

Encyclopedia Britannica and Merriam-Webster sue Perplexity for copying their definitions

The AI web search company Perplexity is being hit by another lawsuit alleging copyright and trademark infringement, this time from Encyclopedia Britannica and Merriam-Webster. Britannica, the centuries-old publisher that owns Merriam-Webster, sued Perplexity in New York federal court on September 10th.

In the lawsuit, the companies allege that Perplexity's "answer engine" scrapes their websites, steals their internet traffic, and plagiarizes their copyrighted material. Britannica also alleges trademark infringement when Perplexity attaches the two companies' names to hallucinated or incomplete content.

The word "plagiarize" illustrates the point of the lawsuit. The court document includes back-to-back screenshots that show Perplexity's result is identical to Merriam-Webster's definition.

<https://www.theverge.com/news/777344/perplexity-lawsuit-encyclopedia-britannica-merriam-webster>