

LEGAL STATUS OF INTELLECTUAL DELIVERABLES: THE AUTHORSHIP OF AI-GENERATED WORKS

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ABSTRACT

Objective. The study considers the authorship of works created by artificial intelligence and proposes an alternative concept within which legal relations in the field of AI-based copyright can be regulated.

Methods. The research methods are based on the analysis of a limited number of studies selected according to special parameters and comprehensively reviewed. The authors also use the method of analogy and comparative analysis.

Results. The main concepts of AI authorship and the features and characteristics of strong AI are considered. Based on the study results, it is concluded that strong AI capable of creating unique and original works can be defined as a quasi-subject with limited rights and responsibilities.

Conclusions. AI as a quasi-subject should be recognized as an authorized, but not obligated, subject of legal relations. In copyright law, it may have the right to authorship and publication of the work. The creators of AI and third parties involved in its creation and use must exercise property rights.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, intellectual deliverables, legal personality, responsibilities, creative work, copyright protection.



1. INTRODUCTION

At the present stage of technological progress, artificial intelligence has great potential in the field of copyright (Bonadio et al., 2023; Kazantsev, 2023; Muiyang et al., 2023). AI systems generate creative works (literary, musical, visual, and virtual) that are theoretically subject to copyright (Kirillova et al., 2021; Shumakova et al., 2023; Zhdanova, 2023a). For example, AI writes articles for the Esquire magazine (Singapore) and creates a “new” Rembrandt portrait. There are competitions for artistic works written by AI (Gaffar & Albarashdi, 2024). A real sensation was the completion of the unfinished piece of Dvořák’s piano composition in E minor by the AIVA AI (Burova et al., 2021). After this, AIVA was officially registered as a composer in France and Luxembourg, thereby the artwork created by this AI received protection, and the AI was recognized as the author (Akhmetshin et al., 2018; Leheza et al., 2022; Quintais et al., 2024).

Despite the existing precedents, discussions continue among scholars about the right of authorship to works created by AI as there are opposing opinions. For example, AI does not have creative thinking (Akhmetshin et al., 2024; Sturm et al., 2019) and cannot express itself, so it is difficult to recognize it as the author of the creative works generated (Hristov, 2016). Another group of experts rightly notes that AI is rapidly evolving (Gurinovich et al., 2023) and is already capable of creating unique (Hacohen and Elkin-Koren, 2023) works (Friedmann, 2024) which are comparable to those works created by talented people (Zhang et al., 2023). Several questions arise: is a work created by AI an object of copyright (Koros et al., 2023; Zhdanova, 2023b), how to regulate the authorship of works (Bortnyk et al., 2023) created by AI, and whether such works should be protected as copyright objects (Semenova et al., 2023; Wen et al., 2024). Thus, the authorship of works created by AI or with its participation requires a comprehensive study to develop legislative norms that can protect both the creators of AI and the creative objects it generates.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Experts are debating whether AI has copyrights. Researchers note that AI can create the following intellectual deliverables with human participation or autonomously: musical works, literary works, works of fine art, photo and video works, and other creative works. When identifying the authorship of works created by AI or with its help,



experts emphasize several concepts to determine the right of authorship. We have analyzed the following main theories:

– **The machine-centric theory**, in which AI is the author of the creative work (Bonadio et al., 2023; Gaffar & Albarashdi, 2024; Matulionyte, 2023; Quintais et al., 2024);

– **The theory of hybrid authorship**, according to which AI is a co-author of the creative work (Friedmann, 2024; Hacoheh and Elkin-Koren, 2023; Lemley, 2023; Norberg & Norell, 2023; Wen et al., 2024; Zhang et al., 2023);

– **The work-for-hire theory**, according to which artificial intelligence is defined as an employee who creates some work as commissioned (Griffin et al., 2023; Kompa et al., 2023; Koros et al., 2023; Vyas et al., 2023);

– **The anthropocentric theory**, when AI acts as a tool in creative work and does not have any rights (Abbott & Rothman, 2023; Aplin & Pasqualetto, 2019; Catanzaro, 2023; Hristov, 2016; Stech, 2023; Sturm et al., 2019);

– **The theory of zero authorship** proposes that there is no authorship when AI creates any works (Hristov, 2020; Levendowski, 2018; Schönberger, 2018);

– **The contamination theory** is designed to regulate complex situations when there is a different combination and influence of AI creating works (Ananto, 2023; Hayes, 2023; Laskowska-Litak, 2023; Shtefan, 2021).

To determine the scope of copyright, experts classified AI according to its creative potential into the following categories:

– AI has little influence on the creation process, it simply edits the work, corrects stylistic errors, and plays an insignificant role (Ahuja, 2020; Díaz-Noci, 2020; Ihalainen, 2018; Wu, 1997);

– AI influences the result of intellectual activity, but to a limited extent, partially writes the text, processes images, complements musical works, etc. (Murray, 2023; Palace, 2019; White & Matulionyte, 2019);

– AI independently generates creative work that has both novelty and uniqueness (Bracha, 2023; Demir, 2023; Lee, 2023; Roos, 2023; Selvadurai & Matulionyte, 2020; Tan, 2023).

Based on this classification, scientists distinguish between strong and weak AI. Weak AI is not capable of creating works independently that claim legal protection. Therefore, it makes no sense to discuss the rights of weak AI.



AI capable of autonomously creating works has the following characteristics: self-organization (Xiao, 2023); the learning ability (Margoni, 2018; Sun, 2021); the self-learning ability (Okorie, 2023); the ability to think rationally.

The study aims to consider the basic concepts of authorship of works created by AI and propose an alternative to regulate legal relations in the field of copyright with the participation of AI.

3. METHODS

To determine the authorship of works created by AI and the possibility of their copyright protection, we selected those studies by researchers from different countries that have a long-term impact on the research trends. This article used a desk review and comparative analysis of works. For a comprehensive analysis, studies were selected that contained definitions of the right of authorship of works created by AI, works created by AI as an object of copyright, the legal status of AI, and the concept of authorship of works created by AI.

When searching for documents, we followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) standards. The PRISMA consists of four stages: the selection of articles, screening, deciding on their eligibility, and finalizing the list of studies for inclusion in the systematic review.

Step 1: Data collection

We selected scientific works on the following topics: the authorship rights of AI, the creation of works by AI, concepts of AI authorship, and the protection of works created by AI. We conducted a bibliographic search in Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. A total of 251 publications were collected across several categories.

Step 2. Data filter using selection criteria

Studies were selected according to the following criteria:

1. The authors have at least three publications on the topic “Copyright in AI” and “Copyright protection for works created by AI” written over the past 10 years;
2. More than 50% of research on legal topics in the total number of publications by these authors;



3. The author's profile must indicate that their publications are thematically related to legal sciences;

4. Their scientific works must have been written between 1990 and 2024.

Using this approach, more than 251 publications were initially selected.

Step 3. Data filter after reading the text

We read the full text of articles, whose titles and abstracts made it difficult to determine the relevance of the topic. After careful sampling, 51 papers were selected.

This methodology allowed us to identify the main concepts of AI authorship and propose the concept of authorship of works created by AI to regulate legal relations in the field of copyright with due regard to the participation of AI in the creation of such works.

4. RESULTS

Experts have identified the typical features of strong AI: self-organization (Margoni, 2018), the ability to learn (Sun, 2021) and self-learn (Okorie, 2023), and rational thinking. Supporting this opinion, we add that strong AI should have such a quality as autonomy. AI can be autonomous so that it does not require constant human intervention to complete its tasks. Its autonomy can be achieved through the use of machine learning algorithms and neural networks, which allow the system to independently learn and adapt to new data. This helps AI make decisions and perform creative tasks (create music, literary works, visual art, and virtual objects) without human intervention. AI must perceive, analyze, evaluate, and simulate images (processes), as well as have cognitive-analytical abilities and creative potential (Selvadurai & Matulionyte, 2020).

Considering these qualities, AI can be classified according to its creative potential and direct impact on the subject of copyright (Table 1).



Table 1. Types of AI by impact on the copyright object

<i>AI is a tool for generating creative works</i>	A person is the author of a creative work, the influence of AI is minimal, it can be used, for example, as an auto-editor (Ahuja, 2020; Díaz-Noci, 2020; Ihalainen, 2018; Wu, 1997)
<i>Public ownership of a creative work</i>	AI generates a creative work according to a given algorithm and this work can be used by anyone for free (White & Matulionyte, 2019)
<i>AI is a co-author</i>	AI creates a work together with a person, while AI must have autonomy and the ability to think analytically and creatively (Murray, 2023; Palace, 2019)
<i>AI is the author</i>	A person does not participate in the creation process; artificial intelligence creates a creative work independently (Bracha, 2023; Demir, 2023; Tan, 2023)

Thus, AI can be the author of a creative work only if it is new and original (Roos, 2023), creative (Lee, 2023) and independent (Xiao, 2023). AI should have the freedom of choice in decision-making when creating a potential work.

These characteristics allow it to be classified as a strong AI and address the possible recognition of the right of authorship for AI by lawyers and legislators.

5. DISCUSSION

When analyzing the works selected, we identified the main concepts of AI authorship. According to the machine-centric theory, AI is the author of the works created. Scholars assume that if AI independently generates a literary, artistic, or musical work, with minimum human participation, the author of such a work will be AI (Matulionyte, 2023). This approach can minimize emerging questions about copyright ownership. However, AI lacks the fundamental features of a subject of law: will (Butler, 1982), expression of will (Zatarain, 2017), and interest (Maggiore, 2018). Therefore, AI cannot be considered an analogue of a real person (Hristov, 2020). The mechanical application of this theory may give rise to more legal conflicts, create difficulties in law enforcement and have a socio-ethical impact of dehumanization on a person as a subject of law (Laskowska-Litak, 2023). Therefore, it is inappropriate to give AI a fully legal personality in order to protect intellectual property.

Many scholars support the anthropocentric theory, according to which the author of a creative work created by AI is a person (Stech, 2023), i.e., AI creators, developers or users (Abbott & Rothman, 2023). Under this approach, AI is a tool for creating intellectual deliverables (Aplin & Pasqualetto, 2019; Catanzaro, 2023). At the



initial stage of creating AI, this approach suited everyone. As AI was developing and acting independently in the generation of creative works, experts, lawyers, and legislators began to question the right of authorship and protection of AI-created works (Hayes, 2023). Since AI is capable of self-learning, the result may not coincide with the original intentions of its creators. Using this approach, it is very difficult to determine the author: the creator, owner, or user of AI (Ananto, 2023).

In conformity with the work-for-hire theory proposed by some scholars (Griffin et al., 2023), AI acts as an employee who produces a creative work (Kompa et al., 2023) regarded as a work for hire within the framework of these legal relations. This approach cannot radically change existing laws. It is required to slightly adjust current legal norms (Vyas et al., 2023). However, a more detailed examination of this approach reveals that when creating a work for hire, the rights to it belong to the author, and the employer has only exclusive rights. Therefore, the legal personality of AI is questioned again.

The theory of hybrid authorship is proposed to apply to works created by AI. Under this theory, AI acts as a co-author when creating intellectual deliverables (Lemley, 2023). In practice, the situation is as follows: the co-authors of a creative work are the creator, the user, and the AI itself. According to existing laws, the institution of co-authorship involves assigning the rights and responsibilities to each co-author through a signed agreement (Norberg & Norell, 2023). Does the agreement concluded with AI make sense and what rights should be assigned to it? To what extent exclusive rights, personal copyrights, and rights that determine economic benefits can implement such a variant of co-authorship?

The theory of zero authorship seems to be the most rational. It claims that authorship should not be assigned to works created by AI. Such works should go into the public domain regardless of creative contribution and value (Levendowski, 2018). According to the developers of this theory, AI does not have legal personality and does not need copyright rights (Schönberger, 2018). In the future, this approach will destroy an economic incentive to create AI that is capable of creativity.

Among the existing theories of AI authorship, none can fully regulate legal relations in the field of copyright protection of AI-generated works. To attract investment in the development of AI capable of generating creative works, it is necessary to develop legal provisions that can regulate the scope of AI-related



copyrights (Naqvi, 2020). It is advisable to consider an approach in which it is possible to assume AI authorship.

When developing the concept of authorship of works created by AI, it is necessary to consider that, on the one hand, AI has a potential to create unique and original objects of copyright (Shtefan, 2021). On the other hand, AI has no economic goals for the sale of created works. In addition, AI does not need recognition, approval or motivation (Kudinov, 2022). Thus, to regulate legal relations in the field of copyright with the participation of AI, a new legal institution is required since AI has specific qualities and features that have no analogues. Accordingly, AI as the producer of creative works that require protection can be defined as a quasi-subject with limited rights and responsibilities. AI as a quasi-subject may have some elements of legal personality but does not have the status of a full-fledged subject of law. It is an artificial construct that is defined for the convenience of law enforcement. AI as a quasi-subject should be recognized as an authorized, but not obligated, subject of legal relations in copyright law. This is stipulated by circumstances when the legal construct of a quasi-subject is intended to replace subjects of law in exceptional cases necessary for law enforcement. However, it is impossible and inappropriate to endow a quasi-subject with all elements of right and legal capacity.

The author's rights are a set of personal non-property and property rights (Zibner, 2019). Personal non-property rights include the right to authorship, integrity, and publication of the work (Kasap, 2018). Exclusive rights are as follows: the right to transfer and use the work both commercially and freely (de Souza, 2021). Thus, AI capable of generating creative works may have the right to authorship and publication of the creative work, while its creator and people involved in the production of creative works with the participation of AI must exercise property rights.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study results, we concluded that to resolve legal relations in the field of copyright with the participation of AI, it is necessary to develop the concept of AI authorship. It is worth mentioning that only strong AI with the following qualities can generate creative works:

- Self-organization;
- Ability to learn and self-learn;



- Rational thinking;
- Autonomy;
- Ability to accumulate experience and use it to make creative works;
- Ability to model images, processes, and situations;
- Cognitive and analytical abilities.

AI capable of creating unique creative works can be defined as a quasi-subject with limited rights and responsibilities. AI as a quasi-subject should be recognized as an authorized, but not obligated, subject of legal relations. In copyright law, it may have the right to authorship and publication of the work, while the creators of AI and third parties involved in its creation and use must exercise property rights.

The study is limited by the sample size. In total, the articles initially used 266 monographs, reports, and statistics. After careful consideration, 51 works were selected that described the main concepts of AI authorship and possible prospects for the development of strong AI with creative potential.

Further research on AI authorship needs to consider the possible integration of AI and the use of its inventions in patent law.

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