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Tech Decoded

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Hello. Is AI-generated music starting to be taken seriously? This month we've seen a virtual artist get a record deal after racking up millions of streams. A synthetic song also topped the US digital country music chart. I explore how musicians and labels are responding. We also look at the backlash against Apple's new iPhone case, watch a robot lose its footing, and check out the sci-fi aircraft concept that could be coming to airport near you.

THE DOWNLOAD

Is AI an 'unstoppable force' in music?



Songs by "synthetic" band the Velvet Sundown have been streamed millions of times. Credit: Velvet Sundown

The country song *Walk My Walk* may have been described by one critic as "lacking sincerity" and "pretty obviously the product of AI".

But it still reached the top of Billboard's Country Digital Song Sales chart this week, while the AI-generated artist behind it, *Breaking Rust*, now has 2.4

million monthly listeners on Spotify.

It's a similar story for Xania Monet, a virtual R&B singer who reportedly got a \$3m record deal this month. She was created by Mississippi poet Telisha "Nikki" Jones, who writes the lyrics herself but generates the music using the AI app Suno.

Several big artists have criticised the latest developments, which come as stars like Sir Paul McCartney and Dua Lipa have **warned that AI could destroy musicians' livelihoods** unless politicians intervene.

The corporate side of the music industry is scrambling to respond. Major labels Sony Music, Universal Music Group and Warner Music Group are reportedly working on licensing deals that would grant AI music platforms permission to train their models on artists' work in exchange for compensation. Spotify **has struck a deal** to develop "responsible" AI tools that "put artists" first.

Mark Mulligan from MIDiA Research believes the industry has to make a deal because AI has become an "unstoppable force" in music. "Legislation, regulation and even litigation are moving too slowly for the labels to wait."

He doesn't expect big-name artists to be muscled out. That's because AI music-generators, on the whole, aren't good enough to make chartworthy music yet.

The real threat, he says, is that AI can, and already does, create music "good enough" for inclusion in background or "mood" playlists which have become big business for labels and streaming platforms.

These songs are already vying for royalties. And it's not crazy to think the majors might one day launch their own AI record labels to get a slice of the action.

The download: *Given the state of play, label attempts to reach a deal make sense. But artists may step up calls for legislators to intervene.*

TOP STORIES



AI firm says China used its tech for hacking

Anthropic claims to have caught Chinese government hackers using its chatbot Claude to orchestrate attacks against global organisations.

[Read more >](#)



Apple's new iPhone Pocket ridiculed online

The new carrying case was mocked online for its price and appearance, with one X user calling it "\$230 for a cut up sock".

[Here's why >](#)



Blue Origin rocket successfully lands booster

The space company owned by Jeff Bezos successfully launched its New Glenn rocket and caught its reusable booster for the first time.

[Watch the launch >](#)



Cryptoqueen jailed over £5bn Bitcoin stash

The woman, said by police to have bought crypto worth billions using funds stolen from Chinese pensioners, was jailed in the UK for money laundering.

[Read more >](#)



Russian AI robot falls after being unveiled

Russia's first anthropomorphic robot, AIdol, fell just seconds after its debut at a technology event in Moscow.

[Watch the footage >](#)

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

The sci-fi plane concept that could take off



The idea of blended wing aviation has been around for more than 100 years. Credit: Outbound

The concept of blended-wing aircraft - where fuselage and wing are all one structure - is not new, but it has primarily been used by the US military in planes like the B-2 Spirit stealth bomber. Now, a crop of start-ups want to use blended-wing designs to build more aerodynamic and fuel-efficient commercial airliners. **Mark Piesing reports.**

PODCAST PICK



Beam me up, Scotty!

A lot of us have probably wished we could teleport. But is this superpower the stuff of science fiction? Or could it one day become reality?

[Listen here](#)

And finally...

A Hungarian man has set a new record for longest video game marathon by playing the rhythm-based music game Dance Dance Revolution for six days. Szabolcs Csépe, from Budapest, bopped to more than 3,000 songs in his quest to enter the record books. **Here's why** he took on the "tediously joyful challenge".



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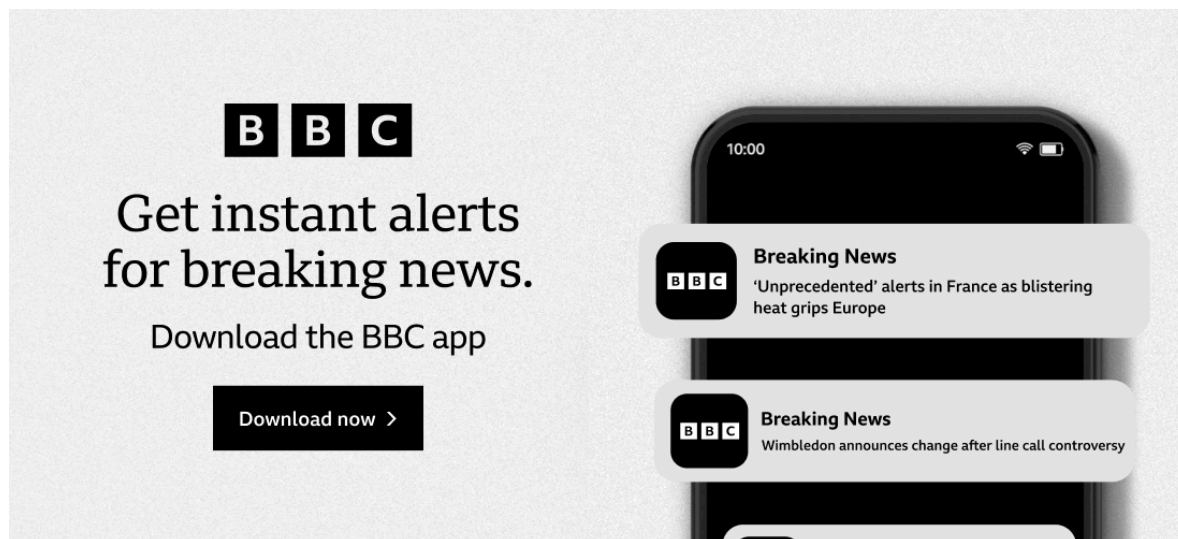
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