Apple Music's New AI Rule: What Indie Artists Need to Know

You may have seen the news about Apple Music requiring transparency around AI-generated music. As an independent musician, you might be wondering, "Does this affect me? And what do I actually have to do?"

Let's break it down in plain English, focusing on how this impacts you when you upload your next single.

The Bottom Line

Apple Music is now requiring labels and distributors (the services you use to get your music onto the platform, like DistroKid, TuneCore, or CD Baby) to label music that was primarily created by artificial intelligence.

If you record a song in your bedroom studio, this doesn't change anything for you. **However, if you are using AI tools to generate the main vocals or the core instrumental track, you will soon need to declare that during the upload process.**

What You Have to Declare

The new rules focus on two main areas where AI might be used:

- **AI Voices:** Is the main vocal on the track an AI voice clone? This applies even if the voice is meant to sound like a famous singer, or if it's a synthetic voice you created from scratch.

- **AI Instrumentals:** Was the main music bed (the drums, bass, chords, or melody) entirely generated by an AI tool based on a text prompt?

If the answer to either of these is yes, your distributor will likely ask you to check a box confirming that.

What You Do *Not* Have to Declare

It is important to know that you do not need to declare anything if you used AI as a **tool** in your process, but a human made the final creative decisions.

- **Mixing & Mastering:** If you used an AI-powered plugin to clean up the audio or master the track, you are fine. That is considered a production tool.
- **Inspiration & Samples:** If you used AI to generate a synth sound that you then tweaked, or to help write lyrics that you then edited, you are still the primary creator.

Why Should You Care?

As an indie artist, your brand and authenticity are your biggest assets. These rules are actually designed to protect you.

Imagine a "deepfake" song comes out using an AI version of your voice. Under these new rules, Apple Music has a system in place to identify that something is wrong. They can investigate because the person uploading it would have to lie on the metadata form to get it up there.

A Quick Checklist for Your Next Release

Before you hit "upload" on your distributor's website, ask yourself:

- **Did I record the vocals myself in a studio (or my closet)?** ✅ No AI declaration needed.
- **Did my human band play the instruments?** ✅ No AI declaration needed.
- **Did I write the lyrics and melody?** ✅ No AI declaration needed.
- **Did I type a prompt into an AI app and upload the audio file it spat out without changing it?** ⚠️ You likely need to declare this as AI-generated.

The Golden Rule: Be honest. If you made it, claim it. If a machine made it, declare it. This keeps your account safe and your fans trust.