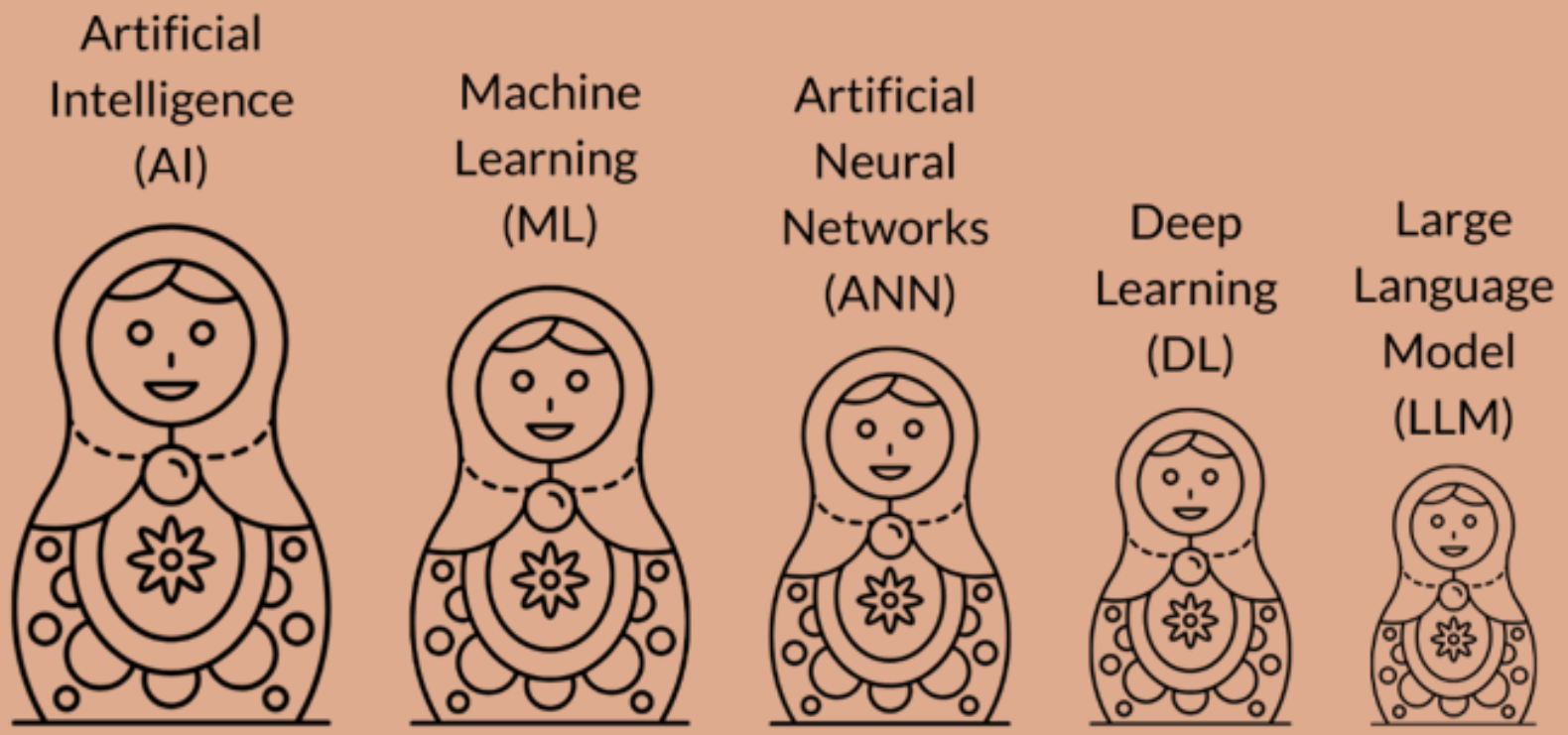
03 Ethical Concerns

04 Questions & Next steps

What is AI, really?

Hint: It's not magic

Types of AI



Credit: *The AI-Driven Leader* by Geoff Woods

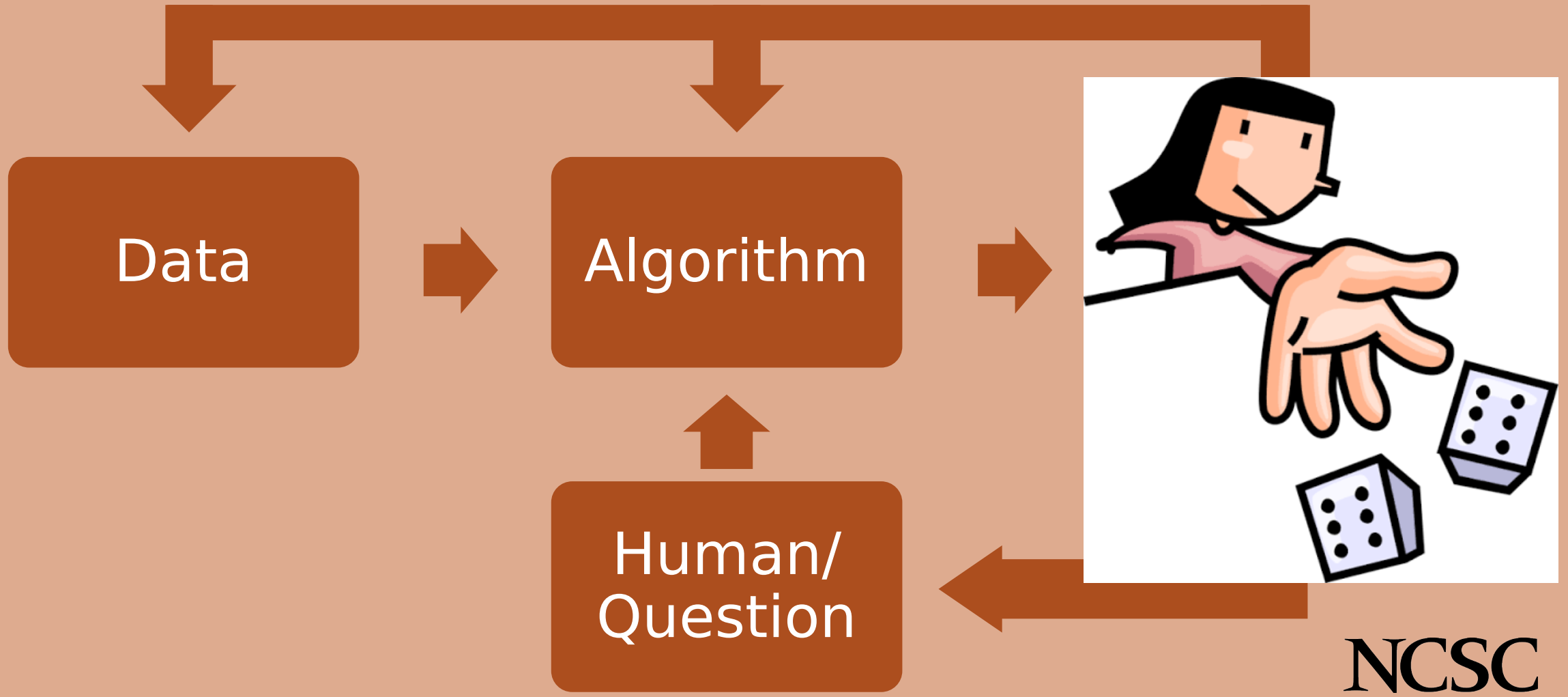
NCSC

Basics



NCSC

GenAI / LLM Basics



NCSC

What Gen AI is not

- A search engine
- Not a true research tool*
- Completely trustworthy
- Forthcoming about its limitations
- Consistent

NCSC

Predictive AI vs. Generative AI vs. AGI

Predictive AI: Designed to excel at a specific task (e.g., spam filters; recommendations for suggested products; predicting how a judge might rule on a case based on past rulings; making bail recommendations)

Generative AI: Creates new data from existing data (e.g., chatbots; creating images, computer code, legal documents; summarizing large documents or data; translation into commonly used languages

Artificial General Intelligence (AGI): a hypothetical computer system that can learn, reason, and perform any intellectual task that a human can do

NCSC

Why are we even here today?

NCSC

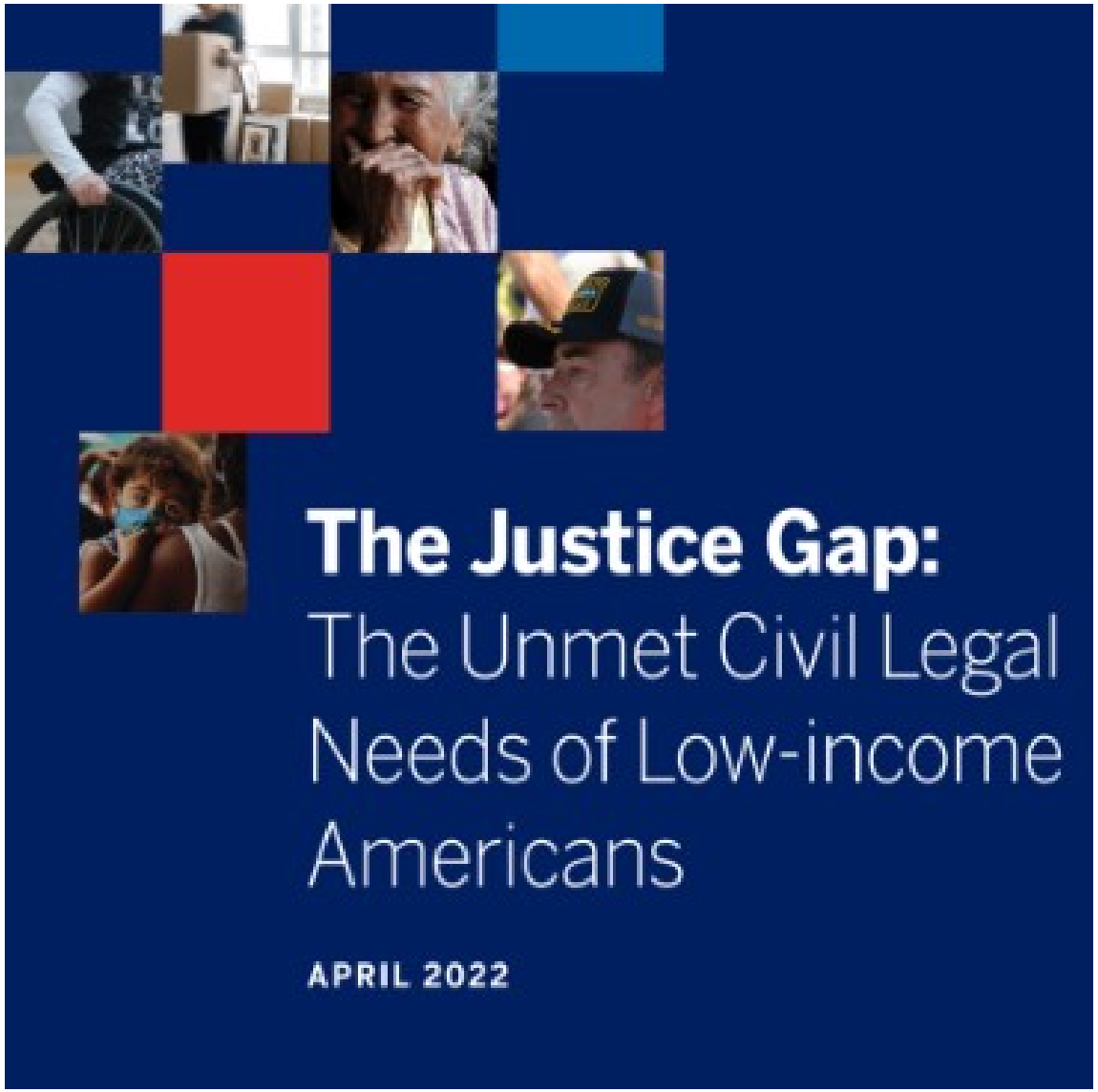
LSC | America's Partner for Equal Justice

LEGAL SERVICES CORPORATION

LSC.gov

Low-income Americans did not receive any or enough legal help for 92% of their civil legal problems.

They are forced to "go it alone" without legal representation in disputes where they risk losing their job, their livelihood, their home, or their children, or seek a restraining order against an abuser.



Promises & Pitfalls

NCSC

The Promise

- Automate routine tasks, freeing staff for direct assistance, programmatic approaches, and complex cases
- Scale of services and impact
- Data insights
- Incremental uses and exponential uses

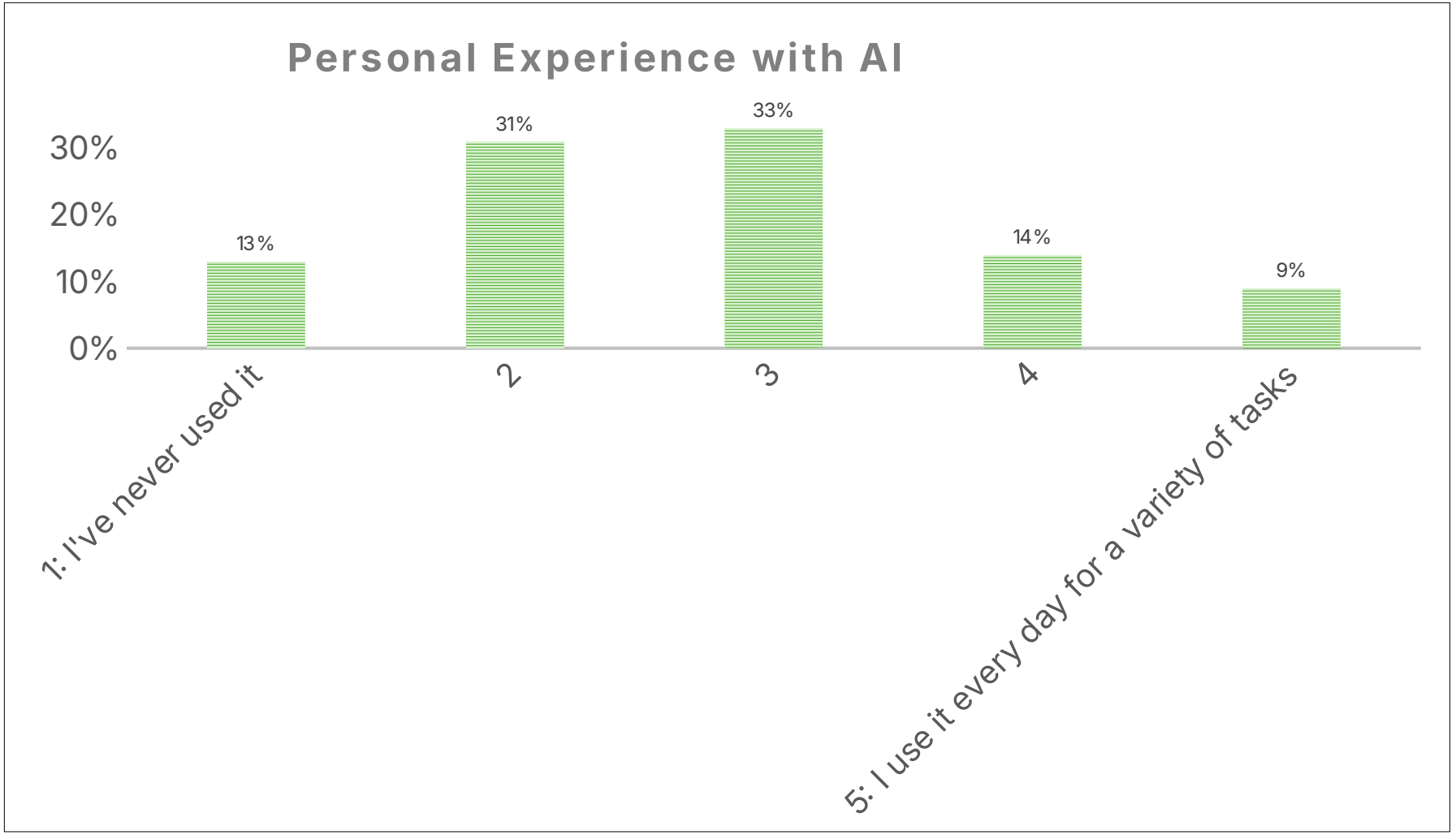
The Pitfalls

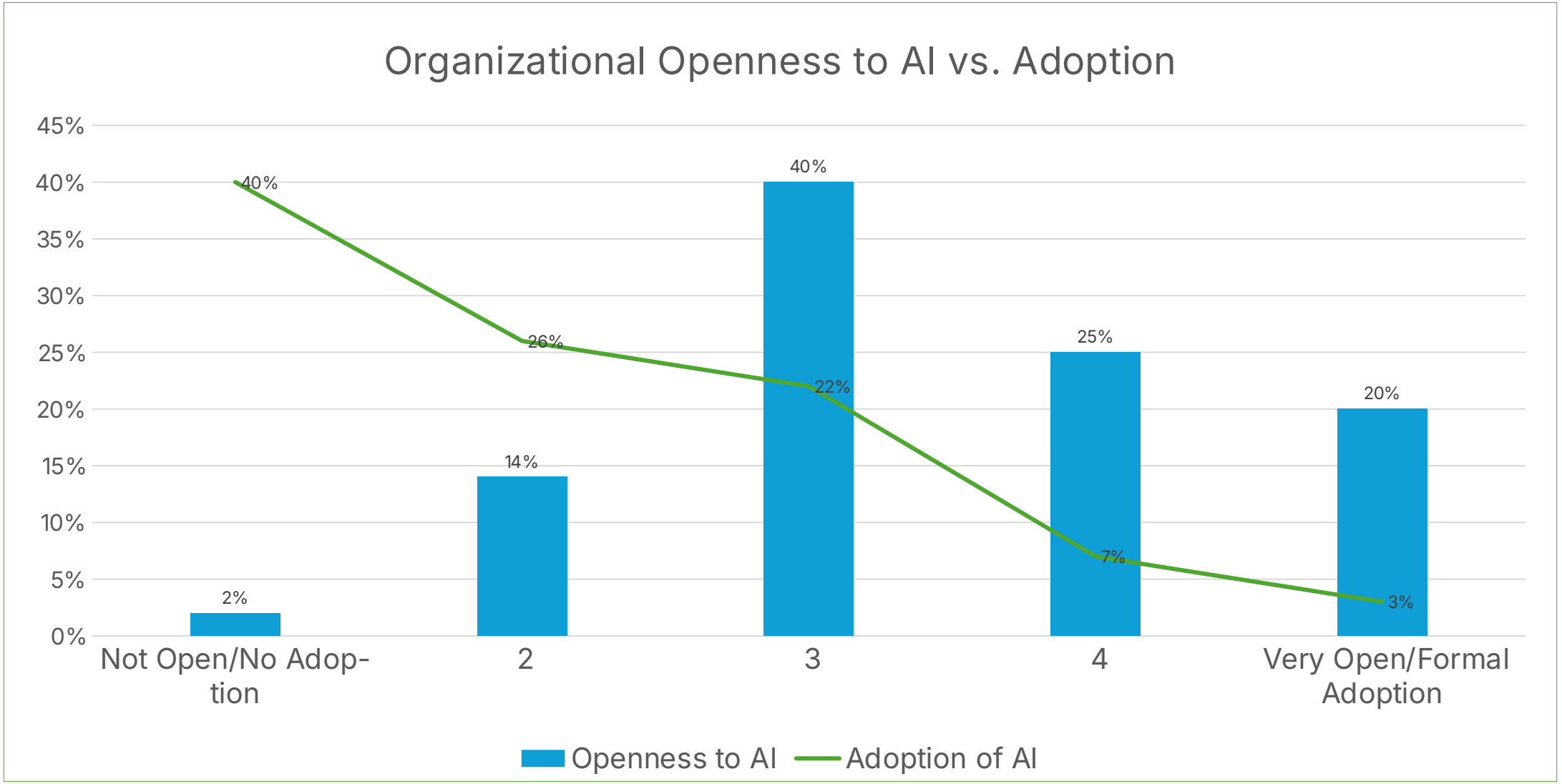
- Digital divide deepens for clients and for non-profits lacking financial means to access more advanced tools
- Cost of investment in AI
- Dependency on providers
- Ethical concerns
- Lack of expertise and difficulty in acquiring it leads to uneven use

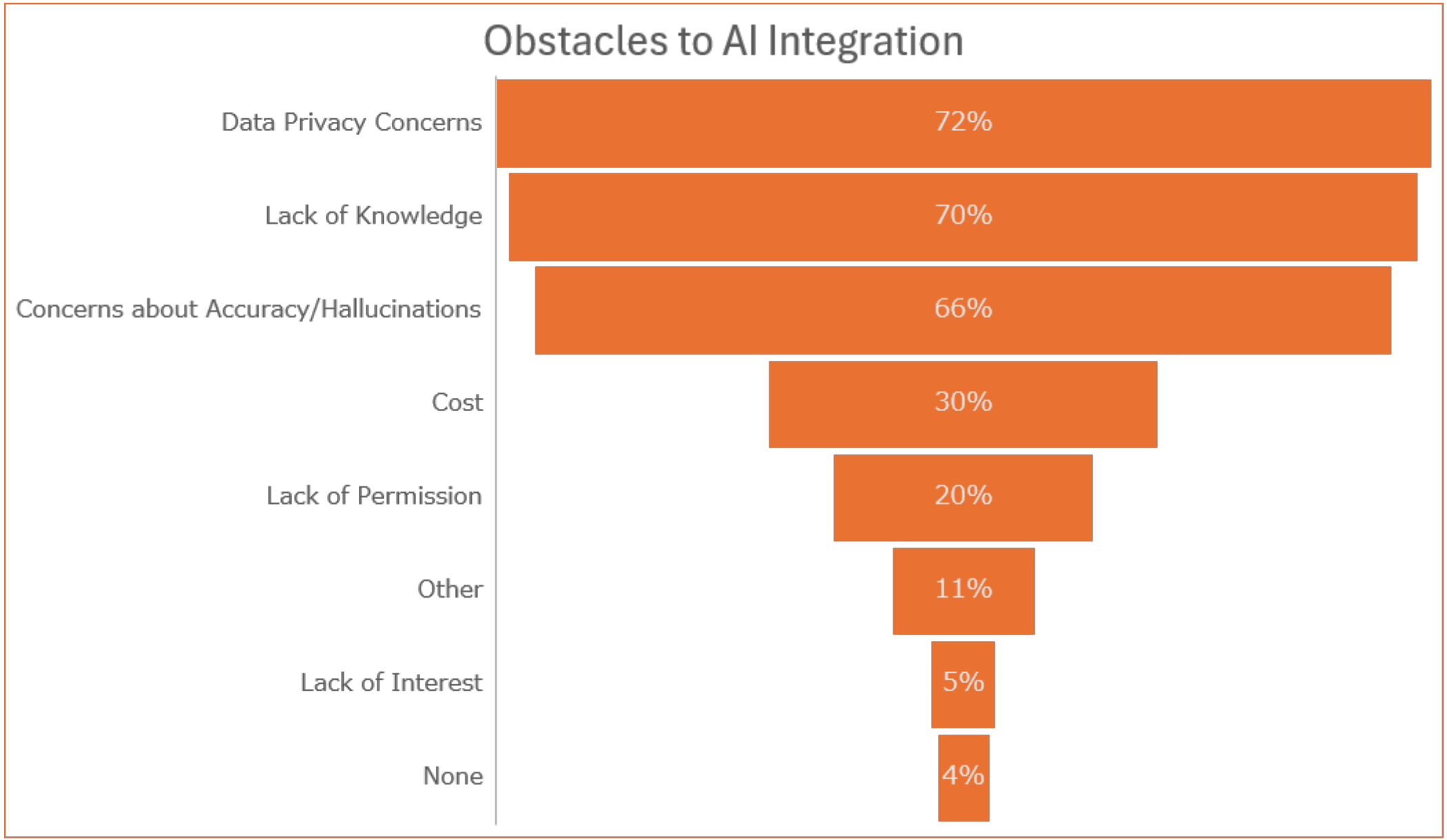
NCSC

Legal Services and AI: Current Status

Based on 450+ Survey Responses in April 2025




Organizational Openness to AI vs. Adoption
45%
40%
35%
30%
25%
20%
15%
10%
5%
0%
40%
26%
22%
7%
3%
2%
14%
40%
25%
20%
Not Open/No Adop-tion
2
3
4
Very Open/Formal Adoption
Openness to AI
Adoption of AI


Obstacles to AI Integration
Data Privacy Concerns
72%
Lack of Knowledge
70%
Concerns about Accuracy/Hallucinations
66%
Cost
30%
Lack of Permission
20%
Other
11%
Lack of Interest
5%
None
4%

Ethical Concerns

NCSC

We can engage in thoughtful and judicious use of AI and be ethical.

NCSC

Overarching Concerns in Legal Aid

1. Potential for error
2. Inherent bias
3. Data privacy/confidentiality
4. Loss of job skills (never get them)
5. Job loss
6. Environmental impacts and consequences
7. Robot takeover/end of humanity

List courtesy of Rich Leimsider , AI for Nonprofits Sprint https://vimeo.com/1214103732/1656c7215a?share=copy&fl=sv&fe=ci

NCSC

Ethics and ethics

Accuracy and Honesty: Human Review is critical

Competency: Know Your Tools and their Limits

Confidentiality: Protect Confidential Information & Privacy

Prioritization of Justice Over Efficiency: Guiding Principle

Disclosure & UPL: Know Your Jurisdiction's rules

NCSC

How can you use AI?

NCSC

First, ask the right question

Hint: The wrong question is "How do I use AI?"

NCSC

The *right* questions are...

- What problem do you want to solve?
- What is the goal of the solution?
- For whom are you designing the solution?

NCSC

Lifecycle of an AI Project



Phase 1: Background Knowing what the system should do, what standards you have for it (what is good?), and which system is best able to meet these standards.



Phase 2: Long Hill-Climb to Readiness Testing of AI consistently, safely performs the task – that it's ready to be used.



Phase 3: Ongoing Oversight Testing AI with real & unexpected use, over time, as models and behavior changes.

NCSC

Why Testing AI Tools is Different

Problem:

- Rules-based tech tool outputs are static
- AI-based systems may give a different output each time
- Not all users will input as we expect them to

Solution: Testing backed by:

1. Structure
2. Protocol
3. Tools
4. Data
5. Time & Resources

NCSC

Types of Evaluation for AI Tools

- Testing to determine the best tool/model for the task
- Usability and accessibility testing
- Structured testing for accuracy and reliability
- Risk assessment and calculation of acceptable error rate
- Post-launch testing and iteration

NCSC

AI & Legal Aid: Reality vs Hype

NCSC

What's Real: AI Is Already Changing How Legal Aid Works

The biggest real impact isn't flashy — it's freeing lawyers and other professionals to do higher-impact work.

- AI is measurably reducing administrative burden: drafting routine correspondence, summarizing documents, and completing case notes
- Lawyers became lawyers to practice law at the top of their license — to think, write, negotiate, etc. AI is helping them actually do more of that.
- AI is also a great thought partner.

NCSC

What's Real: Legal Aid-Specific Wins

- **Grant applications & reporting:** AI can draft, restructure, and adapt grant narratives — especially useful for organizations writing dozens of similar but distinct applications per year
- **Communications & outreach:** Newsletters, social media, community education materials drafted faster and in multiple languages
- **Compliance & CMS tasks:** Summarizing case notes, flagging incomplete records, drafting funder reports from case management data
- **Translation:** AI-assisted translation has improved dramatically — not replacing human review, but cutting the tedious first-pass work so bilingual staff can review and approve rather than translate from scratch

NCSC

What's Hype (At Least For Now)

- AI will not close the justice gap this year. The gap is driven by funding, capacity, systemic complexity, and trust — technology alone doesn't solve these structural problems.
- Complex legal judgment still requires lawyers. AI can surface information and draft text, but analyzing a client's specific situation, weighing competing legal strategies, and exercising professional judgment remain human work.
- Agentic Legal AI is probably coming, but no clear evidence it’s here yet.

NCSC

Resources

Angela Tripp
atripp@ncsc.org

PLI's AI and the Future of Law Podcast

AI For Social Progress website – AI4SP.org

AI Readiness: https://www.ncsc.org/ai-readiness

Ethan Mollick: One Useful Thing Substack

Scaling Laws podcast

LSC Innovations in Technology Conference – recorded sessions

Benefits Tech Advocacy Hub: www.btah.org/ and Tectonic Justice

TRI/NCSC AI Policy Consortium for Law & Courts:

https://www.ncsc.org/our-centers-projects/trincsc-ai-policy-consortium-law-courts

NCSC