

The Experiment

This study stems from a partnership between researchers from the **University of Sussex** and an **AI startup** based in Brighton, UK, focused on developing ethical AI technology.

Our goal is to understand how different people react to various images. To do so, we use a new **image-generation algorithm** (based on a modified *Generative Adversarial Network*) trained on curated material to produce realistic, high-quality erotic images. This allows us to systematically manipulate features and study their effects on perception.

The animation below illustrates how a traditional GAN generates face images. Our enhanced version extends this to full-body images, including multi-person scenes, by refining the latent space derived from the training data.

If you are interested, more technical details will be available at the end of the experiment.



Next

Instructions

In the next part, you will be presented with images generated by our algorithm (labeled '**AI-generated**'), intermixed with real photographs (labeled '**Photograph**') from public image databases.

Each image will be **briefly flashed**. Try to observe the image as though it were real, as if you were actually present in the scene. After each image, you will answer a few questions:

- **Body Reaction:** How much did you feel your body physically respond to the image? Think about sensations like tension, warmth in your body, or changes in heart rate or breathing.
- **Valence:** How did you feel overall when viewing the image, ranging from negative to positive? Consider that feeling positive can also equate to feeling psychologically aroused.
- **Enticement:** How sexually appealing do you think this image would be for people similar to you in terms of gender and sexual orientation?

While these questions might seem similar, they capture different reactions. For example, an image can make you feel mentally aroused or emotionally stirred without causing a strong reaction in your body, and vice versa.

Please pay attention to how the images make you feel in your mind and body. Respond according to your gut reactions.

Below is an example of the rating screen you will see after each image:

The image shows a survey interface with three sections. The first section asks 'How much did you feel your body react when looking at this image? *' with a slider from 'Not at all' to 'Strong reaction'. The second section asks 'How did you feel while viewing this image? *' with a scale of faces from negative (frowns) to positive (smiles). The third section asks 'How sexually appealing do you think this image is for people like you? *' with a numerical scale from 0 to 6. A 'Continue' button is at the bottom.

Press **Start** when you are ready.

Previous

Start

+

AI-generated



How much did you feel your body react when looking at this image? *

Not
at
all

Strong
reaction

How did you feel while viewing this image? *

Negative



Positive

How sexually appealing do you think this image is for people like you? *

Not at all



Very much

Continue

+



Break Time

We know that experiments like this can feel a bit repetitive or tedious, but it is important for us that you stay focused until the end.

Please take this opportunity to **take a short break and relax your neck and eyes** before continuing.

Ready to continue!

+

Photograph



How much did you feel your body react when looking at this image? *

Not
at
all

Strong
reaction

How did you feel while viewing this image? *

Negative



Positive

How sexually appealing do you think this image is for people like you? *

Not at all



Very much

Continue

Instructions

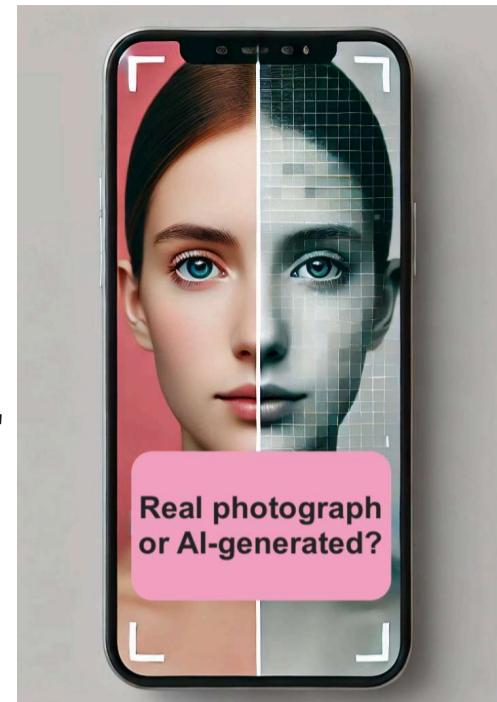
Thank you for staying with us so far!

There is **something important** we need to reveal... In the previous phase, the labels ('**AI-generated**' or '**Photograph**') were actually **mixed-up!** As a result, they were correct for some images but wrong for others (e.g., the label said "AI" but the image was actually a photo, or vice versa).

In this final phase, we want you to try to identify **the correct category** of each image. We will briefly present all the images once more, followed by one question about whether you think the image is a real photograph from the original picture database or an AI-generated image

Sometimes, it is hard to tell, but don't overthink it and **go with your gut feeling**. At the end, we will tell you if you were correct or wrong!

Press start once you are ready.



I think this face is... *

Indicate your confidence that the image is fake or real

—

Al-Generated Photograph

Start

+



The labels we showed you in the previous phase have been mixed up! Can you tell to what category each image belongs?

I think this image is... *

Indicate your confidence that the image is fake or real



AI-
Generated

Photograph

Continue