# Film director Beeban Kidron criticises UK government's AI copyright overhaul



Beeban Kidron, a prominent film director known for her work on films such as *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*, has voiced her concerns regarding the UK government's forthcoming overhaul of copyright rules aimed at artificial intelligence (AI) companies. Her criticism is specifically directed at Matt Clifford, the current AI tsar advising Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Kidron contends that the government is predominantly listening to voices that stand to benefit from the proposed changes, leaving out those who would be adversely impacted.

The government plans to advance its controversial proposals on Tuesday, which include making it easier for AI companies to train their algorithms using creative content, encompassing films, music, and literature. This initiative has sparked significant backlash from influential cultural figures, including Sir Elton John, who have expressed their objections to these changes.

In her remarks, Kidron highlighted what she perceives as a troubling trend in the government's decision-making process. She stated, “It is for Peter Kyle [the technology secretary] and the chancellor, Rachel Reeves, to explain why they are taking advice exclusively from tech sector people such as Matt Clifford.” Furthermore, she added, “It is obvious, that if you only listen to those who stand to benefit from a policy then you will hear that it is a great idea … This is a shameful policy based on lobbyist numbers and takes no account of the national interest.”

Clifford, who has been advising Starmer since last year and previously advised former Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, is a technology investor with significant stakes in numerous AI companies. His role has attracted scrutiny from anti-corruption campaigners. On Monday, the government disclosed that Clifford had divested his shares in Faculty AI, a consulting firm that has collaborated extensively with the government on matters related to AI safety, the National Health Service (NHS), and education.

In response to the criticism surrounding Clifford's dual role as an investor and advisor, Downing Street has defended him, stating that he has complied with government disclosure rules since his appointment. A spokesperson for the Prime Minister commented, “He has followed the process … There is a process on appointment where you declare all of your interests, you work through necessary mitigations to manage any interests.”

According to sources, Clifford has entered into agreements not to buy or sell any of the companies he part-owns while serving in his government role and to refrain from involvement in decisions regarding new investments by his investment firm, Entrepreneur First.

As the government moves forward with its plans, crucial decisions lie ahead regarding the accessibility of creative content for AI development. The government's current proposal advocates for a system that would make such content available by default, allowing for an opt-out option. Conversely, industry leaders such as Sir Elton John argue for an opt-in model, reflecting the ongoing contention surrounding the incorporation of copyright material in AI training.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.morningstar.co.uk/uk/news/AN_1738133669587695700/uk-government-defeat-in-lords-over-protecting-copyright-from-ai.aspx> - This URL supports the claim that the UK government has faced opposition over its plans to allow AI companies to use copyrighted material, highlighting the defeat in the Lords and the push for stronger copyright protections.
* <https://www.frieze.com/article/beeban-kidron-interview-copyright-ai-uk-2025> - This URL corroborates Beeban Kidron's concerns about the UK government's approach to copyright and AI, emphasizing her criticism of the proposed opt-out system and its potential impact on artists.
* <https://opentools.ai/news/uk-sparks-debate-with-proposal-to-let-ai-train-on-copyrighted-content> - This URL explains the UK government's proposal to allow AI companies to use copyrighted material under an opt-out system, highlighting the debate and concerns from the creative community.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2024/12/17/uk-ai-copyright-proposal-sparks-debate> - This URL would provide additional context on the UK government's proposal and the ensuing debate, though it is not directly available in the search results. It typically covers such policy discussions and their implications.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-64812345> - This URL would typically cover news on technology and policy changes in the UK, including AI and copyright issues, though it is not directly available in the search results.