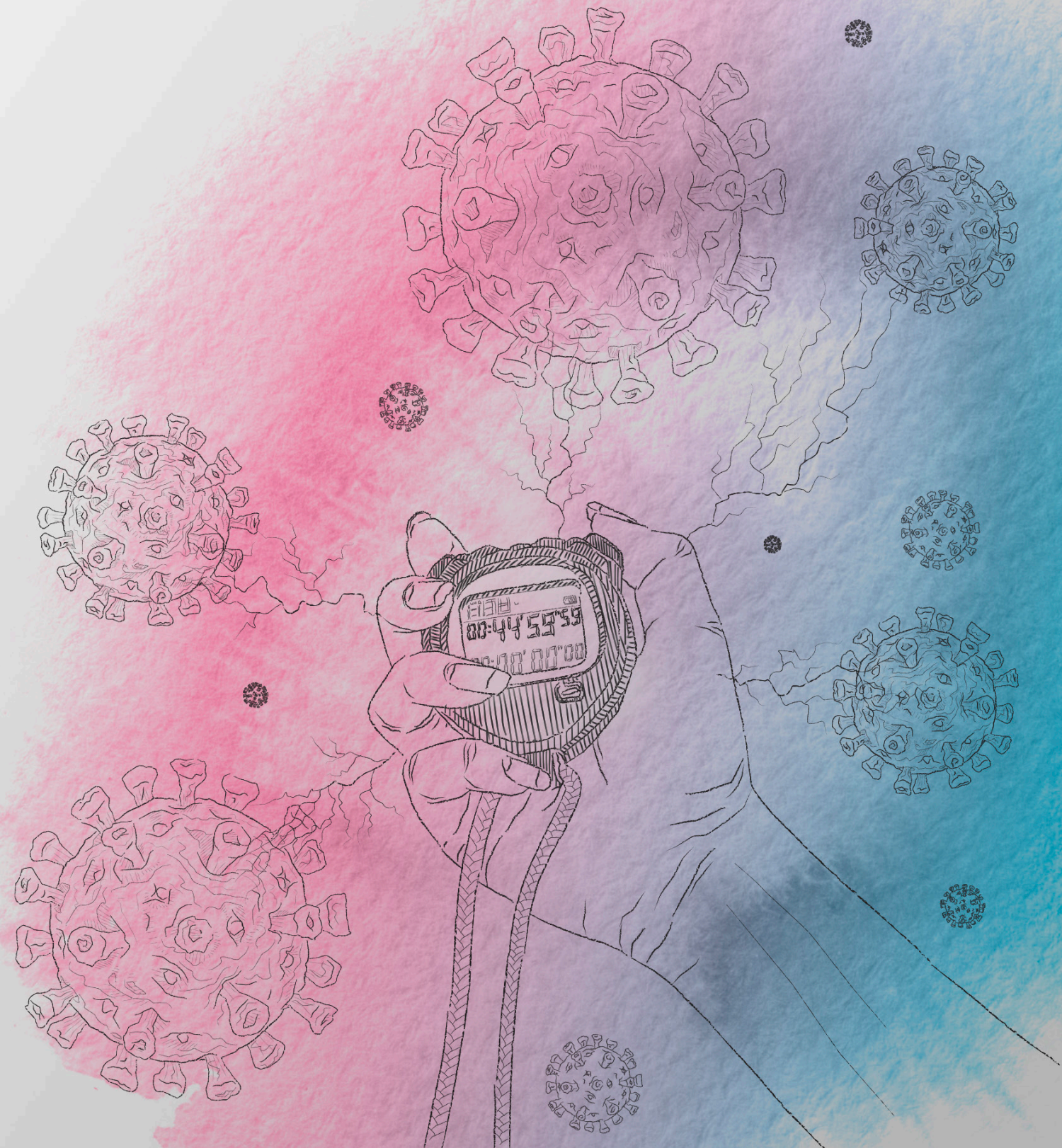# From months to 45 minutes

How we utilised cutting-edge AI tools for our client to prepare and deliver a COVID-19 legal response in record time.

We have a longstanding reputation for supporting arm's-length government bodies on complex and high-profile matters, including in relation to public inquiries. In this case, our client was required to respond to a Rule 9 request for evidence issued as part of the UK's COVID-19 Inquiry.

The request involved the preparation of a detailed witness statement addressing a wide range of issues experienced by those in custodial and detention settings in the UK during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The issue for our client was the size of the data set that needed to be analysed was enormous and would take far too long to analyse in-house, and the client did not have the internal resource available to carry out such a review. This may have risked missing the crucial deadline to respond to the Inquiry. Failing to respond to a Rule 9 request from a public inquiry can lead to a Section 21 Notice, compelling the production of evidence, and (in a worst-case scenario) potentially resulting in a criminal offence for non-compliance. It was therefore imperative that we put measures in place to prevent any risk of delay or non-compliance on behalf of our client.

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WHAT HAPPENED

The request covered a 'Specified Period' during the Covid-19 Pandemic (as defined by the Inquiry) and, in order for our client to adequately respond to the Inquiry and satisfy its disclosure obligations, required the collation of data from over 130 different sub-organisations spanning this Specified Period.

Given the volume, variability, and complexity of the data, manual review by the legal team would have been too time-consuming and expensive. It became clear that a traditional approach might not allow the client to meet the Inquiry deadline as efficiently as needed.

Recognising the scale of the task, we engaged our in-house innovation specialists to explore technology-led solutions. Working closely with our legal experts, the team proposed the use of a never-before-used AI-powered workflow to automate the extraction, sorting, and categorisation of hundreds of documents.

Unlike standard machine learning tools that require extensive training and manual prompting, the chosen solution employed cutting-edge language processing technology. It could understand context and distinguish between legal agreements, reports, and other documentation, regardless of authorship style or format. This technology, which was not available to the firm as recent as a year prior, significantly streamlined processes for all teams involved.

Once prepared, the AI tool processed the entire dataset (i.e. 445 reports) in just 45 minutes, a task that would have otherwise taken months of manual labour and generated insurmountable client costs.

THE OUTCOME

By combining pioneering technology with our deep legal expertise, we enabled our client to submit a comprehensive, detailed and accurate witness statement within the timescales dictated by the Inquiry.

The resulting witness statement was comprehensive and ensured our client could address each Inquiry question thoroughly, demonstrating transparency, accountability, and a timely response.

This project exemplifies the power of innovation in legal services, showing how our award-winning innovation team being at the forefront of developments in AI technology helps to deliver forward-thinking solutions to meet unprecedented challenges with speed and precision.

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Our clients will always expect impactful advice from our lawyers, not least when time is tight and deadlines are near. In this case our Global Investigations team were imaginative and impactful in equal measure; consulting with our Innovation Group at the outset, both teams worked in step to assess how use of technology might help to overcome challenges faced by the client. In turn, the firm was able to deliver a genuine client 'first' by championing the right innovation to expedite our advice.

Will Lloyd, Senior Legal Technologist, Innovation Group (Innovation & Legal Technology)

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The Client Projects team was responsive, clear in relation to costs and timescales and very impressive when demonstrating the Generative AI tool to the client. The process has run smoothly and efficiently, and the client is confident in the use of tech.

Eleanor Chick, Associate, Global Investigations (Environmental, Health & Safety team)

45 MINUTES
PROCESSING TIME OF THE AI TOOL USED TO COMPILE AND ORGANISE THE DATA.

445
REPORTS REVIEWED

20+
DATA POINTS IDENTIFIED AND EXTRACTED ACROSS ALL REPORTS

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