

Tangled Up in Bluebook: Preparing Lawyers to Catch AI Hallucinations Before They Hit the Record

Target Audience: Educators in general; Legal educators and law professors

Estimated Engagement Time: 3 minutes (self-guided read-through or video slideshow version) or 45-60 minutes presentation with detailed data/information.

Description

Generative AI tools are changing how law students and lawyers research, write, and prepare for court—but they also introduce a new, systemic risk: the AI “hallucination,” where fabricated citations and legal principles appear in flawless Bluebook form. This session explores why the legal field is uniquely vulnerable to hallucinations, from the 1L legal writing classroom to the appellate courtroom. Drawing on recent disciplinary cases, empirical studies, and law school pilot programs, I’ll outline a practical framework for teaching AI literacy in legal education.

Detail in the full presentation includes a real-world cautionary tale: *Mata v. Avianca* (2023), where attorneys were sanctioned after relying on ChatGPT to generate legal citations – only to find out the cited cases never existed. The court fined the lawyers and lambasted the “gibberish” fake authorities in their brief, a stark reminder of the stakes when unchecked AI output slips into filings. Using this incident as a springboard, the presentation underscores the critical lesson: no matter how convincing AI-generated text may appear, legal professionals must stay ***Tangled Up In Bluebook*** – rigorously verifying sources and citations – to avoid professional embarrassment or worse.

Also - more in depth analysis of ethics and professional responsibility referencing the ABA rules, as well as how law schools are incorporating AI into their programs – to hopefully include AI literacy skills.