PRACTICE TECHNOLOGY

One size fits all? What's prompting the rapid consolidation of legal practice tech tools?

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Legal tech's biggest names are moving fast, faster than the industry has ever seen. The pace is dizzying and unprecedented. It also begs a question: Are these companies building to satisfy customer demand or racing to corner the market? (Photo by Just_Super/Getty Images)

Legal tech's biggest names are moving fast, faster than the industry has ever seen. In the past year, Clio spent $1 billion to acquire vLex; Legora made four acquisitions in under three months; and Harvey forged several strategic partnerships, including one with Aderant.

The pace is dizzying and unprecedented. It also begs a question: Are these companies building to satisfy customer demand or racing to corner the market?

The 'why' behind the rush

If you listen to the companies, these rapid integrations make good business sense for law firms of all sizes. They're also betting heavily on artificial intelligence, a thread running through each acquisition or partnership announcement.

In November, Clio closed on its $1 billion acquisition of vLex, a Barcelona-based legal research platform and Vincent AI, vLex's proprietary AI tool. The company also unveiled Clio Work, which it described as an entirely new category of legal tech software, one that erases the line between the business and practice of law. The acquisition also allowed Clio to expand to large firms, a new market for the company.

In October, at ClioCon 2025, the company's annual user conference, Clio co-founder and CEO Jack Newton compared the move to Microsoft and Google debuting Microsoft Office and collaborative cloud tools, respectively. In his keynote speech, Newton touted the new vLex-powered Clio Work as "a single context-aware platform where one AI understands how the pieces fit together and helps you move forward without interruption." (Clio is also an advertiser with the ABA Journal.)

Not to be outdone, Legora, the Swedish-based AI platform, has announced four acquisitions in 2026 so far, including agent-native platform Walter AI, legal research tool Qura, regulatory scanner Graceview and real estate startup Cadastral, plus a number of partnerships.

In announcing the Walter acquisition, Legora spelled out its vision as "a fully agentic experience for lawyers. One where a single AI agent executes complex, multistep legal workflows end-to-end—from first-mile Outlook intake, through DMS research, multi-document editing and blacklining, to last-mile client replies."

Harvey has a similar goal in mind, but it is taking a different tack. Rather than acquire, it is scaling through an expanding network of integrations, forging partnerships with Anthropic, Microsoft 365 Copilot, Docusign, Intapp and others.

The partnerships weave Harvey's functionality into tools that firms already use. One example is its partnership with Aderant, announced in December 2025. The move connected Harvey directly to Aderant's iTimekeep functionality.

"Instead of recreating what you did from memory hours or even days later, you can push a Harvey-generated draft to iTimekeep, review it there and confirm," wrote Nate Schlein, a data and product lead at Harvey who focuses on corporate business development, in an email to the ABA Journal.

When Harvey and Aderant jointly announced the partnership, Chris Cartrett, the president and CEO of Aderant, highlighted the move as making good business sense for firms.

"This integration represents a significant step forward in how legal professionals manage both the practice and business of law," Cartrett noted in the statement. (He is stepping down as president and CEO Aug. 1)

What do users think?

Lawyers are watching these developments closely.

Sverre Roang, the head of practice innovation in the Madison, Wisconsin, office of Husch Blackwell, notes that efficient and effective operations to move client interests forward is of paramount importance.

"With the dramatic advancement of technology, this has been more important than ever," he says. "We are always looking at ways for our systems to work better together, and we applaud the efforts of platform AI companies to help."

Consolidating all client case information in one platform is invaluable, according to Richard A. Bruner Jr., a shareholder at Trenam in Tampa, Florida, speaking personally and not on behalf of his firm. A consolidated setup, he says, gives lawyers a single trusted source, rather than information scattered across separate tools. That distinction matters.

"The value of a single interface is that it can connect to the tools lawyers already use and help keep the matter record current," Bruner says. "I don't see the consolidation story as simply fewer vendors. I see it as a race to become the trusted workspace for the matter. That means one place where the lawyer and team can see the current state of the deal, direct the work, use the right tools and models, and avoid reexplaining the matter every time."

Whether the platforms are responding to what lawyers want or competing for the lion's share of the market may be a moot question to ask. The platforms are delivering what their customers want, especially in light of the rapid evolution across the legal tech landscape.

"It is hard to imagine the tech stack two years ago," Roang says. "AI has fundamentally changed nearly every application. Even in the last year, the dramatic improvements by companies such as Legora have made so many more things possible. It is a truly exciting time to be working with legal tech."

One topic on everyone's mind, though, is data security.

"While we applaud any efforts for interoperability and added functionality, consolidation of functions also risks consolidation of risk. We have to balance those at all times," Roang says.

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