# Scarlett Johansson warns of big tech’s growing power and AI threats to Hollywood creativity



Scarlett Johansson has emerged as a prominent voice in the ongoing debate surrounding the influence of big tech on Hollywood and the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) in the film industry. Her recent comments, made during an interview with *Vanity Fair* ahead of her upcoming film *Jurassic World Rebirth*, have struck a chord in an industry struggling to navigate the rapidly changing landscape shaped by technology.

Johansson openly criticised how major tech companies have infiltrated the entertainment sector, suggesting that they are now the de facto power brokers. “Big tech guys are the real power players,” she declared, indicating that funding from these corporations extends even to prestigious awards such as the Oscars. This raises troubling questions about control in artistic sectors, echoing sentiments shared widely in the community. She remarked, “I guess we’re being muzzled in all these different ways,” emphasising the pervasive nature of tech influence and the resultant censorship that some believe stifles genuine artistic expression.

In the wake of her recent disputes with OpenAI, Johansson has become particularly vocal about the unchecked proliferation of AI technologies in filmmaking. This controversy, which revolved around a voice in OpenAI's chatbot that resembled her own performance in the film *Her*, underscored deeper issues related to creators' rights and the misuse of personal likenesses. Following heavy backlash over the use of this voice, OpenAI confirmed the voice was not intended to replicate Johansson's but removed it as a precaution, hinting at the ethical quagmire posed by AI in creative fields. Johansson's previous unsuccessful engagements with OpenAI also highlighted her concerns over how such technologies can distort identities and intellectual properties, leading to a call for “some agreed-upon set of boundaries” to protect artists.

This dialogue is particularly relevant considering Johansson's own experiences with deepfake technology, as she has been targeted by falsified content that misrepresents her and her views. These incidents serve as stark reminders of the potential for AI misuse, particularly in amplifying hateful or defamatory messages. Johansson's advocacy for legislation to safeguard personal likenesses reflects a growing awareness among artists of the risks they face in an increasingly digital world. Legislative responses, including proposed bills for better protection of voice and image rights, are gaining traction as these conversations intensify.

Despite the industry's challenges, Johansson's resilience shines through. As she prepares for her role in *Jurassic World Rebirth*, she also looks forward to her directorial debut with *Eleanor the Great* at the Cannes Film Festival. Her decision to step away from the Marvel Cinematic Universe, stating that her character's arc has reached a natural conclusion, has further solidified her commitment to pursuing meaningful roles while maintaining artistic integrity.

Her contributions to the conversation about tech and artistry have not gone unnoticed. Colleagues within the industry, such as Robert Downey Jr. and Sofia Coppola, have lauded Johansson's straightforwardness and leadership qualities. Downey Jr. referred to her as “a natural leader,” praising her for the absence of pretense in her dealings, while Coppola highlighted her early confidence in directing.

As Hollywood continues to grapple with the intertwining of technology and creativity, Johansson's candid observations serve as a crucial reminder of the need for a balance between innovation and safeguarding artistic integrity. The evolving landscape poses both opportunities and challenges, but with advocates like Johansson at the forefront, there is hope for a more ethical approach to the integration of technology in film.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.thesouthafrican.com/lifestyle/celeb-news/international-celebs/scarlett-johansson-criticises-big-techs-influence-on-hollywood/)
* Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.thesouthafrican.com/lifestyle/celeb-news/international-celebs/scarlett-johansson-criticises-big-techs-influence-on-hollywood/), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/scarlett-johanssons-openai-feud-rekindles-hollywood-fear-artificial-intelligence-2024-05-23/), [[3]](https://time.com/7012805/scarlett-johansson-2/)
* Paragraph 3: [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/technology/scarlett-johanssons-openai-feud-rekindles-hollywood-fear-artificial-intelligence-2024-05-23/), [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/hollywood-is-first-last-defense-ai-war-2024-05-21/), [[5]](https://apnews.com/article/532c849ccae3ca9e9325dacfe88e0436)
* Paragraph 4: [[7]](https://cadenaser.com/nacional/2025/02/13/scarlett-johansson-alerta-del-riesgo-de-no-actuar-frente-a-las-amenazas-de-la-ia-tras-sufrir-un-nuevo-deepfake-cadena-ser/)
* Paragraph 5: [[1]](https://www.thesouthafrican.com/lifestyle/celeb-news/international-celebs/scarlett-johansson-criticises-big-techs-influence-on-hollywood/)
* Paragraph 6: [[1]](https://www.thesouthafrican.com/lifestyle/celeb-news/international-celebs/scarlett-johansson-criticises-big-techs-influence-on-hollywood/), [[6]](https://www.ft.com/content/d75f098c-aee1-40b1-8a48-09bf8943f8bb)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.thesouthafrican.com/lifestyle/celeb-news/international-celebs/scarlett-johansson-criticises-big-techs-influence-on-hollywood/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/technology/scarlett-johanssons-openai-feud-rekindles-hollywood-fear-artificial-intelligence-2024-05-23/> - Scarlett Johansson's dispute with OpenAI over the use of a voice resembling hers in their AI chatbot, ChatGPT-4o, has reignited Hollywood's concerns about artificial intelligence. The issue arose when OpenAI's new text-to-video tool, Sora, featured a voice 'eerily similar' to Johansson's performance in the film 'Her.' OpenAI denies the voice was meant to mimic Johansson's, claiming it was cast before they contacted her. This controversy has highlighted broader anxieties about AI's use of copyrighted materials and the impact on creators' rights. While some in the entertainment industry see AI as a tool to enhance production, others are wary of its implications. Historical cases, such as those won by Bette Midler and Tom Waits, provide a legal precedent for Johansson's claims. The SAG-AFTRA performers union advocates for stronger federal protections for voice and likeness rights to address these concerns.
3. <https://time.com/7012805/scarlett-johansson-2/> - In 2023, Scarlett Johansson publicly criticized OpenAI after the company used a voice for its new chatbot, ChatGPT-4o, that closely resembled hers without her permission. Johansson had previously declined a request from OpenAI CEO Sam Altman to voice the chatbot. She highlighted concerns about the protection of personal likeness and identity in the age of deepfakes. OpenAI claimed the voice was from another actor but removed it following heavy backlash, with accusations of unethical behavior and violations of permissions and copyright. The incident spurred Senator Brian Schatz to advocate for regulation to protect individuals' images and voices, leading to the introduction of an AI public awareness and education bill.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/breakingviews/hollywood-is-first-last-defense-ai-war-2024-05-21/> - Scarlett Johansson has accused OpenAI, led by Sam Altman, of using her voice without permission in their AI chatbot, ChatGPT 4.0, evoking parallels to the film 'Her.' Johansson, who declined Altman's prior request to participate, calls for legislation to protect individuals’ likeness, work, and identities. OpenAI has since removed the voice, named Sky, while stating it was from another professional actress. Hollywood frequently finds itself at the forefront of AI disputes; Amazon faces litigation for allegedly using AI in the production of the film 'Road House,' and Taylor Swift's deep fakes prompted a response from the White House. High-profile actors like Johansson, who previously settled a dispute with Walt Disney, have the legal clout to challenge large companies, raising concerns about AI’s use of individuals' images without compensation.
5. <https://apnews.com/article/532c849ccae3ca9e9325dacfe88e0436> - Scarlett Johansson has raised concerns that one of OpenAI's ChatGPT voices, named Sky, sounds 'eerily similar' to her own. This led OpenAI to pause the use of the Sky voice. Johansson had previously been approached by OpenAI CEO Sam Altman to lend her voice to the system but declined. After releasing the Sky demo, Johansson was shocked at the similarity and took legal action. OpenAI denied any intention for Sky to mimic Johansson's voice, stating it belonged to another professional actress, whose identity remains private. OpenAI has apologized and decided to halt Sky's voice usage out of respect for Johansson. The controversy has highlighted broader discussions on AI voice development and gendered programming in technology. Meanwhile, OpenAI's latest AI model, GPT-4o, is noted for its advanced capabilities, including real-time engagement, emotion mimicry, and mood detection, although it currently remains limited to select users and paid subscribers.
6. <https://www.ft.com/content/d75f098c-aee1-40b1-8a48-09bf8943f8bb> - Bryan Lourd, the 63-year-old chief executive of Creative Artists Agency (CAA), is a notable figure in Hollywood known for his low profile yet powerful influence in the entertainment industry. Lourd, originally from small-town Louisiana, has spent four decades in the industry, starting at the William Morris group before rising to prominence at CAA. He is known for his polished appearance and manners, reflective of his Southern upbringing, contrasting with the more aggressive style of his rival, Ari Emanuel of Endeavor. Lourd has navigated various challenges, including Hollywood's recent strikes and the technological disruptions from streaming and AI. A significant incident involved actress Scarlett Johansson, who accused OpenAI's Sam Altman of appropriating her voice for ChatGPT; Lourd successfully mediated to have the voice use paused. With a rich personal history, including an influential relationship with Carrie Fisher, Lourd's career narrative is intertwined with historical shifts within Hollywood. He advocates for better industry practices and artists' rights, positioning himself as a key figure in the evolving entertainment landscape.
7. <https://cadenaser.com/nacional/2025/02/13/scarlett-johansson-alerta-del-riesgo-de-no-actuar-frente-a-las-amenazas-de-la-ia-tras-sufrir-un-nuevo-deepfake-cadena-ser/> - La actriz Scarlett Johansson ha denunciado nuevamente la difusión de un vídeo falso creado con inteligencia artificial (IA) que la muestra junto a otros artistas de Hollywood de origen judío protestando contra Kanye West con una camiseta ofensiva. Johansson, quien ya ha sido víctima previamente de deepfakes, ha declarado en la revista People y ha emitido un comunicado rechazando este nuevo bulo en vídeo. La actriz subrayó la creciente amenaza que representa el uso de la IA para amplificar discursos de odio y enfatizó la importancia de rechazar su mal uso, destacando el riesgo de perder el control sobre la realidad. Asimismo, mencionó un incidente anterior con OpenAI, donde la empresa utilizó una voz muy similar a la suya en ChatGPT, lo que provocó una reacción de su parte.