# Debate intensifies over AI and copyright in the UK



The ongoing debate surrounding the intersection of artificial intelligence (AI) and copyright law in the UK has intensified following a recent government consultation that closed this week. Technology Secretary Peter Kyle has made statements indicating his intention to balance the needs of both the AI sector and the creative industries, which have raised significant concerns regarding potential changes to copyright law.

High-profile musicians and artists, including Sir Elton John, Annie Lennox, Sir Paul McCartney, and Kate Bush, have vocally opposed the government's proposals designed to facilitate the training of AI models on copyrighted material. They argue that these changes could lead to the loss of artistic integrity and threaten the financial viability of the creative sector. The proposals would allow technology companies to use copyrighted works without seeking permission or compensation, placing the onus on artists to opt out of such usage, a scenario many label as overly burdensome.

In statements made to Sky News, Kyle underscored the importance of data in the development of effective AI technologies, acknowledging the need for significant datasets to ensure efficiency. He stated, "I will not have one side forcing me to make a choice between one or the other," reiterating his goal to support both industries while navigating their conflicting interests. Kyle expressed his commitment to ensuring that artists have the right to exclude their material from AI training, highlighting the tension inherent in the current situation.

On the closing day of the government consultation, major UK newspapers featured protest wraps calling for a reconsideration of the proposed copyright changes. Concurrently, over 1,000 musicians participated in a protest by releasing an album of silent studios and recording space, symbolising their discontent with the government's approach.

In a further interview with BBC Breakfast, Kyle acknowledged the inadequacies of current copyright laws to protect individuals in the context of AI. He remarked that the UK boasts the world's second-largest creative arts industry and the third-largest market for AI, asserting the importance of both sectors to the nation’s economic and cultural future. "We need both to thrive here in the UK in the 2020s going forward," he commented, emphasising the cultural significance of creative work and the potential for AI advancements.

Kyle also noted that much of the current data used by AI models is sourced internationally, rather than domestically, adding a layer of complexity to the legal framework governing copyright. He indicated the government's responsiveness to the challenge but recognised the nuanced opinions surrounding the issue, admitting that it would be an "incredibly tricky" balance to achieve.

Looking forward, Kyle mentioned that Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is expected to discuss AI with US President Joe Biden, reflecting the importance of international collaboration on emerging technologies. "By the US and the UK working together, we believe that we can stay absolutely clearly ahead of some of the rest of the global competition," he stated, suggesting that such cooperation could yield mutual benefits.

The government's approach to this pressing issue remains under scrutiny, as prominent figures in the creative community continue to call for a comprehensive dialogue that safeguards their rights while fostering innovation in the AI landscape.

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

## References

* <https://www.lewissilkin.com/our-thinking/the-collective/insights/2025/02/26/ai-and-the-creative-industries-key-takeaways-from-the-uks-copyright-consultation> - This URL supports the claim that the UK government is considering changes to copyright law to allow AI developers to use copyrighted material for training, with an opt-out mechanism for rights holders. It also highlights the ongoing debate and the need for transparency in AI training practices.
* <https://www.dentons.com/en/insights/articles/2025/january/2/the-uks-new-ai-copyright-consultation-a-path-to-clarity-or-controversy> - This URL corroborates the government's consultation on reforming copyright law to address AI-related issues, including the proposal to permit text and data mining for commercial purposes with an opt-out option for rights holders.
* <https://lordslibrary.parliament.uk/copyright-and-artificial-intelligence-impact-on-creative-industries/> - This URL provides context on the UK government's consultation regarding AI and copyright, highlighting the challenges in balancing the needs of the AI sector and the creative industries.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This URL is the source of the original article discussing the UK government's consultation on AI and copyright law, including the reactions from prominent figures in the creative industry.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/copyright-and-artificial-intelligence> - This URL would typically provide direct access to the UK government's consultation on AI and copyright, though it is not explicitly listed in the search results. It would support the claims about the consultation's focus and proposals.