

Major record labels sue AI companies over copyright

27th June 2024



Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing many things in our lives. Not all of the things are good. Some of the world's biggest record labels are suing two AI companies over possible copyright infringements. The labels include Sony Music,

Universal Music Group and Warner Records. They say two AI start-up companies called Suno and Udio are infringing their copyrighted music on "an almost unimaginable scale". The labels say the AI start-ups have created models to produce music that could "saturate the market with machine-generated content". Lawyers for the record labels say AI-generated music, "will directly compete with, cheapen and ultimately drown out the genuine sound recordings". This could be a disaster for artists.

Many AI companies say their software creates content that is protected under copyright law by the "fair use doctrine". This is a special rule that allows people to reuse copyrighted material legally. Fair use means people can reuse music and written articles for things like news reporting and comedy. Suno CEO Mikey Shulman defended his company. He said: "Our technology is transformative. It is designed to generate completely new output, not to memorize and regurgitate pre-existing content." However, the record labels say the start-ups have created songs that sound exactly like "Dancing Queen" by ABBA and "My Girl" by The Temptations. The labels want compensation of \$150,000 per song from the AI start-ups.

Sources: [bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com) / [wired.com](https://www.wired.com) / [billboard.com](https://www.billboard.com)

Writing

No one should be allowed to make money from other people's material. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

A.I. / record labels / copyright / start-up companies / music / lawyers / sound / artists software / rule / news reporting / comedy / technology / songs / ABBA / compensation

True / False

- 1) All of the world's biggest record labels are suing A.I. companies. T / F
- 2) Record labels say the level of copyright infringement is unimaginable. T / F
- 3) Record labels say AI-generated content could flood the market. T / F
- 4) More artists are going to sing about disasters. T / F
- 5) The "fair use doctrine" allows material to be used for news stories. T / F
- 6) An A.I. start-up CEO says his software only creates new music. T / F
- 7) The article mentions an ABBA song called "My Girl". T / F
- 8) Record labels want the start-ups to pay \$150 per copyrighted song. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1. possible | a. create |
| 2. unimaginable | b. material |
| 3. scale | c. precisely |
| 4. content | d. potential |
| 5. disaster | e. damages |
| 6. protected | f. level |
| 7. generate | g. safeguarded |
| 8. regurgitate | h. catastrophe |
| 9. exactly | i. repeat |
| 10. compensation | j. unheard of |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about copyright?
- b) Who owns the music that artists create?
- c) What are the good things about AI?
- d) What do record labels do?
- e) Is it OK for companies to use AI to recreate famous songs?
- f) Do you think AI will kill off human music makers?
- g) Do you think AI music will be better than music humans make?
- h) What advice do you have for people who want to be pop stars?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. possible copyright | a. scale |
| 2. an almost unimaginable | b. new output |
| 3. saturate the market with machine- | c. doctrine |
| 4. drown | d. for artists |
| 5. This could be a disaster | e. of \$150,000 per song |
| 6. the "fair use" | f. his company |
| 7. people can reuse music | g. infringements |
| 8. CEO Mikey Shulman defended | h. and written articles |
| 9. It is designed to generate completely | i. out the genuine sound |
| 10. The labels want compensation | j. generated content |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What are the bad things about AI?
- What do you think of the "fair use doctrine"?
- What would happen if there was no copyright?
- Does using copyrighted material make someone a criminal?
- Should the start-up companies pay the record labels?
- What do you use AI for?
- What questions would you ask the start-up CEOs?

Spelling

- record labels are niusg two AI companies
- on an almost unimaginable lceas
- music that could arusetta the market
- AI-eegardent music
- gnuneej sound recordings
- This could be a tesasrid for artists
- edotptrec under copyright law
- the fair use citdeonr
- news reporting and odymec
- pre-nseigtxi content
- sound clteayx like "Dancing Queen"
- The labels want ptscmoonaine of \$150,000

Answers – Synonym Match

| | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|
| 1. d | 2. j | 3. f | 4. b | 5. h |
| 6. g | 7. a | 8. i | 9. c | 10. e |

Role Play

Role A – Music

You think music is the thing that needs copyright protection most. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things don't need as much protection. Also, tell the others which of these needs protecting least (and why): paintings, computer software or movies.

Role B – Paintings

You think paintings are the things that needs copyright protection most. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things don't need as much protection. Also, tell the others which of these needs protecting least (and why): music, computer software or movies.

Role C – Computer Software

You think computer software is the thing that needs copyright protection most. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things don't need as much protection. Also, tell the others which of these needs protecting least (and why): paintings, music or movies.

Role D – Movies

You think movies are the things that needs copyright protection most. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things don't need as much protection. Also, tell the others which of these needs protecting least (and why): paintings, computer software or music.

Speaking – Copyright

Rank these with your partner. Put the things most in need of copyright protection at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|-------------|---------------------|
| • Music | • Computer software |
| • Novels | • Movies |
| • Poetry | • Architecture |
| • Paintings | • Songs |

Answers – True False

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | F | 2 | T | 3 | T | 4 | F | 5 | T | 6 | T | 7 | F | 8 | F |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|

Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.