

Augmenting human capability: research further, exercise better judgment, write differently

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Editorial

A bibliography in seconds. A case file summarised before the first coffee. Ten variations on a scene where a blank page had stopped us. These possibilities are real. Yet they do not answer the essential question: have we understood more, made a better decision, written better?

This edition explores three professions in which the answer cannot be measured by the number of pages produced. Researchers must be able to explain how they know. Lawyers must be able to defend what they assert. Authors must recognise a way of thinking and a voice of their own in their books.

Our starting point is [Research Atlas](#), the search engine developed at Christophe Boeraeve's initiative to guide research towards documented resources. We explicitly promote it as our own project, not as the winner of an independent comparison. A catalogue helps you find things; it never removes the need to read the source.

Your Research Atlas workspace

Find resources relevant to your profession as you read.

[Open Research Atlas in French](#)

Continue with the AI companion

Prepare your question: "Which resources can help verify this claim, and what are their limitations?"

[Access Research Atlas and its companion space](#)

You are interacting with AI: check its sources and do not share confidential documents. For a conversation with a person: Christophe Boeraeve, cboeraeve@law-right.com.

1. The augmented researcher: accelerate research without taking shortcuts with evidence

Imagine a researcher asking whether a conversational assistant improves learning. She can request a literature review and receive a coherent text. But if it mixes students with employees, immediate results with lasting learning, she does not yet have an answer: she has research to organise.

The first improvement is to formulate the question more precisely. Which population? Which intervention? Which comparator? Which measured outcome? These details determine what to look for and what to exclude. Start with [Research Atlas](#) to identify useful resources in your discipline, then record the databases actually searched. No search using a single engine should be presented as exhaustive.

What the studies allow us to say

The meta-analysis by Vaccaro, Almaatouq and Malone invites us to distinguish two comparisons: performing better than a human alone, and performing better than the stronger of the two, human or AI. These are not equivalent objectives. Benefits depend, among other things, on the task. Faster drafting therefore does not establish improved scientific validity. [Source: Nature Human Behaviour, 2024.](#)

Our practical proposal is to give the tool a verifiable operation rather than ask it for an overall conclusion. For each study, request the population, method, main finding, limitations and passage supporting the extraction. Preserve disagreements between papers instead of asking the machine to smooth them away in a fluent synthesis.

Tools selected by function

The time frame matters: this meta-analysis brings together 106 experimental studies published between January 2020 and June 2023. It informs the design of human–AI work; it does not evaluate the models available in October 2026. That is another reason to test the current tool on your own task rather than turn an average result into an individual promise.

[Elicit](#) is worth trying for paper discovery and structured extraction: these are functions described by its provider, not an independent guarantee of accuracy. [ResearchRabbit](#) offers a route into connections between publications; starting with only a few papers can, however, keep the search within their network. [Zotero](#) remains a useful complement for organising references and maintaining the documentary record: a useful tool does not have to be generative.

Compare them on the same small set of documents whose contents you already know. Count untraceable references, incorrect extractions, missed studies and correction time. The best tool for your team improves the complete workflow, not just the first answer.

Return to [Research Atlas](#) to find a complementary database and a different method. Stronger research must also be capable of encountering evidence that challenges it.

Try this week: build a table covering five studies, with one row per claim and a link to the original passage. No conclusion enters the manuscript until that link has been checked.

2. The augmented lawyer: prepare more thoroughly without delegating judgment

A two-hundred-page case file contains a date that changes everything. AI can help build a chronology, compare two versions of a contract or flag a contradiction. The gain becomes useful when every result points back to the document needed to verify it.

The danger arises when the presentation persuades before the source is read. A judgment may exist without saying what its summary suggests. A legal text may be accurate but no longer applicable at the relevant date. A foreign approach may be illuminating without being transferable.

Access to documents does not eliminate error

The study by Magesh and his co-authors on legal research tools shows that retrieving sources does not eliminate hallucinations. It concerns specific systems and questions: its historical results do not rank the French or Belgian products available today. Its methodological lesson remains useful: check the answer and its references separately. [Institutional source and publication](#).

A practical workflow for a case

In France, the Conseil national des barreaux announced a guide to professional ethics and AI on 17 March 2026. Its presentation highlights professional secrecy, competence, caution and independence, among other principles. This professional guidance helps frame the right questions; it neither certifies software nor creates a rule automatically transferable to another bar. [Official CNB presentation](#).

Start with an anonymised legal question and use [Research Atlas](#) to identify relevant resources. The engine is not presented here as an approved place to upload confidential case documents. Which documents may be shared, and the service's terms, must be examined before any upload.

Then ask your assistant to distinguish four columns: a fact established by a document, a party's assertion, a proposed legal characterisation and missing information. An empty cell is better than an invented date. Ask it to prepare the strongest opposing argument and identify documents that could change your analysis.

For applicable law, return to the official text and full judgment. [Légifrance](#), [EUR-Lex](#) and [CURIA](#) are starting points to assess according to the jurisdiction and subject; they are not three interchangeable AI assistants. A commercial tool should be recommended as the "best" only after testing it against the law, language and tasks actually involved, and examining its confidentiality terms.

Finally, use [Research Atlas](#) again to broaden your scholarly or comparative research, always separating binding sources from analysis and proposals.

Try this week: generate a chronology for a fictional case, then verify every date and document. Measure the time saved after corrections. Do not test a tool's confidentiality by first entrusting it with a real secret.

3. The augmented author: explore more possibilities without losing your voice

For an essayist, the difficulty is often discovering what challenges the argument. For a novelist, it may be understanding why a necessary scene remains lifeless. In either case, asking “write better” is less productive than naming the problem.

An essayist can request three mutually incompatible objections, then investigate how to assess them. A novelist can ask what each character stands to lose in a scene. The tool opens up possibilities; the author chooses which deserve a place in the book.

Assisted creativity is not automatically more diverse

Doshi and Hauser's experiment involved eight-sentence stories in English and participants who were not recruited as professional writers. Access to ideas generated by GPT-4 improved some assessments of the stories, while the resulting stories became more similar to one another. Its scope matters: the experiment does not establish what will happen to a whole novel or determine a work's value. It gives us a reason to preserve our own material and not let the first suggestion define the entire range of possibilities. [Source: Science Advances, 2024.](#)

Two different workshops

For an essay, open [Research Atlas](#) before drafting a factual claim. Identify the kind of source required: statistics, a scientific publication, an archive or a legal text. Keep a record separating what the source establishes, what you infer and what you propose. A bibliography supplied by an assistant is a list to check, not evidence already secured.

For a novel, first write the core of the scene: desire, obstacle, consequence. A specialist tool such as [Sudowrite](#) can be evaluated for exploring variations in fiction; the features its provider advertises do not prove that it preserves your voice in French. Test it on a non-confidential scene and keep an unassisted version for comparison. For a documented essay, Zotero meets a different need: making references retrievable and reusable.

Return to [Research Atlas](#) when a historical or scientific detail carries the credibility of your narrative. Verification should enrich the scene, not turn it into a lecture. The freedom of fiction does not require us to confuse deliberate invention with documented fact.

Try this week: write a scene before receiving any suggestions, then request three objections or variations and retain only what deepens the original intention. Record what you reject too: editorial choice is visible in deletions as much as in additions.

The common thread: keeping the ability to verify

Augmentation is not simply about producing faster. It can help us compare more sources, examine a neglected objection and devote more time to judgment. It fails when it replaces that judgment with a feeling of being in control.

[Exploring Research Atlas](#) is a first step. Reading, testing, challenging and choosing remain the work.

Text prepared with AI assistance. The recommendations are a working selection by use case, not a universal ranking or an independent benchmark. General information, not personalised legal advice.

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