

What is a deepfake

Today, the events captured in realistic-looking or-sounding video and audio recordings need never have happened. They can instead be generated automatically, by powerful computers and machine-learning software. The **catch-all** term for these computational productions is “deepfakes”.

catch-all 全方位的；笼统的

The term first appeared on Reddit, a messaging board, as the username for an account which was producing fake videos. An entire community sprung up around the creation of these videos, writing software tools that let anyone automatically paste one person’s face onto the body of another. Reddit shut the community down, but the technology was out there. Soon it was being applied to political figures and actors.

Tools for editing media manually have existed for decades—think Photoshop. The power and **peril** of deepfakes is that they make **fakery** cheaper than ever before. Before deepfakes, a powerful computer and a good chunk of a university degree were needed to produce a realistic fake video of someone. Now some photos and an Internet connection are all that is required.

peril 危险

fakery 假货；伪造

The consequences of cheap, widespread fakery are likely to be profound, **albeit** slow to unfold. Plenty worry about the possible impact that believable, fake footage of politicians might have on civil society—from a further loss of trust in media to the potential for **electoral** distortions. These technologies could also be deployed against softer targets: it might be used, for instance, to **bully** classmates by creating imagery of them in embarrassing situations. In a world that was already saturated with extreme imagery, deepfakes make it plausible to push that even further.

albeit 虽然；尽管

electoral 选举的

bully 霸凌；欺负