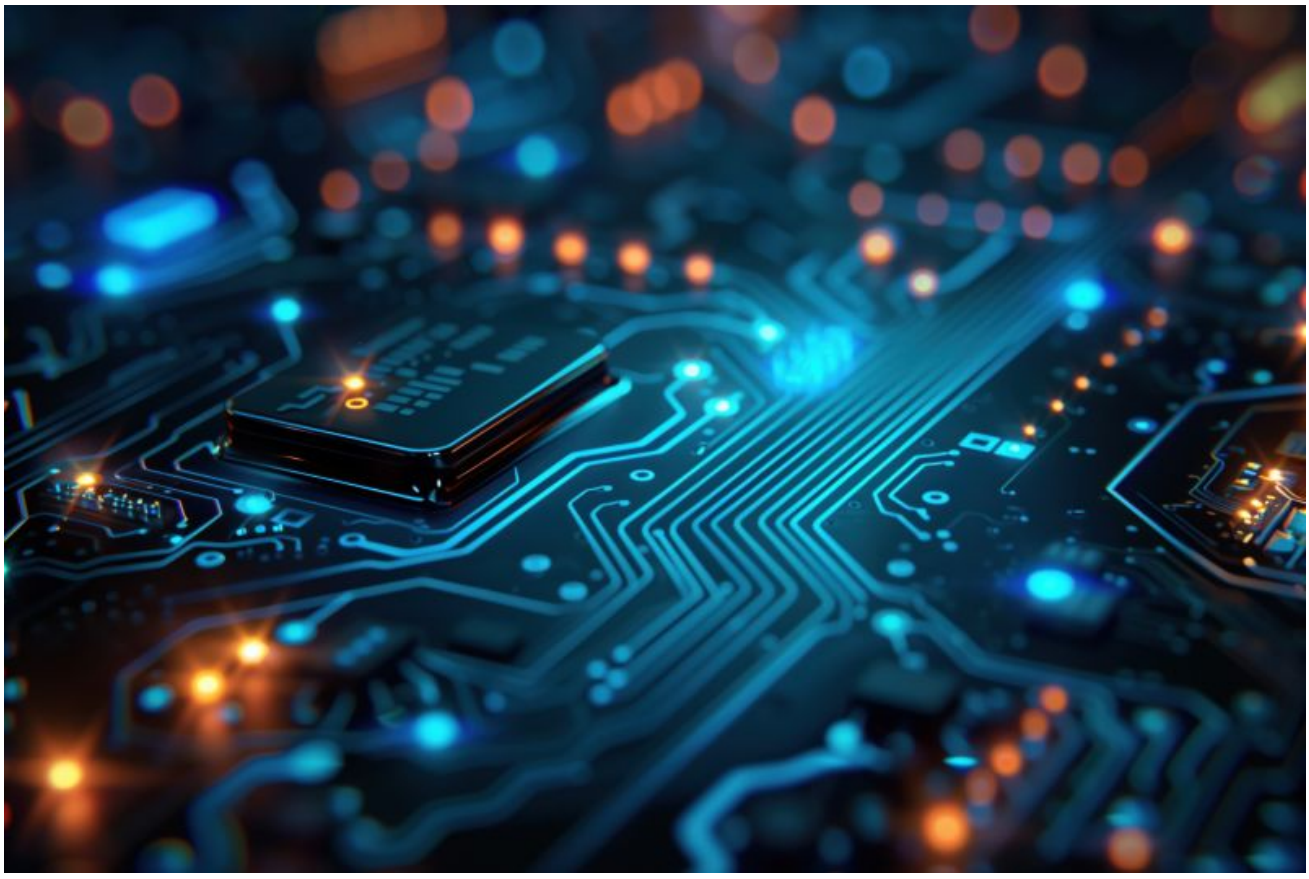
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Chianti Consortium Deploys A.I. to Hunt Counterfeits Across the Internet

The ministry-backed effort scans marketplaces, social media and web domains worldwide to police unauthorized use of the wine name through Jan. 20, 2027.

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The Consorzio Vino Chianti is using artificial intelligence and other digital monitoring tools to track counterfeit products and unauthorized uses of the Chianti name across the internet, expanding an anti-fraud effort that the group says will run through Jan. 20, 2027.

According to the consortium, the project is part of a ministry-backed program designed to protect the Chianti denomination online. The work covers global monitoring of e-commerce marketplaces, social media platforms, websites, search engines and domain registrations, with no geographic limits.

The initiative comes as wine producers face a growing problem in digital sales channels, where protected names can be copied, diluted or used to market unrelated products. For the beverage industry, tighter digital enforcement could help limit online fraud and protect the commercial value of a well-known wine name for producers, importers and distributors, even if the full effect will depend on how quickly platforms act on takedown requests.

The consortium, led by president Giovanni Busi, said the system is meant to identify counterfeits, unfair competition and improper use of the Chianti trademark. One example cited in local reporting was the sale of kits containing powdered mixes promoted as a way to make “Chianti” by adding water, a product type that shows how far misuse of a protected wine name can spread online.

The group said the program has three main areas. The first is surveillance of major international marketplaces to find suspicious or unlawful listings, submit removal requests through official platform procedures, and manage contacts with the platforms while providing supporting documentation. The second is monitoring of major social media networks, including Facebook, Instagram, X and TikTok, to detect content that may violate intellectual property rights, promote counterfeit goods or use fake accounts tied to the Chianti name. The third is broader web and domain-name monitoring to identify websites and internet addresses using the Chianti trademark without authorization and to request removal of unlawful material from site operators.

The consortium said the effort follows earlier results this year, when software-based checks uncovered several suspected fake products. Local newspaper La Nazione reported that those findings helped push the work forward for roughly another year under the ministry project.

When the program ends on Jan. 20, 2027, the consortium said the results will be made available free of charge to businesses in the sector and published on its public website, consorziovinochianti.it. The promise of open access suggests the group wants the project to serve not only as an enforcement tool but also as a source of practical information for wineries and other operators that may not have the resources to carry out continuous digital monitoring on their own.

In comments reported by La Nazione, the consortium said the goal is to protect both producers and consumers by safeguarding the authenticity, transparency and quality associated with the Chianti denomination in the global digital market. That reflects a broader challenge for European wine regions that rely on geographic names as a core part of their identity and pricing power. When a protected name is copied online, the harm can extend beyond a single fraudulent sale, affecting consumer trust and weakening the distinction between authentic and imitation products.

Alessio Mugnaini, president of the local union of municipalities, mayor of Montespertoli and agriculture delegate for Italy’s national association of municipalities, said AI can help people do more work, better and faster, but only if it is used correctly. He also said users need to know how to manage the information these systems produce, suggesting that stronger digital skills may be needed alongside new software tools.

Montespertoli is one of the main production areas for Chianti, giving local officials a direct interest in how the name is used in domestic and foreign markets. For producers in those areas, the issue is not only legal protection but also pricing, reputation and market access. A false listing on a marketplace or a misleading social media promotion can reach consumers in multiple countries within hours, often long before a traditional enforcement action can begin.

The consortium has not said how many suspicious listings, accounts or domains are currently under review, but its description of the project points to a continuous monitoring model rather than one-off inspections. That approach is increasingly important in online alcohol sales, where listings can be reposted quickly under new seller names or moved from one platform to another after removal.

The Chianti program also highlights how wine groups are adapting brand-protection strategies once used mainly for fashion, luxury goods and consumer electronics. In the drinks business, the same tools can be used to detect misuse of protected designations, fake labels, imitation packaging and misleading advertising language that tries to benefit from the reputation of an established appellation.

For now, the consortium’s immediate focus is online enforcement. Its message is that the fight against “fake Chianti” no longer takes place only in stores or at borders, but also in search results, social feeds and digital storefronts where consumers may not easily distinguish a certified bottle from an unauthorized product.