

CALL FOR PAPERS



AI AS A TOOL TO DIMINISH LEGAL INEQUALITY? ISSUES OF ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN COMMERCIAL LAW

University of Edinburgh, Monday, December 16, 2024

The University of Edinburgh & Goldsmiths, University of London, warmly invites individuals to attend and present at the above seminar, which is funded by the British and Irish Law Education and Technology Association (BILETA).

The seminar attendance is free of charge and will be conducted in a hybrid format, allowing both online and face-to-face participation.

The seminar will be hosted at the University of Edinburgh on Monday, **December 16, 2024**. Coffee and lunch are included for in-person participants.

Background

The development of machine learning, complex algorithms, and advancements in big data processing have led to innovative applications of Artificial Intelligence (AI). The use of AI could bring many benefits to individuals and society but also raises a plethora of challenging legal and non-legal questions, including legal accountability.

On March 13, 2024, the European Parliament adopted the Artificial Intelligence Act (AI Act). This marks a significant regulatory milestone, aiming to set EU-wide standards on data quality, transparency, human oversight, and accountability. However, this legislation, along with other international efforts like the USA's Algorithmic Accountability Act and Canada's Directive on Automated Decision-Making, still leaves some gaps, particularly in addressing the legal issues raised in the commercial law context.

Commercial law encompasses a complex web of regulations and contractual arrangements that govern the relationships between businesses. Access to justice in this field has been obstructed by various barriers, including high legal fees, lengthy court proceedings, expensive arbitral procedures, and uncertainty in transnational procedures. The use of AI as a

tool in the commercial context can contribute to solving these issues, as AI systems can automate routine tasks and conduct legal research more efficiently and cost-effectively. Furthermore, AI-operated online dispute resolution forums are increasingly presenting an alternative to traditional dispute resolution. The use of AI tools in commercial law is not without its challenges. Concerns about data privacy and bias in AI algorithms create a noteworthy potential for errors and flawed judgments.

Submission of Abstracts

This seminar will contribute to the ongoing discussion on the role of AI in law, with a focus on commercial law. It will contribute to answering key questions on whether AI can lower access to justice barriers and contribute to diminishing legal inequality.

The seminar aims to explore the potential threats and advantages that Artificial Intelligence (AI) offers through a lens of legal inequality and access to justice in the context of commercial law. Overall, the seminar participants will investigate whether AI can contribute to lessening legal inequality and lowering the barriers to access to justice. By examining AI's potential to lower barriers to justice in commercial law, the seminar seeks to generate insights that could inform future legal frameworks and AI applications in the legal domain.

The seminar focuses on four key legal areas:

- **Competition law**
- **Business & human rights**
- **Dispute resolution**
- **Commercial law**

Nevertheless, we are more than happy to receive abstracts that broadly fit the general theme of the seminar. If you have any questions or seek clarifications on topics that could be of interest, please drop an email to a.dikervanberg@gold.ac.uk.

Applications from PhD students and legal practitioners are highly encouraged. Equally, we are very keen to see applications from female scholars and practitioners as well as scholars and practitioners belonging to minority and disadvantaged groups.

To contribute to the debate, please submit an abstract of a maximum of 500 (five hundred) words by 15 September 2024. Please email your abstract to Dr Aysem Diker Vanberg @ a.dikervanberg@gold.ac.uk or Dr Johanna Hoekstra @ Johanna.Hoekstra@ed.ac.uk. The abstract should clearly state the research question, methodology, and key findings.

Key Dates

- Submission of Abstracts: **15 September 2024**
- Notification of acceptance to participants **30 September 2024**
- Date of the conference: **16 December 2024**

Research Output

The output of the seminar will consist of a range of papers. Depending on the range of papers, the papers may be published as a special edition of a journal or as an edited collection



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in an open-access journal. The organisers will get in touch with all participants after the conference to see whether they wish to submit a full paper and keep them updated about potential publication plans.