

Why the Great AI Backlash Came for a Tiny Startup You've Probably Never Heard Of | WIRED

By Kate Knibbs

August 17, 2023

Hari Kunzru wasn't looking for a fight. On August 7, the Brooklyn-based writer sat on the subway, scrolling through social media. He noticed several authors grumbling about a linguistic analysis site called Prosecraft. It provided breakdowns of writing and narrative styles for more than 25,000 titles, offering linguistic statistics like adverb count and ranking word choices according to how "vivid" or "passive" they appeared. Kunzru pulled up the Prosecraft website and checked to see whether any of his work appeared. Yep. There it was. *White Tears*, 2017. According to Prosecraft, in the 61st percentile for "vividness."

Kunzru was irked enough to add his own voice to the rising Prosecraft protest. He wasn't mad about the analysis itself. But he strongly suspected that the founder, Benji Smith, had obtained his catalog without paying for it. "It seemed very clear to me that he couldn't have assembled this database in any legal way," he says. (And Kunzru is no stranger to thinking about these issues; in addition to his successful career as a novelist, he has a past life as a WIRED writer.)

[...]

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