# Nick Clegg warns UK AI copyright rules risk stifling innovation



Nick Clegg, the former British Deputy Prime Minister and currently President of Global Affairs at Meta, stirred controversy with his recent comments regarding proposed artificial intelligence (AI) regulations in the UK. During a promotional event for his latest book, Clegg warned that the obligation for AI developers to seek permissions from copyright owners before using their work for training purposes could stifle the UK’s burgeoning AI industry. He expressed scepticism about the practicality of such measures, stating, “I don't know how you can get permission from everyone first. I don't see how it can be implemented.” This assertion underscores the tension between technological innovation and the protection of creative works.

Clegg’s remarks come amid ongoing debates within the UK Parliament regarding amendments to the Data (Use and Access) Bill, which would mandate increased transparency from tech firms on the copyrighted materials employed in AI training. The creative community, comprising hundreds of notable figures including Paul McCartney and Elton John, has rallied in support of these amendments, arguing that they are essential for safeguarding creators’ rights. However, British Technology Minister Peter Kyle highlighted the potential economic risks of imposing strict regulations, insisting on the need for a balanced approach that nurtures both the AI and creative sectors.

Amidst these discussions, Beeban Kidron, a member of the House of Lords and a film producer, has emerged as a central figure advocating for these amendments. Kidron argues that enforcing transparency will enhance copyright protections and encourage better practices from AI companies regarding content usage. “This struggle is not over yet,” Kidron asserted, reflecting the ongoing nature of the negotiations and the challenges faced in balancing innovation with legal safeguards.

Clegg’s views echo a broader apprehension about the potential consequences of stringent regulations on technological advancement. He recently likened the current discourse surrounding AI to the ‘moral panic’ seen in the 1980s over video games, cautioning against overly pessimistic narratives that could stifle innovation. He advocates for a regulatory environment that fosters creativity while addressing appropriate concerns about AI, emphasising the risk of losing competitive advantage should the UK impose regulations not mirrored by other countries.

Increasingly, debates around AI and copyright laws highlight a fundamental conflict in the landscape of digital innovation. Critics of the UK government's proposed reforms argue that they disproportionately benefit large technology firms at the expense of creators, with many calling the initiative a “legalisation of music theft.” The call for a new copyright exception, which would allow AI companies to utilise UK copyrighted works without obtaining licenses, has incited significant backlash, including protests from over a thousand artists.

As Clegg and other stakeholders grapple with the implications of AI technologies, the tension is poised to escalate. With calls for both innovation and protection of intellectual property at the forefront of these discussions, the UK government faces a complex challenge in navigating the future of AI regulation. Ensuring that creators are fairly compensated while fostering an environment ripe for technological breakthroughs may ultimately define the success of the UK's efforts in the global AI arena.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://voi.id/en/technology/484916)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://voi.id/en/technology/484916), [[4]](https://www.forbes.com/sites/virginieberger/2024/12/17/what-the-uks-ai-copyright-reform-means-for-2025-and-beyond/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[7]](https://www.parallelparliament.co.uk/lord/baroness-kidron/debate/2024-12-18/lords/grand-committee/data-use-and-access-bill-hl)
* Paragraph 4 – [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/nov/01/nick-clegg-ai-clamour-similar-moral-panic-video-games), [[5]](https://www.irishtimes.com/business/2024/12/05/metas-nick-clegg-warns-european-regulation-of-ai-threatens-innovation/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[6]](https://www.forbes.com/sites/virginieberger/2025/02/28/how-the-uks-ai-copyright-exception-hands-creators-work-to-big-tech-for-free/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://voi.id/en/technology/484916> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/nov/01/nick-clegg-ai-clamour-similar-moral-panic-video-games> - Nick Clegg, Meta's president of global affairs, compared the current AI discourse to the 1980s 'moral panic' over video games. He cautioned against excessive zeal and pessimism surrounding new technologies, noting that such cycles often lead to exaggerated predictions about their impact. Clegg's remarks highlight the need for balanced discussions on AI's potential and risks, especially as international leaders convene to address AI safety concerns.
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/jul/22/putting-the-ai-genie-back-in-the-bottle-not-an-option-metas-nick-clegg-says> - Nick Clegg stated that reversing AI advancements is unfeasible, given that generative AI models utilise publicly available data. He emphasised the importance of multilateral regulation to prevent fragmented laws and highlighted Meta's commitment to transparency and safety in AI development. Clegg also discussed the potential need for international oversight if AI systems achieve a degree of autonomy or agency.
4. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/virginieberger/2024/12/17/what-the-uks-ai-copyright-reform-means-for-2025-and-beyond/> - The UK government's proposal to reform copyright law in favour of AI companies has sparked backlash from creators and industry leaders. The plan includes a broad new copyright exception for commercial generative AI training, allowing AI companies to train on British copyrighted works without a licence. Critics argue that this favours big tech at the expense of protecting creators and intellectual property.
5. <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/2024/12/05/metas-nick-clegg-warns-european-regulation-of-ai-threatens-innovation/> - Nick Clegg warned that stringent AI regulations in Europe could hinder innovation. He questioned the value of being the first to regulate if it leads to being the last to innovate, and criticised the focus on dystopian fears surrounding AI. Clegg advocated for balanced regulation that fosters innovation while addressing legitimate concerns.
6. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/virginieberger/2025/02/28/how-the-uks-ai-copyright-exception-hands-creators-work-to-big-tech-for-free/> - The UK government's revival of a proposal granting AI companies unrestricted access to copyrighted material for training has ignited opposition from the creative industry. Over 1,000 artists, including Kate Bush and Annie Lennox, protested the plan, describing it as the 'legalisation of music theft' through a silent album titled 'Is This What We Want?'.
7. <https://www.parallelparliament.co.uk/lord/baroness-kidron/debate/2024-12-18/lords/grand-committee/data-use-and-access-bill-hl> - Baroness Beeban Kidron, a member of the House of Lords and film producer, proposed amendments to the Data (Use and Access) Bill to protect the creative sector from unlicensed use of copyrighted content by generative AI developers. She highlighted the economic significance of the sector and the need for legislative measures to prevent intellectual property theft.