# Elton John brands UK government "absolute losers" over AI copyright bill risking artists’ futures



Sir Elton John has launched a vehement critique against the UK government, labelling them “absolute losers” for their approach to proposed copyright reforms that could profoundly threaten the livelihood of creative professionals across the nation. This assertion comes in response to the contentious Data (Use and Access) Bill, which would permit artificial intelligence companies to utilise artists' works without securing permission unless creators actively opt out.

In a passionate interview with the BBC, the 78-year-old music icon expressed feelings of being “incredibly betrayed” by the Labour government's position. He described the proposed legislation as "criminal," warning that it endangers the creative legacies and livelihoods of not only established artists but also the next generation of creators. "A machine doesn’t have a soul, doesn’t have a heart, it doesn’t have human feeling, it doesn’t have passion," John asserted, drawing a line between human creativity and AI-generated content.

At the core of this ongoing conflict is a pivotal question regarding the need for AI companies to secure permissions before they can leverage copyrighted material for training purposes. While the House of Lords voted to amend the bill to require such consent, the Commons notably rejected these protective measures. John's concern is shared by a growing cadre of artists; over 400 prominent UK musicians, including luminaries like Paul McCartney and Ed Sheeran, have rallied against the government's initiative. This collective action underscores a broader unease within creative industries, reflecting fears that AI and other technological advancements are encroaching on human creativity, much like they have begun to replace roles in white-collar professions.

Proponents of the bill, including government officials, argue that this legislation is vital for fostering technological innovation, with estimates suggesting it could inject £10 billion into the economy over the next decade. However, critics argue that this framework reduces artistic creation to a commodity to be mined rather than a protected form of intellectual property. The chief executive of UK Music cautioned that the legislation could undermine the country's reputation as a hub of creativity, drawing a parallel to the environmental challenges faced by the Maldives.

Moreover, the ramifications of the UK’s approach could extend beyond its borders, potentially influencing how copyright law adapts globally. As China advances its technological capabilities, countries around the world wrestle with similar dilemmas relating to AI and the rights of creators. The European Union has taken steps towards stricter protections for creators, while the United States remains embroiled in debates about fair use in AI training, leaving the UK at risk of lagging behind in terms of safeguarding creator rights.

Looking ahead, John has threatened to pursue legal action should the government push through the current legislation. In the meantime, technological progress, exemplified by breakthroughs at CERN, illustrates that innovation does not necessarily have to come at the expense of existing rights.

The government is reportedly reviewing feedback gathered during its consultation process, while artists mobilise public support against the bill. Simultaneously, technology companies continue to lobby for fewer restrictions, raising the stakes in this rapidly evolving landscape.

This moment could very well serve as a turning point in the interaction between technology and creativity. As AI continues to transform industries, the relationship between these two domains becomes increasingly fraught. Unlike the medical field, where collaborations with AI appear more amicable, the tension surrounding creative fields is palpable. The battle ignited by Elton John may ultimately determine whether human creativity receives the protection it deserves in an increasingly AI-driven world.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.journee-mondiale.com/en/elton-john-calls-uk-government-absolute-losers-over-ai-copyright-changes/), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/criminal-elton-john-condemns-uks-ai-copyright-plans-2025-05-18/)
* Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.journee-mondiale.com/en/elton-john-calls-uk-government-absolute-losers-over-ai-copyright-changes/), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/feb/22/elton-john-calls-for-uk-copyright-rules-rethink-to-protect-creators-from-ai)
* Paragraph 3: [[1]](https://www.journee-mondiale.com/en/elton-john-calls-uk-government-absolute-losers-over-ai-copyright-changes/), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/apr/30/ministers-include-concessions-in-ai-copyright-bill-before-crucial-vote)
* Paragraph 4: [[1]](https://www.journee-mondiale.com/en/elton-john-calls-uk-government-absolute-losers-over-ai-copyright-changes/), [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/38585a82-cffd-4144-9969-82e94cbb2168)
* Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.journee-mondiale.com/en/elton-john-calls-uk-government-absolute-losers-over-ai-copyright-changes/), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/apr/30/ministers-include-concessions-in-ai-copyright-bill-before-crucial-vote)
* Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.journee-mondiale.com/en/elton-john-calls-uk-government-absolute-losers-over-ai-copyright-changes/), [[7]](https://www.ft.com/content/5a6601f7-a9c9-4f3b-a205-b4f8fe3e688d)
* Paragraph 7: [[1]](https://www.journee-mondiale.com/en/elton-john-calls-uk-government-absolute-losers-over-ai-copyright-changes/), [[4]](https://apnews.com/article/dc80620c1c226a816048b87fb30309c4)
* Paragraph 8: [[1]](https://www.journee-mondiale.com/en/elton-john-calls-uk-government-absolute-losers-over-ai-copyright-changes/), [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/38585a82-cffd-4144-9969-82e94cbb2168)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.journee-mondiale.com/en/elton-john-calls-uk-government-absolute-losers-over-ai-copyright-changes/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/criminal-elton-john-condemns-uks-ai-copyright-plans-2025-05-18/> - Elton John has strongly criticized the UK government's proposal to relax copyright laws, allowing AI developers to train models on creative content without compensating original creators. Supported by artists like Paul McCartney and Ed Sheeran, John argues this move undermines the livelihoods of young artists and the UK's creative industry. The government insists on consulting stakeholders and will not proceed unless policies benefit both AI development and the creative sector.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/feb/22/elton-john-calls-for-uk-copyright-rules-rethink-to-protect-creators-from-ai> - Elton John has called on the UK government to reconsider proposals that would relax copyright rules, potentially allowing tech firms to use online material, including creative work, for AI without permission. He emphasized that such changes could destroy the UK's leadership in the creative sector and urged for a system where creators can opt-in to the use of their work.
4. <https://apnews.com/article/dc80620c1c226a816048b87fb30309c4> - Over 1,000 British musicians, including Kate Bush and Elton John, released a silent album titled 'Is This What We Want?' to protest proposed changes to UK AI laws. The album's 12 tracks are recordings of empty studios, symbolizing the potential loss of creative control. The protest aims to protect musicians' interests and preserve the integrity of Britain's creative industries.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/38585a82-cffd-4144-9969-82e94cbb2168> - Thousands of British musicians, artists, authors, and journalists protested against government proposals that would allow tech companies to use their work to train AI models. The 'Make it Fair' campaign highlights the dangers of such proposals, with over 1,000 musicians releasing a silent album titled 'Is This What We Want?' to demonstrate the risks to the music industry.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/music/2025/apr/30/ministers-include-concessions-in-ai-copyright-bill-before-crucial-vote> - UK ministers are considering amendments to the Data (Use and Access) Bill amid artists' concerns over AI and copyright. The proposed changes would allow AI companies to use copyrighted works to train their models without permission, unless the copyright holder opts out. Critics argue this approach favors AI companies and undermines existing copyright laws.
7. <https://www.ft.com/content/5a6601f7-a9c9-4f3b-a205-b4f8fe3e688d> - Over 400 leading UK musicians, artists, and media executives, including Sir Paul McCartney, Elton John, and Dua Lipa, have signed a letter urging Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer to support stronger copyright protections against unauthorized AI usage. They advocate for an amendment to the Data (Use and Access) Bill, proposed by Baroness Beeban Kidron, which would require AI developers to disclose specific copyrighted materials used to train their models.