

UK trial opens into bitcoin 'inventor' claims

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Australian computer scientist Craig Wright says he is Satoshi Nakamoto, the pseudonym of bitcoin's creator.

The trial of an alleged bitcoin creator opened in London on Monday, seeking to determine whether an Australian computer scientist invented the world's most popular cryptocurrency.

Craig Wright, 53, says he is Satoshi Nakamoto, the pseudonym of bitcoin's creator and author of a white paper that introduced the cryptocurrency to the world in 2008.

Wearing a striped suit, Wright sat impassive in court on Monday as he listened to the outline of the case against him.

The Crypto Open Patent Alliance (COPA), a non-profit organization set up to keep cryptocurrency technology free from patents, is suing Wright over his claims first made in 2016.

The trial at London's High Court, presided over by judge James Mellor, is expected to last until mid-March.

"Over a period of nearly 10 years... (Wright had) the strongest incentive to prove he is Satoshi Nakamoto—but single handedly failed," said COPA lawyer Jonathan Hough in opening remarks.

Documents provided by Wright were not written in the same software code as the original 2008 white paper, according to Hough.

"COPA's case is, simply, that Dr. Wright's claim to be Satoshi is a lie, founded on an elaborate false narrative and backed by forgery of documents on an industrial scale," the lawyer added in a written submission.

"As his false documents and inconsistencies have been exposed, he has resorted to further forgery and ever more implausible excuses."

COPA wants the High Court to rule that Wright, who is expected to face questioning on Tuesday, is not Satoshi.

The programmer describes himself as "Creator of Bitcoin" on the social

media platform X.

"I conceived bitcoin, and I unveiled it to the world," he wrote last month on X, formerly known as Twitter.

In its argument, Wright's legal team said its client "has the required skills and knowledge" to have created the bitcoin system.

It rejected claims of forged documents, saying that "metadata anomalies" identified by experts "are explained (and caused) by his complex computer environment and working practices, which involved creating, storing and working on files in a shared and collaborative environment."

Wright, who on his website describes himself as a businessman, has been involved in a number of lawsuits brought by himself but this time around is being asked to defend himself.

COPA brings together heavyweights in the industry, including cryptocurrency platform Coinbase and Block, which specializes in digital payments.

It accuses Wright, nicknamed "Faketoshi" by his detractors, of lying about his identity and of forging and manipulating documents presented to try to prove his claims.

The outcome of the case could determine that of another pitting Wright against 26 developers—including Coinbase—for allegedly infringing upon his intellectual property rights.

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