

SEMINAR

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How can Construction and Engineering Smart Contracts help streamline contract administration?

Dr Jim Mason

Associate Professor, Department of Architecture and Built Environment
University of the West of England, Bristol, UK

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Time: 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 n.n.

Venue: Room 612B, 6/F Haking Wong Building, The University of Hong Kong

Abstract

The author's work to date is on traditional smart contracts operating on rigid "if-then" logic. This already produces a massive potential streamlining of contract administration. The binary functionality of these smart contracts relieves the contract administrator of many mundane tasks, including aspects of progress reporting, supply chain management, quality checks and the payment process. The possibility now exists, it is claimed, of AI and blockchain-enabled smart contracts to become more dynamic and adapt to changing circumstances and real-time data. How real a possibility is this and how do we reconcile the bold claims of AI (often about itself) with the everyday realities of the construction and engineering industry? A fundamental part of the answer involves a consideration of AI and the law. After all, it is only to the extent that AI is regulated that dealings are trusted. This seminar draws together different initiatives around the regulation of AI before reality-checking its claims for enhancing smart contracts in present usage. The working conclusion is that the considerable lag between the fast-evolving cutting-edge capability and legislative provision should not deter experimentation, where positive outcomes may improve the case and increase pressure for faster adoption in construction and engineering.

About the Speaker



Dr Jim Mason is Associate Professor of Construction Law at UWE Bristol. Jim is the author of textbooks on construction law entitled *Construction Law: From Beginner to Practitioner (Second Edition)* (2023) and *Innovating Construction Law: Towards the Digital Age* (2021).

Jim is a non-practising solicitor, trained mediator and Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy. He is a Trustee of the Aubrey Barker Fund for Educational Development in Surveying (<http://aubreybarkerfund.org>) and President for Europe with the Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy (CASLE, <https://casle.org>).