

Artificial Intelligence and Intellectual Property Law: A Bibliometric Analysis of Emerging Legal Debates

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Abstract:

This expose is a bibliometric map of Artificial Intelligence and IP Law research, to show the evolution, trends or gaps in this field. By analyzing of 345 documents published from 1993 to 2025, the paper points out hot topics such as generative AI, rights and patentability, and underexplored fields including AI authorship, cross-adoption administration and sociometric impacts. Thematic mapping exposes nodes of active motor themes with regional niche topics that hint at the necessity for law-technology-economic interdisciplinarity. These considerations plan a template for further research and policy, in the name of accommodative legal environments that reconcile innovation, author rights, and public interest.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Intellectual property law, Rights, Patentability, Generative AI, Legal gaps.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The fast pace of the development of artificial intelligence (AI) possibilities to change law in many business sectors – including intellectual property (IP) law (Farhad & Zakir, 2025; Barnat et al., 2024). AI is now supplying creative works, inventions and designs which defy founded systems of copyright, patent and trademark (Ellenberg 2024; Taiwo 2024). This questions urgent questions about authorship, ownership and liability – exceptionally when human input in AI-generated outputs is cursory or indirect. As a result, academics and lawyers are studying increasingly whether or not existing IP laws can satisfy the peculiar needs of AI (Cooper et al., 2025; Aronov & Idrysheva, 2024).

At the root of this perception is a traditional understanding that IP hinges on human creativeness and is attribute to known authors or inventors (Mammen et al., 2022). AI-created works, however, disrupts that paradigm forcing courts and the representative to deal with a technological landscape (Gómez Jerez, 2021). In other legal systems, including Germany and the European Union, there is discussion as to whether mechanisms generated by AI may be afforded formal protection by categorizing these outputs as apparatuses of human creativity rather than independent authorship (Ellenberg 2024; Hugenholtz & Quintais, 2021). Analysis Other countries have taken alternative routes: in the UK and South Africa, particular rights in respect of AI-generated works are recognised, highlighting a continued scuffle between supporting innovation and observing to existing law (Taiwo, 2024).

Moreover, patent law faces similar challenges, particularly when artificial intelligence becomes part of the inventive process (Merriitt, 2023). Recent cases, such as Emotional Perception AI Ltd v Controller-General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, illustrate how courts and patent offices are grappling with AI-related inventions and the extent to which such systems satisfy the requirements of

novelty and inventive step (Arıkan, 2025; Abbott, 2020). Furthermore, regulations may be stacked across districts one on top of the other and this barrier also hinders enforcement and harmonization problems; this indicates feedback between national regulation and global innovation strategies (Kalwani Ben-Ami, 2024). Where this assumes a state of affair exists, it reflects the need for advanced paradigms which can resolve the techno- logical race against time vis outdated implacability of classical IP rights (Moore, 2017).

In terms of content, AI influences IP not only in terms of formalities, but also from economic and practical perspectives (Kop, 2019). Generative AI for example, has found increasing use in trademark similarity (and relatedness), drug patent, and design similarity analysis but these are now challenging the established practices with new ethical and regulatory implications to consider, especially regarding interpretability (Adarsh et al., 2024a; Ribeiro & Muzaka, 2024; Amoncio et al., 2025). "Transformative use" and "fair compensation are also subject to such dismal ratio of values, as manifested in debates over how best to balance encouragement for creativity with the rights of IP holders particularly in digital and user-generated content settings (Cardona, 2024; Kraetzig, 2025; Huang & Chen, 2024).

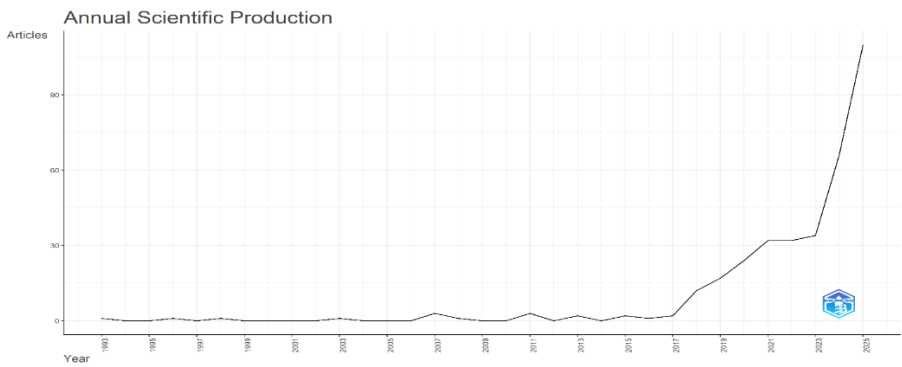
Not least, the ground is turned by rendezvous in public and stakeholder. Fan debates about Ai-generated imagery and debate over publishers press rights (Kraetzig, 2025; Tang & Liu, 2025), all points to social, cultural aspects of AIL that intersect legality. The discussion of AI and IP law is an essentially interdisciplinary one, involving law, economics, technology, and social policy. Bibliometric analysis offers a systematic approach to counter-mapping these debates, the relative influence of key individuals, and empty space on issues as well as across jurisdictions. The paper has for its objective to identify hot legal issues in AI and IP and establish the paths of future investigate or abandoned paths on empirical grounds.

2. Methodology

This research employs bibliometric techniques to map systematically the development of legal discourse on AI and IP law (Poologanathan, 2025). Bibliometrics permits the monitoring of research trends, computing author productivity and analyzing collaboration networks in a given discipline (Cooper et al., 2025; González-Tejero et al., 2023). By using quantitative analyses of publications, citations and keyword co-occurrences, this approach can provide a direct window into how AI-generated works, inventions, and designs are conceptualized, regulated and discussed in multiple dominions (Ellenberg 2024; Taiwo 2024). Bibliometric indicators also allow researchers to perceive emerging areas, gaps in the literature, and relationships between disciplines-emphatically issues of science policy and policy (Kalwani, 2024).

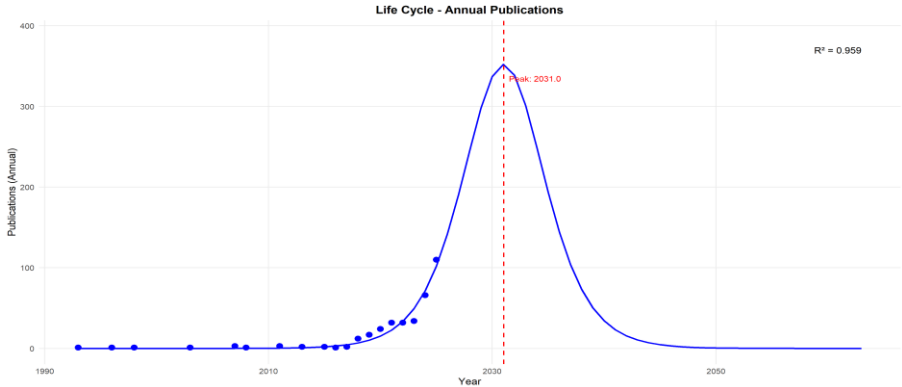
The dataset consists of 180 sources published in journals, books (incl. chapters), and conference proceedings from the years 1993 to 2025. It comprises 345 papers by 515 contributors, 198 of these being single-authored. The dataset shows an annual growth rate of 15.82%, average document age 3.77 years and the mean citation per article is 5.426. Points Home plagioclase To search Types of articles were journal articles (312), with some including articles with book chapters (24) and timely access publications (5), and a few retracted works (3). These facts suggest both the maturity of peer-reviewed conversations and continuing controversies over empirical rigor in AI and IP law research (Mu, 2022; González-Tejero et al., 2023; Arıkan, 2025).

Fig.1. Long-term Evolution of Annual Scientific Production (1993–2025)



The first is that annual publication trends were analyzed looking back in time to observe the development of the field. The annual production of research (see Figure 1) has three phases: an initial academic phase (1993–2017) characterized by small quantities of publication, a second one of emerging growth (2018–2023) showing academics' increasing interest (i.e., academic interest), and third one of exponential explosion in publications as the field became high-growth “hot” subject (2024–2025). This trend could indicate increasing attention to urgent legal challenges: AI-created works, cross-border dispute over patentability, and developments in rights (Feng 2025; Aronov & Idrysheva 2024).

Fig.2. Life Cycle Forecast – Annual Publications Using the Hubbert Curve Model

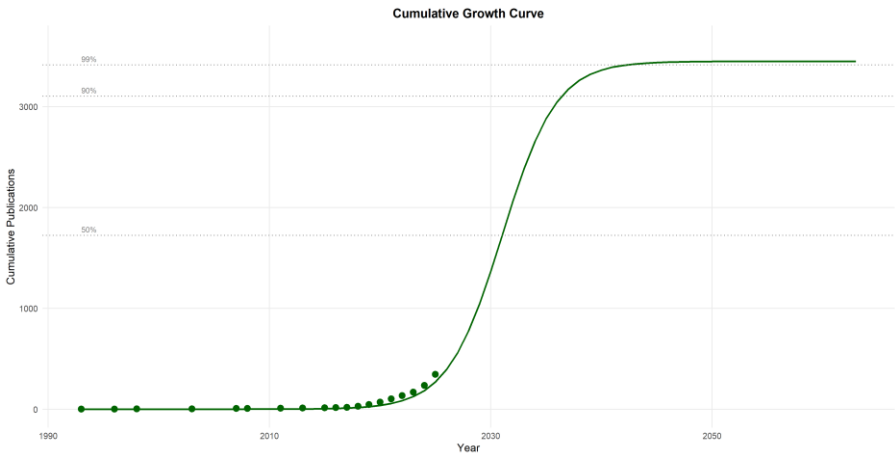


A Gaussian type of HC equation for annual publications (Figure 2) was applied to forecast studies trends in the future. The model was

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able to make a reasonable approximation of the optimum ($R^2 = 0.959$) and predicts an optimum in 2031 with around ~350 publication/year before reaching saturation. Such modeling could help show the time dynamics of research growth and warns both scholars and policy makers for where the space is in which legal scholarship—who focuses on future regulation (cf., Ellenberg, 2024; Chen, 2025)—and technology development should co-evolve.

Fig.3. Cumulative Growth Curve and S-Curve Maturity Distribution Analysis



S-curve for knowledge accumulation was formed as analysis of cumulative publication trends. The point of inflection is reached around 2030 as the exponential growth begins to give way to linear growth which, in turn, implies a transition from an emerging field to a maturing one. Projected saturation levels are at 50% coverage in 2031, 90% of available knowledge by 2040 and approaching full coverage (99%) by 2050; while the point of diminishing return can be reached with as few as about 3500 articles. The above analysis offers a macroscopic viewpoint of the evolution process in the field, revealing times when rapid drying up of research opportunities (Ribeiro & Muzaka, 2024; Adarsh et al., 2024) were experienced.

The methodological backbone of the present research is thematic mapping, which allows for clustering research blocks by their centrality (i.e., relevance) and density (i.e., internal growth). By means of co-word and network analysis, clusters were detected to analyze the structure and evolution of the field (Cardona, 2024; Kraetzig, 2025). These thematic clusters can be visualized in Figure 3. Visual representation of the thematic clusters.

Motor themes (high density and high centrality, upper-right quadrant): These features topics such as electronic commerce, private international law and consumer protection that are mature, so they are developing interest in research areas.

Jack Craggs, center-high density (upper-left measure, labelled Niche themes): There are some specialized topics here e.g., internet district and tax jurisdiction which come with very high intensity but less central research.

Basic Themes (high centrality and low density, lower-right quadrant): The underlying themes (e-Commerce's impact on business, EU legislation, Online business) Build the field but still in need of more elaboration.

Emergent or declining themes (low density and low centrality, lower-left quadrant): As representing rising or decreasing interests such as digital economy, smart contract, Brexit and etc., these themes imply potential topics that could be further studied in the future.

This thematic classification is extremely helpful since it facilitates the assessment of research gaps, underscores under-developed regions that need more legal analysis and contributes to an agenda emerging when assessing the AI and IP law scholarship (Tang & Liu, 2025; Huang & Chen, 2024). While it accomplishes this by linking thematic density and centrality with publication trends, this approach also permits a systematic understanding of what the dominant themes are within the meta-analyses set (both in terms of

debate and specialization) and still developing -- which will serve as setup for the subsequent results section.

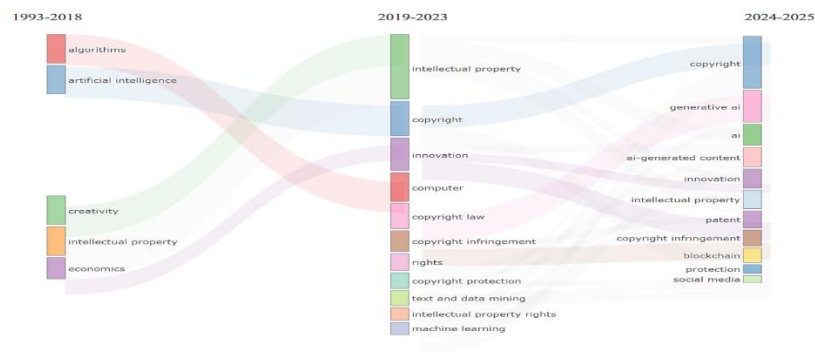
Lastly, we analyzed the patterns of collaboration to evaluate the social structure underlining research in AI and IP law. Single-authorship articles constituted 199 of 345, and these authors averaged 1.7 co-authors per article with international co-authorship representing approximately one third (28.99%) of total authorship. This data indicates that there is minimal collaboration, and limited areas for improved interdisciplinary or cross jurisdictional engagement in research given the worldwide nature of AI-produced content, patent searches, and creativity assessments pertaining to trademarks (Kalwani, 2024; Jiang & Wu, 2024; Amoncio et al., 2025).

In conclusion, the methodology combines: temporal trends, life cycle representations cumulative growth forecasting thematic mapping collaboration analysis Focusing on thematic analysis, this methodology does not only portray the past and present shape of AI & IP studies but also paves the way to interpreting new clusters, areas that have become burdensome to explore, and research agendas in section Results (Ellenberg 2024; Taiwo 2024; Arıkan 2025).

3. Evolution of Artificial Intelligence and IP Law

The development in AI and IP law research, is indicative of a constantly changing dance between technological progress and legal adjustment. In the intervening 30 years, the field has moved elsewhere early arguments over AI and creativity to today's complex environment chock full of rights, patenting, generative AI and emerging regulatory debates. Bibliometric and thematic mapping tools permit researchers to trace this evolution in a systematic manner, unveiling patterns of how legal scholarship has evolved, diverged and converged over time (Cooper et al., 2025; Ellenberg, 2024).

Fig.4. TEM of AI and IP (1993–2025)



A thematic evolution map based on Sankey (see Figure 4) is drawn to reflect the trend of research development from 1993–2025. In the early period (1993–2018), we found that the literature centered on overarching and preliminary concepts, including “algorithms,” involvement in wide scope of activities relative to other areas of technology fields thinking” “Algorithms”, "Creativity" - Theoretical AI tends to affect legal and political structure=headers as “principle” was being applied, which provides commentary on several views concentrating inside of this lines over time. These early lines of thought were tenuously related, mirroring the immaturity of the field as well as a lack of clarity regarding how autonomous agents could produce creative or patentable works (Gómez Jerez, 2021; Taiwo, 2024). If the data is modeled on these clusters, it suggests that “rights” and “artificial intelligence” are in a broader cluster, but they are not the most central or dense terms within that so there might be diffuse research activity or capital in the space (Ellenberg, 2024).

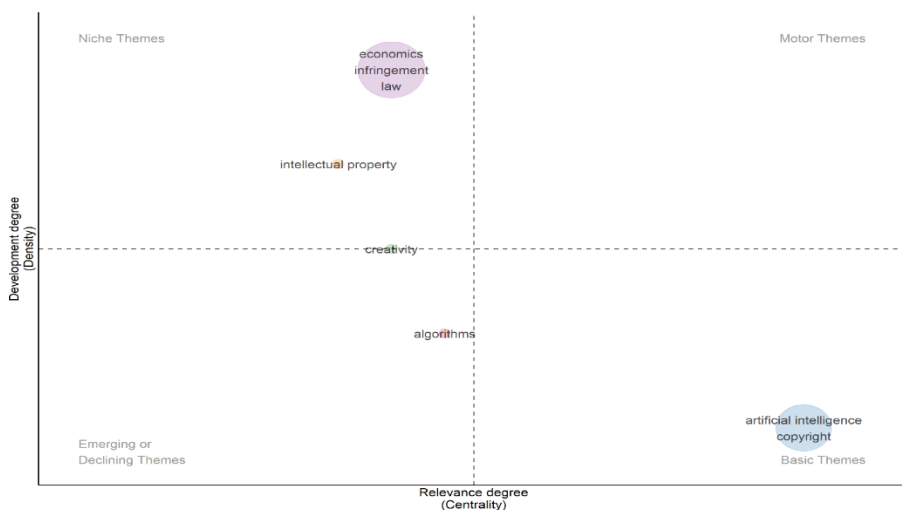
With a peak in 2019-2023, in that period the research activity spread very dramatically and launched research on subfields (“text and data mining”, “innovation” and “big data”). It poses a shift from more broad attempts to focused examination of the legal and technical intersections. For instance, writers investigated the right ability of generative AI content, attributions, and ownership issues in

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generative approaches (Feng, 2025; Aronov & Idrysheva, 2024). Similarly, issue of AI penetration has reached patent law research with assertion claims that brought the following case before court: Emotional Reactionary AI v Controller-General of Patents Designs and Trademarks (Arikan, 2025), where the focus is on legal but as well as economic implications.

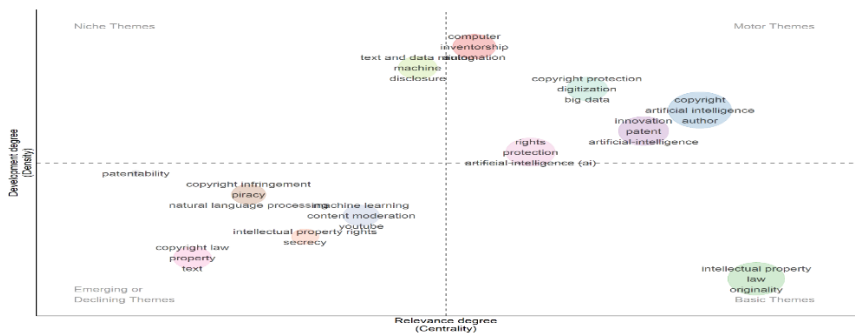
And the field had fragmented by 2024–25 into extremely specialized sub-disciplines. Dominant nodes were “generative AI,” “AI-generated content” and “rights law,” all of which refer to practical legal problems posed by highly autonomous approaches today. Meanwhile, tech tools like blockchain and machine learning became niche topics tacked onto IP management, rather than fundamental legal questions. This thematic dispersion is due to the scholars finally growing up in the field moving on from more exploratory questions to tackling more specific target (high impact) responses around pressing regulatory and doctrinal issues arising around AI integration.

Fig.5. Strategic Map of the Themes of Research (Period: 1993–2018)



The strategic map of the initial stage (1993–2018) in Figure 5 indicates that the field has become mature. Interestingly there were still no evident motor themes at the very beginning of the field; but at that time they could not recognize any widely popular or heavily specialized clusters already. “Economics,” “infringement,” and “law” also emerged as high-density but low-centrality components, which reflect the existence of dense, narrow-topic subdisciplines that have little influence in the wider discipline (Kalwani, 2024). “Artificial intelligence” and “rights,” as basic themes, were found in the lower-right corner (i.e., general items with wide distribution but low internal specificity). The lack of highly centralized and dense motorist themes right now reflects a scholarly inquiry that does not have much unity or coherence, albeit the conceptual wars that precedes its foray into empirical and doctrinal confrontation (Mu, 2022; Taiwo, 2024).

Fig.6. Strategic Research Theme Map (Period: 2019-2023)



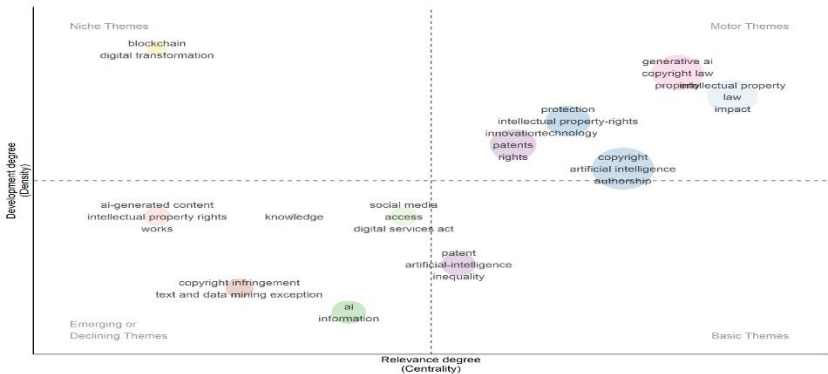
On the motor quadrant (high centrality and density), this is even clearer in Figure 6 where one can notice a convergence of important research areas during 2019–2023. Subjects such as” rights,” ”artificial intelligence,” innovation” and ”big data” were among the sample of most influential, well developed courses covered in the survey, pointing to both the legal importance and technological sophistication of subjects taught (Ellenberg, 2024; Cooper et al., 2025). Meanwhile, machine learning, text and data mining and automation were classified as peripheral or niche research areas in the top-left corner. Although

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more advanced, and less central to the predominant knowledge base (and research), these are still indicative of an emerging space (now borderland) between technical led functionalities and age-old IP constructs in the law (Ribeiro & Muzaka, 2024; Adarsh et al., 2024).

Conversely, other former core but underdeveloped themes like “IP rights” and “secrecy” shifted to the bottom-left quadrant, reflecting the decline in attention or shift towards new frames. Migration is symptomatic of changing attitudes in scholarship that informed by the greater dissemination and transmission of generative AI, necessitates dealing with tangible questions about authorship, ownership, and responsibility (Feng, 2025; Aronov and Idrysheva, 2024). Underpinning such thematic changes is a crucial stage at which research focus has shifted from the conceptual basis to specific legal and regulatory interventions.

Fig.7. Strategic Map of Research Themes (2024–2025 Target Period)



The recent map depicted in Figure 7 provides an image of the current research efforts, now emphasizing AI-specific legal issues. Motor themes have expanded to cover "generative AI," "rights law," and "IP" both highly relevant and elaborated drivers of contemporary discourse (Chen, 2025; Ellenberg, 2024; Kraetzig, 2025). These issues encapsulate the heightened discussion regarding rights protecting concerning AI-created artwork, the patentable subject

matter involving AI-innovations and more generally, legal, and economic considerations that have been raised by AI applications in both creative as well as industrial fields (Arikan, 2025; Cardona, 2024).

Specialist themes such as “blockchain” and “digital transformation” have taken place in the top-left quadrant, suggesting that they are a specialist rather than universal focus. These technologies are mere means by which to facilitate IP management, data provenance and enforcement schemes, rather than at the core of the legal debate concerning authorship and liability (Huang & Chen 2024; Tang & Liu, 2025). Rising or shrinking themes in the lower-left quadrant — such as “AI-generated content” and “social media” — are those that are new or being subsumed under the larger tent of “generative AI.” The location of these topics refers to the development speed of the research and the incorporation association of distributed issues into unified research groups (Taiwo, 2024; Jiang & Wu, 2024).

Some patterns can be observed in those trends over the 3 waves periods. First, the field has gone through a recognizable move away from exploratory research and over to specialized or central themes, as is characteristic of a development stage in both legal and technological studies (Ellenberg, 2024; Cooper et al., 2025). Secondly, AI related technologies and applications in IP law have driven the development of motor themes with high centrality and density values, suggesting that these are research areas with high impact that can be influential. Third, these niche and emerging themes reflect the interdisciplinary nature of LAW ranging from law scholarship to computational tools and industry applications (Ribeiro & Muzaka; 2024; Adarsh et al., 2024). Finally, the fickle trends of topics suggest a responsive research ecosystem that adapts with changes to technology, case laws and regulatory forces (Feng 2025; Aronov & Idrysheva, 2024).

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This path in AI and IP research is already being followed by jurisdictional and comparative studies. Earlier work focused on the general law of rights and patent, a more modern way is to analyze them by case through its districts (e.g., UK and South Africa (Taiwo, 2024), Germany and EU (Ellenberg, 2024)) or groundbreaking caselaw in patent disputes (Arikan, 2025)). Additionally, the work at platform regulation and transformative use and user-generated content is no longer about doctrinal factors but also accounts for social and economic reasons. These interconnections reinforce the value of treating AI and IP law not merely as a domain of positive law, but also perhaps to some extent as a socio-technical system.

It is a short three-decade history of AI and IP law. An early era of conceptual scratching around, followed by a yearslong massing of specialized legal-technical inflection points, and now the age — or ages! of high-cycle engine themes in the form generative AI and rights law. Both the thematic mapping, life-cycle analysis and collaboration network are indicating how internal research priorities changing along with a most core component consolidated and new frontiers began for future study (Cooper et al., 2025; Chen, 2025; Jiang & Wu, 2024). This observation has a significant bearing in understanding the current quasi-legal state of play (and thus prospects for new academic research and policy intervention) in this fast-moving area.

4. Discussion: Gaps and Future Directions

The bibliometric map of AI and IP law suggests many nodes where there are voids in existing literature to merit scholarly attention. But despite the strong proliferation in publications (and particularly up until 2019), there are still important remaining issues, such as rights ability and patentability; and jurisdictional coherence/interdisciplinarity. These gaps result from a combination of AI technologies being innovative and the time lag in legal adaptation to modern technologies, or technological domains (Ellenberg, 2024; Taiwo, 2024).

One of the key controversies is the extent to which AI-created works should be legally shielded. To date, the literature on AI authorship has focused in early publications on more theoretical questions of creativity and authorship (Gómez Jerez, 2021), while a new wave is lecturing how concerns with sources of value around attribution, ownership and recognition of AI as an author can be addressed (Feng, 2025; Aronov & Idrysheva, 2024). The approaches taken relating to jurisdiction range between extremes: the UK and South Africa hold a rigorous stance that still insists on humans as authors, while the Chinese courts have issued more limited judicial explanations (Taiwo, 2024; Chen, 2025). This lack of unanimity at global level results in legal indecision not only for authors and businesses but also traders, who wonder about the function of comparative law and possible organisation.

This is closely related to the back issue of cross-border diversity. “AI does not recognize borders,” and controversies frequently fall under multiple regulatory organizations. Academics have analysed domestic and international law interaction focusing on prosecution and conflict-of-law issues (Kalwani, 2024). Some 'new' areas of concern like generative AI and rights law are pervasive through the literature, yet innovations like blockchain for IP management are still located within a few spread out academic societies (Huang & Chen, 2024; Cardona, 2024). This emphasizes the urgent need for empirical and comparative studies to passage the gap between jurisdictions and inform international IP governance.

Another research void is in regard of patentability and innovative analysis of AI-based inventions. Precedent cases, such as *Emotional Perception AI v Controller-General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks* discloses the legal uncertainty surrounding identification of an AI as an inventor under current patent approaches (Arikan, 2025). However, few research is based on quantitative and predicated methods to effectively evaluate AI-generated invention

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while only some of them are empirical. AI-powered analytics could be integrated into the legal assessment (e.g., machine learning models for assessing patent novelty) and contribute to our understanding of innovation but without eroding IP incentives, both for human-led and AI-assisted creativity (Ribeiro & Muzaka, 2024).

Another unexplored field is social and ethical issues. AI 19 Generated Content (AIGC) with fan art, social media or user-generated platforms are triggering conflicts between technological potential and legal/protective measures (Tang & Liu, 2025; Kraetzig, 2025). These are issues that are just now unfolding in academic discussion, and although the social implications are immediate, a legal framework for transformative use, platform responsibility and fair sharing of benefits have yet to be fully considered (Cardona, 2024; Huang & Chen, 2024). As a result, it is essential to have interdisciplinary studies by combining legal, ethical, and computational aspects.

Lastly, more interdisciplinary coordination between law, AI and economics is clearly required. Generators, rights, and generative AD Generative finance is the topic of many academic papers (Adarsh et al., 2024), although technical areas such as machine learning or automation tools are still specialists and remain isolated from main legal reporting (Cooper et al., 2025). Closing this gap would permit data-driven regulation, increased level of algorithmic accountability and evidence-based policy making especially in domains such as drug patenting, similar design assessment, and trademark distinctiveness (Ribeiro & Muzaka, 2024; Amoncio et al., 2025; Adarsh et al., 2024).

Given these lacunae, a number of opportunities for further research need to be addressed. To begin with, transnational coordination of IP approaches would be needed to minimize international differences in rights and patent standards. Second, further comparative and empirical work on generative AI, along with its legal, social, and economic implications is needed. Third, by

incorporating the computational tools into legal research they can also facilitate predictive assessment of innovation, infringement risk, and economic value. Fourth, shared frameworks that would integrate ethical, social, and technical challenges together can be solutions for these new social issues. Finally, keeping abreast of emerging legal trends and the adoption of appropriate policy responses is essential in being prepared for AI technology and the law (Stern, 2023; Abbott, R. 2020; Surden, H. 2014).

It is only by exploring further these research questions, that academics can contribute to the provision of this much-needed context with respect to the development of AI in IP law and ensure such development occurs in a legally coherent and socially responsible manner. Additionally, identifying these gaps allow policy formulators to set-out a direction of future technological development and develop institutional frameworks that are both adaptable, equitable as well as concerted with creative types.

5. Conclusion

This bibliometric analysis exposes that the field has matured substantially over 30 years: from early, undeveloped scholarly engagements with AI and creative practices to a specially created legal enclave with sub-domains oriented around machine learning; disability; and patentability. Thematic mapping and citation analysis provide insight into the foundational motor themes, niche themes, and new directions in exploration such as social media, user-generated content, and ethical questions.

While growing exponentially, large voids still exist in global legal harmonisation, empirical knowledge about AI advances, transnational relevance or implementation and the incorporation of social and ethical profits. These disconnects illustrate the rapid evolution of technology in conflict to the slower moving nature of legislation and underline the importance of inter-disciplinary, cross-country informed research. Such explaining can help to straighten the

legal landscape, ensure a level playing field for innovation, and safeguard the interests of creators, users and implementers.

The direction of the field reflects a constant tug-of-war between industrial advancements and legal evolutions. And while AI is already having an impact on creative, industrial and digital practices in industry and the arts, IP law will need to be both capable of coping with challenges arising from automated content creation, machine-generated inventions, and brand-new variabilities of digital creativity. Industry partnership and joint efforts between law, computer science, economy, and ethics are needed in order to keep regulatory frameworks balanced and up-to-date.

In conclusion, this research commands an organized understanding of AI and IP law scholarship as it maps thematic trends and knowledge gaps. It requires practical advice for researchers, policymakers and practitioners that all needed to engage in interdisciplinary discussion, evidence-informed policy-making and agile legal reform to promote innovation while protecting IP rights in the age of AI.

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