# Coca-Cola faces backlash after AI-generated ad misattributes literary quotes



Coca-Cola's recent venture into AI-generated advertising has unfortunately led to factual inaccuracies and public backlash, revealing the complexities of integrating artificial intelligence into creative processes. In April, the company launched a campaign titled “Classic,” intended to illustrate the appearance of its brand in renowned literary works. Among the mentions were Stephen King’s *The Shining* and V. S. Naipaul’s *A House for Mr. Biswas*. However, the advertisement also erroneously cited a nonexistent book, *Extreme Metaphors*, attributed to J. G. Ballard.

This misstep seems to stem from confusion with *Extreme Metaphors: Selected Interviews with J. G. Ballard 1967-2008*, a posthumous collection of interviews with the author, edited by Dan O’Hara and Simon Sellars. O’Hara himself expressed alarm at the campaign, stating that the sequences presented in the ad, which purportedly depict Ballard typing, never actually featured his prose. The editor emphasised that viewers might mistakenly assume that the AI-generated text represented Ballard’s own high-calibre writing. “The sequence of words being typed out… was only spoken, and the only person ever to type that exact sequence in English is me,” he explained.

To produce the ad, VML, the marketing agency responsible for the campaign, revealed that AI played a role in the initial research phase to identify suitable literary references. While they maintained that all content was manually checked and authorised by respective authors and estates, the final product raises questions about the reliability of AI tools in constructing brand narratives. Critics, including O'Hara, caution that audiences may be led astray into believing that AI-generated text holds the same value as original work.

Coca-Cola's encounter with AI isn't isolated. Just last year, the company faced scrutiny for its festive advertising, which included AI-created elements in its classic Christmas campaigns. Its reimagined version of the iconic 1995 “Holidays Are Coming” ad generated significant controversy. The updated ad, featuring AI-generated imagery of trucks and holiday scenes, attracted criticism for appearing “creepy” and “soulless,” showcasing a disconnect between innovation and emotional depth that brands typically strive for during festive seasons.

The intense discussions surrounding these AI-generated ads reflect a broader unease within the creative sectors. Critics argue that the growing reliance on AI for advertising undermines human artistry and authenticity, with many artists protesting against the technology's encroachment on creative fields. Some view Coca-Cola’s approach as a cost-cutting measure, jeopardising the human touch that has historically characterised its holiday messaging.

In response to the backlash, Coca-Cola's Director of Marketing for Europe, Javier Meza, defended the use of AI, claiming it as an effective solution that saved time and financial resources. However, as consumer backlash intensifies, it prompts questions about the ethical implications of such decisions. As brands navigate the evolving landscape of advertising, striking a balance between technological advancement and genuine emotional storytelling will be crucial to maintaining their connection with audiences.

Coca-Cola's recent campaigns encapsulate the tensions at play in an industry grappling with the application of AI tools. As the conversation continues, it remains essential for brands to tread thoughtfully, ensuring that their storytelling does not only reflect innovation but also honours the authenticity and artistry that consumers expect.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 4
2. Paragraphs 5, 6
3. Paragraph 6
4. Paragraph 6
5. Paragraph 6
6. Paragraph 5
7. Paragraph 6

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://fortune.com/2025/05/14/ai-coca-cola-ad-campaign-invented-fake-book/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.ft.com/content/5cbd497d-f4c7-488b-bc6c-81afcd4dad1b> - This article discusses the competitive nature of Christmas advertising in the UK, highlighting how brands like Sainsbury's and John Lewis strive to create impactful campaigns. It mentions Coca-Cola's iconic 'Holidays Are Coming' ad and its AI-generated version, which received mixed reactions from viewers. The piece emphasizes the significant financial and cultural importance of these holiday ads and the challenges brands face in balancing innovation with tradition.
* <https://as.com/meristation/betech/coca-cola-rehace-uno-de-sus-anuncios-navidenos-mas-famosos-con-ia-y-se-desata-la-polemica-n/> - This article reports on Coca-Cola's use of artificial intelligence to recreate its famous 1995 Christmas ad, 'Ya viene la Navidad.' The new version, produced by Secret Level, has sparked controversy on social media due to its AI-generated nature, with critics arguing that it lacks authenticity and human touch. The piece also notes technical issues in the ad, such as distorted trucks and unrealistic content, leading to debates about the ethical implications of using AI in creative industries.
* <https://www.huffingtonpost.es/sociedad/gran-polemica-nuevo-anuncio-navideno-cocacola-el-mundo-esta-cerca.html> - This article covers the controversy surrounding Coca-Cola's latest Christmas ad, which was created using artificial intelligence. The 15-second commercial features Santa Claus's hand and Coca-Cola trucks in a snowy landscape. Fans have criticized the ad for lacking the magic of previous holiday campaigns, with some expressing disappointment over the use of AI in the ad's creation. Javier Meza, Coca-Cola's director of marketing for Europe, defended the decision, stating that AI was an effective solution that saved time and money.
* <https://www.afaqs.com/news/advertising/coca-colas-ai-generated-christmas-ad-has-left-viewers-feeling-flat-7590378> - This article discusses Coca-Cola's AI-generated version of its iconic 'Holidays Are Coming' Christmas ad. The 16-second spot closely mimics the original but introduces modern twists. The piece highlights the excitement of PJ Pereira, founder of Silverside AI, about the project. However, it also notes the internet's reaction, with social media users criticizing the ad as 'creepy' and questioning the role of AI in creative industries. The article raises questions about the balance between technological innovation and emotional authenticity in advertising.
* <https://www.breitbart.com/tech/2024/11/19/coca-cola-facing-intense-backlash-for-ai-christmas-ad/> - This article reports on the backlash Coca-Cola faced after releasing a new Christmas ad created entirely by AI. The ad, a reimagining of the 1995 'Holidays Are Coming' campaign, received over 2.8k dislikes on YouTube and numerous negative comments. Critics accused Coca-Cola of using AI to cut costs and questioned the authenticity of the ad. The piece also mentions that this marks Coca-Cola's first fully AI-generated ad and includes a statement from Javier Meza, Coca-Cola's European chief marketing officer, defending the decision.
* <https://www.storyboard18.com/advertising/coca-colas-ai-generated-christmas-ad-sparks-outrage-fans-say-festive-magic-is-lost-47709.htm> - This article covers the online uproar caused by Coca-Cola's AI-generated Christmas commercial, which reimagines the 1995 'Holidays Are Coming' campaign. The 15-second ad, produced using Coca-Cola's 'Real Magic AI' software, features AI-generated visuals of festive trucks arriving in a snowy town. The piece highlights criticism from viewers who found the ad 'creepy,' 'soulless,' and 'dystopian,' expressing disappointment over the lack of human artistry and the absence of Santa Claus, a beloved figure in Coca-Cola's holiday tradition.