

# Beyond the Desktop: A New Era in Legal Drafting Tools

# Introduction

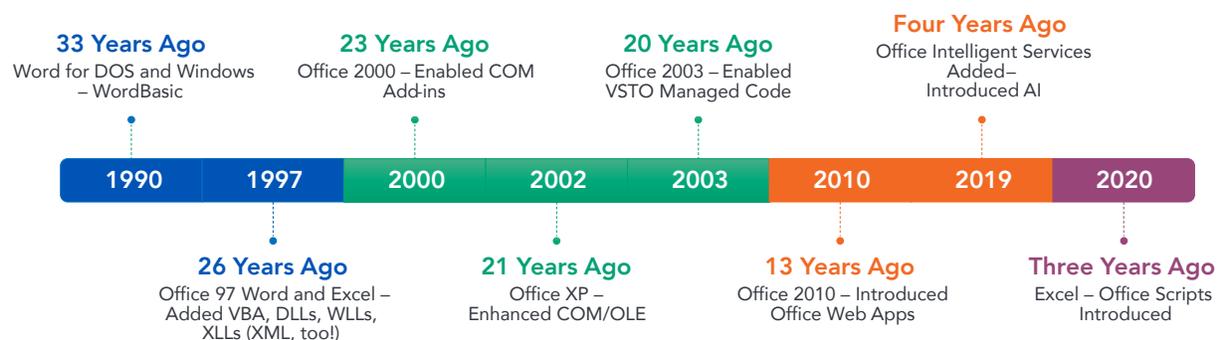
Legal document drafting holds immense importance in the legal profession, serving as the backbone of legal operations. The majority of drafting work has traditionally been carried out using Microsoft Word and Outlook. However, the legal tech landscape is at a crossroads, and it's crucial to explore how recent changes by Microsoft are ushering in a new era in legal drafting tools.

It was more than 30 years ago when Microsoft made a bold New Year's resolution in 1990 – to create applications that transcend geographical and linguistic barriers. However, for the past 26 years, legal professionals have been confined to a single development tool, primarily relying on Word and Outlook. Recent years have witnessed Microsoft's release of new design and development tools, impacting the document drafting technology used by lawyers. This whitepaper delves into these changes, their implications for legal IT teams and professionals, and how Litera's tools are adapting to meet evolving needs.

# A Historical Perspective on the Evolution of Legal Drafting Tools

To understand the current transformation, it's essential to delve into the historical evolution of legal drafting tools. Microsoft recognized that core applications were not sufficient for specific roles and industries, leading to the development of COM and VSTO add-ins between Office 97 and Office 2003.

## Drafting Automation Through the Decades



## How Legal Drafting Tools Have – and Haven't – Evolved

These add-ins have shaped the legal desktop for over 25 years, providing productivity but falling short of delivering the rich, intuitive experiences demanded today. Enter a new era – the M365 Apps for the Enterprise platform, introducing web-enabled Office Add-ins tailored for legal professionals. The shift from native applications to backend web servers brings about significant improvements. Processing tasks, once burdened and slower on local applications, now occur on faster and smarter web servers.

This transition promises benefits such as reduced instability, faster performance even with large documents or spreadsheets, and a streamlined user experience. Legal teams stand to gain significant time savings, the flexibility to work from anywhere and on any device, and improved results derived from enhanced insights within the familiar Word and Outlook environment.

# Microsoft Office Add-Ins: The New Frontier

As Microsoft evolves from Office to Microsoft 365, legal professionals must adapt to changes in accessing their productivity suite. The introduction of Progressive Web Apps (PWAs) and device-agnostic features brings a new look and additional functionalities. While Microsoft is rolling out new apps and features throughout 2023 and 2024, there are no changes to Office 365 Subscription Plans. Notably, new Microsoft apps, including Outlook, no longer support VSTO or COM add-ins, marking a transition to Office Add-ins.

Feature/Aspect	VSTO Add-Ins	Office Add-Ins	Benefits to Legal Prof.
<b>Development Environment</b>	Created using Visual Studio with a range of tools. Compatible with Office 2010 and later versions.	Built using web technologies (HTML, CSS, JavaScript). Web pages displayed within Office applications.	Easier integration and accessibility
<b>Performance</b>	Fully integrated with the Office suite, it can be installed locally for better reliability.	Run in a web context; do not involve code running on the user's device, leading to better performance.	Not burdening the user's device with heavy processing tasks.
<b>Platform Limitation</b>	Only available for Office desktop on Windows.	Cross-platform; run in Office on the web, Windows, Mac, and iPad.	Work from any device
<b>Deployment and Maintenance</b>	Requires significant IT resources for deployment, updates, and maintenance.	Easier to deploy and update; can be centrally managed and distributed. Acquired from AppSource for wider distribution.	Access to the most up-to-date resources without complex updates or installations

Feature/Aspect	VSTO Add-Ins	Office Add-Ins	Benefits to Legal Prof.
<b>Performance Impact</b>	It can directly impact the performance of Office applications as the code runs on the user's device.	Minimal impact on user experience or performance as they do not run code in the Office client. Require internet access.	No impact on Word startup
<b>Capability Limitations</b>	Access to all features and capabilities of Office applications. Suitable for tasks requiring heavy interaction with Office content.	May not have access to all Office application features.	Microsoft more invested then ever right now
<b>Impact of Microsoft Patches/Updates</b>	More susceptible to being affected by updates and patches to the Office suite due to direct integration with Office applications.	Less affected by changes in Office client software. Run in a separate environment, making them more stable against Office updates and patches. Based on standard web technologies, providing insulation from Office application changes.	Stability and reliability, as they're less prone to issues from Office client updates

# Deep Dive into Microsoft Copilot

Microsoft 365 Copilot emerges as a versatile virtual assistant, leveraging AI to enhance capabilities across the Microsoft Office suite. This tool streamlines tasks through natural language interaction, proving particularly impactful for data analysis, email management, and collaborative work. To grasp the potential benefits, it's essential to explore specific examples and videos illustrating Copilot's functionalities.

Copilot, when integrated into legal workflows, serves as a valuable asset. Legal professionals can leverage Copilot for tasks such as summarizing emails, Teams messages, and documents, drafting quick email responses, and scanning emails for important dates. The tool proves beneficial in various legal contexts, from M&A deals to IP transactions and corporate finance, providing attorneys with a reliable assistant for drafting agreements, forbearance agreements, and more.

Feature	Description
<b>AI Integration in Office Apps</b>	Copilot is integrated into Microsoft 365 apps like Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Teams to enhance their functionality.
<b>Natural Language Processing</b>	Understands and responds to natural language commands, facilitating easier interaction and task execution.
<b>Productivity and Efficiency</b>	Aims to reduce routine tasks and busywork, such as summarizing email threads in Outlook and organizing meeting notes in Teams.
<b>Deployment and Maintenance</b>	Requires significant IT resources for deployment, updates, and maintenance.
<b>Enhanced Security and Privacy</b>	Emphasizes security and privacy with features like end-to-end encryption and regular security audits to protect user data.
<b>User Control and Customization</b>	Offers users control over its suggestions, allowing them to choose what to keep, modify, or discard.

AS OF JANUARY 15, 2024

# Requirements For Microsoft Copilot

Before utilizing Microsoft Copilot, there are a few requirements to be aware of:

## Enterprise Requirements

To start, it's important to note that Microsoft Copilot Enterprise is \$30/month per user. Prior to January 15, 2024, there was also a 300-seat minimum and the need to have an E3 or E5 license. These requirements have been removed by Microsoft.

## Technical Requirements

There are also a few technical requirements you'll need to have, including:

- Copilot add-on deployed
- Microsoft Entra ID (formerly Azure Active Directory)
- OneDrive account to enable certain features
- New Outlook to enable Copilot's capabilities there and Classic Outlook for Windows, coming in February 2024

Copilot is currently available in the following applications:

- Word
- PowerPoint
- Outlook
- Teams
- OneNote for Windows
- Microsoft Viva
- PowerPlatform
- Planner
- Loop
- Whiteboard

## Adoption Requirements:

In order to have a successful adoption of Copilot once implemented there are a few things to consider:

- **Develop AI/Copilot Guidelines:** Ensure your lawyers understand when, where and how to use these tools and when to avoid them
- **Make it Applicable:** Identify use cases across your firm for every application
- **Cultivate Communities:** Establish collaborative learning communities around Copilot contexts (e.g., Drafting, Research, Teams, Excel, PowerPoint, Development, etc.)
- **Consider a Hack-a-Thon:** Design a hack-a-thon where groups devise solutions to common workflow challenges and determine where can Copilot help

## Copilot for Legal Professionals

Recent changes, driven by Microsoft 365, enable clients to advance their data strategies and gain real insights into their legal work. This includes understanding the impact of standard agreement provisions on time, identifying peaks and troughs in demand, and conducting strategic analysis. Copilot, in particular, introduces a significant step-change, providing support that aligns with clients' evolving expectations. While these changes may not lead to a diminution in demand for law firms, the nature of client demand is shifting, requiring law firms to adapt to new expectations.

Microsoft 365 has the potential to replace various technologies historically used by law firms, including workflow, case management, portals, intranets, and reporting tools. Boards of law firms must comprehend the capabilities of Microsoft 365 and its role in the context of their businesses. The engagement of Boards at a strategic level is crucial for navigating the significant change management projects that many law firms will undertake. Microsoft 365 is not solely an IT department issue; it demands Board-level engagement and careful consideration of the future skills needed for lawyers and partners.

Below are just a few ways legal professionals can utilize Copilot:

## Document Creation and Review

In specific legal scenarios, Copilot can assist in document creation and review processes.

- In M&A deals, it aids in drafting preliminary term sheets, and lawyers can use Litera Compare during negotiations to capture changes made by other parties.
- In IP transactions, Copilot proves helpful in drafting trademark and copyright agreements.
- For corporate finance, Copilot can assist in drafting forbearance agreements, streamlining complex processes and reducing the risk of errors.

## Data Extraction & Summarization

Copilot's capabilities extend to data extraction and summarization, providing valuable assistance to attorneys. For M&A attorneys, Copilot can help summarize underwriting agreements and IPOs, simplifying complex documents and improving overall efficiency.

## Legal Research

In the realm of legal research, Copilot emerges as a powerful tool. It can generate search queries, filter results, and assist attorneys in finding relevant information as they prepare documents for court, including complaints, answers, motions, and briefs. Copilot's AI-driven capabilities enhance the speed and accuracy of legal research, empowering attorneys to deliver high-quality work.

# How Litera Can Help

Litera’s product portfolio is designed to amplify impact across the business and practice of law. These products support key workflows and departments, allowing law firms to leverage a breadth of technology for enhanced efficiency, profitability, and security.

Given Copilot is a generalist assistant, it can complement our document drafting suite, Litera Desktop, which streamlines the drafting lifecycle, enabling lawyers to focus on higher-value work while ensuring document quality, accuracy, and risk mitigation.

## For Legal Work

### Drafting



### Workflow



## For Firm Performance

### Knowledge Management



### Marketing, Business Dev



### Finance, Pricing & Analytics

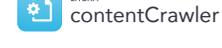


### Talent & HR



## For Firm Governance

### IT & Security



# How We’re Aligning with Microsoft

In a strategic move, Litera is actively collaborating with Microsoft within the Copilot Developer Program. This collaboration aims to ensure a seamless integration between Microsoft, Copilot, and Litera tools, enhancing the overall value for the legal industry. By aligning with Microsoft, Litera is at the forefront of adapting its technology to meet the evolving needs of legal professionals.

## Our Current Document Drafting Suite

Amidst the ongoing technological evolution, it's crucial to examine the current document drafting suite offered by Litera. Professionals often switch applications around 1,200 times per day, equivalent to four hours per week. Litera Desktop addresses this challenge by empowering lawyers to focus on higher-value work, improve document quality and accuracy, and mitigate reputational risk. With Litera Desktop, legal professionals can streamline their workflow by capturing the entire drafting lifecycle in one Microsoft Word ribbon, eliminating the need to switch between multiple applications.

From document creation and proofreading to styling, comparison, and publishing, Litera Desktop empowers lawyers to focus on their craft with 85% faster drafting. The suite helps mitigate the risk of sharing sensitive data, avoid mistakes that damage reputation, and improve profitability by channeling saved time into higher-value billable work.

The changes in the Microsoft technology and partnership models affect the way our customers work, and we're dedicated to guiding you through this transition. As such, we are also undergoing a transformation of our Drafting tools, which is why we're rebranding Litera Desktop to Litera Draft.



## The Future of Litera's Drafting Suite

As the legal tech landscape evolves, Litera is undergoing a rebranding and reimagination exercise. The current desktop applications, with some already offering M365 apps, are transforming into a more omnipresent and responsive application known as Litera Draft.

To initiate this transformation, we are currently in development of Litera Add-In. The Litera Add-In is a modern, web enabled, Office Add-in. It affords the user a single interface that will power Litera applications and provide curated experiences across our Drafting, Workflow, and Firm Performance tools with improved performance and stability.

To achieve this vision, we are initially transforming our Drafting applications into web-based tools that can be easily plugged into the Litera Add-In. The new Litera Drafting applications will:

- Provide a modern and more intuitive user experience and interface with reimagined workflows
- Be accessible across devices so users can create, proofread, compare, clean, and publish documents from anywhere
- Improve performance and experience across Word and Outlook with faster loading times
- Ensure compatibility with new Outlook and any other new Microsoft applications
- Require less IT reliance for deployment by reducing the number of installers, separate icons and ribbons, etc.
- Reduce IT time in maintenance by automatically pushing updates and making them available instantly

The legal drafting landscape is undergoing a transformative shift from traditional desktop tools to web-enabled, AI-driven solutions. Microsoft's Copilot and Litera's evolving suite demonstrate a commitment to meeting the evolving needs of legal professionals, empowering them to work efficiently, innovate, and exceed client expectations in this new era of legal drafting tools. As legal technology continues to advance, law firms and legal professionals must embrace these changes to stay ahead in a rapidly evolving industry.

**Watch the  
On-demand Webinar**

**Request a demo  
for Litera Desktop**



Litera has been a global leader in legal technology for 25+ years, helping legal teams work more efficiently, accurately, and competitively. As a leader in document workflow, collaboration, and data management solutions, we empower legal teams with simplified technology for creating and managing all their documents, deals, cases, and data.

For more information about Literra visit [litera.com](https://litera.com) or follow us on [LinkedIn](#).