

TED Talk — Oral Script

« AI and Screenwriters in Europe : Progress, Consent and Value Sharing »

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SLIDE 1 — Cover

Opening

What brings you here, this Saturday morning ?

In a festival as warm and joyful as this one. To come and listen to a lawyer. A lawyer who represents a federation of guilds. Guilds that, for many of you, may feel far away.

The answer is one sentence. Something is happening, right now, in our profession. Something with very real consequences. Consequences for the next generation of screenwriters. Consequences for the diversity of the stories tomorrow will hear. And these consequences could follow two very different paths. Two paths that nothing yet forces us to choose between.

And how many times, in history, has individual fear made us blind to the collective choices we had to make ?

SLIDE 2 — TWO TRAJECTORIES

Two paths. Let me leave them, here, in this room. Without naming them. Because you will see them better than I can.

SLIDE 3 — What is already fragile

Look around you. Look at who writes, today, in our countries. Women, men, of all origins, of all generations, of all sensibilities. Stories that sometimes disturb. Stories that take risks. Stories that do not minimise friction.

Remember how fragile this plurality is. Remember how loud the questions of inequality between women and men still are, inside our own profession. Remember how often we have

said that the precarity of our work ends up opening the door only to those who already have the material safety to face the insecurity that comes with our craft.

And so the question that comes to my mind, and that I would like to leave with you for a moment, is this one. Can an algorithm tell, or choose, the story of being human ?

▶ SLIDE 4 — The question in one sentence

And imagine, just for a moment, the other path. The path where this tension we know, where this fragile plurality, breaks. So I ask you this.

In ten years, will the stories our children watch have been pre-written by models trained to minimise friction ?

Smoothed out.

Standardised.

Reassuring.

Written, in the end, by an average of all the stories of the past.

No friction, no fiction.

Which of these two paths better describes what we call a craft ? And which of them, quietly, with no spectacular decision, is becoming possible ?

Movement II — What is already being built

Now, I would like us to leave the imagined paths for a moment. Let us look together at what is happening, right now, before our eyes. Because the positive path is perhaps not as far away as some pessimists like to suggest. It is being drawn. Step by step. Decision by decision. And this is exactly what makes this year so decisive.

▶ SLIDE 5 — Four signals. One direction.

On November 11, 2025, a German court in Munich condemned OpenAI. The case had been brought by GEMA, the German society of music composers. And what this judgment teaches us, beyond the result, is something simple. A European court has finally agreed to look at what everyone already knew, technically. But what few people dared to name, legally. Training a model is not a simple reading that leaves no trace. The works are memorised. And this mémorisation can now be proven in court. Case law is moving forward.

A few months later, on March 10, 2026, the European Parliament adopted a resolution. It is called the Voss Report. And it marks a political turning point at the level of the Union. For the first time, such a visible text says this. The fundamental principles of copyright are not to be negotiated down in the name of innovation. There must be mandatory transparency from AI providers. Because without transparency, neither our consent nor our compensation can be checked.

And the text goes further. If an AI provider does not document the data it used for training, it will be presumed to have used our works. This is what we call a reversal of the burden of proof. And it is, at last, a wording that aligns the law with the technical reality of what is happening.

It is not yet binding. But think of it as a version 2.0. A new pitch from the European Union. And as scriptwriters, you will agree with me. This new version is much more convincing than the one from 2019.

On March 17, 2026, in Geneva, WIPO (the World Intellectual Property Organization) launched a global platform on AI infrastructure. It is a quiet signal. Rarely commented on. But it is important. Because it says that the international community is finally beginning to recognise something. Without an infrastructure to identify works at the global scale, none of the protections we write in Brussels will work in practice. And what I see in this platform is the beginning of a conversation that we, as authors, must take part in.

And then, closer to home, there is one European example worth naming. SACEM, in France, is the collecting society of music composers. It has put in place an operational system for composers who would never want to trade their right to say no to AI use in exchange for compensation. It even makes a choice that may go against its own direct interest, to leave a free choice to its authors. Because it understands the fundamental stakes behind the right to say no.

Let me stop here for a second. Because if we take a step back, what these four signals tell us together is this. The positive path exists. It is being built.

It involves parliaments.

It involves courts.

It involves international organisations.

It involves collecting societies.

And it already involves coalitions that go far beyond each of our national guilds.

▶ SLIDE 6 — Progress — and what we still need to build

But then, if all of this is moving forward, why should we still be vigilant ? More precisely, why are we here, this morning, together ? Because inside these advances themselves (and this is where careful reading becomes essential), there are a few words, a few formulations, a few legal constructions, that could, in just a few years, tip the meaning of the whole structure. And this is precisely what I would now like to speak about.

And the question that, in the end, returns at every level of these advances, is one and the same. Who builds the infrastructure ?

▶ SLIDE 7 — Consent is not about how much. It's about yes or no.

Movement III — Consent, scale, tension

And this is where I would like us to stop, for a moment, together. Because inside all of these advances, there is one word that keeps coming back. A word that may sound harmless. But on this one word, I deeply believe, the entire balance of the coming years will play out. That word is consent.

And consent is not, first of all, a question of how much. It is, first of all, a question of yes or no. Consent is the right to say no. If we cannot say no, we do not consent. We submit, in silence, with a cheque. To consent or to submit. This is exactly the difference between an author and a supplier.

Authors have rights.

Suppliers have contracts.

We are not the same.

▶ SLIDE 8 — Are we measuring at the right scale ?

So please imagine the following situation. And I ask you to imagine it not as an abstract debate. But as a very concrete situation that many of you will live in the coming months, perhaps even in the coming weeks.

Are we measuring at the right scale ? €2,000 per year. Is that the right order of magnitude ?

Someone tells you that a mechanism has been found. That it is fast. That it allows you to receive something right now. That it is better than nothing. That, in any case, it is too late to stop what has already happened. And someone offers you an amount. Let us say, just to give a figure, 2,000 euros per year. That is not nothing. When you know the precarity of our profession, that is really not nothing.

And here is the question I would like to leave in this room. Not to answer it. Because it is for all of us to answer.

Do these 2,000 euros compensate us ?

Or do they buy us ?

Do they repair what was taken ?

Or do they legitimise, for the next ten years, the fact that it is being taken ?

Because here is what concerns me. The harm that is being prepared is not only individual. It is not only about the income of each of us. It is also a collective harm. A harm to our profession itself. A harm to our profession in ten years. To the number of screenwriters our countries will still be able to support. A harm to the young screenwriter of tomorrow. A young screenwriter who will need decent economic conditions, just to enter our profession. And to stay in it. And no quickly negotiated compensation will absorb this harm. Not if the compensation is set at a level that does not reflect what is truly at stake.

And here we have to speak honestly about a comparison that we sometimes hear. A comparison that seems deeply misleading to me. Some might be tempted to think that compensation for AI could simply follow the model that already exists for, let us say, private copy. But this is not the same scale at all.

AI is not private copy.

The scale of impact is not the same.

The scale of compensation cannot be either.

Private copy is when a user records an episode of a series on their box, to watch later with the family. The harm is real, but it is limited. It is domestic. It is contained. What we are talking about here is not private use. It is the massive and systematic ingestion of our work. To produce, at almost no cost, new works that may compete with the very works that trained the models. It is really not the same thing. And to accept, without debate, that the reference point

of private copy could be the compass for AI compensation, would be a mistake of scale. A mistake that would then take us twenty years to undo.

So look at the tension carefully. On one side, there is the pressure of urgency. The very understandable temptation to take what is offered, because tomorrow is uncertain. On the other side, there is the responsibility to hold the line. To hold the long view. To hold the idea that compensation must match the scale of the harm. Not the scale of what those who profit from our work are willing to give up without pain.

This tension does not only go through our contracts. It goes through each one of our organisations. At every level. Guilds know it. Authors' societies know it. And it is precisely because this tension goes through all of us, that we need, together, to speak about it openly. Without placing it on the shoulders of a single actor. Because no single actor can solve it alone.

And it is most likely there. In this honest conversation about the timing of compensation. About the level of compensation. About the conditions of consent. That is where the path we will take is truly being decided.

▶ SLIDE 9 — A right without infrastructure is a rule without enforcement

Movement IV — The missing piece

And then, there is one last thing. The piece that, to me, is missing from the whole puzzle. And on this one, I would like us to stop together, one last time. Because everything we have spoken about so far (consent, compensation, transparency, the presumption of use) all of this rests on one silent assumption. The assumption that we, as authors, are able to identify our works in the training data of the models. That we can know whether or not a scene, a dialogue, a universe of ours has been ingested.

And the truth is, today, at the global scale, this capacity does not exist. Not really. Not in a shared way. Not in an interoperable way.

So imagine what this means in practice. We give an author the right to say no. We tell them they can register on a list of exclusions. We tell them that AI providers will have to take this into account. But we do not give them the tool that would let them, individually, know whether their works are in this corpus or that one. And we do not give AI providers a common reference that would let them recognise these works in a reliable way. What is a right worth, in these conditions, if we cannot exercise it? What is an opt-out worth, if we declare it into the void?

Imagine banning diesel cars from city centres, but building no system to identify them at the gate. The rule exists. The ban exists. But nothing happens, because nothing can enforce it. This is exactly what a right to say no would be, for us, without an infrastructure to identify our works. A perfect rule on paper. A fiction on the ground.

And this is exactly why the platform launched at WIPO last March, the one I mentioned earlier, is so important. Not because it solves the problem. It does not solve the problem. But because it finally names the question. And this question, you see, is by nature an international question. No country alone can build a global infrastructure to identify works. No guild, however powerful, can do it alone. No society of authors, however well-organised, can do it alone.

And it is here, I believe, that the most interesting promise of this moment lies. Because what is missing can only be built together. And together means, in the proper sense, with several of us. With those who share the same craft beyond borders. (This is what European guilds do, within our federation.) With those who carry the expertise of managing the repertoires. (This is what authors' societies can do, when they decide to invest in this question.) With those who have the power to set the norm. (This is what parliaments and courts are beginning to do.) No one can do it alone. And this is, perhaps, after all, the best news of this story.

▶ SLIDE 10 — So — who writes this story ?

Conclusion — The story to write together

I came here to speak with you about law. About licences. About Brussels. But what I would like us to take away, you and I, is something simpler. And much bigger.

The fears we each carry, in our contracts, in our commissions, in our incomes, these fears are real. They are legitimate. But they are individual. And fear, you know better than anyone, is rarely a good storyteller.

What we have to write together, you and I, is not a short story. It is a story worthy of our craft. A collective story.

So the question I would like to leave with you is this. If we, screenwriters, had to write this story. Can any one of us carry it alone ? Can a single guild ? Can a single authors' society ? The answer, I think, we all know. So the only question left is this one. What are we waiting for ?

And if I may add just one more question. With whom are we going to decide to write it ?

Because what is at stake is not only the craft of the screenwriter. It is the diversity of the stories tomorrow will hear. And that, I believe, no one in this room thinks should be left to anyone other than us.

 SLIDE 11 — We are not alone.

An algorithm cannot tell our story.

Five million of us can.