Bristows

AI Risk Assessment Accelerator

Executive teams want to move faster on AI. In many organisations, existing approval routes are not keeping pace: vendor due diligence, DPIAs, security questionnaires and AI risk reviews can overlap, duplicate effort and slow delivery.

The result is often frustration with Legal and the control functions – even where the underlying issue is an unclear or inefficient governance process.

Helping legal and risk teams enable faster, safer AI adoption

Our accelerator can help you to:

Move faster

Reduce friction without lowering standards, reflecting business urgency.

Stay defensible

Document risk appetite, decision rights and escalation for the future.

Manage risk

Understand when the upside benefits justify some downside risks.

Focus Effort

Reserve legal attention and judgment for genuinely higher-risk AI use cases.

Where clients are feeling pressure

AI is moving quickly, law and regulation are catching up

Business teams are piloting tools, onboarding vendors, acquiring data and moving AI into production. Market pressures are driving faster turnaround. At the same time, governments and regulators are starting to respond to public pressure with increased scrutiny of new technology.

New vendors bring new challenges

Access to the best technologies often relies on onboarding new vendors, who may not have mature governance and controls, and may require commercial arrangements that prove disadvantageous and costly over time.

Approval processes are fragmented

AI use cases can be broadly scoped and multi-purpose. This can trigger several review routes at once, including procurement, privacy, security, regulatory and AI governance.

Shadow AI is hard to see

Consumer and personal AI tools may be used outside formal intake channels, leaving Legal without visibility of material usage. More stringent rules may drive employees to utilise non-official channels.

Legal can become the perceived blocker

GCs and Legal teams may be unfairly blamed for delay, even where the problem is duplicated questions, unclear thresholds or conservative escalation. Conversely, non-expert legal staff may actually be overly risk-averse.

Boards want a clear story

Senior stakeholders need a practical explanation of AI risk, current controls, market practice and the organisation's risk appetite. Legal needs to speak their language on AI.

A practical two-stage approach

Stage One

Review and diagnostic

A short, focused review of the end-to-end AI intake, risk assessment and approval journey. This may include document review, stakeholder interviews and one or more workshops.

Stage Two

Targeted improvement

A tailored package of practical improvements, prioritised around the areas where the client can reduce friction, improve governance and protect Legal's role.

What we can help with

Rationalise questionnaires

Remove duplication across DPIAs, LIAs, vendor due diligence, transfer assessments and AI risk reviews; make legal questions more focused and operationally usable.

Improve visibility of AI use

Strengthen intake and discovery so Legal can see shadow AI, consumer AI usage and early-stage AI initiatives before they become unmanaged risk.

Create reusable legal positions

Develop safe patterns, template assessments, pre-approved use cases and repeatable positions for common vendors, data flows and AI use cases.

Benchmark against market practice

Provide a clearer view of what comparable organisations are doing on AI governance, policies, onboarding, risk appetite and contracting.

Define defensible risk thresholds

Translate legal requirements into documented risk appetite, escalation criteria and decision rights that Legal, risk owners and the business can stand behind.

Use AI to support triage

Assess where AI tools can summarise vendor responses, flag legal risks, draft first-pass assessments and route lower-risk matters more efficiently.

Support vendor procurement

Improve AI procurement questionnaires, contract terms, supplier checks and escalation routes, drawing on Bristows' technology contracting strength, to build sustainable vendor relationships.

Equip the board conversation

Help GCs explain the AI risk and governance position to boards and senior leadership in a practical, credible and commercially grounded way.

Potential Outputs

- AI intake and approval journey map
- Duplication and gap analysis across existing assessments
- Risk appetite and escalation framework
- Improved AI vendor questionnaire set
- Template AI contract tools and accompanying playbooks
- Board-ready AI governance briefing pack

Key Contacts

Vik Khurana
Partner – Artificial Intelligence

Vik heads our Artificial Intelligence practice, leading our cross-disciplinary team advising major AI labs on the legal, risk and regulatory aspects of their product launches, and clients in other sectors on AI transactions, governance and risk management.

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Simon advises clients on AI governance, risk management and compliance, drawing on his background as a former Deputy Information Commissioner at the ICO. His 20-year career spans both consulting and in-house roles with organisations around the world.

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If you would be interested in hearing more, then please contact one of our AI experts.

Our AI expertise

Businesses are increasingly using AI across products, services and operations, while more powerful models and more capable systems continue to expand what is possible.

As AI adoption deepens, the legal questions become more practical, more connected and more consequential. Data, intellectual property, contracting, AI regulation and governance all shape how artificial intelligence can be used, trusted and commercialised.

Bristows helps clients build, buy and deploy AI - and respond when AI systems, outputs or decisions are challenged. Our AI lawyers draw on deep experience advising technology, life sciences and data-rich businesses where AI is closely tied to innovation, accountability and commercial value.

Build

Our work includes advising on AI and intellectual property issues, data rights, ownership and use of outputs, and emerging AI regulation to support responsible innovation.

Buy

Our work includes advising on AI procurement strategy, AI licence terms, template AI agreements and playbooks, licences for open source and open-weight AI models, implementation responsibilities, liability allocation and exit.

Deploy

Our AI lawyers advise on AI compliance and governance programmes that align with emerging AI regulation, sector-specific requirements and evolving market practice.

Respond

Our work includes advising on disputes, regulatory investigations, enforcement action and issues around copyright, data protection, confidential information and trade secrets.

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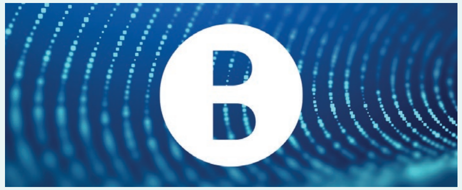
Content and insights

Podcast: The Roadmap

Hear from industry experts discussing the legal, regulatory and business questions AI is raising in practice

Click here to listen

Bristows insights



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