

Representation of BBC News content in AI Assistants

Foreword

AI assistants risk misleading audiences by distorting BBC Journalism

The media landscape is being changed by AI. It offers new capabilities and opportunities for media companies like the BBC; and new formats and ways to consume content for audiences. The BBC is excited about the future of AI and the value it can bring audiences and our staff. We're already using it to add subtitles to programmes on BBC Sounds and translate content into different languages on BBC News. We're developing tools that use AI to assist our staff in everyday tasks; and exploring how it can provide our audience with new experiences, like a personal tutor on Bitesize.

AI will bring real value when it's used responsibly. But AI also brings significant challenges for audiences, and the UK's information eco-system.

A key feature of the emerging landscape is AI assistants like those from OpenAI, Google, and Microsoft. AI assistants are adept at many tasks including drafting emails and documents; analysing data; and summarising information. They can also provide answers to questions about news and current affairs. They do this, in part, by repurposing content from publishers' websites, often without publishers' permission.

To better understand the news related output from AI assistants we undertook research into four prominent, publicly available AI assistants – OpenAI's ChatGPT; Microsoft's Copilot; Google's Gemini; and Perplexity. We wanted to know whether they provided accurate responses to questions about the news; and if their answers faithfully represented BBC news stories used as sources.

We gave the AI assistants access to our website for the duration of the research and asked them questions about the news, prompting them to use BBC News articles as sources where possible. AI answers were reviewed by BBC journalists, all experts in the question topics, on criteria including accuracy, impartiality and how they represented BBC content.

The BBC is the UK's most widely used and trusted news provider and the world's most trusted international news provider.^{1,2} We take time and care to ensure the accuracy and impartiality of our news. Our journalists approached this task with the same level of care.

¹ Ipsos UK, February 2024

² BBC Global Brand Tracker

The answers produced by the AI assistants contained significant inaccuracies and distorted content from the BBC. In particular:

- 51% of all AI answers to questions about the news were judged to have significant issues of some form.
- 19% of AI answers which cited BBC content introduced factual errors – incorrect factual statements, numbers and dates.
- 13% of the quotes sourced from BBC articles were either altered from the original source or not present in the article cited.

This matters because it is essential that audiences can trust the news to be accurate, whether on TV, radio, digital platforms, or via an AI assistant. It matters because society functions on a shared understanding of facts, and inaccuracy and distortion can lead to real harm.

Inaccuracies from AI assistants can be easily amplified when shared on social networks. It matters because news publishers must be able to ensure their content is being used with their permission in ways that accurately represent their original content and reporting. We also know from previous internal research that when AI assistants cite trusted brands like the BBC as a source, audiences are more likely to trust the answer – even if it is incorrect.

Individual errors highlight some of the issues our research found. For example, Google's Gemini incorrectly stated that "The NHS advises people not to start vaping, and recommends that smokers who want to quit should use other methods". In fact, the NHS does recommend vaping as a method to quit smoking. Microsoft's Copilot incorrectly stated that Gisèle Pelicot uncovered the crimes against her when she began having blackouts and memory loss. In fact, she found out about the crimes when the police showed her videos they had found when they confiscated her husband's electronic devices. Perplexity mis-stated the date of Michael Mosley's death and misquoted a statement from Liam Payne's family after his death. OpenAI's ChatGPT claimed in December 2024 that Ismail Haniyeh, who was assassinated in Iran in July 2024, was part of Hamas leadership.

Our research can only scratch the surface of the issue. The scale and scope of errors and the distortion of trusted content is unknown. This is because AI assistants can provide answers on a very broad range of questions and users can receive different answers to the same or similar question. Audiences, media companies and regulators do not know the extent of the issue. It may be that AI companies do not know either.

The implications of this research are far-reaching.

AI assistants cannot currently be relied upon to provide accurate news and they risk misleading the audience. While AI Assistants often include a disclaimer about the risk of inaccuracy there is no mechanism for AI applications to correct errors, unlike professional news outlets that acknowledge and correct occasional errors.

It is likely other publishers may be similarly affected by the issues the research has identified. It may also be that errors are repeated in other areas where reliability and accuracy is paramount - for example, health, education and security.

We expect the use of AI assistants to grow so it's critical they provide audiences with accurate and trustworthy information. Publishers, like the BBC, should have control over whether and

how their content is used and AI companies should show how assistants process news along with the scale and scope of errors and inaccuracies they produce.

Ensuring people can find trusted information in the age of AI will require AI and media sectors to work together, and the BBC is ready and willing to work closely with others. We are also planning a series of AI literacy activities to help audiences navigate their use of AI.

We believe there are three important next steps:

- 1) We want AI companies to hear our concerns and work constructively with us. We want to understand how they will rectify the issues we have identified and discuss the right long-term approach to ensuring accuracy and trustworthiness in AI assistants. We are willing to work closely with them to do this.
- 2) Regulation may have a key role to play in helping ensure a healthy information ecosystem in the AI age. Policymakers are already looking at this area. For example Ofcom has recently published research that shows that audiences that consume news from Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs) have higher trust in institutions, better knowledge of news and are less polarised. We believe it is vital that the accuracy of PSB news is preserved through the prism of AI assistants. It is essential that PSBs, AI companies, Ofcom and Government work together to secure an effective regulatory regime.
- 3) We will repeat this study in the near-future and believe there would be value in regular evaluations which may sit best with a regulator or research institute - providing an independent view of the accuracy and trustworthiness of news content on AI platforms, including AI assistants.

The BBC is excited about the opportunities AI will bring. We look forward to working with the AI and media sectors to ensure AI is used responsibly and brings value to our audiences.

Pete Archer, Programme Director Generative AI

Representation of BBC News content in AI Assistants

Research by Oli Elliott, Principal Data Scientist, BBC Responsible AI Team

February 2025

Approach

In December 2024, the BBC carried out research into the accuracy of four prominent AI assistants that can search the internet – OpenAI’s ChatGPT; Microsoft’s Copilot; Google’s Gemini; and Perplexity. We did this by reviewing responses from the AI assistants to 100 questions about the news, asking AI assistants to use BBC News sources where possible. Ordinarily the BBC ‘blocks’ these AI assistants from accessing the BBC’s websites. These blocks were lifted for the duration of the research and have since been reinstated.

AI answers were reviewed by BBC journalists, all experts in the question topics. Journalists rated each AI answer against seven criteria – (i) accuracy; (ii) attribution of sources; (iii) impartiality; (iv) distinguishing opinions from facts; (v) editorialisation (inserting comments and descriptions not backed by the facts presented in the source); (vi) context; (vii) the representation of BBC content in the response. For each of these criteria, journalists could rate each response as having no issues; some issues; significant issues or don’t know.

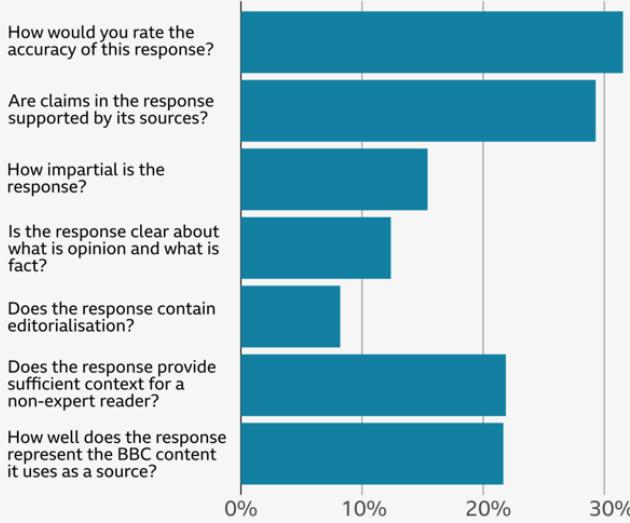
A detailed methodology is included in the appendix.

High level findings

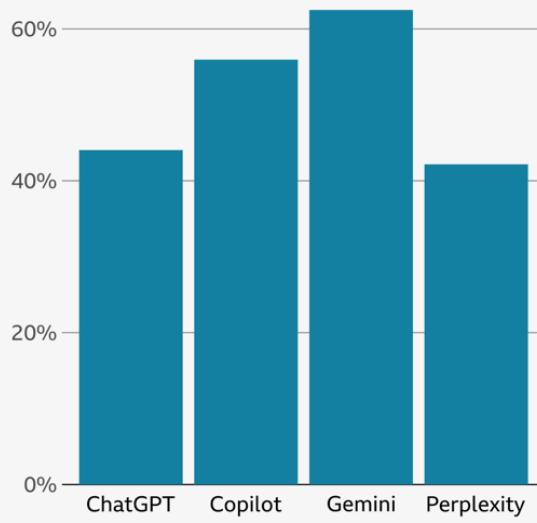
51% of all AI responses were flagged as having ‘significant issues’ of some form by reviewers. 91% of responses contained at least ‘some issues’. Journalists analysed responses to all the questions AI attempted to answer, including where no BBC sources were used.

Responses from all AI assistants contained a variety of issues

% of AI responses rated as containing significant issues, by issue type



% of AI responses rated as containing significant issues of any type, by AI



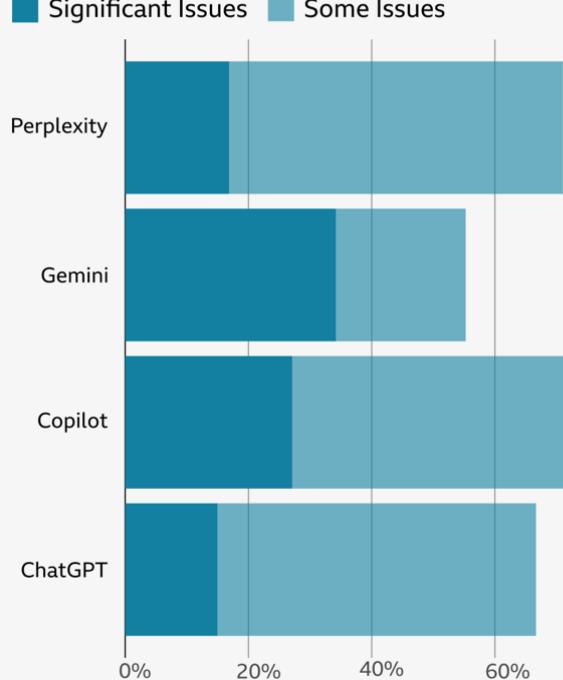
Source: BBC RAI Research. Responses and the issues identified could originate from BBC and other publisher content.

When looking at how assistants represent BBC content, 34% of Gemini, 27% of Copilot, 17% of Perplexity, and 15% of ChatGPT responses were judged to have significant issues with how they represented the BBC content used as a source. The most common problems were factual inaccuracies, sourcing and missing context.

Perplexity cited at least one BBC source in all responses, ChatGPT and Copilot in 70% of responses, and Gemini in 53% of responses.

The sections below give further detail on some of the criteria we assessed against.

How well does the response represent the BBC content it uses?
AI responses as rated by journalists, %



AI responses used at least one BBC source. ChatGPT n=60, Copilot n=59, Gemini n=38, Perplexity n=83.
Source: BBC RAI Research

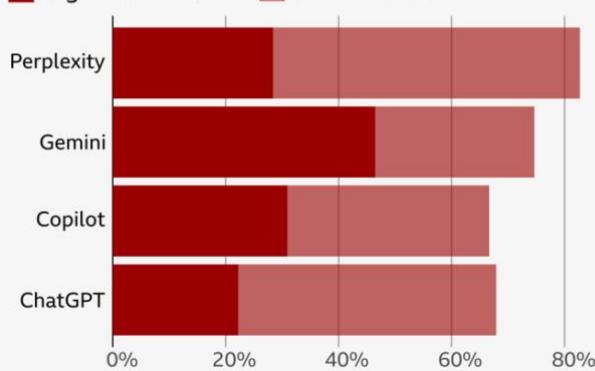
Accuracy

Journalists were asked to rate the overall accuracy of each response, and whether the claims in it were supported by the citations the assistant provided. Gemini responses raised the most concerns with 46% flagged as having significant issues with accuracy.

Gemini incorrectly stated that “The NHS advises people not to start vaping, and recommends that smokers who want to quit should use other methods”. In fact the NHS does recommend vaping as a method to quit smoking. (The [BBC article](#) cited elsewhere in the response makes this clear, including reference to free ‘swap to stop’ vape kits for adults provided by the NHS)

How would you rate the accuracy of this response?

AI responses as rated by journalists, %
■ Significant Issues ■ Some Issues

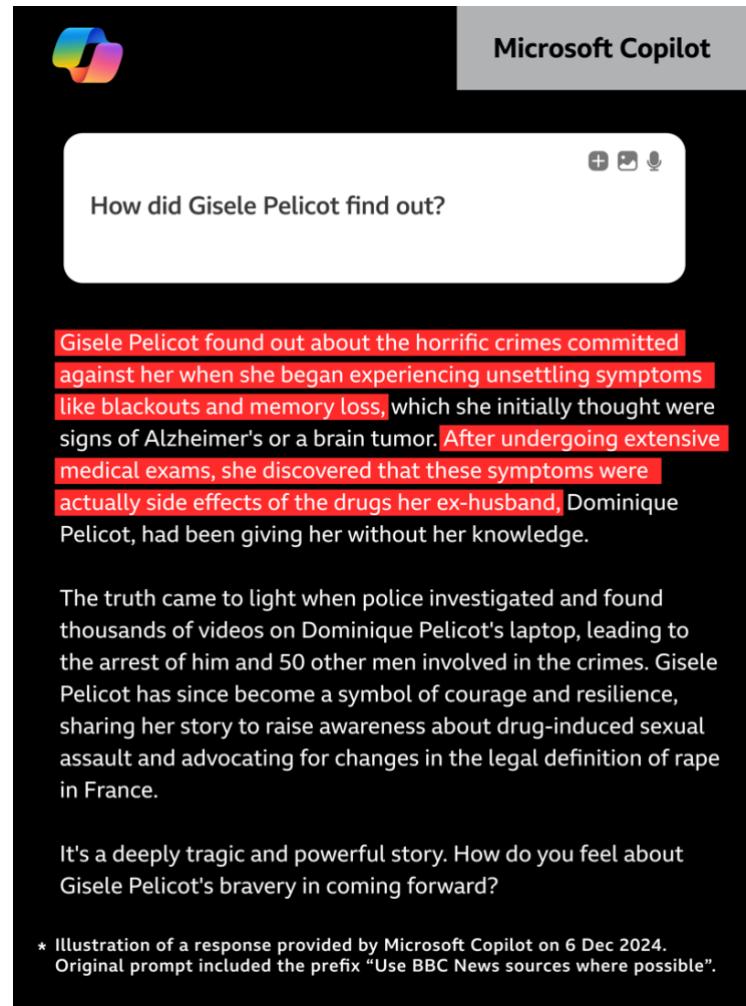


All responses including those which did not cite BBC. n>=71
Source: BBC RAI Research

Across all responses which cited BBC articles, journalists identified 45 instances of dates, numbers and factual statements incorrectly reproduced by AI assistants from or attributed to BBC content – one in every five responses.

When asked about rape survivor Gisèle Pelicot, Copilot suggested blackouts and memory loss led her to uncover the crimes committed against her. In fact, Gisèle Pelicot only found out about these crimes when she was questioned by police and shown videos they had found after detaining her husband and confiscating his electronic devices - as the [cited BBC article](#) makes clear.

The full text and sources of the AI assistant responses illustrated in this report are in the appendix.



Microsoft Copilot

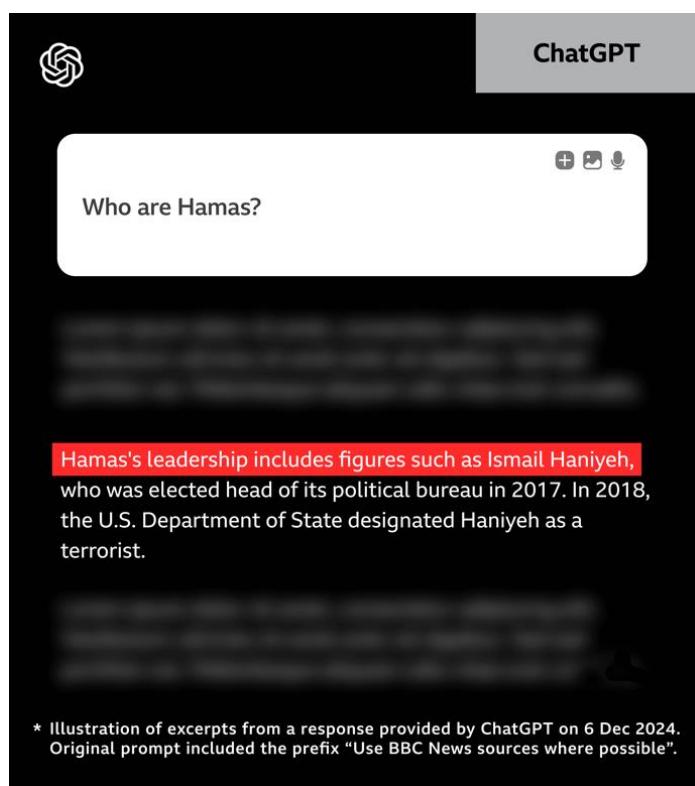
How did Gisele Pelicot find out?

Gisele Pelicot found out about the horrific crimes committed against her when she began experiencing unsettling symptoms like blackouts and memory loss, which she initially thought were signs of Alzheimer's or a brain tumor. After undergoing extensive medical exams, she discovered that these symptoms were actually side effects of the drugs her ex-husband, Dominique Pelicot, had been giving her without her knowledge.

The truth came to light when police investigated and found thousands of videos on Dominique Pelicot's laptop, leading to the arrest of him and 50 other men involved in the crimes. Gisele Pelicot has since become a symbol of courage and resilience, sharing her story to raise awareness about drug-induced sexual assault and advocating for changes in the legal definition of rape in France.

It's a deeply tragic and powerful story. How do you feel about Gisele Pelicot's bravery in coming forward?

* Illustration of a response provided by Microsoft Copilot on 6 Dec 2024. Original prompt included the prefix "Use BBC News sources where possible".



ChatGPT

Who are Hamas?

Hamas's leadership includes figures such as Ismail Haniyeh, who was elected head of its political bureau in 2017. In 2018, the U.S. Department of State designated Haniyeh as a terrorist.

* Illustration of excerpts from a response provided by ChatGPT on 6 Dec 2024. Original prompt included the prefix "Use BBC News sources where possible".

Other errors included understating the number of UK prisoners let out of jail under the early release programme by a factor of 3, the year of singer Liam Payne's death (2024, not 2023), and Chrome's market share (64.6% not 61%).

ChatGPT claimed, in December 2024, that Ismail Haniyeh, who was assassinated in Iran in July 2024, was part of Hamas leadership.

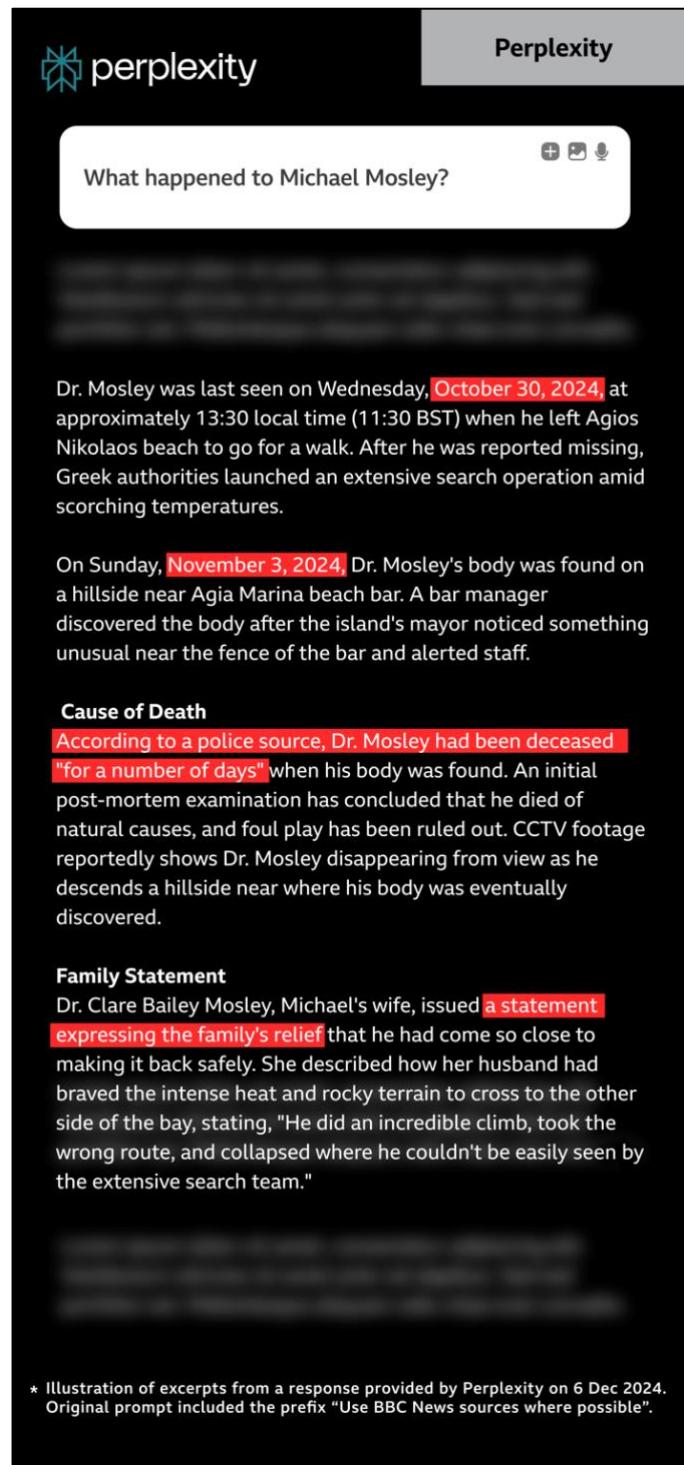
Perplexity, describing the circumstances of the death of broadcaster Dr Michael Mosley, stated he went missing on October 30 and his body was found in November – in fact he died in June 2024. The same response also misrepresented statements from Dr Mosley's wife describing the family's reaction to his death.

Eight quotes sourced from BBC articles were either altered from the original source or not present in the cited article. 62 responses in total included BBC quotes meaning an error rate of 13%. These eight were in responses from all assistants tested except ChatGPT.

Perplexity altered a statement from Liam Payne's family after his death. The accurate statement in the [BBC article](#) read "We are heartbroken. Liam will forever live in our hearts and we'll remember him for his kind, funny and brave soul." but Perplexity changed this to "We are heartbroken. Liam will live forever in our hearts, and we'll always remember him for his kind, loving, and brave soul." (underlining added to assist the reader)

Sourcing

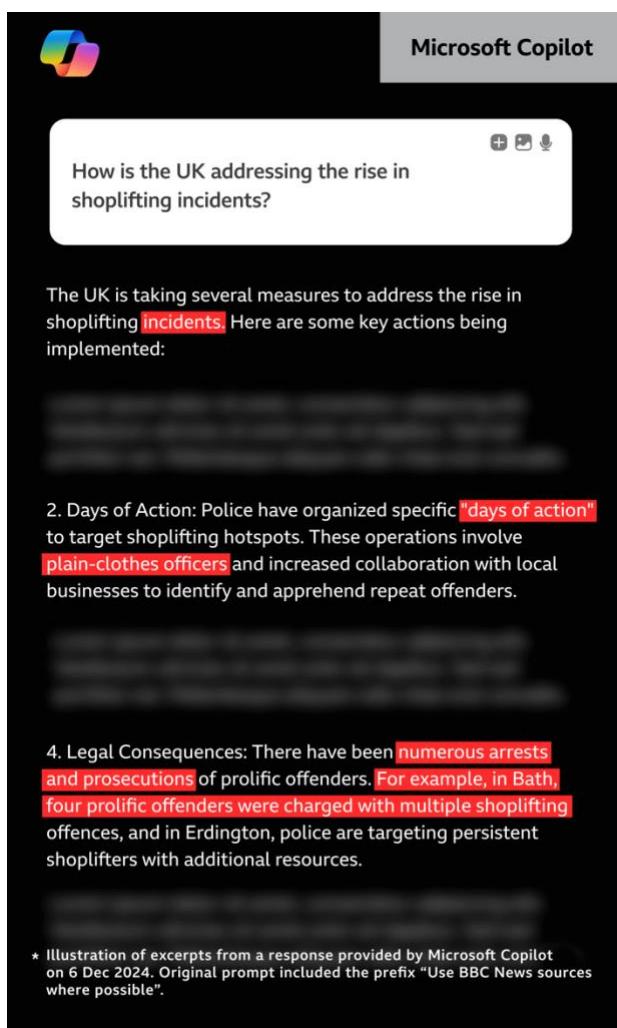
Although all AI assistants were encouraged via prompts to use BBC News, the choice of source articles often led to errors. Old BBC articles or live pages, which are designed to cover breaking news, were selected and caused the AI to make simple errors such as claiming Rishi Sunak and Nicola Sturgeon were still in office when they were not. Here the assistants accurately summarised statements which were correct at the time but have since been superseded by more recent events and BBC articles.



The screenshot shows the Perplexity AI interface. The top bar has the Perplexity logo and the word "Perplexity". Below is a search bar with the text "What happened to Michael Mosley?". The main content area is blurred, but a summary is visible: "Dr. Mosley was last seen on Wednesday, October 30, 2024, at approximately 13:30 local time (11:30 BST) when he left Agios Nikolaos beach to go for a walk. After he was reported missing, Greek authorities launched an extensive search operation amid scorching temperatures. On Sunday, November 3, 2024, Dr. Mosley's body was found on a hillside near Agia Marina beach bar. A bar manager discovered the body after the island's mayor noticed something unusual near the fence of the bar and alerted staff." A "Cause of Death" section is present, mentioning a police source stating Dr. Mosley had been deceased for a number of days. A "Family Statement" section is also shown, mentioning Dr. Clare Bailey Mosley's statement expressing the family's relief. A note at the bottom states: "Illustration of excerpts from a response provided by Perplexity on 6 Dec 2024. Original prompt included the prefix 'Use BBC News sources where possible'." A BBC logo is in the bottom left corner of the screenshot.

Dr Michael Mosley died in June 2024, not October. The quote from the police source in the "Cause of Death" paragraph is not present in the [BBC article cited](#) but is in a [different BBC article](#) not among the sources. In the Family Statement paragraph, Dr Bailey Mosley said the family was "taking comfort", not "relief", that he so nearly made it to safety.

Asked for the latest on the Scottish Independence debate, Copilot turned to a [BBC live page from 2022](#) as its sole source. The BBC page described then First Minister Nicola Sturgeon launching a fresh independence campaign, stating she “stands ready” to negotiate with then PM Boris Johnson. Copilot summarised these updates to say “Recently, First Minister Nicola Sturgeon launched a fresh campaign for a referendum, stating she is ready to negotiate with the UK Prime Minister for the powers to hold one.” It is unclear why out-dated articles and pages were chosen as sources when more recent BBC coverage was available.



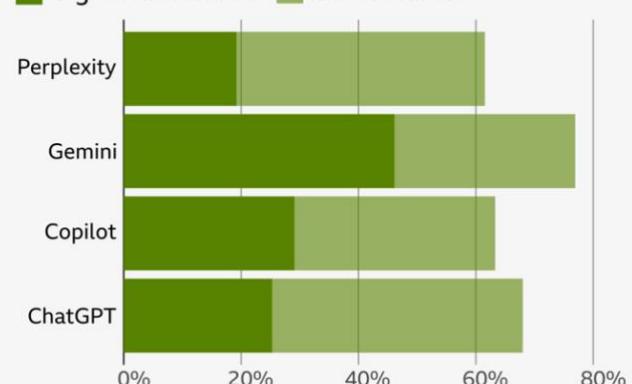
The screenshot shows a Microsoft Copilot interface. The user asks: "How is the UK addressing the rise in shoplifting incidents?" Copilot responds: "The UK is taking several measures to address the rise in shoplifting incidents. Here are some key actions being implemented: 2. Days of Action: Police have organized specific "days of action" to target shoplifting hotspots. These operations involve plain-clothes officers and increased collaboration with local businesses to identify and apprehend repeat offenders. 4. Legal Consequences: There have been numerous arrests and prosecutions of prolific offenders. For example, in Bath, four prolific offenders were charged with multiple shoplifting offences, and in Erdington, police are targeting persistent shoplifters with additional resources." A note at the bottom states: "Illustration of excerpts from a response provided by Microsoft Copilot on 6 Dec 2024. Original prompt included the prefix "Use BBC News sources where possible".

BBC reporting refers to an increase in shoplifting offences, not incidents. References to 'days of action', 'plain-clothes officers' and 'Bath' were sourced to BBC articles but not present in those articles. Some of this information is present in an Avon and Somerset Police blog post which was not cited in the response. BBC sources do not provide support for nation-wide claim of 'numerous arrests and prosecutions'.

Are the claims in the response supported by its sources?

AI responses as rated by journalists, %

■ Significant Issues ■ Some Issues



All responses including those which did not cite BBC. n>=65

Source: BBC RAI Research

In other responses, the information returned was accurate but incorrectly sourced to the BBC. In response to a question about shoplifting, Copilot described “days of action” to tackle shoplifting involving plain-clothes officers, but the [BBC article](#) cited as a source did not include the words quoted nor mention of plain-clothes policing. The BBC sources cited in this response also do not mention numerous arrests and prosecutions, or four prolific offenders being charged in Bath. Some of the above information appears to come from a [post on the Avon and Somerset Police website](#) but this was not cited as a source anywhere in this response.

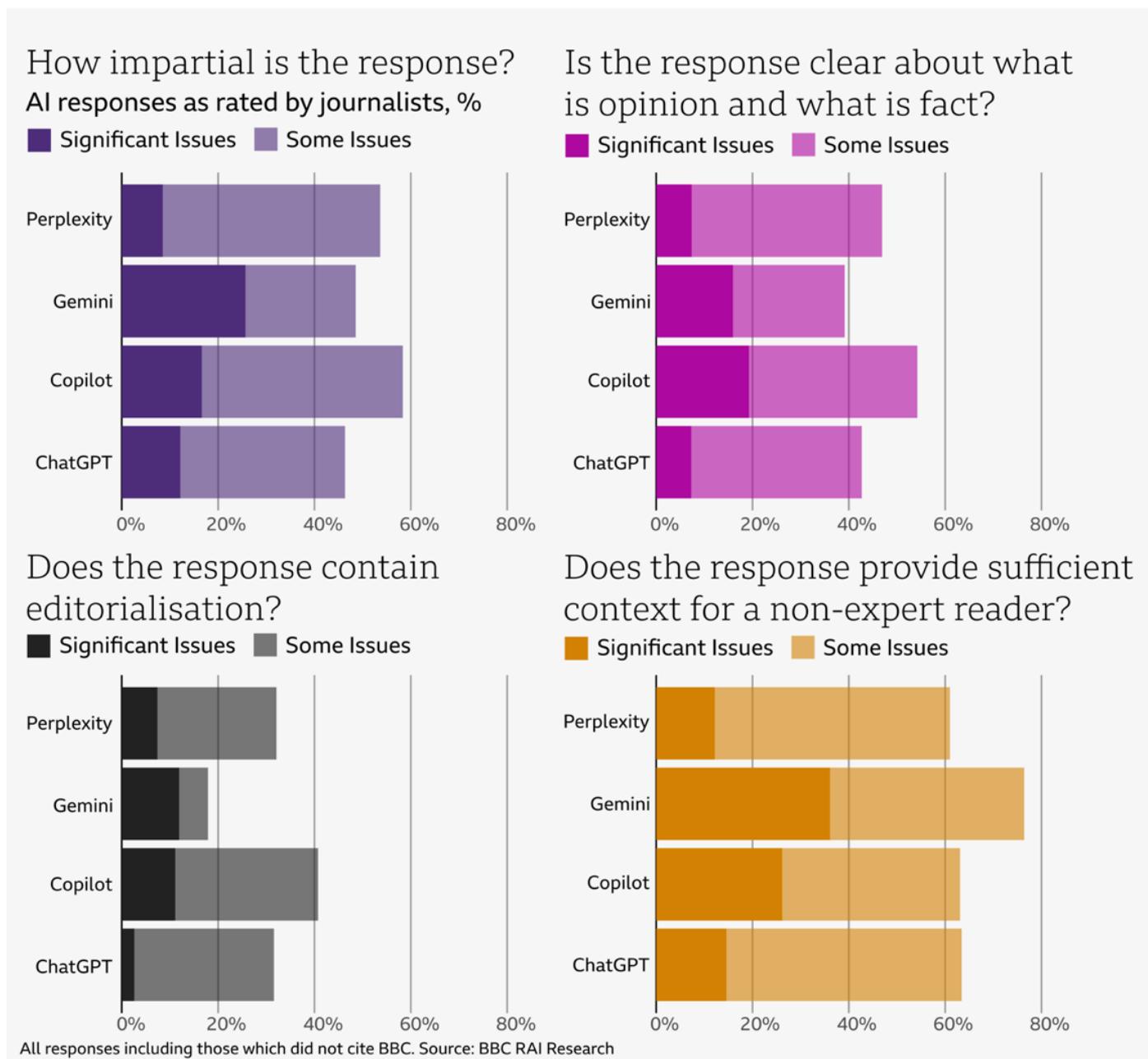
Elsewhere in the same response, Copilot claimed police forces across the country had begun working with private security firms to deter shoplifting. The broader accuracy of this statement is unclear, but none of the articles cited as its source mention private security firms.

Overall, Gemini produced the most sourcing errors – reviewers rated over 45% of responses as containing significant sourcing errors. Lack of sources were part of the cause. 26% of Gemini responses and 7% of ChatGPT’s provided no sources at all, including in responses about public health, Middle East conflict and UK politics.

Impartiality, opinion, editorialisation and context

Journalists were asked to rate the responses for impartiality, clearly distinguishing between opinion and fact, editorialisation, and providing appropriate context. It is important to assess these issues because responses where each sentence is factually accurate can still mislead a reader and mispresent the BBC.

Journalists flagged 23 instances of commentators' opinions presented as facts cited from BBC sources, or where BBC articles presented multiple perspectives on a debated topic and the AI showed only one of them presented as fact attributed to the BBC (10% of all responses which cited BBC). Over half of these were in answers from Perplexity.



Sources covering hearings in the Covid-19 and Thirlwall (Letby) inquiries were characterised as “findings” (the Thirlwall inquiry is yet to produce its findings). Perplexity attributed criticism of the early response to the pandemic in Wales as “passive, slow and disjointed” to the Covid-19 inquiry report. In fact, these were the words of Kirsten Heaven, counsel for the Covid-19 Bereaved Families Cymru.

Both ChatGPT and Copilot cited the BBC when describing as ‘strict’ proposed restrictions to access assisted dying in the UK. However, these were the words of MP Kim Leadbeater who put forward the bill. The views of MPs and campaigners, [quoted by the BBC](#), who opposed the bill were not included. Reviewers observed significant editorialisation in more than 10% of Copilot and Gemini responses, 7% from Perplexity and 3% from ChatGPT. In addition to presenting the opinions of people involved in news stories as facts, AI assistants insert unattributed opinions into statements citing BBC sources. This could mislead users and cause them to question BBC impartiality.

A Perplexity response on the escalation of conflict in the Middle East said that Iran initially showed “restraint” and described Israel’s actions as “aggressive” in statements citing a BBC source. The [BBC source cited](#) does not characterise Iran or Israel’s actions in this way, and neither do any of the other sources provided for the response.

The response concludes by saying “Iran’s ballistic missile attack on Israel was a calculated response to Israel’s aggressive actions...”. The adjectives ‘calculated’ and ‘aggressive’, without attribution or further context, are opinion which may be readily disputed by some users. None of the sources for this response characterise Iran or Israel’s actions this way. While not directly cited to a BBC source, in a response based solely on BBC sources, there’s a risk this opinion may be attributed to the BBC.

Perplexity



Why did Iran attack Israel?

1. **Iran initially showed restraint** following the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel, avoiding direct involvement in the conflict.

2. However, **Israel's aggressive actions against Hezbollah**, Iran's key ally in Lebanon, forced Iran to reconsider its approach.

In summary, Iran's ballistic missile attack on Israel was a **calculated response to Israel's aggressive actions** against its allies, particularly Hezbollah, and an attempt to deter further Israeli operations in the region.

* Illustration of excerpts from a response provided by Perplexity on 6 Dec 2024. Original prompt included the prefix “Use BBC News sources where possible”.

The AI assistants we tested often finish their responses with short, one or two sentence conclusions. While other parts of the response are usually accompanied with citations, these summary statements are rarely attributed to anyone. Unfortunately, these generated conclusions can be misleading or partisan on sensitive and serious topics.

In response to a question about Keir Starmer's promises to voters, Copilot gave an incomplete picture of the prime minister's plans and overtly editorialised by concluding that "it's a comprehensive plan that aims to tackle some of the UK's most pressing issues". Additionally, three of the four sources cited by the response were from the BBC, which may inadvertently give the impression this conclusion came from a BBC source.

Gemini concluded a response to a question about whether nurse Lucy Letby is innocent with "It is up to each individual to decide whether they believe Lucy Letby is innocent or guilty". This is a misleading response to the question since Letby has been convicted in a court of law, by a jury of her peers, and is not innocent in the eyes of the law.

Missing context was one of the most common issues identified by reviewers. This appears to occur when a response requires multiple perspectives or facets. The devolved nature of UK government, for example, caused the AI assistants confusion. Both ChatGPT and Perplexity claimed energy price cap increases were UK-wide, but the cap does not apply to Northern Ireland, as stated in the [BBC article](#) sourced by both assistants.

Google Gemini

❖ Gemini



Is Lucy Letby
innocent?

The BBC has reported on both sides of this debate. For example, they have reported on the evidence that was presented at Letby's trial and on the arguments that have been made by her lawyers. They have also reported on the views of experts who have questioned the evidence against Letby.

It is up to each individual to
decide whether they
believe Lucy Letby is
innocent or guilty.

* Illustration of excerpts from a response provided by Google Gemini on 6 Dec 2024. Original prompt included the prefix "Use BBC News sources where possible".

Conclusions

This study is the first, that we are aware of, to use journalists to review the responses of AI assistants to questions about the news. Where other research has sought to demonstrate specific types of errors, such as returning [accurate election information](#) or [identifying the original source of article text](#), here we aimed to understand a wider range of concerns and their potential frequency.

This research shows that AI assistants have significant issues with basic factual accuracy. One in five responses which used BBC articles as a source introduced factual inaccuracies not present in the sources – many of them simple mistakes. The BBC reports on conflicts and natural disasters, elections, and health and medical stories. Errors, like those shown in this report, could cause immediate harm to users who receive their news and information through these assistants.

This research also suggests the range of errors introduced by AI assistants is wider than just factual inaccuracies. The AI assistants we tested struggled to differentiate between opinion and fact, editorialised, and often failed to include essential context. Even when each statement in a response is accurate, these types of issues can result in responses which are misleading or biased.

AI assistants like these are likely to be part of the future of how people find information, including news. However, to serve audiences and preserve their trust, and protect the overall information eco-system, they must first be accurate and follow basic editorial standards when answering questions about the news.

We will repeat this research in the near future, giving a view on whether AI assistants are improving over time. We will also look at whether we can bring in other publishers and media organisations into the next phase of research. Although this research focussed on the representation of BBC content by AI assistants, we see no reason why other publishers would not be similarly affected by the issues it has identified.

Appendix - Methodology

News questions

The research was designed and carried out by the BBC's Responsible AI team. 100 news questions were drawn from trending topics audiences have searched for on Google over the last year. We ensured questions covered topics which have not been superseded or rendered redundant; involved events BBC News has covered, and reflected the motivation of an audience member to understand a topic in greater depth rather than simply retrieve a fact or figure. The following are example questions:

What caused the Valencia floods?

How many Russians have died in Ukraine?

Is vaping bad for you?

What is the latest on the independence referendum debate in Scotland?

What did Labour promise?

AI assistants and responses

This research covers four AI assistants which can search the internet: ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini and Perplexity. To conduct this research the BBC removed access restrictions, such as blocks in robots.txt and site headers, and allowed AI companies to crawl BBC content.

AI Assistant	Owner	Product Version	LLM
ChatGPT	OpenAI	Enterprise	GPT-4o
Copilot	Microsoft	Pro	Not specified
Gemini	Google	Standard	Not specified
Perplexity	Perplexity	Pro	Default

In some cases, AI assistants refused to provide a response. Over the 100 news questions asked, Gemini refused to answer 12 questions most of which included names of prominent political figures. Perplexity refused once, stating it could not find information about the potential closure of a [music venue in Bristol](#). Copilot and ChatGPT attempted to provide answers to all questions.

With each AI assistant and question the following prompt was used to generate a response:

Use BBC News sources where possible. [QUESTION]

The purpose of this prompt prefix is to encourage AI assistants to draw on BBC News articles when forming responses so that we could test against our own content. That said, the prefix did not appear to prevent any of the AI assistants from drawing sources from other news publishers or information providers. Each prompt was entered into a new chat thread.

The text and URLs of sources in each AI response were saved. Where assistants placed source links within text, indicating that a sentence or paragraph drew from a specific article, the

location of sources was also recorded. All responses from the AI assistants to the 100 news questions were collected on 5th and 6th December 2024.

Journalist reviews

BBC News journalists were assigned to each news question where it matched their area of expertise. In many cases, articles cited by the AI assistants were written by the journalist reviewing the response. In total 45 journalists reviewed 362 AI responses.

Surveys in Microsoft Forms were used to collect journalists' ratings and commentary on each AI response to their assigned news questions. The order of responses from each assistant was randomised and names or brands of AI companies removed so the reviewer would not know which assistant had provided any individual response. For each question they were assigned, journalists reviewed responses from all four AI assistants.

For each response, the surveys contained 7 multiple-choice questions in three sections. These were accuracy, attribution of sources, impartiality, context, editorialisation, and distinguishing opinions from facts. A final question asked the reviewer to consider the overall representation of BBC content in the response. Each multiple-choice question presented four options: 'No issues', 'Some issues', 'Significant issues', and 'Don't know'. For example:

How would you rate the accuracy of this response?

No issues – response is completely accurate

Some issues – response contains minor inaccuracies that would not materially mislead the reader

Significant issues – response contains significant inaccuracies that could materially mislead the reader

Don't know

In addition to the multiple-choice questions, two free text questions requested reviewers describe their concerns and reasoning.

Before starting the surveys, journalists were given a recorded video briefing and written guide to the project and how to approach reviewing AI responses. The question wordings were reviewed by audience research specialists. A small inter-rater agreement test, using Krippendorff's Alpha, showed moderate agreement.

Appendix – Results

Rating summary statistics

Question key

Q1: How would you rate the accuracy of this response?

Q2: Are the claims in the response supported by its sources, with no problems with attribution (where relevant)?

Q4: How impartial is the response as an answer to the question?

Q5: Is the response clear about what is opinion and what is fact?

Q6: Does the response contain editorialisation attributed to the BBC?

Q7: Does the response provide sufficient context for a non-expert reader to understand the answer?

Q9: Overall, how well does the response represent the BBC content which it uses as a source (where BBC is a source)?

ChatGPT

Rating	Q1	Q2	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q9
Significant Issues	18	19	10	6	2	12	9
Some Issues	37	32	28	29	22	40	31
No Issues	26	24	44	47	52	30	20
Don't Know	3	9	2	2	8	2	
The response does not use BBC content as a source							24

Copilot

Rating	Q1	Q2	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q9
Significant Issues	26	23	14	16	9	22	16
Some Issues	30	27	35	29	24	31	27
No Issues	28	29	35	38	48	31	16
Don't Know	0	5	0	1	3	0	
The response does not use BBC content as a source							25

Gemini

Rating	Q1	Q2	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q9
Significant Issues	33	30	18	11	8	26	13
Some Issues	20	20	16	16	4	29	8
No Issues	18	15	36	42	55	17	17
Don't Know	1	7	2	3	5	0	
The response does not use BBC content as a source							34

Perplexity

Rating	Q1	Q2	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q9
Significant Issues	23	15	7	6	6	10	14
Some Issues	44	33	37	32	20	40	45
No Issues	14	30	38	43	55	32	24
Don't Know	2	5	1	2	2	1	
The response does not use BBC content as a source							0

AI error examples

AI Assistant:	Copilot
Question:	How is the UK addressing the rise in shoplifting incidents?
Response:	<p>The UK is taking several measures to address the rise in shoplifting incidents.[1] Here are some key actions being implemented:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Increased Police Presence: Police forces across the country, including Southampton and Cambridgeshire, have increased patrols in high-crime areas to deter shoplifters and provide reassurance to business owners.[1][2] This includes high-visibility patrols and working with private security firms.[1][2]2. Days of Action: Police have organized specific "days of action" to target shoplifting hotspots.[1] These operations involve plain-clothes officers and increased collaboration with local businesses to identify and apprehend repeat offenders.[1]3. Community Engagement: Police forces are engaging with local communities to raise awareness and encourage reporting of shoplifting incidents.[1] This includes meeting with business owners and shoppers to discuss solutions and show that their concerns are being taken seriously.[3]4. Legal Consequences: There have been numerous arrests and prosecutions of prolific offenders.[1] For example, in Bath, four prolific offenders were charged with multiple shoplifting offences, and in Erdington, police are targeting persistent shoplifters with additional resources.[1][3]5. Support for Shop Workers: Efforts are being made to support shop workers who face threats and abuse from shoplifters.[1] This includes providing faster support and reassurance to those who regularly deal with aggressive behavior.[1] <p>These measures aim to reduce the impact of shoplifting on businesses and communities, but the challenge remains significant. What are your thoughts on these efforts?</p> <p>Sources:</p> <p>https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-68152250 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c5y7j7qqeyko https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c3e8kn9ngyzo</p>
Reviewer comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Response talks of a rise in incidents where the source has a rise in offences recorded• No mention in sources [1] or [2] of private security firms• Quote "days of action" does not exist in any cited source• None of the cited sources mention plain-clothes, Bath, or "numerous arrests and prosecutions"

AI Assistant:	Gemini
Question:	Is vaping bad for you?
Response:	<p>Vaping is not as harmful as smoking cigarettes, but it is still bad for your health. [1] The vapour inhaled contains a small amount of chemicals, often including the addictive substance nicotine. [2] More research is needed to fully understand the [3] long-term effects of vaping, but some studies have shown that it can damage the lungs, heart, and brain. [4]</p> <p>The NHS advises people not to start vaping, and recommends that smokers who want to quit should use other methods, such as nicotine replacement therapy or medication.</p> <p>Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [1] https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/5-truths-you-need-to-know-about-vaping [2] https://ukhsa.blog.gov.uk/2018/02/20/clearing-up-some-myths-around-e-cigarettes/ [3] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-66784967 [4] https://www.escardio.org/The-ESC/Press-Office/Press-releases/Cardiologists-establish-how-e-cigarettes-damage-the-brain-blood-vessels-and-lungs
Reviewer comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NHS recommends using vaping to quit smoking.

AI Assistant:	Copilot
Question:	Who could use the assisted dying law?
Response:	<p>The proposed assisted dying law in England and Wales would allow terminally ill adults who are expected to die within six months to seek assistance to end their own lives.[1] To be eligible, individuals must meet several criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Residency: They must be residents of England or Wales and registered with a GP for at least 12 months.[2] 2. Mental Capacity: They must have the mental capacity to make the decision and express a clear, settled, and informed wish to die, free from coercion or pressure.[2] 3. Life Expectancy: They must be expected to die within six months.[2] 4. Legal Declarations: They must make two separate declarations, witnessed and signed, about their wish to die.[2] 5. Medical Approval: Two independent doctors must confirm the person's eligibility, and a High Court judge must also review the case.[2] <p>The person themselves must self-administer the approved substance, and no one else is allowed to administer it.[1] The law includes strict safeguards to prevent coercion and ensure that the decision is made freely and with full understanding.</p> <p>It's a significant and sensitive topic with strong opinions on both sides. What are your thoughts on this proposed law?</p> <p>Sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckqzkp79npg0 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx2l7m6r55do

Reviewer comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By using the word strict to describe safeguards the article is editorialising without explaining that some people do not believe the safeguards are strict enough. It is not clear that this is the opinion of an MP rather than a fact.
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AI Assistant:	Gemini
Question:	Is Lucy Letby innocent?
Response:	<p>Lucy Letby was convicted of murdering seven babies and attempting to murder seven others at the Countess of Chester Hospital. [1] She is currently serving a whole-life sentence. [2]</p> <p>There is a debate about whether Letby is innocent. Some people believe that she is innocent and that she was wrongly convicted. [3] Others believe that she is guilty and that she should be punished for her crimes.</p> <p>The BBC has reported on both sides of this debate. For example, they have reported on the evidence that was presented at Letby's trial and on the arguments that have been made by her lawyers. [4] They have also reported on the views of experts who have questioned the evidence against Letby. [5]</p> <p>It is up to each individual to decide whether they believe Lucy Letby is innocent or guilty.</p> <p>Sources:</p> <p>[1] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cjwld9qq7pwo [2] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cljyn2e7l3yo# [3] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvgwx9xprwqo [4] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c89l05e97vqo [5] https://www.pslhub.org/blogs/entry/7489-lucy-letby-experts-tell-bbc-about-medical-evidence-concerns/</p>
Reviewer comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final line is not a representation of the sources.

AI Assistant:	Copilot
Question:	What did Labour promise?
Response:	<p>Labour has made several key promises as part of their current agenda. Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer has outlined a "plan for change" for Britain, which includes five national missions designed to address long-term challenges and end what he calls "sticking plaster politics".[1] These missions focus on areas such as economic growth, public services, and infrastructure.</p> <p>One of the significant promises is the renationalisation of rail services. Labour plans to bring several rail operators, including South Western, C2C, and Greater Anglia, back into public ownership starting next year.[2] This move aims to improve reliability, boost economic growth, and save money on fees.</p> <p>Labour also intends to fight the next election on the economy, with policies aimed at cutting waste and driving growth.[3] They have emphasized their commitment to wealth creation, positioning themselves as both pro-business and pro-worker.[4]</p>

	<p>It's a comprehensive plan that aims to tackle some of the UK's most pressing issues. What do you think about these promises?</p> <p>Sources:</p> <p>https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/czrxqdkwqgo https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ceqlnrqjr79o https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-67048289 https://www.lbc.co.uk/news/labour-party-manifesto-politics-election-latest-news-keir-starmer/</p>
Reviewer comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Editorialises significantly, using the phrase: "It's a comprehensive plan that aims to tackle some of the UK's most pressing issues."

AI Assistant:	Perplexity
Question:	What happened to Michael Mosley?
Response:	<p>Dr. Michael Mosley, the renowned science broadcaster and program creator, has tragically passed away at the age of 67. His body was discovered on the Greek island of Symi, four days after he went missing[2].</p> <p>Disappearance and Discovery</p> <p>Dr. Mosley was last seen on Wednesday, October 30, 2024, at approximately 13:30 local time (11:30 BST) when he left Agios Nikolaos beach to go for a walk[2]. After he was reported missing, Greek authorities launched an extensive search operation amid scorching temperatures[2].</p> <p>On Sunday, November 3, 2024, Dr. Mosley's body was found on a hillside near Agia Marina beach bar[2]. A bar manager discovered the body after the island's mayor noticed something unusual near the fence of the bar and alerted staff[2].</p> <p>Cause of Death</p> <p>According to a police source, Dr. Mosley had been deceased "for a number of days" when his body was found[2]. An initial post-mortem examination has concluded that he died of natural causes, and foul play has been ruled out[2]. CCTV footage reportedly shows Dr. Mosley disappearing from view as he descends a hillside near where his body was eventually discovered[2].</p> <p>Family Statement</p> <p>Dr. Clare Bailey Mosley, Michael's wife, issued a statement expressing the family's relief that he had come so close to making it back safely[2]. She described how her husband had braved the intense heat and rocky terrain to cross to the other side of the bay, stating, "He did an incredible climb, took the wrong route, and collapsed where he couldn't be easily seen by the extensive search team."[2]</p> <p>Legacy</p> <p>Dr. Michael Mosley was a beloved figure in science broadcasting, known for his commitment to making science accessible and engaging for the general public[1]. He was actively working on a new series titled "Michael Mosley - Just One Thing" during the final months of his life, which is set to air posthumously in October 2024</p>

	<p>as a tribute to his significant influence[1]. The series will showcase Mosley's distinctive approach to health and wellness, demonstrating how small, manageable lifestyle changes can lead to substantial improvements in well-being[1].</p> <p>Dr. Mosley's passing is a great loss to the scientific community and to the millions of viewers and listeners who benefited from his practical health advice and engaging presentation style.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <p>[1] https://www.bbc.com/mediacentre/2024/michael-mosley-just-one-thing-series-honouring-late-broadcaster</p> <p>[2] https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1dd7ekyrypyo</p> <p>[3] https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3qq1l49832o</p>
Reviewer comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dates are incorrect - significant and material inaccuracy Inaccurately references Dr Clare Bailey Mosley's response as "relief" at how close he was to safety. This is not supported by facts or the source referenced.

AI Assistant:	Perplexity
Question:	Why did Iran attack Israel?
Response:	<p>Iran attacked Israel with ballistic missiles on October 1, 2024, as a response to escalating tensions and Israeli actions in the region. Several factors contributed to this decision:</p> <p>Shift in Iranian Strategy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Iran initially showed restraint following the October 7, 2023 Hamas attack on Israel, avoiding direct involvement in the conflict[1]. However, Israel's aggressive actions against Hezbollah, Iran's key ally in Lebanon, forced Iran to reconsider its approach[1]. <p>Israeli Offensive Against Hezbollah</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> In September 2024, Israel launched a major offensive against Hezbollah, causing significant damage to the group's capabilities[1]. Israel remotely detonated booby-trapped devices, killing Hezbollah leaders and destroying their communications[1]. A massive air strike on September 27, 2024, killed Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's leader, along with many top lieutenants[1]. <p>Iran's Perception of Vulnerability</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Israel's actions against Hezbollah were seen as a blow to Iran's "axis of resistance" strategy[1]. Iran concluded that its previous reluctance to engage in wider conflict was encouraging Israel to push harder[1].

	<p>Strategic Calculation</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Although risky and likely to provoke an Israeli response, Iran viewed retaliation as the "least bad option"[1]. 2. The attack aimed to demonstrate Iran's resolve and ability to respond to perceived threats[1]. <p>Broader Regional Context</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The attack occurred amidst ongoing conflicts, including Israel's war in Gaza and tensions with Hezbollah[1][4]. 2. Iran likely sought to reassert its influence and support for its allies in the face of Israeli military actions[1]. <p>In summary, Iran's ballistic missile attack on Israel was a calculated response to Israel's aggressive actions against its allies, particularly Hezbollah, and an attempt to deter further Israeli operations in the region.</p> <p>Citations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> [1] https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c781vqy3918o [2] https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c1wnp0vln19o [3] https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c5ygn5579gvo [4] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67039975 [5] https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c75lpzq0re1o
Reviewer comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key source appears to be Jeremy Bowen's [analysis] piece considering a year on from Oct 7. [Phrases like 'Iran showed restraint' or 'Israel's aggressive actions' are not present in the piece].
<p>AI Assistant: Copilot</p> <p>Question: How did Gisele Pelicot find out?</p>	<p>Response: Gisele Pelicot found out about the horrific crimes committed against her when she began experiencing unsettling symptoms like blackouts and memory loss, which she initially thought were signs of Alzheimer's or a brain tumor. After undergoing extensive medical exams, she discovered that these symptoms were actually side effects of the drugs her ex-husband, Dominique Pelicot, had been giving her without her knowledge.</p> <p>The truth came to light when police investigated and found thousands of videos on Dominique Pelicot's laptop, leading to the arrest of him and 50 other men involved in the crimes. Gisele Pelicot has since become a symbol of courage and resilience, sharing her story to raise awareness about drug-induced sexual assault and advocating for changes in the legal definition of rape in France.</p> <p>It's a deeply tragic and powerful story. How do you feel about Gisele Pelicot's bravery in coming forward?</p> <p>Sources:</p> <p>https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c30p6ey32ydo</p>

Reviewer comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This suggests she found out because of the neurological symptoms she was experiencing. In fact, she found out when police told her they had found the images on her husband's computer.
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AI Assistant:	ChatGPT
Question:	Who are Hamas?
Response:	<p>Hamas, an acronym for "Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya" (Islamic Resistance Movement), is a Palestinian militant Islamist group that has governed the Gaza Strip since 2007. Founded in 1988 during the first Palestinian intifada (uprising) against Israeli occupation, Hamas is committed to the destruction of Israel.[1]</p> <p>On 7 October 2023, Hamas launched a significant attack on Israel, resulting in the deaths of approximately 1,200 people and the abduction of over 250 hostages. This assault led to a substantial Israeli military response in Gaza, causing the deaths of tens of thousands of Palestinians.[1]</p> <p>The United Kingdom has designated Hamas as a terrorist organization. However, the BBC has faced criticism for not labeling Hamas as "terrorists" in its reporting, opting instead for terms like "militants" or "fighters." The BBC maintains that to uphold impartiality, it uses the term "terrorist" only when attributed to others, such as the UK government.[3]</p> <p>Hamas's leadership includes figures such as Ismail Haniyeh, who was elected head of its political bureau in 2017. In 2018, the U.S. Department of State designated Haniyeh as a terrorist.[4]</p> <p>The group's military wing, the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, has been responsible for numerous attacks against Israel, including rocket attacks, shootings, and bombings. Hamas's actions and ideology have led to its designation as a terrorist organization by multiple countries and international entities.</p> <p>Sources:</p> <p>https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-13331522 https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67039975?0=utm_source%3Dground.news https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_the_BBC https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-67103298</p>
Reviewer comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggests Haniyeh is still alive but he was assassinated in Iran in the summer - this important information is in the BBC source cited.

AI Assistant:	Perplexity
Question:	What has the covid inquiry found?
Response:	<p>The UK Covid-19 inquiry, led by Baroness Hallett, has revealed significant failures in the country's pandemic preparedness and response. The inquiry's findings, based on extensive hearings and testimonies, highlight several key issues:</p> <p>Flawed Pandemic Planning</p> <p>The inquiry's first report concluded that the UK was "ill-prepared for dealing with a catastrophic emergency, let alone the coronavirus pandemic"[1]. The government</p>

had planned for the wrong type of pandemic, focusing on a mild one where the spread of a new virus was considered inevitable[1]. This led to:

- An "untested" policy of lockdown[1]
- More deaths and greater economic damage than there should have been[1]
- A reliance on strategies tailored for flu viruses, which proved ineffective against Covid-19[2]

Government Failures

The report states that the UK government and devolved nations ""failed their citizens""[1]. Specific criticisms include:

- Insufficient challenging of scientific experts by government ministers[1]
- A "passive, slow and disjointed" early response to the pandemic in Wales[1]
- Conflicting, contradictory, and confusing guidance issued by the Welsh government[1]

Impact of Austerity and Brexit

The inquiry highlighted how pre-pandemic policies affected the UK's ability to respond:

- Austerity measures strained the NHS and public health systems[2]
- Brexit prioritization led to some pandemic planning workstreams being halted or slowed[2]

Healthcare System Challenges

The inquiry is currently examining the impact on healthcare systems across the UK[1]. Issues being explored include:

- The approach to personal protective equipment (PPE)[1]
- Treatment of care home residents[1]
- The effect on health and care sector workers[1]

Recommendations and Future Focus

Baroness Hallett has called for swift action on the inquiry's recommendations, stating that changes should be in place within six to twelve months[1]. The inquiry is expected to produce at least nine reports covering various aspects of the pandemic response, including:

- Political decision-making
- Vaccine distribution
- Impact on children
- Economic repercussions[3]

As the inquiry continues, it aims to ensure that lessons are learned to prevent future pandemics from causing similar levels of suffering and loss of life[1].

	<p>Citations:</p> <p>[1] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-57085964</p> <p>[2] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c29dzp2z5y6o</p> <p>[3] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/crrlv0enpeno</p> <p>[4] https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/c4ng7j486pdt</p>
Reviewer comments:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was the Council for Bereaved families, not the report, that talked about "passive, slow and disjointed"