# UK judge warns lawyers face prosecution for citing AI-generated fake cases



In a concerning development for the legal profession, a judge in the United Kingdom has highlighted significant risks associated with attorneys citing fictitious cases generated by artificial intelligence (AI) during court proceedings. High Court Justice Victoria Sharp expressed alarm over these false citations, warning that legal practitioners could face prosecution if they fail to verify the accuracy of their research. This incident marks a pivotal moment in the ongoing dialogue about the role of AI in judicial systems globally, as courts grapple with maintaining integrity amid advancing technology.

Justice Sharp, alongside fellow judge Jeremy Johnson, delivered a ruling wherein they addressed concerns raised by lower court judges regarding the “suspected use by lawyers of generative artificial intelligence tools to produce written legal arguments or witness statements which are not then checked.” Such actions not only undermine the legal process but also risk eroding public confidence in the justice system. Sharp's remarks spotlight the urgent need for lawyers to exercise due diligence when utilising AI-generated materials.

The specific cases under scrutiny involved a £90 million lawsuit regarding an alleged breach of a financing agreement with Qatar National Bank. In this instance, one lawyer irresponsibly cited 18 non-existent cases. The client, Hamad Al-Haroun, subsequently apologised for the misinformation brought before the court, attributing the error to reliance on publicly available AI tools. However, Sharp noted the unusual role reversal; it is typically the lawyer who ensures the accuracy of such significant legal research, not the client.

In another case, the judges addressed a housing claim where a barrister, Sarah Forey, cited five fabricated cases against the London Borough of Haringey. Although Forey denied the involvement of AI in her submissions, Sharp pointed out that her explanations for the discrepancies were insufficient and failed to meet the court's expectations. The judges opted to refer both lawyers involved to their respective regulatory bodies without taking more severe punitive measures, reflecting a cautious approach to handling these infractions.

Sharp underscored the profound implications of presenting false information in court, asserting that such actions could amount to contempt of court or, in severe instances, perverting the course of justice, which carries extremely serious penalties, including potential life imprisonment. She illustrates a balanced view of AI, acknowledging it as a "powerful technology” and a “useful tool” within the legal framework. However, she firmly advocates for a regulatory environment that adheres to established professional and ethical standards, emphasising that it is essential to uphold public confidence in justice.

As the legal landscape evolves with technological advancement, the incidents highlighted by Judge Sharp serve as a critical reminder of the need for vigilance, integrity, and thoroughness in legal practice, ensuring that innovation enhances rather than undermines the cornerstone of justice.

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.whec.com/ap-top-news/uk-judge-warns-of-risk-to-justice-after-lawyers-cited-fake-ai-generated-cases-in-court/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data