

Media release

Creative work, AI and the platform economy

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Four hundred participants attend CLTR 2024 in Basel

When the computer becomes your competitor: at CLTR 2024, representatives from the creative sector, politics, business and academia discussed the relationship between creative work, artificial intelligence and the platform economy.

According to a recent study by PwC Switzerland, around half of Swiss creative professionals already use AI platforms, such as ChatGPT, Midjourney, Amper Music and ElevenLabs. The tools take care of routine tasks, facilitate research and provide inspiration.

However, for creative professionals, AI generators are more than just tools. When a piece of software speaks, sings, writes or paints, it becomes your colleague, rival or competitor. This raises very fundamental questions about the position of non-human authors and the value and nature of intellectual creations in general.

CLTR 2024, the first national public event focusing on creative work, artificial intelligence and the platform economy, took place in Basel on Tuesday. Four hundred participants from politics, academia and business discussed how an industry which employs 300,000 people and accounts for around two per cent of Switzerland's total economic output intends to deal with the unfettered progress in the field of generative AI.

"Today's event is just the beginning," said Federal Councillor Beat Jans, Head of the Federal Department of Justice and Police (FDJP), in his welcoming address to the Congress Center Basel. Catherine Chammartin, Director General of the Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IPI), which organised the event, reiterated that the discussion is just getting started. The long-term goal, according to Ms Chammartin, is a solution that protects authors without hindering innovation.

Discussion of possible regulatory measures still to come

Five panels on the topics of language, images, music, designs and films debated the legal status of AI-generated works, among other issues. AI generators' hunger for data and the question of how to compensate the authors of the works used to train the models also gave rise to much discussion.

Afterwards, Catherine Chammartin discussed possible state regulatory measures on the main stage with Nadine Adler Spiegel from the Federal Office of Culture (FOC) and Bernard Maissen, Director General of the Federal Office of Communications (OFCOM).

Maissen spoke of 'painful changes' for many creative professionals that could not be prevented through regulation. Adler Spiegel insisted that creative professionals must continue to be fairly compensated in future.

How and where the Swiss legal framework is to be further developed will be decided by the Federal Council. OFCOM is currently compiling an overview of possible regulatory approaches to artificial intelligence. Its report is to be presented to the government before the end of the year.

About the IPI

The Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IPI) is the federal centre of competence for patents, trade marks, geographical indications, design and copyright. Individuals and companies can register their inventions and creations with the IPI to protect them from being copied. In addition to this, the IPI informs the public about the various intellectual property rights.

It also fulfils a political mandate in all areas of intellectual property by preparing legislation, advising the federal authorities and representing Switzerland within international organisations and vis-à-vis other countries.

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