# Bjorn Ulvaeus joins calls to tighten UK AI copyright rules amid creative industry fears



Bjorn Ulvaeus, singer of the legendary band ABBA, has joined a growing chorus of voices calling for tighter regulations on AI companies profiting from artists' work without proper compensation. Ulvaeus and other figures from the creative industries have urged the UK Government to reconsider proposals that would allow technology firms to use artists’ creations to train AI models unless the creators explicitly opt out.

The current Labour Government’s plans would grant a copyright ‘exception’ to big technology companies, enabling them to harvest creative content for AI training unless creators take active steps to prevent it. This approach has raised concerns among artists and cultural stakeholders about the potential damage to the UK’s £126 billion cultural sector, which supports 2.4 million jobs. Critics warn that such policies would permit companies, particularly those based in Silicon Valley, to exploit British creative works freely, jeopardising a vital economic and cultural asset.

Ulvaeus highlighted the issue’s importance to artists, stating in an interview with The Times: “Copyright is the oxygen creators depend on. Unfortunately, there is an alternative and dangerous view, driven by profit-seeking tech companies. AI training must be subject to clear transparency rules.” For years, AI firms have been collecting extensive collections of art, literature, and music content to develop their models without direct payment to the original creators.

Under current copyright laws, creators are automatically protected and entitled to compensation if their work is used, reflecting a recent landmark court ruling in the United States that mandated AI firms pay for using copyrighted material. However, the government’s consultation earlier this year indicated a preference for giving tech companies an “opt-out” copyright exception, a position that many fear undermines established copyright principles.

The consultation phase ended in February, and the creative community anxiously awaits the Government’s final stance. Opponents of the policy argue this would effectively overturn centuries of copyright law, which has underpinned the growth of the UK’s globally admired creative sector.

The Daily Mail has spearheaded a campaign against the proposals, supported by notable figures such as Sir Elton John and Sir Brian May. Their campaign focuses on the Data (Use and Access) Bill, which is scheduled for its report stage on 7 May. Baroness Kidron, a filmmaker and crossbench peer, stressed the UK’s potential in the global AI market, stating: “We can be a world leader in providing the commodity AI firms are most desperate for: high-quality creative content. But we can only seize this growth opportunity if the government gives us meaningful transparency which will allow creators to hold AI firms to account for copyright theft.”

Labour MP Samantha Niblett, who co-chairs the parliamentary internet, communications and technology forum, described herself as a “tech optimist” but warned that AI’s transformative potential would be undermined if built on unlicensed UK content. Speaking to the Daily Mail, she called for transparency provisions in the Data Bill to foster a licensing market for AI training data, boosting trust in UK tech regulation.

Technology Secretary Peter Kyle acknowledged the challenge of balancing the interests of creators and tech firms, stating: “We want to provide a solution allowing both sectors to thrive.” Similarly, Caroline Dinenage, Conservative chair of the culture, media, and sport committee, emphasised the necessity of effective copyright enforcement backed by transparency measures to ensure creators continue producing content essential to AI development.

The debate over AI and copyright in the UK is thus reaching a critical juncture, with key stakeholders calling for regulatory clarity and protections to safeguard the creative industries while accommodating technological advancement.

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

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