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Good News for Creators in The Battle Against AI Companies

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Thomson Reuters has won a landmark AI copyright case against Ross Intelligence, which used headnotes from Westlaw to train its AI without permission. The ruling sets a precedent for the use of copyrighted material in AI training

Thomson Reuters has won a major AI copyright case in the United States. The case, which began in 2020, involved Thomson Reuters suing Ross Intelligence, a legal AI startup, for allegedly using copyrighted materials from its Westlaw platform to train a competing AI-powered legal search engine.

US Circuit Court Judge Stephanos Bibas ruled in favor of Thomson Reuters, finding that Ross Intelligence's use of Westlaw's headnotes—summaries of key legal points—constituted copyright infringement. The judge rejected Ross Intelligence's fair use defense, noting that the company intended to compete directly with Westlaw by creating a market substitute. This ruling highlights the importance of copyright protections in the AI era and sets a precedent for future cases involving the use of copyrighted material for AI training.

The decision has broader implications for the ongoing debate between generative AI companies and rights holders. As AI technology advances, the legal framework governing the use of copyrighted material will be crucial in shaping the industry's future. This case underscores the necessity for companies to obtain proper licensing and consent before using copyrighted content, even for AI training purposes.

This ruling is expected to influence similar lawsuits and will likely be referenced by both creators and tech companies as they navigate the complexities of AI and copyright law.

Image: Creatives Unite with Mistral AI