

C1-C2 Worksheet: Taylor Swift, AI And The Ownership Of Identity - 28 April 2026

Article

Taylor Swift's latest legal move shows how quickly artificial intelligence is forcing celebrities to rethink the boundaries of identity. According to recent Reuters reporting, her company has filed trademark applications for short audio clips and a performance image, in an attempt to crack down on unauthorised AI deepfakes that could pass off synthetic content as genuine endorsements. The filings draw on trademark law rather than relying only on copyright or publicity rights, and they appear designed to shore up control over her voice, likeness, consent and attribution in an environment where a convincing imitation can be manufactured at scale.

The strategy is legally inventive because it tries to open up a new route for protecting a public figure's persona. A trademarked sound normally identifies a product or brand, but a distinctive voice also carries emotional recognition, commercial value and cultural authority. That is why AI impersonation can feel more invasive than ordinary parody: it can blur the line between performance, fraud and personal violation. If scammers can cash in on a copied voice or face, the harm is not only financial. Authenticity itself becomes commodified, and audiences may struggle to know who is actually speaking.

Yet the implications go well beyond one musician. Artists, actors, influencers and ordinary workers may all need safeguards as synthetic media becomes easier to produce. At the same time, any attempt to push back against AI cloning must avoid rules so broad that they stifle satire, criticism or legitimate creative reuse. Swift's filings may therefore set a precedent, but they will not settle the issue on their own. The harder question is whether the law can protect identity without turning every resemblance into an enforceable property claim, especially when the boundary between tribute and theft remains ambiguous.

True/False

Decide if each statement is True (T) or False (F).

1. The article says Swift's filings are intended to protect her voice and image from unauthorised AI use.
2. The writer claims that trademark law has already solved the legal problem of AI deepfakes.
3. The article connects AI impersonation with possible fraud, fake endorsements and public confusion.
4. The issue is presented as relevant beyond the music industry.
5. The writer argues that all AI imitations of public figures should automatically be banned.
6. The article suggests that a copied voice may harm both finances and authenticity.
7. The final paragraph says satire and criticism should be treated exactly like theft.
8. The article claims that fans, rather than courts or lawmakers, should decide what counts as legal imitation.

Phrase Match

Match the phrases (1-10) to the correct definitions (A-J).

Phrases (1-10)	Definitions (A-J)
1. crack down on	A. to strengthen or support something
2. draw on	B. to profit from something, especially unfairly
3. pass off as	C. to make a distinction less clear
4. shore up	D. to resist or oppose something
5. open up	E. to use something as a source
6. blur the line	F. to create an example that may influence later cases
7. cash in on	G. to be wider or more extensive than something
8. push back against	H. to take strong action against something
9. set a precedent	I. to create or provide a possibility
10. go beyond	J. to make something false appear genuine

Synonym Match

Match the words (1-10) to the correct synonyms (A-J).

Words (1-10)	Synonyms (A-J)
1. likeness	A. credit
2. consent	B. unapproved
3. attribution	C. commercialised
4. enforceable	D. image or appearance
5. unauthorised	E. unclear
6. impersonation	F. genuineness
7. commodified	G. permission
8. safeguards	H. imitation
9. ambiguous	I. protections
10. authenticity	J. legally binding

Use the new language

Please choose 5 words or phrases and make your own sentence using the new word or phrase.

Discussion Questions

Student A

1. Would you recognise your favourite singer's voice if it was copied by AI?
2. Should a celebrity be able to control how their voice and image are used?
3. Have you ever seen an AI image, video or voice clip that looked or sounded convincing?
4. What kinds of fake endorsements would worry you most?
5. Is a person's voice part of their identity, their brand, or both?
6. Would you listen to an AI-generated song if it sounded like a famous artist?
7. How can ordinary people protect themselves from fake AI content?
8. Do you think audiences are becoming more sceptical of what they see online?

Student B

1. Should the law treat a copied voice as a form of property, a form of identity, or something else?
2. Where should the boundary lie between parody, tribute and theft?
3. Does trademark law seem like a suitable tool for pushing back against AI impersonation?
4. Could strict rules around voice and likeness stifle satire, criticism or artistic experimentation?
5. What kinds of safeguards should platforms have before AI-generated celebrity content is published?
6. How might music, advertising and political communication change if copied voices become normal?
7. Should ordinary people have the same protection over their likeness as celebrities?
8. In 20 years, will digital identity be something people actively license, insure and defend?

Answer Key

True/False: 1=T, 2=F, 3=T, 4=T, 5=F, 6=T, 7=F, 8=F

Phrase Match: 1=H, 2=E, 3=J, 4=A, 5=I, 6=C, 7=B, 8=D, 9=F, 10=G

Synonym Match: 1=D, 2=G, 3=A, 4=J, 5=B, 6=H, 7=C, 8=I, 9=E, 10=F

Example sentences with the phrases

1. Regulators promised to crack down on misleading AI adverts.
2. The documentary draws on interviews, archive footage and private letters.
3. Scammers tried to pass off the fake recording as a genuine message.
4. The company hired extra lawyers to shore up its intellectual property strategy.
5. New technology can open up opportunities, but it can also create new risks.
6. AI tools often blur the line between human creativity and machine production.
7. Some websites try to cash in on famous names without permission.
8. Musicians are beginning to push back against unauthorised voice cloning.
9. The court's decision could set a precedent for future AI cases.
10. The debate goes beyond celebrities and affects ordinary workers too.