

Craig Wright's claim he invented bitcoin a 'brazen lie', court told

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An Australian computer scientist's claim to be the author of the founding text of bitcoin is a "brazen lie", the high court has heard. Craig Wright's assertion that he is the pseudonymous author Satoshi Nakamoto was at the centre of a trial that began on Monday, where the 53-year-old is being sued by a group of cryptocurrency exchanges and developers. Jonathan Hough KC, representing the Crypto Patent Alliance [Copa], told the high court that Wright's claim was a "brazen lie and elaborate false narrative supported by forgery on an industrial scale". Copa, which is backed by Twitter founder Jack Dorsey, is seeking a "negative declaration" that Wright is not Nakamoto. Elements of Wright's conduct were reminiscent of a "farce", said Hough, including the alleged use of ChatGPT to produce forgeries to back up his claims. Nevertheless, Hough said, Wright's insistence that he was Nakamoto – a claim he first made in 2016 – had "deadly serious" consequences for individuals who had faced legal action based on his claims. Hough said: "On the basis of his dishonest claim to be Satoshi, he has pursued claims he puts at hundreds of billions of dollars, including against numerous private individuals." In written submissions, Hough added: "Dr Wright has consistently failed to supply genuine proof of his claim to be Satoshi: instead, he has repeatedly proffered documents which bear clear signs of having been doctored." The court heard that experts on both sides agreed that the original white paper was written on OpenOffice software. But the version provided by Wright was created on software called LaTeX, Hough told the court. The document that underpins the cryptocurrency is called Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System and was published in 2008 under Satoshi's name. Wright's claim he was Satoshi has been met with widespread scepticism in the cryptocurrency community because he has failed to produce the private keys – a secure code comprising a hexadecimal string of numbers and letters – that would unlock access to the 1.1m original bitcoins "mined" by Nakamoto. Those bitcoins are now worth about \$47bn (£37.5bn). Wright's barrister, Lord Grabiner KC, said he had released the white paper after "having spent many years devoted to studying and working on concepts underpinning bitcoin". He added there was "clear evidence" demonstrating his creation of the digital currency. He said on Monday that Wright possessed "an unusual combination of multidisciplinary talents" and extensive experience in the field, and Nakamoto "uniquely brought these together" in the white paper. He also said that Copa was "exclusively concerned" with undermining Wright's claim and that if anyone else was Nakamoto, they or their associates would have already come forward. In written submissions, he added: "This issue has been the subject of extensive media comment since early 2016, as well as multiple sets of legal proceedings in this jurisdiction and elsewhere. If Dr Wright were not Satoshi, the real Satoshi would have been expected to come forward to counter the claim. "Dr Wright's use of the Satoshi

pseudonym has its roots in his deep admiration for Japanese culture and a desire to maintain a certain level of privacy while developing and ultimately creating bitcoin,” Grabiner added. The trial before Mr Justice Mellor, in which Wright is scheduled to begin giving evidence on Tuesday, is expected to conclude next month with a decision in writing at a later date.