WIPO CONVERSATION ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND FRONTIER TECHNOLOGIES
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DRAFT INTERVENTION BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE

The Delegation of the Republic of Singapore appreciates the opportunity to deliver this intervention.

Singapore recognises the indisputable importance of AI to the global economy. Equally, we recognise the importance of protecting the interests of human creators and rightsholders, who should enjoy the fruits of their creativity and investment, and be incentivised to continue creating for the benefit of society. All this requires striking a careful balance in the IP system.

Singapore's CDA Exception

In Singapore, we too have considered the challenges arising from using copyright works as training data. Our approach has been to put in place an exception for computational data analysis in our Copyright Act, which has been effective since Nov 2021. This exception makes clear that copyright works may be used for text and data mining purposes, including machine learning. It supports Singapore's drive to catalyse data-driven innovation, and has been well-received by AI developers for providing legal certainty when using copyright works as training data.

We believe that the solution to the conundrum being debated in this session lies in fostering a balanced approach to facilitating the use of training data. Where this balance lies is for member states to calibrate based on their social, economic, and cultural circumstances. For Singapore, even as we facilitate the use of such data through a copyright exception, we have safeguards – developed through extensive industry consultations – that set clear limits on what is permissible.

For example, the exception requires users to obtain lawful access to the works used as training data and generally prohibits users from further supplying the works to third parties. Such crucial safeguards preserve and protect rightsholders' commercial interests and freedom to conduct business based on licensing and subscription models for access.

TDM-Enabled AI Innovation in Singapore

In the two and a half years or so since the exception came into force, Singapore has witnessed the development and adoption of TDM-enabled AI innovation by both our private and public sector. Just last December, we launched a $70 million initiative to develop the first large language model that will be trained to understand and generate human language, incorporating the languages of South-East Asia. When deployed, it will enable users in the region to appreciate the context and values related to one another's diverse cultures and languages.

Looking Ahead

In this, we also see how AI possesses tremendous potential for good: to uplift human potential; to unite and not divide; to preserve and not destroy. We must ensure that the concerns of creators and rightsholders whose works are used for AI development continue to be heard by industry stakeholders and policymakers, and that these creators and rightsholders too, reap the benefits of AI-enabled innovation. For generative AI has sometimes been dramatised as a struggle between humans and bots, but the reality is that the success of such technologies – which extend beyond expressive content generation – has the potential to benefit all humans.

Singapore values our participation in this and other global conversations, which comes at an inflection point in human history. In these early days of the AI spring, technology and market developments are rapidly evolving. So too are societal sentiments. Similarly, legal frameworks have not coalesced around a single approach. To help make sense of all this, just last month, the IP Office of Singapore published a landscape report on AI and IP law, identifying and summarising key AI/IP issues, including those surrounding training data for AI models, and the different approaches adopted by various jurisdictions on such issues.

In charting the way ahead, Singapore will continue to monitor these developments closely, to collaborate internationally, and to engage with the full gamut of stakeholders to understand the different perspectives and interests at play.

Thank you.