# SoundCloud commits to no AI training on artist content without consent



Music-sharing platform SoundCloud has taken a firm stance on the use of artists' content in the realm of artificial intelligence, announcing that it “has never used artist content to train AI models.” In a bid to address the concerns that have emerged following changes to its terms of service last year, SoundCloud asserts it is making a “formal commitment” that any future application of AI on its platform will prioritise consent, transparency, and artist control.

The clarification comes amidst growing anxieties within the artist community over the implications of SoundCloud’s evolving legal framework. Last February, updates to the platform's terms included clauses implying that artists’ works could be used for training AI technologies unless explicitly stated otherwise. This prompted backlash, with many artists wary that such broad language could permit the deployment of their content without proper authorisation. Elaborating on the company’s previous missteps, CEO Eliah Seton acknowledged in a statement that “the language in the Terms of Use was too broad and wasn’t clear enough. It created confusion, and that’s on us.”

SoundCloud’s current terms will soon be revised to ensure clearer protections for its users. The impending updates will explicitly state that the platform will not employ any artists' content to train generative AI tools—which could potentially mimic their style or likeness—without *affirmative* consent provided through an opt-in mechanism. This pivot emphasises SoundCloud's intent to place artists at the forefront of new technologies, providing them with agency over how their works are used in conjunction with AI.

Despite these reassurances, some critics find the revisions insufficient. Ed Newton-Rex, a noted tech ethicist who first raised concerns regarding the terms, argues that the amended language could still allow for models trained on artist work that, while not directly replicating their style, might still pose competitive threats in the marketplace. He voiced his scepticism on social media, suggesting that the policy should simply declare, “We will not use Your Content to train generative AI models without your explicit consent.”

The push for clearer boundaries around the use of copyrighted material in AI training is not limited to SoundCloud. A recent U.S. court ruling underscored the legal complexities surrounding this subject, affirming that the unauthorised use of copyrighted works for AI development does not constitute 'fair use.' This precedent highlights the growing need for robust legal frameworks as the evolving tech landscape intersects with intellectual property rights.

Furthermore, awareness is rising across the industry about the importance of consent. Notably, Sony Music Group has proactively contacted numerous AI and music streaming companies, asserting its decision to opt-out of any AI training involving its content without prior agreement. As industry giants grapple with the implications of AI, a consensus is forming around the necessity of explicit agreements that safeguard the creative rights of artists while navigating new technological frontiers.

The current landscape signals an urgent call for updated legislation, such as the proposed Generative AI Copyright Disclosure Act in the U.S., which seeks to enhance transparency and explicitly requires companies to disclose the copyrighted works used when training AI. As the music and tech industries evolve, ensuring that artists retain control over their intellectual property remains paramount, particularly in a world increasingly influenced by generative AI.

The path forward for platforms like SoundCloud entails a careful balancing act: harnessing the potential of AI while respecting and protecting the creative rights of artists, ensuring that creators have a decisive voice in how their works are integrated into the rapidly changing digital ecosystem.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraph 1, 2
2. Paragraph 2
3. Paragraph 4
4. Paragraph 5
5. Paragraph 6
6. Paragraph 7
7. Paragraph 8

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theverge.com/news/667420/soundcloud-ai-training-copyright-tos> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theverge.com/news/667420/soundcloud-ai-training-copyright-tos> - SoundCloud has updated its Terms of Use to clarify that it will not use artists' content to train generative AI models without explicit consent. CEO Eliah Seton acknowledged that previous language was too broad and created confusion. The new terms specify that any use of AI on SoundCloud will be based on consent, transparency, and artist control. This change follows concerns from artists about the platform's previous terms, which allowed for the use of their content in AI training without clear consent.
3. <https://developers.soundcloud.com/docs/api/terms-of-use> - SoundCloud's API Terms of Use prohibit the use of user content for training or developing artificial intelligence technologies without explicit authorization. The terms state that user content accessed through the API may not be used to train or develop AI technology, create identifying digital files, or serve as input to AI technology. This policy aims to protect the rights of content creators and ensure that their work is not used without proper consent in AI applications.
4. <https://soundcloud.com/terms-of-use/10-2022> - SoundCloud's Terms of Use outline the rights and responsibilities of users regarding the content they upload to the platform. Users retain ownership of their content but grant SoundCloud a license to use it for providing services. The terms also specify that users must not upload content to which they do not hold the necessary rights, and unauthorized use of copyrighted works within content is strictly prohibited. The document emphasizes the importance of respecting intellectual property rights and adhering to the platform's guidelines.
5. <https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/using-copyrighted-content-to-train-ai-without-permission-is-not-fair-use-us-court-rules-in-precedent-setting-thomson-reuters-case/> - A U.S. court ruled that using copyrighted content to train AI without permission is not considered 'fair use.' The case involved Thomson Reuters suing Ross Intelligence for scraping its law database to create an AI system. The court's decision highlights the legal complexities surrounding the use of copyrighted material in AI training and sets a precedent for future cases involving similar issues.
6. <https://www.algoodbody.com/insights-publications/ai-generated-music-how-will-the-existing-copyright-framework-cope> - This article discusses the challenges the existing copyright framework faces in addressing AI-generated music. It highlights the need for updated legislation to protect creators' rights in the age of AI. The piece also mentions the Generative AI Copyright Disclosure Act, a proposed U.S. law requiring companies to disclose the copyrighted works used in training AI models, aiming to enhance transparency and protect intellectual property rights.
7. <https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/sony-music-sends-letters-to-700-ai-music-streaming-companies-declaring-its-opting-out-of-ai-training1/> - Sony Music Group (SMG) has sent letters to 700 AI and music streaming companies, declaring its 'opt-out' of AI training. SMG explicitly prohibits the use of its content for training, developing, or commercializing any AI system without authorization. This move reflects the industry's growing concern over the use of copyrighted material in AI applications and the need for clear agreements between content creators and technology companies.