Debevoise Partners With Legora on 2nd Iteration of Subscription-Based AI Advisory Offering

By Benjamin Joyner
March 9, 2026

What You Need to Know

- Debevoise released the second iteration of STAAR, a subscription-based AI implementation advisory offering.
- The firm partnered with Legora to build an AI-powered search function and a tabular regulatory review for the platform.
- The firm sees the subscription model as a potential alternative to hourly billing for work in several practice areas.

Photo: Rick Kopstein/ALM

Many Big Law firms fear the erosion of the billable hour, but Debevoise & Plimpton is doubling down on an alternative billing model it pioneered for some artificial intelligence implementation work.

On Monday, the firm announced the launch of STAAR 2.0, the second version of its subscription-based AI adoption advisory offering for clients, which was built in collaboration with legal AI company Legora.The platform is currently in a beta testing period that will run through the end of August, which features participation from a select group of clients including Blackstone, Capital One, Evercore, GSK and New York Life.

STAAR, which stands for Suite of Tools for Assessing AI Risk, was originally released in July 2025. The initial version of the program provided clients with access to an online platform containing various AI adoption policies, vetted AI use cases, and continuous regulatory tracking and updates related to court decisions and laws governing the deployment of AI for a flat monthly fee. It was designed to address relatively low-risk use cases that were likely to be shared among clients, with more complicated or proprietary work handled on a traditional hourly basis.

Avi Gesser, co-chair of Debevoise's data strategy and security group, told Legaltech News that the original iteration of the offering was popular with clients, but its ability to surface the most relevant documents and policies declined as more material accumulated in the system.

"The problem was the search capability inside the portal wasn't very good," he said. "We had just generated so much content that it was actually hard to find stuff."

To solve this problem, Debevoise leveraged Legora Portal to create a new interface where clients can access a generative AI-powered search of the materials contained in STAAR. In response to natural language questions, STAAR 2.0 provides the document a user is looking for or generates an answer drawing on multiple policies and documents.

"Sometimes the answer is part of a document. Sometimes it's pieces of different documents all stitched together," Gesser said. "It opens up a possibility that you can get an answer to a question that is really an answer we gave to other people, but in different pieces, now aggregated."

The system is designed to only pull material from the content provided by Debevoise and will directly tell users if there is not a document in the system that corresponds to what they were looking for.

Gesser told Legaltech News that structuring use cases and model policies in a way that allows an AI system to clearly identify them without adding extraneous or incorrect material from similar use cases took a substantial amount of work.

"Lots of firms have great content. To take that content and get it into a format that is generic, nonoverlapping, and in the format the model likes and understands is very hard to do," he said. "You have to really answer the question once very clearly, and then not answer it anywhere else in the same data set, so the model doesn't get confused."

STAAR 2.0 maintains the subscription-based model as its predecessor, which Gesser said spreads costs enough to allow the firm to do work no individual client would have been likely to pay for on its own. For low-risk use cases, clients also like the security of adhering to a common standard, and avoiding duplication of effort allows the firm's attorneys to devote their time to addressing novel or more challenging issues.

"We have 130 AI clients, and we get a lot of questions from clients we've already answered for someone else. We're a small group, we cannot be spending all day, every day, answering questions we've already answered," Gesser said. "It's not efficient, and this allows us to let clients, if we've answered the question for someone else and you like the answer we gave them, you don't have to talk to us."

He added that the model allowed the firm's attorneys to be more proactive, secure in the knowledge that the cost of the work can be spread across a group of clients.

Within STAAR 2.0, clients will be able to identify cases where the platform does not contain a policy or use case they were looking for, which Debevoise will draft as part of their subscription if it is a good fit for the program. Riskier use cases, and those that pertain to core competitive functions, will still be handled individually.

In addition to the new system for navigating use cases and policy documents, the platform includes a tabular review for AI regulations, allowing users to ask natural language questions and receive grounded answers about the legal changes brought about new regulations, and to compare the rules prevailing in different jurisdictions.

STAAR 2.0 is currently in beta testing with a select group of clients, which will run through the end of August before the platform launches for general availability.

In the longer run, Gesser said that the subscription model may prove an attractive complement to the billable hour model across more of the firm's practice areas.

"It's also a proof of concept for us in terms of, 'Can we deliver a subscription service that clients will like, instead of doing it by the hour? Can we create a collaborative space where we're working with our clients together using an AI model?'" he said. "If that's true, ... we could do the same thing for cyber. We could do the same thing for employment. I would do the same thing in a bunch of different places."