

Don't get used to seeing AI lawyers in the courtroom

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In March 2025, a man without legal representation attempted to use an AI-generated avatar to argue his civil appeals case in a New York courtroom. The panel of judges quickly dismissed his effort. This instance represents one of the earliest known attempts to integrate rapidly advancing AI technology into courtroom proceedings. However, legal experts say that while self-represented individuals may continue using AI tools, they are likely to encounter resistance from judges.

James Gatto, co-leader of Sheppard Mullin's AI industry team, anticipates more self-represented litigants will experiment with AI in legal proceedings. "It's not that you can't use AI to represent yourself if you're an individual plaintiff — it's just a question of what you can use it for," he said. "And the line is, at a high level, information versus legal arguments," he added. Gatto also noted that many lawyers have begun using generative AI tools to aid their work, although some have faced sanctions for submitting AI-generated legal briefs containing incorrect case citations.

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