# UK government's AI proposals face backlash from creative industries



In recent weeks, the UK government's proposals, which allow artificial intelligence (AI) companies to utilise copyright-protected work without the explicit permission of the creators, have ignited significant opposition within the creative industries. This outcry culminated in the release of a silent album, co-written by over 1,000 musicians, including notable artists such as Kate Bush. This protest follows a statement signed by 48,000 creatives, including Abba’s Björn Ulvaeus, who asserted that these proposals pose a “major, unjust threat” to artists’ livelihoods.

The crux of the contention lies in how generative AI models, the technology that underpins tools like ChatGPT, are structured. These advanced models require extensive training on vast datasets, largely sourced from the open web, which encompasses a variety of content, including articles, encyclopaedic entries, and creative works. Various industry representatives, including authors, artists, and newspaper publishers, are demanding compensation for the usage of their work in building these AI models, insisting that such practices should cease until appropriate permissions have been granted. They posit that AI companies are effectively appropriating their creations at no cost to develop competing products.

The government’s consultation reveals its preferred approach, which involves permitting AI firms to employ copyrighted work for training purposes under a “text and data mining” exception. In an attempt to address concerns, the proposed framework would allow creators to opt-out of this mining process through what officials have termed a “rights reservation” system. However, this proposal has drawn considerable scepticism. Opponents of the government’s consultation argue that there is insufficient evidence of a reliable rights reservation process in any other country. The government counters that AI companies, including OpenAI, have provisions allowing news publishers to block web crawlers from accessing their content.

Additionally, the consultation encourages transparency from AI developers regarding the content incorporated into their training datasets. These proposals not only mirror those in the EU AI Act, which similarly features an opt-out option, but have also been subject to critique from key figures involved in EU copyright law.

Critics of the government’s plans, including Beeban Kidron, a film-maker and crossbench peer in the House of Lords, contend that existing copyright law sufficiently protects creators’ rights. They argue that the opt-out framework is inequitable, particularly for emerging artists, who may not be aware of the availability of such options. It is further claimed that tracking the dispersion of their work across the internet is virtually impossible, rendering the proposal impractical.

According to government statistics, the creative industries contribute £126 billion to the UK economy and employ approximately 2.4 million individuals, highlighting the sector's vital role in the country's economic landscape. As discussions continue, the tensions between technological advancement and creative rights remain at the forefront of public debate.

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

## References

* <https://www.linklaters.com/en-us/insights/blogs/digilinks/2025/january/uk-government-proposes-copyright-and-ai-reform-mirroring-eu-approach> - This URL supports the claim that the UK government is proposing copyright reforms to allow AI companies to use copyrighted materials with an opt-out system for creators, mirroring the EU's approach. It also discusses the background and previous attempts at reform.
* <https://www.globalpolicywatch.com/2025/01/uk-government-proposes-copyright-ai-reform/> - This URL corroborates the government's objectives for the new copyright framework, including supporting right holders' control and remuneration, facilitating AI development, and promoting transparency. It also highlights the proposed text and data mining exception.
* <https://writerbeware.blog/2025/01/31/turning-copyright-on-its-head-the-uks-proposed-ai-copyright-exception/> - This URL discusses the UK's proposed copyright exception for AI training, allowing companies to use internet material without permission unless creators opt out. It critiques the opt-out system as placing the burden on creators.
* <https://www.dentons.com/en/insights/articles/2025/january/2/the-uks-new-ai-copyright-consultation-a-path-to-clarity-or-controversy> - This URL explains the UK government's consultation on copyright reform for AI, including proposals for a text and data mining exception with transparency measures. It notes the similarity to the EU's approach and potential controversy.
* <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 need for clarity in how copyright applies to AI model development. It mentions the proposed exception for text and data mining.