The Glasses Are Watching

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Jan 01, 2026 8 min read

Summary

- The Meta Ray-Ban Display glasses introduce a discreet private display that provides real-time information directly in the wearer's line of sight.
- Augmented reality (AR) glasses pose privacy risks by capturing unauthorized data and conversations, raising concerns over consent and legality in various settings.
- Smart glasses may generate relevant ESI subject to discovery and can threaten attorney-client privilege, requiring careful information governance and updated protocols.



Antonina Kraakman via Getty Images

Tech from the Trenches Column

There's a moment when new technology stops feeling like a demo and starts slipping into our daily lives—a tipping point. Augmented reality (AR) wearables are quickly approaching that tipping point.

In September 2025, Meta announced the release of Meta Ray-Ban Display, a product that adds a private display to its already popular artificial intelligence (AI) glasses. The new display, housed in the right lens, is controlled by a neural wristband that interprets subtle hand gestures. The glasses are available to demo and purchase in select stores—in theory. In practice, demo appointments fill up weeks in advance, and demand is so high that stores still struggle to keep them in stock.

Consumer adoption of wearables was already accelerating. Since Meta introduced its original AI glasses in 2023, over 2 million pairs have been sold. Add to that the over 20 million Meta Quest headsets sold since 2019, and the future of adoption comes into sharp relief. Competing wearables are being developed by large companies like Snap, Samsung, and Apple, and a fleet of independent dreamers are also racing each other to scale AR features into normal-looking glasses. With options like Meta's Orion and Samsung's Android XR glasses just over the horizon, exciting times lie ahead. But at what risk?

Adding a display to the already stylish and well-adopted Meta Ray-Bans may push us to a mass adoption tipping point. So, what happens when these devices begin showing up consistently in our spaces and cases? When do glasses contain a display-driven AI assistant that can record, translate, navigate, and coach the wearer?

If your legal brain is feverishly scanning for pitfalls, you're not alone. There are major challenges ahead for legal pros who need to consider the privacy issues, device management complexities, sources of electronically stored information (ESI) for discovery, and more.

These products may soon become commonplace, not just in homes and on the streets, but in hallways, boardrooms, courthouses, and meet-and-confers. That's thrilling for productivity, but challenging for privacy, consent, information governance, data identification, privilege, and how we move through the world together. So, let's peer around the corner. In this piece, we'll explore the hardware advances and legal pitfalls you can begin preparing for now.

The Hardware Advances

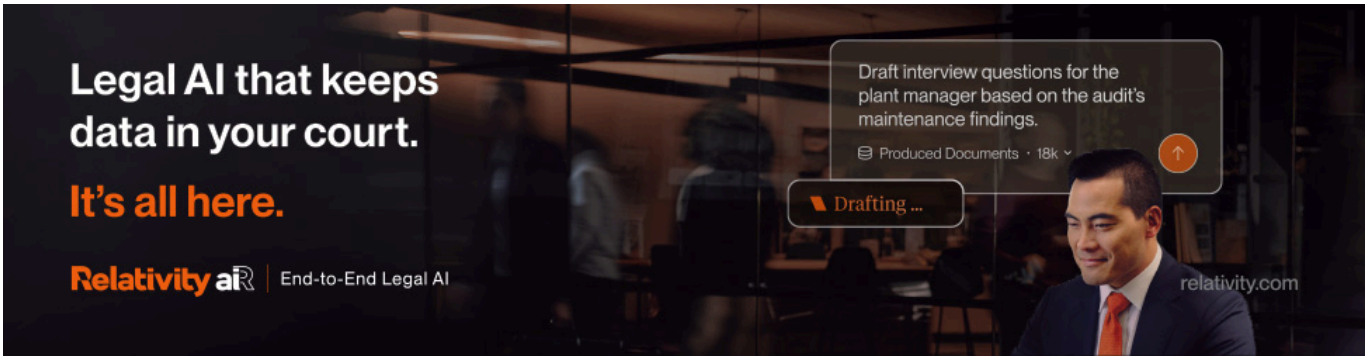
Earlier Meta Ray-Ban glasses were great capture devices: They enabled point-of-view photos, quick video, hands-free communication, and an AI voice assistant in your ear. But users were still *listening* and then opening their phones to view data that was captured.

Now, glasses can respond in real time, right in the wearer's line of sight. The right lens holds a private full-color display that can surface info, without alerting others to what is being seen. Users can view notifications, access live translations, read texts, get turn-by-turn navigation, conduct video calls, and capture 3K Ultra HD video without ever touching or looking at a phone. This is a massive productivity advancement—it elevates the product from an AI-enabled recording device to a complex visual aid that changes the way people see and navigate the world.

Another major advancement is how users interact with the device. Previously, users tapped the glasses at the temple to navigate. But in this version, a neural wristband reads small hand gestures and finger movements, so users can observe and navigate their glasses interface discreetly. It's meant to be convenient and intuitive, and to make the glasses more socially acceptable. The thought is that they are designed to enhance and augment rather than distract from life.

Meta Ray-Ban Display glasses are also significantly different from other wearables with displays because they closely resemble the glasses we're accustomed to seeing. Meta's line of virtual reality headsets, for instance, is bulky and conspicuous to wear. Apple's Vision Pro is gorgeous, but with high visibility, no one forgets you're wearing it. Ray-Ban Display takes the opposite approach: It aims to be a low-profile, all-day wearable, built to fit *into* the real world.

Once a normal-looking pair of glasses can listen, look, and quietly show things to users, every moment becomes a potential data generation moment, signaling that attorneys need to start treating AI glasses like true data endpoints, rather than just accessories.



Legal Pitfalls

The shift from vision correction to networked capture-and-display devices is daunting. As these devices become more common, they will trigger issues that legal professionals must recognize and plan for.

Privacy

Covert recording devices are always a concern when data privacy is involved. These devices could allow for easy surreptitious collection of data that's intended to be private. But there's another risk. While functioning, smart glasses may scan faces, screens, whiteboards, and background conversations the wearer doesn't intend to capture. If the device is performing face, voice, or object recognition in the background, or sending snippets of user experiences to a cloud model for "improvement," this could cause a privacy problem—particularly where heavily regulated categories such as biometrics are concerned.

Consent

These glasses make it simple to capture and record people who have not agreed to be captured or recorded. In all-party consent states, a transcribed hallway conversation can be an unlawful recording if the other party doesn't consent. In courts, agency offices, and secure client facilities, photography and recording are often disallowed, regardless of device. As adoption ramps up, we may struggle to identify subtle captures.

Shadow AI

Since the rise of generative AI (GenAI), law firms and legal departments have invested considerable time and resources in vetting and approving AI tools for their employees. Yet, Microsoft's 2024 annual *Work Trend Index* reported that 75 percent of knowledge workers use AI at work and 78 percent are "bringing their own." More recently, BCG reported from a global 2025 study that 54 percent of employees would use an AI tool that isn't authorized by their employer.

In other words, employees are already quietly adopting AI tools outside IT's approved stack. When devices like this become a steady part of someone's life, it may be easy for employees to forget they're using work-relevant tech at all—and much harder for employers to see when consumer apps and unapproved models quietly slip into the workflow.

Information Governance

Smart glasses represent a framework that can fracture into multiple network endpoints. In a growing sea of novel data types, we need to understand where data from glasses lives, how it is stored, and for how long. There could be pockets of relevant ESI located on the glasses themselves, on other mobile devices that communicate with them, on accompanying applications, in public or private clouds, and even in personal galleries.

Ensuring this data is identifiable, preservable, exportable, and able to be managed on a retention and defensible deletion schedule may prove challenging for even the most organized information governance (IG) frameworks—simply because there are so many endpoints to account for. IG teams may find themselves adding glasses to a tiered and stratified data map.

E-Discovery

AR glasses create at least three sources of potentially relevant ESI:

1. Original captures (video, photos, audio, livestreams)
2. Derivative content (transcripts, captions, AI-generated summaries, real-time scene identifications)
3. System and usage data (timestamps, geolocation, device IDs, gesture logs)

This data is stored in different places and can be wrapped in semi-structured formats that aren't easily recognized or processed with existing tools. Awareness is the first key. Custodian interviews and questionnaires will need to be updated to inquire whether glasses are used for work. It's important to understand that other mobile devices, accounts, and applications the glasses sync with will need to be preserved alongside the hardware.

Expect large data volumes and complex collections. Some content may live only in a consumer-facing app or in a cloud gallery with limited export options. Original captures, captions, and AI labels may all sit in different "views" of the same event.

Attorney review and production introduce another layer of challenges. Context-rich clips, overlapping audio and video, stacked metadata, and AI-generated summaries won't map neatly into fields most review platforms understand. The review is likely to include longer recordings as well as dozens or even hundreds of tiny artifacts per custodian, per day. This can drive processing, hosting, and review costs unless scoping and reduction workflows are thoughtfully applied. And we may also find a need for updated ESI protocols and production specifications that cope with gesture metadata, normalized formats, or other AR data complexities.

Privilege and Work Product

The subtlety of these glasses can threaten attorney-client privilege and work product in ways that are easy to miss. A hallway strategy talk may seem like ambient noise to a wearer who forgets that their glasses are translating, transcribing, or summarizing in the background. Such captures aren't harmless and could result in waiver—especially if they are stored in a public cloud or processed by a third-party AI model that uses them for retraining.

And once identified as relevant to a matter, labels, summaries, and other data derived from privileged conversations may not seem obviously privileged on their face. To preserve privilege, awareness of and expectations around wearables must be considered. Attorneys need to be cognizant of who is wearing them, when they must be removed or turned off, how privileged discussions are to be handled, and how inadvertent captures should be reported and remediated. Glasses that auto-transcribe, summarize, and "helpfully" upload the meeting notes should not be present in privileged conversations unless device management and protective precautions are in place.

A Look to the Future

It's amazing what we're capable of—a normal-looking pair of glasses that quietly changes what we see in the world. Meta Ray-Ban Displays are an early example of what's to come for augmented reality: lighter frames, improved displays, more sensors, rising consumer demand, and competitors racing to catch up. Each new release pushes us closer to the day when AR glasses could feel as normal as cell phones with cameras. The upside is real: live captions, instant translation, hands-free notes, and major productivity gains. Many are waiting with bated breath, excited for what comes next.

But, as is often the case, what comes next for legal professionals is the careful cultivation of awareness, research, planning, and thoughtful risk mitigation. The glasses aren't going back in the box. However, there is no need for fear when we can draw on lessons from past legal technology experiences. We can look to lessons learned from email, smartphones, and cloud sharing. At first, they entered the legal arena as "edge cases," showing up in one or two matters per year. But over time, they became ubiquitous—silent parts of our own infrastructure. AR wearables are on the same trajectory. The question isn't whether they will show up in your practice, but when, and whether you'll be ready when they do.

If we stay curious, implement guardrails, and talk openly about how these tools show up in real matters, we can have the fun futuristic glasses while also coping with the looming legal pitfalls. Attorneys are absolutely cool enough to pull that off.

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