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Companies destroying books to train AI models – 31st August 2026

Level 4

Consumer groups in the US want the government to look at AI companies. The groups claim that AI companies are digitizing rare books to train their large language models (LLMs). The process includes breaking the spines of the books, scanning the pages, and then destroying them. Some books may be the last copies of the original texts. Critics say such books are historically important. One critic said we needed to preserve old books.

The bulk buying of books is creating a problem for book stores. They are getting large orders for valuable books, but are also questioning the ethics of destroying books. Booksellers are getting unusually large orders for valuable books. Some of these books are apparently being bought not to be read, but to be scanned. The Washington Post reported that AI companies are spending lots of money on millions of books to help train AI assistants.

Level 5

A trade commission in the US is being asked to investigate AI companies for allegedly destroying rare books. Some consumer groups claim that AI companies are digitizing old books to train their large language models (LLMs). The process includes breaking the spines of the rare books, scanning the pages, and then destroying them. Some books may be among the last surviving copies of the original texts. Critics say such books are historically important and that it is unacceptable to burn them. One critic said: "The rarer a book is, the more carefully we should preserve it."

The bulk buying of books is creating a problem for rare book stores. They are getting large orders for valuable books, but are also questioning the ethics of destroying books. The Wall Street Journal reported that sales of rare books have surged. Booksellers are getting unusually large orders for out-of-print, and sometimes valuable books. Some of these books are apparently being bought not to be read, but to be scanned for AI training. The Washington Post reported that AI companies are spending a fortune on millions of books to help train AI assistants.

Level 6

The Federal Trade Commission in the USA is being urged to investigate AI companies for allegedly buying rare books in bulk and then destroying them. Groups like the Consumer Federation of America have asked the FTC to look into claims that AI companies are digitizing the books to train their large language models (LLMs). The process includes breaking the spines of the rare works, scanning the pages, and then destroying them. Some destroyed books may be among the last surviving copies of the original texts. Critics argue that such books are historically important and that it is not socially acceptable to burn them. One critic said: "The rarer a book is, the more carefully we should preserve it."

The bulk buying of books is creating a dilemma for stores that specialize in rare and antique books. They are receiving large orders for some rather valuable items, but are then questioning the ethics of destroying books. The Wall Street Journal reported that rare and obscure book sales have suddenly surged. Booksellers have been getting unusually large orders for out-of-print, and sometimes valuable books. It added that some books are apparently being bought not to be read, but to be digitized for AI training. Earlier this year, the Washington Post reported that the companies are spending a fortune on millions of books that are being used to help train AI assistants.