

POLICY BRIEF

Creative *Sovereignty*

Securing the UK's creative
future in the age of AI



University of
Southampton
Web Science Institute

“Our desire, vision, and responsibility for a better future do not belong to any one industry, but to us all.”

The ongoing debate between AI developers and creative industries is often framed as a simple conflict. On the one side, many in the creative industries feel Silicon Valley has weaponised the web to steal the works of writers, musicians, and artists, using creativity they do not own as raw material for machines that will replace humans. On the other, a data-driven technology sector promises to usher in an age of productivity, economic growth, and job creation.

UK policymakers seem stuck in the middle. Despite all the debates and news coverage, the result of all the talk about copyright, opt-ins, opt-outs, infringements, or exemptions in this space is a government position of so-called *strategic pause*. This benefits nobody. Framing this as a copyright issue does not tell the whole story or sufficiently articulate the risks facing the UK.

If we are headed towards an AI-centric world, who will design and own the technologies to shape the creative landscape of tomorrow? Who determines how our media communication is worded and shared? What happens to our international influence if we do not control the terms of how our collective story is told? How good is the promise of new jobs if we have no say in the conditions under which those jobs exist? And worse still,

if we willingly sell out our globally renowned creative industries to make that happen? These problems will not be addressed by resolving copyright disputes alone.

We argue that what is needed is a coordinated policy of conditions for participation: payment, collective bargaining, transparency, and trust. This fosters the development of an AI sector under which the UK has a say, but without undermining the creative industries in the process.

These should be preconditions of AI products and services being offered to UK consumers. Our proposal addresses these significant threats to the UK's *creative sovereignty*: our cultural soft power and the ways we communicate, create, and dream.

In an age that increasingly demands we pick a side, we submit an alternative path for consideration: coexistence. Whether AI does, in fact, rewire the fabric of our society (as we have seen with the web) remains to be seen. But that future should not come at the cost of controlling our collective creativity and the UK's ability to tell its own story on its own terms.

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Policy objective:

Ensure the UK retains influence over how its creative and cultural assets are used in AI systems while supporting both innovation and the long-term sustainability of the creative economy.

The framework for a trusted AI market:

Four integrated pillars that enable innovation while protecting the UK's creative industries and ensuring fair value, transparency, and accountability.



1

Compulsory licence

AI Developers pay a licence fee and are always granted one when compliant with this framework

Strategic purpose

- Creates legal certainty for AI developers
- Creates predictable payment for rightsholders
- Prevents offshoring of model training from becoming a route around UK governance

Success measures

- ✓ AI models serving UK consumers operating under common licensing conditions
- ✓ Reduction in copyright litigation
- ✓ Increase in UK-based licensing activity

2

Creative sovereignty trust

A collective bargaining entity responsible for negotiating, receiving, and distributing licence fees

Strategic purpose

- Reduces fragmentation across creative sectors
- Increases negotiating power relative to frontier AI firms
- Creates a single interface between UK developers and UK creative industries

Success measures

- ✓ Reduced transaction costs
- ✓ Faster licensing agreements
- ✓ Greater participation from SMEs and independent creators

3

Training data disclosures

AI companies are required to disclose the data that they've trained their models on

Strategic purpose

- Creates transparency needed for effective market oversight
- Allows policymakers to understand dependence on UK creative assets
- Enables attribution and remuneration

Success measures

- ✓ Standardised disclosure regime
- ✓ Auditable reporting
- ✓ Improved visibility of AI training practices

4

Audit utility

An independent auditor to assess the controls underpinning this framework

Strategic purpose

- Creates trust in the system
- Verifies compliance without relying on self-reporting
- Enables evidence-based regulation rather than assumption-based regulation

Success measures

- ✓ Public audit reports
- ✓ Increased confidence among creators and developers
- ✓ Reduced enforcement disputes



Why this is different:

Existing debate		Our approach		Strategic result
<i>The conversation today is framed around ownership and exceptions</i>		<i>We focus on rules of participation that enable innovation and ensure fair value is returned</i>		<i>This approach delivers better outcomes for the UK's economy, people and democracy</i>
Who owns the data?	>	What are the rules of participation?	>	Who controls the future market?
Copyright exceptions	>	Market access conditions	>	Economic resilience
Litigation	>	Transparency and audit	>	Trust and legitimacy
Compensation disputes	>	Built-in remuneration	>	Sustainable creative industries
Fragmented interests	>	Collective governance	>	Long-term creative sovereignty

What is the ask?

The UK Government should make these four pillars the conditions of participation in the UK AI market:

- 1** Compulsory licence
- 2** Creative sovereignty trust
- 3** Training data disclosures
- 4** Audit utility

What does success look like?

Economy

- More UK licensing activity
- Lower transaction costs
- Stronger SME participation

Creative Industries

- Sustainable remuneration
- Transparency
- Long-term investment in UK creative assets

Democracy & Sovereignty

- Greater accountability
- Stronger public trust
- UK influence over how knowledge is used in AI systems



Learn more

Read the full paper:

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Web Science Institute:

www.southampton.ac.uk/research/institutes-centres/web-science-institute

Get in touch:

M.Javanshir@soton.ac.uk

A.J.Sackley@soton.ac.uk

T.A.Irvine@soton.ac.uk



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