# Ex-Meta executive warns UK copyright rules could halt AI industry growth



Concerns over the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and copyright law have surged recently, particularly following remarks from a former executive at Meta, who articulated potential disastrous ramifications for the UK AI industry should stricter copyright regulations be enacted. Speaking at the Charleston Festival, Nick Clegg addressed the growing debate within British parliament regarding the rights of artists to control the use of their work in AI training. Clegg acknowledged the artists’ grievances, referring to their desire to prevent the unauthorised use of their creations as "a matter of natural justice." However, he cautioned that imposing obligations on AI firms to seek permission for using copyrighted materials would be impractical, given the scale at which these systems operate. Clegg posited that if only the UK enforced such laws, it could "kill the AI industry… overnight," highlighting the need for global cooperation to address these complex issues.

This discourse occurs against a backdrop of increasing unrest among creative professionals and content companies, who are vehemently protesting the rampant, unchecked appropriation of their work by technology firms. A cohort of more than 1,000 artists has expressed their discontent by releasing a silent album, a symbolic protest against the UK government's consideration of legalising revenue generation through AI without prior consent from creators. Legal challenges are emerging internationally, with the Authors Guild in the United States spearheading lawsuits asserting that AI companies, like OpenAI and Microsoft, perpetrate mass-scale theft of original content, thereby threatening the financial viability of the artistic community.

In response to these rising tensions, creative industries are exploring updated frameworks for intellectual property law that acknowledge the transformative nature of AI while protecting the rights of content creators. Suggestions include developing integrative economic models that could enable AI creators to financially compensate human artists for their contributions. Various start-ups, such as ProRata.ai and Human Native.ai, are actively testing revenue-sharing models and content licensing solutions aimed at easing the potential friction between AI innovation and artist rights.

Simultaneously, on the legislative front in the United States, significant momentum is building around protecting individuals from the misuse of AI-generated content, particularly through the bipartisan No Fakes Act. This proposed legislation aims to shield people from unauthorised deepfakes and voice clones that misappropriate their identities. Advocates including prominent music industry figures and technology leaders have rallied behind the bill, emphasising the necessity for regulations that balance innovation with ethical standards. Nearly 400 artists have endorsed this initiative, recognising it as an essential step toward securing public trust and empowering victims of digital impersonation.

In Europe, similar themes are emerging, as demonstrated by the recent legal actions taken by French publishers and authors against Meta, accusing the tech giant of using their copyrighted works without consent for AI training. The case highlights ongoing conflicts in the creative sectors regarding the application of copyright laws to AI technologies, intensified by the European Union's newly proposed AI Act. This legislation is set to enforce stringent compliance standards concerning copyright, which may affect how corporations like Meta operate within the EU.

The legal landscape presents a complex and evolving challenge for the tech industry as courts are confronted with determining the boundaries of 'fair use' regarding AI-generated content. Notably, in a high-profile case involving Meta, U.S. District Judge Vince Chhabria has grappled with the implications of using copyrighted material for AI training without proper licensing. His inquiries reflect a broader judicial skepticism towards the notion that companies can leverage artists’ works to create competing outputs without equitable compensation, revealing an urgent need to balance innovation with intellectual property rights.

As discussions surrounding these legislative and legal initiatives continue to unfold, the question remains whether the AI industry can safely navigate the historical concerns of copyright infringement while fostering an environment ripe for technological advancement. The stakes are high, as the future of both the creative industries and the AI sector hangs in the balance, demanding a concerted and collaborative approach to redefine the relationship between technology and creativity.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://80.lv/articles/forcing-ai-companies-to-respect-copyright-would-kill-the-ai-industry-says-ex-meta-executive)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/b98979ba-6ae7-4490-97a9-127381440b1f)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/b98979ba-6ae7-4490-97a9-127381440b1f), [[3]](https://www.apnews.com/article/ec07483bac26818116b9b5a1713fe250)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.apnews.com/article/168b32059e70d0509b0a6ac407f37e8a)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/judge-meta-case-weighs-key-question-ai-copyright-lawsuits-2025-05-01/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-copyright-office-director-sues-trump-administration-over-firing-2025-05-23/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://80.lv/articles/forcing-ai-companies-to-respect-copyright-would-kill-the-ai-industry-says-ex-meta-executive> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/b98979ba-6ae7-4490-97a9-127381440b1f> - Creative artists and content companies are protesting against the unauthorized use of their work by large technology firms, driven by AI developments. More than 1,000 artists released a silent album to protest against the British government's potential legalization of generating revenue through AI without consent. Lawsuits have been filed in the US by the Authors Guild and individual authors, claiming mass-scale theft by AI firms like OpenAI and Microsoft. The UK's creative industry, a significant economic contributor, is undergoing debates about aligning intellectual property laws with current AI advancements while considering 'fair use' exemptions favorable to AI companies. Integrative economic models are suggested where AI content creators can legally access and remunerate human-generated content. Start-ups such as ProRata.ai, TollBit, and Human Native.ai are experimenting with revenue-sharing models and content licensing solutions. Updated legislation and market mechanisms are required to protect intellectual property rights against AI corporations.
3. <https://www.apnews.com/article/ec07483bac26818116b9b5a1713fe250> - On May 21, 2025, tech and music industry leaders testified before the Senate Judiciary Committee’s privacy and technology panel to advocate for the passage of the bipartisan No Fakes Act. This proposed federal legislation aims to protect individuals—ranging from everyday Americans to celebrities—from unauthorized AI-generated deepfakes and voice clones that misappropriate their likenesses, images, and voices. Supporters, including YouTube executives, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), and artists like Martina McBride, emphasized the need for federal regulations to deter misuse of AI technology while preserving its legitimate benefits. The No Fakes Act would hold individuals and companies accountable for unauthorized digital replicas and require online platforms to remove deepfakes upon notification. It includes protections aligned with First Amendment rights and avoids penalizing platforms for providing neutral AI tools. Nearly 400 artists have endorsed the bill. The hearing followed President Trump’s recent signing of the Take It Down Act, which penalizes distribution of non-consensual intimate imagery and AI-generated deepfakes. Industry leaders praised the No Fakes Act as a necessary progression to safeguard public trust, support responsible AI use, and empower victims without requiring legal action.
4. <https://www.apnews.com/article/168b32059e70d0509b0a6ac407f37e8a> - French publishers and authors have filed a lawsuit against Meta, accusing the company of using their copyrighted works without permission to train its artificial intelligence (AI) model. Three trade groups, including the National Publishing Union, the National Union of Authors and Composers, and the Societe des Gens de Lettres, have collectively initiated the legal action in a Paris court. They allege that Meta has engaged in unauthorized use of their works to develop generative AI capabilities for its platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. The groups demand the removal of the data directories created by Meta for AI training. This legal move comes in the wake of the European Union's AI Act, which mandates compliance with copyright laws for AI systems. The case reflects ongoing tensions between the creative industries and tech companies over the use of data and copyrighted material.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/legal/litigation/judge-meta-case-weighs-key-question-ai-copyright-lawsuits-2025-05-01/> - In a pivotal legal hearing in San Francisco, U.S. District Judge Vince Chhabria questioned Meta Platforms' legal justification for using copyrighted materials without permission to train its AI model, Llama. Authors including Junot Diaz and Sarah Silverman filed lawsuits in 2023, alleging that Meta used pirated versions of their books for AI training without compensation. The case focuses on whether such use constitutes 'fair use' under U.S. copyright law, a crucial issue for the AI industry. Chhabria expressed skepticism about the fairness of allowing companies to use protected works to create potentially infinite competing outputs without licensing them, possibly undermining the market for the original work. Meta argued that their actions are transformative and fall under fair use, while plaintiffs contend it amounts to infringement that threatens their livelihoods. Though acknowledging the transformative nature of AI-generated content, Chhabria emphasized the need for plaintiffs to demonstrate specific market harm. The judge’s probing remarks underscored the complex balance courts must strike between fostering innovation and protecting intellectual property rights.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/us-copyright-office-director-sues-trump-administration-over-firing-2025-05-23/> - Shira Perlmutter, former director of the U.S. Copyright Office, has filed a lawsuit against President Donald Trump and other officials after being dismissed via email on May 10, 2025. Perlmutter argues that her termination was unconstitutional, asserting that only Congress has the authority to remove her. Filed in Washington, D.C., federal court, the lawsuit adds to ongoing legal disputes concerning Trump's power over independent agencies. The Copyright Office, under the Library of Congress, confirmed her firing on May 12. The lawsuit highlights the office's recent report on artificial intelligence and copyright law, which questioned the legality of tech companies using copyrighted materials to train AI models without compensation. Perlmutter’s dismissal has drawn criticism from Democratic lawmakers, who emphasize that the office was designed to be politically independent. She is seeking a court order to prevent Trump appointees from assuming her role and to reinstate her as director. This legal action coincides with the Supreme Court permitting Trump's removal of two Democratic labor board members to stand while legal challenges continue.