

EGM 2024

RESOLUTION 1

Proposed by the Management Committee



On artificial intelligence

We know that generative artificial intelligence (AI) can be a useful tool. However, to safeguard human creativity, trusted content and the rights of authors, creators and publishers, it is vital that AI models are developed in a legal, sustainable and ethical manner.

Context

Throughout January 2024, the SoA conducted a survey of members, and 787 authors responded, sharing their views, experience and concerns about the impact of generative AI on their work and careers. Over 9 in 10 authors who responded expressed concern about their work being used without permission, credit or compensation in the development of generative AI systems; the urgent need for transparency from developers about the use of copyright-protected works. They also expressed concerns and a need for transparency and consultation from publishers, agents and other organisations about their use of generative AI systems in production, editing, translating and decision-making.

In early March 2024, [the Publishers Association \(PA\) wrote to developers of generative AI](#) on behalf of its membership expressly stating that they withhold all permission for any works to be used as 'training data' by AI companies. The PA's [180 members](#) include Penguin Random House UK, HarperCollins, Canongate Books and Hachette UK, as well as independent publishing houses and university presses.

The PA's call covers a wide range of authors and their work. However, many SoA members are self-published, published by publishers who are not members of the PA, or are creating work for other media (including broadcast, gaming and live performance). In addition, the PA's members frequently do not hold the right to give consent for copying of our members' work by AI developers for the purpose of developing their systems.

The SoA notes with concern the use of vast amounts of copyright-protected work without the authorisation of the rightsholder in the training, development and operation of AI models. It has caused and continues to cause great harm to the significant creative, human and financial investment made by authors, creators, researchers, academics and publishers.

UK copyright law does not allow copying for such purposes without the explicit consent of the copyright holder or their licensee. Accordingly, the large-scale copying that has been carried out to date amounts to copyright infringement for which rightsholders should be compensated, along with the option of having their works removed or, where not removed, with full credit for further uses.

The SoA board (Management Committee) proposes that, members of the Society of Authors collectively add their support to the PA's call by clarifying explicitly that SoA members do not give consent to such uses; and calling on developers of generative artificial intelligence systems no longer to use rights-protected works without an express licence; to give full transparency on what uses have been made of our members' works; and to compensate authors for the unlawful uses made to date.

This is in line not only with SoA members' views, but also a recent report from the House of Lords Communications and Digital Committee Inquiry into [Large Language Models \(LLMs\)](#), to which [we provided evidence](#), which said that LLMs should not use copyright-protected works without permission or compensation, that there should be support for licensing, and that there should be transparency for rightsholders.

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We invite SoA members to consider and vote on the following statement and actions:

Members of the Society of Authors do not authorise or otherwise grant permission for the use of any of their copyright-protected works in relation to, without limitation, the training, development or operation of AI models, including large language models or other generative AI products, unless they have specifically agreed licensing arrangements.

For the avoidance of doubt, our members do not accept that any AI platform had or has the right to use their work without an express licence.

We call on developers of generative AI:

- 1. To provide full transparency about the works which have been used to develop their model;*
- 2. To make detailed requests for any works they seek to use in future;*
- 3. To obtain authorisation (in advance) from the relevant rightsholder;*
- 4. To offer appropriate remuneration for all uses - past and future;*
- 5. To give appropriate attribution of the author of the work in all cases;*
- 6. On request (general or specific), to remove any work which has been used without authorisation from their systems.*

We urge developers to agree terms on a commercial basis with respective rightsholders. Licensing opportunities exist and are being developed.

Our members authorise us to write to such developers on their behalf giving notice of the above resolutions.

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