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Anthropic Agrees to Enforce Copyright Guardrails on New AI Tools

By Annelise Levy

- Request to stop training AI on lyrics is unresolved
- Guardrails are already in place on current products

Anthropic PBC must apply guardrails to prevent its future AI tools from producing infringing copyrighted content, according to a Monday agreement reached with music publishers suing the company for infringing protected song lyrics.

Eight music publishers—including Universal Music Corp. and Concord Music Group—and Anthropic filed a stipulation partly resolving the publishers' preliminary injunction motion in the US District Court for the Northern District of California. The publishers' request that Anthropic refrain from using unauthorized copies of lyrics to train future AI models remains pending.

Plaintiffs sued Anthropic in October 2023 and sought an injunction in August, arguing it's necessary to stop infringement of their works. Anthropic opposed the motion, arguing fair use over its adoption of the material to train its models since the AI tool was transforming the content, while claiming publishers hadn't demonstrated irreparable harm without an injunction.

Under the agreement, Anthropic will maintain already implemented filters on responses to users' queries in its current models and products, and is allowed to expand, improve, optimize, or change implementation of the guardrails as long as such changes don't materially diminish their efficacy.

The stipulation also allows the publishers to notify Anthropic if these limits aren't effective, and requires Anthropic's direct intervention .

Nothing in the parties' agreement should be interpreted as an admission of liability, fault, or wrongdoing by any party," the stipulation said.

The agreement comes a month after a hearing on the preliminary injunction motion, when Judge Eumi K. Lee took a keen interest in whether Anthropic's intentions and the intended purpose of its products should affect the fair use analysis. Anthropic moved to dismiss the suit in August, and at a Dec. 19 hearing Lee appeared likely to dismiss the publishers' direct third-party infringement and actual knowledge of infringement claims.

Oppenheim & Zebrak LLP, Coblenz Patch Duffy & Bass LLP, Riley & Jacobson PLC, and Cowan Liebowitz & Latman PC represent the music publishers. Latham & Watkins LLP and Neal & Harwell PLC represent Anthropic.

The case is Concord Music Grp. Inc. v. Anthropic PBC, N.D. Cal., No. 24-cv-03811, stipulation filed 12/30/24.

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