# Lawyer for Anthropic admits AI-generated fake citation in copyright case



A significant development in the ongoing legal discourse around artificial intelligence emerged recently when a lawyer representing Anthropic, the AI firm behind Claude, acknowledged the inclusion of a fabricated legal citation generated by the AI in their defence against music publishers. This admission, made during a court filing in Northern California, has intensified scrutiny on the accountability of AI systems in legal contexts, particularly as they intersect with established rights related to intellectual property.

The incident originated from accusations made by Universal Music Group and other music publishers, who contended that Anthropic’s expert witness, Olivia Chen, improperly cited non-existent academic sources during her testimony. U.S. Magistrate Judge Susan van Keulen deemed the situation serious enough to warrant immediate clarification from Anthropic regarding these discrepancies. In their response, the company admitted that Claude “hallucinated” a citation, producing an error that involved "an inaccurate title and inaccurate authors." Anthropic categorised this as an “honest citation mistake” rather than a deliberate misrepresentation, yet the implications are far-reaching.

As the legal proceedings unfold, the case not only highlights the specific challenges faced by Anthropic but mirrors a broader trend within the legal industry. Various legal professionals have recently encountered issues stemming from reliance on AI technologies for research and documentation. This includes instances where fictitious citations were presented in court filings, raising alarm among judges and legal experts alike about the potential ramifications of such inaccuracies. For example, a previous case involving two law firms, Morgan & Morgan, resulted in significant backlash when they submitted bogus AI-generated research, jeopardising their credibility and standing in court.

Moreover, in an era where a growing percentage of lawyers—63% as highlighted in a July 2024 survey—are integrating AI into their practice, the necessity of stringent verification processes has never been more critical. This trend is accentuated by recent mishaps, such as those involving Michael Cohen and Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, where both faced repercussions for including AI-generated false information in legal documents. These incidents underscore an urgent call for lawyers to confront and understand the limitations of AI tools, ensuring that all legal submissions are thoroughly vetted for accuracy.

The potential of AI to enhance productivity within the legal sector is considerable, with firms like Harvey looking to harness generative AI models to streamline operations. Yet, this potential is tempered by the necessity for responsible utilisation, as the AI-generated ‘hallucinations’ pose a looming threat. It is apparent that, if left unchecked, such errors could erode trust in legal processes and undermine the integrity of judicial proceedings.

In response to the growing recognition of these issues, legal bodies across numerous jurisdictions are taking proactive measures. Discussions are underway to establish regulations aimed at ensuring the reliability of AI-generated content in legal submissions, observing the need for courts to adapt to the evolving landscape in which AI plays a prominent role. The Concord Music Group Inc v. Anthropic PBC case is merely one of many illustrating the ongoing friction between AI developers and copyright holders over the utilisation of proprietary content in training models.

As this case progresses, it serves as a cautionary tale not only for Anthropic but for the entire legal community. The lessons gleaned from these incidents reflect an urgent need for vigilance in the face of rapidly advancing technology, as all stakeholders must grapple with the balance between innovation and accuracy when applying AI in legal contexts.

### Reference Map:

1. **Paragraph 1**: [[1]](https://www.breitbart.com/tech/2025/05/16/lawyer-for-anthropic-apologizes-for-fake-legal-citation-generated-by-his-clients-own-claude-ai/), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/anthropics-lawyers-take-blame-ai-hallucination-music-publishers-lawsuit-2025-05-15/)
2. **Paragraph 2**: [[1]](https://www.breitbart.com/tech/2025/05/16/lawyer-for-anthropic-apologizes-for-fake-legal-citation-generated-by-his-clients-own-claude-ai/), [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/anthropic-expert-accused-using-ai-fabricated-source-copyright-case-2025-05-13/)
3. **Paragraph 3**: [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/artificial-intelligence/ai-hallucinations-court-papers-spell-trouble-lawyers-2025-02-18/), [[5]](https://apnews.com/article/777ace9cc34aa0e56398fd47a1d6b420)
4. **Paragraph 4**: [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/artificial-intelligence/ai-hallucinations-court-papers-spell-trouble-lawyers-2025-02-18/), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/irony-using-generative-ai-case-about-dangers-generative-ai-2025-01-30/)
5. **Paragraph 5**: [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/anthropics-lawyers-take-blame-ai-hallucination-music-publishers-lawsuit-2025-05-15/), [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/artificial-intelligence/ai-hallucinations-court-papers-spell-trouble-lawyers-2025-02-18/), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/irony-using-generative-ai-case-about-dangers-generative-ai-2025-01-30/)
6. **Paragraph 6**: [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/artificial-intelligence/ai-hallucinations-court-papers-spell-trouble-lawyers-2025-02-18/), [[7]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/judge-rebukes-minnesota-over-ai-errors-deepfakes-lawsuit-2025-01-13/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.breitbart.com/tech/2025/05/16/lawyer-for-anthropic-apologizes-for-fake-legal-citation-generated-by-his-clients-own-claude-ai/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/anthropics-lawyers-take-blame-ai-hallucination-music-publishers-lawsuit-2025-05-15/> - In a recent legal filing, Anthropic's lawyers acknowledged that their AI system, Claude, generated an inaccurate legal citation in a lawsuit involving music publishers. The fabricated citation included incorrect details, leading to concerns from U.S. Magistrate Judge Susan van Keulen about the implications of such errors in legal proceedings. The incident underscores the challenges of AI-generated misinformation in legal documents and the need for thorough verification processes. Anthropic has since implemented stricter review procedures to prevent future occurrences. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/anthropics-lawyers-take-blame-ai-hallucination-music-publishers-lawsuit-2025-05-15/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/anthropic-expert-accused-using-ai-fabricated-source-copyright-case-2025-05-13/> - A federal judge in San Jose, California, has ordered Anthropic to respond to accusations that it used a fabricated source generated by AI in a copyright lawsuit filed by music publishers, including Universal Music Group, Concord, and ABKCO. The lawsuit centers on the alleged misuse of copyrighted song lyrics to train Anthropic’s AI chatbot, Claude. During a hearing, the plaintiffs’ attorney, Matt Oppenheim, claimed that an Anthropic data scientist cited a nonexistent academic article to support arguments about how frequently Claude reproduces copyrighted lyrics. The article was allegedly generated by Anthropic’s AI and falsely attributed to a respected journal. Judge Susan van Keulen labeled the incident a serious issue and demanded a prompt response from Anthropic, though she denied an immediate deposition of the expert, Olivia Chen. Anthropic acknowledged a citation error but suggested it might relate to a different, legitimate article. The case underscores growing concerns over AI-generated misinformation in legal documents, as other attorneys have recently faced sanctions for similar hallucinations. The case, Concord Music Group Inc v. Anthropic PBC, reflects the broader legal friction between copyright holders and AI developers regarding content utilization. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/anthropic-expert-accused-using-ai-fabricated-source-copyright-case-2025-05-13/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.reuters.com/technology/artificial-intelligence/ai-hallucinations-court-papers-spell-trouble-lawyers-2025-02-18/> - AI-generated 'hallucinations' are creating problems for lawyers, with courts questioning or disciplining lawyers for including fictitious case citations generated by AI programs. This issue came to light when two Morgan & Morgan lawyers used invented case law in a lawsuit against Walmart, risking sanctions. These incidents highlight a new litigation risk as generative AI tools like ChatGPT become more common in legal practices. While these tools can help reduce research and drafting time, they can also produce false information, leading to serious consequences for lawyers who fail to verify their filings. Attorney ethics rules demand that lawyers vet their work, regardless of the tools used. Legal experts emphasize the need for lawyers to understand AI's limitations and ensure their court submissions are accurate. Examples of this growing problem include significant fines and required educational courses on AI for offending attorneys. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/technology/artificial-intelligence/ai-hallucinations-court-papers-spell-trouble-lawyers-2025-02-18/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://apnews.com/article/777ace9cc34aa0e56398fd47a1d6b420> - Michael Cohen, a former personal lawyer to Donald Trump, revealed in a court filing that he unknowingly submitted AI-generated fake legal case citations to his attorney, David M. Schwartz. These citations, found using Google Bard, were included in a motion aimed at ending Cohen's court supervision. The judge, Jesse Furman, asked for an explanation of the non-existent court rulings cited and Cohen's role in drafting the motion. Cohen admitted his unfamiliarity with AI's potential to create fictitious cases and warned of unintentional misinformation. Schwartz, now facing scrutiny for not verifying the citations, described the issue as an inadvertent 'honest mistake.' This incident highlights the risks of relying on AI for legal research, following a similar occurrence earlier in the year involving fake citations generated by ChatGPT. ([apnews.com](https://apnews.com/article/777ace9cc34aa0e56398fd47a1d6b420?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/irony-using-generative-ai-case-about-dangers-generative-ai-2025-01-30/> - A First Amendment case in Minnesota highlights the challenges and potential pitfalls of using generative AI in legal proceedings. Minnesota's Attorney General Keith Ellison faced scrutiny when a Stanford professor, using generative AI tool GPT-4o for drafting an expert declaration, included fake citations. The court in the Kohls v. Ellison case excluded the declaration, citing its unreliability due to the AI-generated hallucinations. This event emphasizes the increasing need for courts to establish rules and guidelines to verify AI content in legal submissions. Legal bodies across the US, including advisory committees and supreme courts, are actively working on regulations to ensure the accuracy, reliability, and confidentiality of AI-used documents. Various jurisdictions have created task forces to manage the growing role of AI in legal practice and plan to introduce changes to the Federal Rules of Evidence to maintain the authenticity and dependability of AI-generated material. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/irony-using-generative-ai-case-about-dangers-generative-ai-2025-01-30/?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/judge-rebukes-minnesota-over-ai-errors-deepfakes-lawsuit-2025-01-13/> - Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison faced a setback when U.S. District Judge Laura Provinzino ruled that Minnesota cannot rely on transportation expert Jeff Hancock in a lawsuit over a deepfake parody involving Vice President Kamala Harris. Hancock used artificially generated article citations in his report, which were found to be fabricated by AI. Despite Hancock's apology and explanation, the judge excluded his testimony and barred Ellison from submitting revised testimony. The case challenges a Minnesota law banning the use of deepfakes to influence elections. The lawsuit was filed by Minnesota Republican state lawmaker Mary Franson and political satirist Christopher Kohls, who argue the law's unconstitutionality. The parody video at the center of the lawsuit had been posted on social media by Elon Musk and reposted by Franson. Similar challenges to AI-generated deepfake regulations are ongoing in California. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/legal/government/judge-rebukes-minnesota-over-ai-errors-deepfakes-lawsuit-2025-01-13/?utm_source=openai))