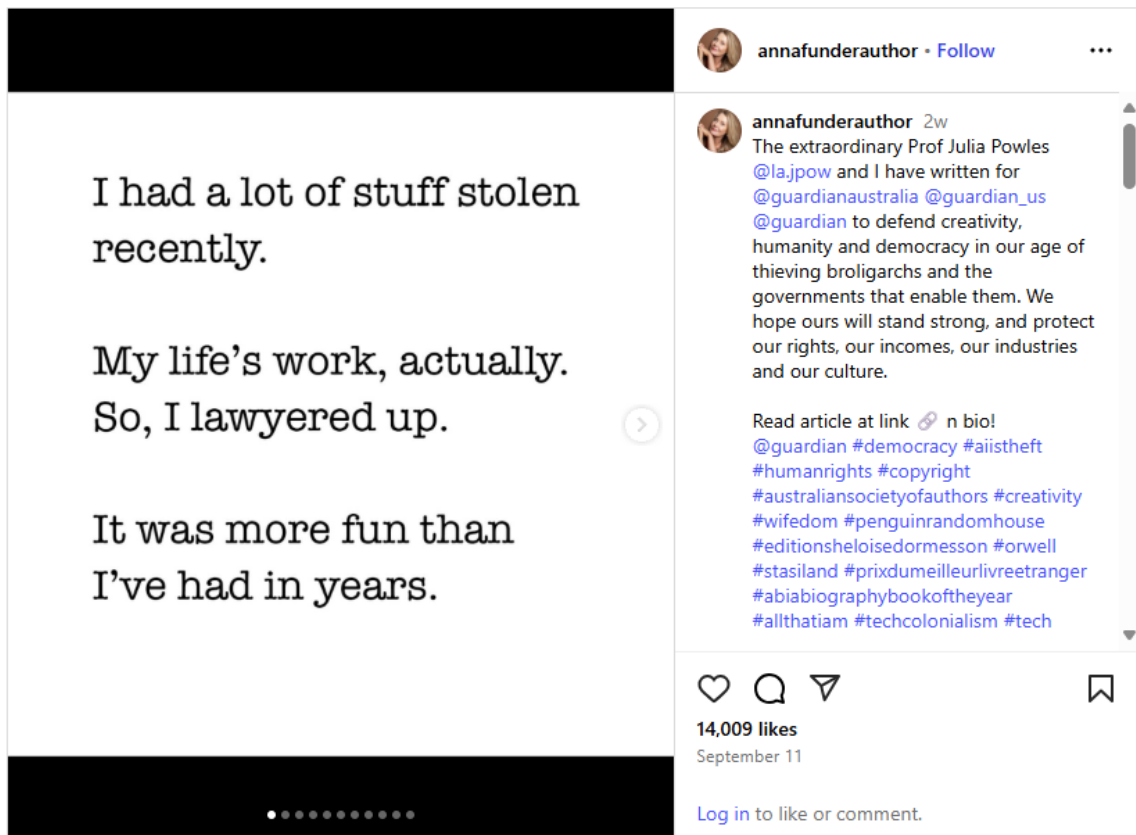


Instagram post by Dr Anna Funder, 11 Sept 2025

https://www.instagram.com/p/DODk_mICfUG/?img_index=11



The image shows a screenshot of an Instagram post. On the left is a large image with a white background and black text. On the right is the Instagram interface showing the user's profile, caption, and engagement metrics.

I had a lot of stuff stolen recently.

My life's work, actually. So, I lawyered up.

It was more fun than I've had in years.

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The extraordinary Prof Julia Powles @la.jpow and I have written for @guardianaustralia @guardian_us @guardian to defend creativity, humanity and democracy in our age of thieving broligarchs and the governments that enable them. We hope ours will stand strong, and protect our rights, our incomes, our industries and our culture.


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Professor Julia Powles is one of Australia's brightest minds, working at the intersection of tech, AI, privacy and human rights.

She's the new Executive Director of the University of California Los Angeles Institute for Technology, Law, and Policy.

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Together we wrote this piece for The Guardian. I brought the outrage, she brought the brilliance, like this:

“Artificial intelligence has captured the public imagination—scraped, pilfered and swallowed it whole. It’s time to claim it back.”

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Today's large-scale AI systems are founded on an extraordinarily **brazen criminal enterprise**: the wholesale theft of every available book, work of art and piece of performance that can be rendered digital.

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To 'train' AI, tech companies started by 'scraping' the internet for publicly available text, a lot of which is rubbish.

They quickly realised that to get high quality writing, thinking and words they would have to **steal our books**.

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The tech companies are operating as **imperialists**, scouring foreign lands whose resources they can plunder. These resources are the products of our minds and humanity. They are our culture, the archives of our collective imagination.

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If we don't resist, Australia will lose the works that delight us by exploring who we are and what we can be. No one will make work that can immediately be stolen. We won't know ourselves anymore. The rule of law will be rendered dust. **Colony, indeed.**

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So what should the government do? It should **strategise, not surrender**. It should insist that any AI product made available to Australian consumers demonstrate compliance with our copyright and moral rights regime. It should require the deletion of stolen work from AI offerings. And it should demand the negotiation of **proper consent and payment** to creators. This is a battle for the mind and soul of our nation – let’s imagine and create a future worth having, made in Australia.


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Tech companies are stealing our books, music and films for AI. It’s brazen theft and must be stopped | Anna Funder and Julia Powles

theguardian.com


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