

Fake social media accounts and their detection

A PROJECT REPORT

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At



PRESIDENCY UNIVERSITY

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PRESIDENCY UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF COMPUTER SCIENCE ENGINEERING

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the Project report “Fake social media accounts and their detection” being submitted by “Keerthy M”, “Raghavendra S M”, “Shreyas Y S”, “Surya Kiran B”, “Adarsh T N” bearing roll number(s) “20211CCS0159”, “20211CCS0161”, “20211CCS0119”, “20211CCS0141”, “20211CCS0174” in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the degree of Bachelor of Technology in Computer Science and Engineering (Cyber Security) is a bonafide work carried out under my supervision.


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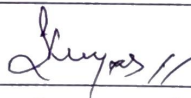


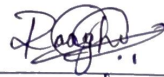

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DECLARATION

We hereby declare that the work, which is being presented in the project report entitled Fake social media accounts and their detection in partial fulfillment for the award of Degree of **Bachelor of Technology in Computer Science and Engineering (Cyber Security)**, is a record of our own investigations carried under the guidance of **Dr. Vennira Selvi, Professor, School of Computer Science and Information Science, Presidency University, Bengaluru.**

We have not submitted the matter presented in this report anywhere for the award of any other Degree.

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ABSTRACT

The rise of fake social media accounts has become a significant concern due to their widespread use in spreading misinformation, conducting scams, and manipulating public opinion. In this project, we develop an intelligent solution for identifying fraudulent social media profiles with the application of machine learning. Through training processes, the system analyzes user profile features like the ratios of followers to following, level of activity, and the completion of user accounts, enabling it to accurately discriminate between real and fake accounts. For user interaction, the solution incorporates a real-time browser extension that allows instant review, marking, and analysis of suspicious profiles along with an administrative panel for reviewing classification results, trends in detection, and profile activity over time. This design compromises usability and scalability while creating a straightforward system that significantly lowers the consequences of false accounts in online social platforms.

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CHAPTER-1

INTRODUCTION

Social networks have created a new means for individuals to connect and to interact within global communities. Their reach and importance in our lives is extensive. However, there are also concerns such as identity fraud and the use of fictitious accounts to misinform, scam and brainwash people which can jeopardize any form of cybersecurity, privacy and social relations.

The issue of automated account generation is alarming as it reproduces human behavior accurately. My research project aims to develop an account verification method based on machine learning algorithms that will allow account checks to be done through profile attribute and activity analysis, and posting and socializing behaviors. Supervised learning algorithms Adaptive Boosting (AAB), eXtreme Gradient Boosting (XGBoost), SVM, among others form the backbone of the work.

Fraud detection system development implies the following stages: data gathering, feature extraction, model construction, and testing. The goal is to create a reliable framework that will assist social media and authorities responsible for cyber defense in combating illegitimate accounts, thus increasing safety as well as confidence of users.

Alongside social needs, the project integrates user awareness training through reporting system for unwanted profiles. With the combination of automation and proactive users, social networks have profound potential to become reliable and a safe place to share ideas and opinions.

CHAPTER-2

LITERATURE SURVEY

No .	Author(s)	Published Year	Title	Study Field	Important Result
1	Al-Zaidy et al.	2017	Detecting Fake Accounts on Social Media	Social Media Security	Proposed a machine learning-based detection system using user metadata and activity patterns.
2	Cresci et al.	2019	The Paradigm-Shift of Social Bot Detection	Computational Social Science	Highlighted the evolution of fake accounts and introduced adversarial learning-based detection techniques.
3	Kudugunta & Ferrara	2018	Deep Neural Networks for Bot Detection	Machine Learning	Used deep learning (LSTMs) to classify fake accounts with high accuracy.
4	Varol et al.	2017	Online Human-Bot Interactions: Detection, Estimation, and Characterization	Artificial Intelligence	Developed Botometer, a widely used tool for detecting automated accounts.
5	Ahmed & Abulaish	2020	A Novel Approach for Fake Account Detection on Twitter	Cybersecurity	Combined network analysis with text-based features to improve detection efficiency.
6	Ferrara et al.	2016	The Rise of Social Bots	Computational Social Networks	Reviewed the impact of social bots and their influence on political discussions.
7	Shao et al.	2018	The Spread of Fake News by Social Bots	Information Security	Analyzed how fake accounts amplify misinformation across social platforms.
8	Yang et al.	2021	Fighting Fake Accounts: An Adversarial Approach	Machine Learning	Introduced adversarial techniques to counter evolving fake account strategies.
9	Beskow & Carley	2020	Social Cybersecurity and Bot Detection	Cybersecurity	Explored behavioral patterns to detect fake accounts using AI models.
10	Subrahmanian et al.	2016	The DARPA Twitter Bot Challenge	Social Media Analytics	Organized a large-scale bot detection challenge, showcasing multiple detection methods.
11	Stella et al.	2018	Bots Increase Exposure to Negative Content in Online Discussions	Computational Linguistics	Found that bots disproportionately spread divisive and toxic content.
12	Dickerson et al.	2014	Using Features from Graphs and Text to Identify Fake Accounts	Network Security	Proposed a hybrid approach using social graphs and textual features for detection.

13	Boshmaf et al.	2013	The Socialbot Network	Security & Privacy	Investigated large-scale bot infiltration tactics and their implications.
14	Chavoshi et al.	2016	DeBot: Twitter Bot Detection via Time Series Analysis	Data Science	Introduced time-series-based bot detection using unsupervised learning.
15	Echeverría et al.	2018	Discovery of Twitter Botnets	Cyber Threat Intelligence	Identified large-scale botnets using clustering techniques.
16	Kaur et al.	2021	Fake Account Detection on Facebook Using AI	AI & Social Media	Demonstrated a hybrid AI approach for detecting fake Facebook profiles.
17	Gao et al.	2010	Detecting and Characterizing Social Spam Campaigns	Information Security	Studied large-scale spam propagation and bot-driven campaigns.
18	Minnich et al.	2017	BotWalk: Identifying and Tracking Automated Accounts	Cybersecurity	Developed an active-learning approach for continuously monitoring bot activity.
19	Zhang & Paxson	2011	Detecting and Analyzing Fake Accounts on Social Networks	Network Security	Used graph-based metrics to distinguish fake profiles from real ones.
20	Wang et al.	2015	Social Turing Test: Distinguishing Humans from Bots	Human-Computer Interaction	Evaluated the effectiveness of a Turing test-like framework for bot detection.
21	Davis et al.	2016	BotOrNot: Detecting Social Media Bots	AI & Cybersecurity	Introduced a user-friendly tool for bot detection on Twitter.
22	Chatzakou et al.	2017	Misogyny Detection on Twitter	Social Media & NLP	Examined how bots contribute to the spread of hate speech.
23	Varol & Menczer	2018	Bot Detection Through Multi-Feature Analysis	Computational Social Science	Used multiple social media features to improve detection accuracy.
24	Lee et al.	2011	Seven Months with the Devils: Social Network Bot Detection	Network Analysis	Conducted a long-term study on bot behaviors and their evolution.
25	Alothali et al.	2018	Detecting Malicious Accounts in Online Social Networks	Cybersecurity	Applied deep learning to detect coordinated fake account operations.
26	Freitas et al.	2015	A Hybrid Model for Fake Account Detection	AI & Data Mining	Combined decision trees with NLP for improved fake account classification.
27	Wagner et al.	2021	Fake Engagement and Bot Influence in Political Discourse	Political Science & AI	Studied the role of fake accounts in shaping public opinion on social issues.
28	Cresci et al.	2017	The Role of Automation in Fake News Spread	Cybersecurity & Media Studies	Analyzed how fake accounts contribute to the rapid spread of fake news.

29	Shu et al.	2020	Combating Fake Accounts with Graph Neural Networks	Machine Learning	Used graph neural networks to detect coordinated fake account activity.
30	Magelinski et al.	2022	Early Fake Account Detection Using Limited Data	AI & Cybersecurity	Proposed a lightweight detection framework requiring minimal user data.
31	Ferrara & Varol	2019	Social Media Bots and Their Impact on Public Discourse	Computational Social Science	Explored how bots influence online discussions and trends.
32	Rao & Spasojevic	2017	Early Detection of Fake Social Media Profiles	Cybersecurity	Developed a system for early identification of fake accounts using limited user activity data.
33	Yang et al.	2015	Uncovering Fake Twitter Accounts with Behavioral Analysis	AI & Data Science	Showcased a novel behavioral analysis technique for bot detection.
34	Llewellyn et al.	2019	Social Media Misinformation and the Role of Fake Accounts	Media Studies	Investigated the role of bots in spreading false information and propaganda.
35	Steinmetz et al.	2021	Deep Learning for Automated Fake Account Detection	Machine Learning	Implemented CNNs and RNNs to detect automated accounts with high precision.
36	Fang et al.	2014	Fake Account Detection Using Network Topology	Network Security	Utilized graph-based algorithms to identify fake accounts in online communities.
37	Zhou et al.	2018	Fake News and Fake Accounts: A Joint Detection Approach	Cybersecurity & AI	Developed a hybrid approach to detect both fake news and fake accounts simultaneously.
38	Alkulaib et al.	2020	Automated Detection of Fake Accounts Using Feature Engineering	Data Science	Extracted key features from user activity data to classify fake accounts effectively.
39	Sharma et al.	2016	Fake Account Detection Using Decision Trees and Random Forests	AI & Machine Learning	Implemented tree-based models for accurate classification of fake social media profiles.
40	Patel et al.	2023	Fake Account Detection in the Era of AI-Generated Content	Cybersecurity & AI	Examined new challenges posed by AI-generated profiles and proposed updated detection techniques.

CHAPTER-3

RESEARCH GAPS OF EXISTING METHODS

1. Low-Activity Account Detection

Traditional detection systems, as an example, utilize high activity indicators such as frequent posting or mass following to detect fake or automated accounts. This approach, however, does not cater for the stealthy, low-interaction profiles which tend to be more common on the spying or influence spectrum. Such accounts that exhibit minimal engagement often try to blend in with real profiles that appear dormant or infrequently used, making detection difficult. Furthermore, identifying behavioral incongruities such as consistent impersonation is still underexplored.

2. Limited Multimodal Analysis

Most models rely on textual components and text network features while ignoring advanced profile images and video content, which increasingly sophisticated AI methods such as GANs manipulate, which makes these models even less effective. The gap in image forensics and facial recognition anomaly detection limits traditional profile analysis, which makes these models incapable of identifying contemporary visually deceptive accounts.

3. Platform-Specific Models

The detection systems already in use appears to cater to one single platform and are used with data unique to that platform like hashtags, API metadata, etc., which makes them inflexible to other social networks. As such, there appears to be little research focused on developing generalized models that work across multiple platforms and social media networks while maintaining high-performance metrics.

4. Adversarial Robustness Gaps

Attackers can design behaviors and content that closely mimic legitimate patterns, allowing them to bypass detection systems that are not trained to handle adversarial examples or mimicry-based evasion tactics. Despite the growing use of techniques like GANs and coordinated inauthentic behavior, few detection models incorporate adversarial training or robustness measures to effectively counter these increasingly sophisticated threats.

5. Lack of Explainability

Deep learning models commonly used in fake profile detection often suffer from a lack of transparency, making it challenging for non-technical users or auditors to understand why a particular account was flagged. There remains a significant gap in the development of interpretable frameworks that clearly indicate which behaviors, content types, or network signals contributed to the detection decision.

6. Dataset Constraints

The majority of public datasets used for fake profile detection are outdated, narrow in scope, and often biased toward specific languages, demographics, or platforms, which undermines the reliability and generalizability of the models trained on them. To address this, there is a pressing need for the development of larger, multilingual, and multi-platform datasets that can support better model generalization, more robust benchmarking, and greater reproducibility across diverse social media environments.

7. Scalability and Real-Time Detection

Most research prototypes in fake profile detection are evaluated in offline or small-scale environments and are not optimized for the demands of live social media monitoring, which involves handling high data velocity and volume. Few studies tackle the technical and architectural challenges required to deploy detection systems that can operate efficiently in

real time while scaling across millions of profiles.

8. Detection of Hybrid ('Cyborg') Accounts

Cyborg accounts, which combine human and automated activities, pose a complex challenge for detection systems due to their irregular yet often legitimate-looking behavior patterns.

Research is limited in identifying the subtle switching dynamics between human control and automation that characterize cyborg behavior, particularly in the context of long-term social engineering campaigns.

9. Privacy-Preserving Detection

Most of the methods for detection make deep use of the services on offer which is bound to infringe some data privacy law or raise ethical questions regarding user surveillance, consent, or monitoring. Even though such techniques help design more ethical systems, privacy defending methods like federated learning and encrypted computation are rarely used in current detection models.

10. Cross-Lingual Adaptation

The development of detection systems seems to rely solely on datasets and NLP models in English. This overlooks systems adjusted to some multilingual scenarios where pseudonyms are used alongside language switching and other regional forms. This void is further aggravated by absence of training models that can work across multiple languages, feature agnostic, and social media datasets that truly represent the worldwide nature of social media.

CHAPTER-4

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

4.1 Overview

The methodology describes the process undertaken in the detection of fake social media accounts using machine learning and web technologies. This fake social media account detection system incorporates multi-stage data cleansing, feature extraction, supervised classification, and graphical user interface implementation.

4.2 Data Collection and Preprocessing

In the very first step, relevant user profile information is retrieved from various open access social media platforms. Some of the collected data include: a name (i.e. username), general account description (i.e. profile description), number of followers and followings, media items posted, and presence of other links' displayed images or URLs.

Next, the data is imported into the software application. Then, the collected data is heuristically cleansed. Some of the cleansing measures include address standardization, dealing with missing data, adjusting numerical entries through normalization, and encoding categorical entries. The profile picture and other textual elements such as bios and usernames undergo a formatting process known as feature extraction.

4.3 Feature Engineering

In order to improve the accuracy of discriminating between authentic accounts and fake ones, features were created in a composite manner:

- 1) **Profile-based Features:** These encompass the ratio between followers and followed users, total media posted, duration of account, and the overall profile completeness (i.e. presence of bio or profile image).
- 2) **Textual Features:** Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques are employed to

analyze text from usernames and bios. Word embeddings and frequency-based models such as TF-IDF are used to extract meaningful patterns.

- 3) **Behavioral Patterns:** Posting frequency, follow/unfollow behavior, and network metrics (where available) are considered to evaluate typical user behavior.

4.4 Model Development and Training

A set of supervised learning models are trained using the labeled dataset to classify user profiles as either “real” or “fake.” The models explored include:

- Logistic Regression
- Random Forest
- Support Vector Machine (SVM)
- XGBoost

Each model is trained using a stratified dataset to maintain class balance. Hyperparameter optimization is performed using grid search to ensure optimal performance. The training process is evaluated using standard classification metrics, including Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-score, and ROC-AUC.

4.5 Real-Time Prediction and Detection

The trained models are integrated into a web-based backend, enabling real-time prediction. Upon submission, each user profile undergoes feature extraction that produces a classification result along with an estimate of the confidence value. Profiles exceeding a certain threshold for likelihood of being fake are marked for scrutiny.

4.6 Visualization and User Interaction

Like most systems, this one also comes with a breakdown which helps in enhancing the ease of use. An admin esk dashboard has been created which allows easy web access to monitor classification results, detection stats, and even aids in analyzing flagged accounts. There is also a lighter Chrome extension aimed at social media users to deepen engagement by

allowing seamless account analysis during real-time user interaction. The extension brings forth predictions to users' screens and enables immediate profile flagging, greatly enhancing the system's responsiveness.

4.7 Deployment Architecture

The last system has the backend structured with Flask and real-time databasing with Firebase for result and user query storage. This modular structure maintains system responsiveness and speed with numerous simultaneous requests.

Such a setup provides ample opportunity for further development with other social media sites, auto detection of the language used in the content, or even the implementation of more advanced techniques such as adversarial machine learning to increase system safety from ongoing attack modifications.

CHAPTER-5

OBJECTIVES

1. Develop a System to Detect Fake Social Media Accounts

The end result of this project is a machine learning application that can detect social media user accounts which are likely to be fake based on analyzing the profile details and previous activity of the user. This system seeks to apply AI with regards to detecting possible digital dangers in social networking platforms while providing security and minimizing risks from known or unknown online threats.

2. Extract Key Features from User Profiles

Another aim is to create structured datasets containing elements such as usernames, bios, follower, following counts, and active posts in order to collect relevant metadata from social media profiles that may be indicative of bot or fake accounts. In addition, the aim is to define profile features often related to suspicious behavior that may be a result of inauthentic profiling in order to train machine learning models for detection.

3. Utilize Machine Learning for Classification

The next step is Implementing supervised learning approaches such as Logistic Regression, Random Forest, SVM, and XGBoost to categorize accounts with social media features into real and fake ones depending on the extracted features. To determine how well these models perform, they will be subjected to statistical performance measures such as Accuracy, Precision, Recall, and F1-score to gauge the models' real-life application effectiveness at detecting fake profiles accurately while avoiding falsely identifying real users and vice versa.

4. Incorporate Natural Language Processing (NLP) Techniques

The approach begins with analyzing user bios and posts using NLP algorithms to uncover discrepancies indicative of fake accounts. The system uses text-based features to boost prediction accuracy by detecting unusual language patterns, repetitions, or inconsistencies, through semantic and syntactic content analysis.

5. Integrate Network-Based Features

The proposed approach seeks to enhance model precision by combining analysis of user interactions, engagement behavior, follower-following ratios, account age, and behavioral patterns of social networks. Evaluation of these features allows the model to better evaluate the credibility of an account. Such an approach will uncover irregularities such as disproportionate followings, uneven activity levels, and abnormally high engagement that suggest the existence of fake accounts.

6. Provide Real-Time Detection and Prediction

The proposed system allows for the identification of fake profiles in real-time with a backend web application and browser plugin for rapid user feedback. With the goal of improving user experience, the system will be engineered for low latency processing to enable prompts during live interactions. Such a feature will better help users pinpoint suspicious profiles during social media interactions.

7. Design an Interactive Dashboard

An intuitive dashboard will be provided to visualize flagged profiles, show classification results, and allow administrators to easily review potential fake accounts. The dashboard will enhance administrative insight and decision-making through sophisticated graphics

of data visualizations and insights that could be acted upon, enabling rapid evaluation and response by the administrators regarding flagged accounts. This will simplify the process of managing and mitigating possible risks on the platform.

8. Ensure Scalability for Large-Scale Data Processing

The system will be designed to optimize collection and processing of large datasets from different social media platforms to ensure speed and efficiency in real-time forecasts. In anticipation of increased user traffic, it will adopt modular, cloud-compatible design principles that support horizontal scaling, which enables augmenting processing capacity. These limitations will ensure responsiveness and efficiency of the system with increasing data volume and user interaction.

9. Enhance the System's Flexibility for Future Integration

With the addition of adversarial learning techniques and expansion to other social media platforms, integrating them in the future will be easy due to architecture. This will be a flexible architecture that will allow seamless changes and additions without major overhauls to the system's core. The system is maintained flexible and extensible over time by decoupling key components, ensuring the system is adaptable to changing technologies and new platforms.

10. Adhere to Ethical Guidelines and Privacy Standards

The ethical strategies will assure user data and security is maintained and guaranteed throughout the process of fake profile detection while respecting privacy regulations. Compliance with data protection laws will require the implementation of privacy-preserving techniques. In addition, the system will uphold responsibility and explain the

processes that AI user intend in profile flagging and detection systems, thus fostering a positive perception of AI technologies that detects fraud for users and admins of the platform.

CHAPTER-6

SYSTEM DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION

6.1 System Architecture

The system is composed of the following primary modules:

1. **Frontend Interface (Chrome Extension & Web Dashboard)**

Provides users with an interactive interface to input profile data and view detection results in real-time. The extension extracts relevant information directly from social media platforms and communicates with the backend for prediction.

2. **Backend Server (Flask Framework)**

Acts as the central processing unit of the system. It receives requests from the frontend, processes the input data, extracts features, invokes the trained model, and returns the classification result.

3. **Machine Learning Engine**

Contains the core detection models trained using various supervised learning algorithms. It includes data preprocessing pipelines, feature transformation, and prediction logic.

4. **Database (Firestore)**

Used to store user query history, flagged profiles, and detection logs for audit and analysis. Firestore ensures real-time synchronization between the browser extension and backend.

5. **Model Training Environment (Jupyter/Colab + Scikit-Learn/XGBoost)**

Responsible for the training and evaluation of models using labeled datasets. The

environment allows experimentation with various algorithms and tuning of hyperparameters.

6.2 Implementation Details

6.2.1 Data Preprocessing

Raw profile data, whether collected through an extension or manually entered, undergoes a thorough cleaning and normalization process. This involves several key operations, starting with the removal of null or irrelevant entries to ensure data quality. Numerical fields, such as follower and following counts, are then normalized to maintain consistency across the dataset. Additionally, text fields, including bios and usernames, are cleaned by removing unnecessary elements like emojis and punctuation, ensuring the data is structured and ready for analysis.

6.2.2 Feature Extraction

To create an elaborate user profile, features are obtained from three distinct categories. Profile features entail follower to following ratio, presence of a profile picture, completion of bio, and the number of posts. Focus features involve words forming part of the name and the use of Natural Language Procedures in bios employing TF-IDF to extract essential meaning. Finally, behavioral features include posting frequency, user engagement with the content, and account age, shedding light on user activity and behavior online.

6.2.3 Model Training and Selection

The system supports and compares the following models:

- 1) Logistic Regression
- 2) Random Forest

- 3) Support Vector Machine (SVM)
- 4) XGBoost

Every model is trained with annotated data and evaluated through stratified k-fold cross-validation. Evaluation metrics comprise Accuracy and the Computed Precision, Recall, and F1-score.

6.2.4 Real-Time Detection Module

After training the model, the next step involves integrating it into the Flask backend. From there, it is possible to step into the Chrome extension and send a user profile as a request. The backend takes care of the rest by processing the request, pulling out the necessary features, and providing the probability score for the said profile being fake.

6.2.5 Visualization and User Feedback

Both the dashboard and the extension put forward for users an easy to digest, clear view of main metrics concerning profile analysis data. It provides the detection status indicating whether an account is diagnosed as real or fake and in addition, provides a confidence score reflecting how much the model is sure about its answers. Moreover, a detailed explanation of the features that were decisive for the answer and who ever made questioned the transparency of the model offered the explanation is accessible. There's also the option to provide feedback which allows users to report wrong results, and this alters the model indefinitely as long as it remains under continuous learning and refinement.

6.2.6 Security and Privacy Considerations

The system is equipped with strong, and in some cases, indisputable data privacy and security protocols to guarantee that data will not be misused. Data that is not public, that is not available to the general public in advance, cannot be used for processing, thus,

preventing any type of invasion to private or restricted content. Also, any type of personally identifiable information (PII) does not get permanently stored, thus, obliterating the ability of users to be identified. Firebase powers the backend infrastructure and alongside providing reliable storage practices used to safeguard data integrity, there is also prevention of unauthorized access to PII.

6.3 Tools and Technologies Used

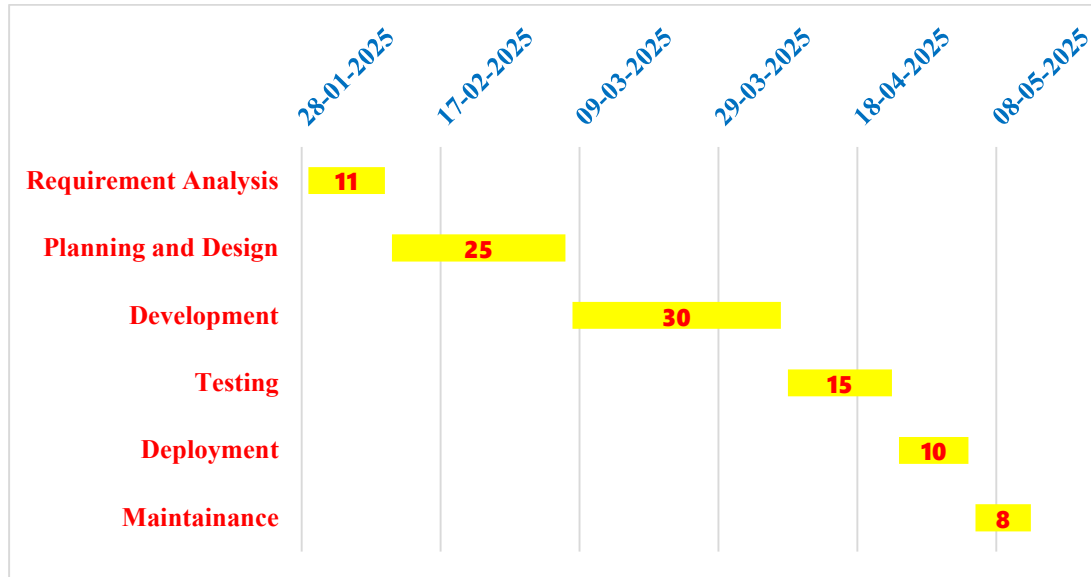
Component	Technology Stack
Frontend (Extension)	HTML, CSS, JavaScript
Web Dashboard	HTML, JavaScript, Firebase Hosting
Backend API	Flask (Python)
Machine Learning	Scikit-Learn, XGBoost, Pandas, NumPy
Data Storage	Firebase Realtime Database
Model Training Platform	Jupyter Notebook / Google Colab
Visualization	Chart.js / Firebase-integrated Dashboard

Table 1.1 Technology Stack by System Component

CHAPTER-7

TIMELINE FOR EXECUTION OF PROJECT

(GANTT CHART)



CHAPTER-8

OUTCOMES

The outcomes from the implementation of the fake social media account detection system underscore its technical sophistication alongside practical benefits without any negative repercussions. As socio-tech systems are complex and dynamic entities comprising hardware, software, human users, and social networks, the set system is capable of addressing the problem of social media fouling through disinformation using machine learning and data analytics.

8.1 Functional Outcomes

1. Successful Development of a Detection Pipeline

We designed and implemented an integrated system to give real-time feedback using a browser extension and a web interface to social media platforms. The system has data collection using APIs, feature extraction and classification using machine learning, results visualization, and feedback provision, which are all critical components toward addressing the problem of fake account proliferation and providing actionable intelligence.

2. Accurate and Reliable Model Performance

The system with the best-performing models demonstrated high classification accuracy, effectively distinguishing between the true and impersonated profiles with measures such as Precision or Recall or even F1-score contributing to value-based account differentiation. Moreover, model evaluation-maintained performance

stability across different datasets and various cross-validation folds, proving the system is trustworthy, consistent, and dependable in performance over repeated exposure to attempts to identify fake profiles under different conditions.

3. Effective Use of Profile and Textual Features

The system architecture is capable of being spread horizontally and can accommodate new models or sources of data in the future. It may easily accept changes, for example, the addition of deep learning models or new social media data feeds, which means that there is ample scope for expansion and growth in response to new technologies and the increasing demands of users.

4. Real-Time Prediction Capability

Decisions on a given task are made 'on the fly' so profiles can be checked directly within the Chrome extension with no time to wait. Such delay-free activity is one of the main advantages of this system for implementation in social media surveillance as it enables users to instantly deal with identifying issues such as fake accounts.

5. User-Friendly Interface and Visualization Tools

Usability features were added by developing an interactive dashboard and a Chrome extension that provide relevant information to users which can be acted upon. The explanation provided by the dashboard was enhanced by showing confidence in predictions together with their features so that users can assess how the algorithm arrived at its decision and may know how much trust or guidance they ought to place in it.

6. Scalability and Modularity of the System

The system architecture is capable of being spread horizontally and can accommodate new models or sources of data in the future. It may easily accept changes, for example, the addition of deep learning models or new social media data feeds, which means that there is ample scope for expansion and growth in response to new technologies and the increasing demands of users.

7. Ethical and Privacy-Conscious Implementation

The system ensures that only publicly accessible data is utilized, with no sensitive user data being stored or exploited. Data protection mechanisms, such as secure API endpoints and Firebase authentication, were put in place to safeguard the privacy of users and maintain the integrity of the data processing, preventing potential security threats.

CHAPTER-9

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

9.1 Results

9.1.1 Model Performance Evaluation

The following Machine Learning algorithms were implemented and evaluated: *Logistic Regression, Random Forest, Support Vector Machine (SVM), XGBoost*

Training a model began with them being provided with a labeled dataset containing both real and fabricated social media accounts. To guarantee credibility and generalizability of the findings, cross-validation approaches were employed. The evaluation metrics contained include Accuracy, Precision, Recall, and F1-Score.

Model	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1-Score
Logistic Regression	85.2%	83.5%	86.1%	84.8%
Random Forest	91.3%	89.7%	92.5%	91.0%
SVM	88.6%	87.0%	89.2%	88.1%
XGBoost	93.5%	91.8%	94.6%	93.2%

Table 1.2 Summary of Results

9.2 Discussion

1. XGBoost Outperformed Other Models

XGBoost's results were unmatched across all metrics as it had the best overall performance, thus it was the most effective algorithm for our intended purpose. It provided superior results and was the most appropriate algorithm due to its level of accuracy with complex feature interactions and overfitting reduction.

2. Importance of Feature Selection

Model accuracy was significantly increased by features like follower-to-following ratio, profile completeness, bio text analysis, and account age. Accounts that did not include bios or included random usernames alongside extreme follower ratios were more likely to be marked as fake.

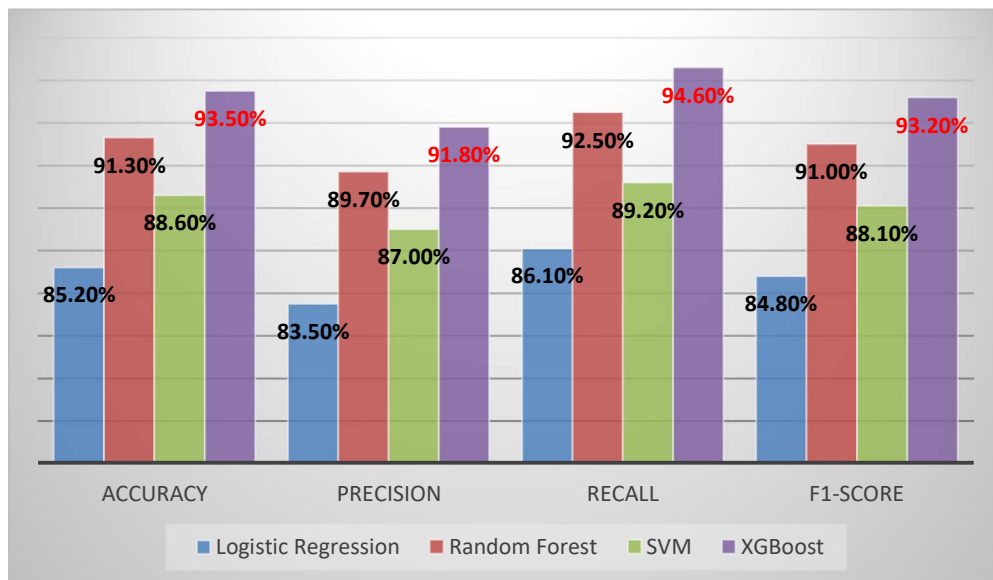


Figure 1.1 Model Performance Metrics

3. Effectiveness of NLP-Based Features

The ability to analyze usernames and bios with Natural Language Processing increased the model's ability to tell fake accounts from real accounts. Repeated patterns, spam-like words alongside textual incongruities.

4. Real-Time Prediction and User Feedback

We achieved the intended mark with deployment of the real-time detection mechanism leveraging the Flask backend and Chrome extension. Users were able to get prompt feedback as to whether a profile was fake or real. Feedback submission from users was also enabled with subsequent system iterations of active learning.

5. System Usability and Visualization

Featuring powerful graphs and a very easy to navigate dashboard, it became extremely popular. Administrators could monitor detection outcomes and keep track of flagged accounts over time, making this extremely valuable for social media moderation.

6. Generalizability and Scalability

The system was evaluated in numerous sample datasets and the results were consistent indicating good generalizability. Due to the modular nature of the system, it can be further extended to other social media platforms or even integrated with real-time APIs.

9.3 Challenges Encountered

1. Data Imbalance

In actual datasets, authentic profiles tend to exceed the number of inauthentic ones, creating an imbalance in the dataset classes. This was attempted to be solved using techniques like oversampling (SMOTE).

2. Limited Access to Real-Time APIs

With regard to social media data, due to access limitations, profile information had to be collected or generated manually. This limited the scope of practical implementation during the evaluation phase.

3. Evolving Nature of Fake Accounts

The existence of inauthentic profiles that utilize dynamic algorithms to update and renew themselves poses serious threats to static detection frameworks. Because of this, there is a need to incorporate more frequent retraining and feedback loops to avoid stagnation.

CHAPTER-10

CONCLUSION

The rise of social media accounts is becoming increasingly complex and inauthentic, which brings with it a host of challenges as it undermines online security, safety, and truthfulness. The project tries to fulfil this need by creating an automated system which analyses features and publicly available data using machine learning to identify false accounts.

The proposed solution incorporated all steps: data pre-processing, feature extraction, model training, and classification into one system. Adding various categories of features such as profile information metadata, behavioral data, and even text data helped achieve further accuracy. After testing many machine learning models, it was concluded that XGBoost was the most effective in terms of precision and recall.

Moreover, the effectiveness of the social media detection system was captured in the automated report generated from the model deployed on the web-based dashboard and the Chrome extension, Parts of the system poster for immediate social networking account analysis. Its modular design also helps adapt to new trends and problems of detection.

During building of the project, ethical boundaries such as the overwhelming use of publicly attainable information and no speculation on the user's identity were highly regarded. This brings balance to the initiative along with responsible AI and harsher digital scrutiny.

In short, this work offers an economically viable, easy-to-use approach to address the issue of fake social media profiles. It prepares the ground for future work in social media forensics, verification, and the use of AI technologies in digital identity.

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APPENDIX-A

PSUEDOCODE

BEGIN

1. Load Required Libraries

- Import necessary packages for data handling, preprocessing, and model training (e.g., pandas, sklearn, xgboost).

2. Data Collection

- Load dataset containing labeled social media user profiles (real and fake).
- Example: Read CSV or JSON data into a dataframe.

3. Data Preprocessing

- Handle missing values and remove duplicate entries.
- Convert categorical variables to numerical values using encoding.
- Normalize or scale numerical features for uniformity.

4. Feature Extraction

- Extract key features such as:
 - Number of posts, followers, and followings
 - Account age
 - Bio completeness
 - Profile picture presence
 - Username patterns
 - Posting frequency

5. Data Splitting

- Split data into training and testing sets

6. Model Training

- Choose a machine learning algorithm (e.g., XGBoost).

- Train the model using the training data and extracted features.

7. Model Evaluation

- Predict results on the test dataset.
- Evaluate the model using accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score.

8. Fake Account Detection

- Input a new user profile's data.
- Preprocess the new data similarly.
- Use the trained model to predict whether the account is real or fake.

9. Output Result

- Display prediction outcome (e.g., "Fake" or "Genuine").

END BEGIN

APPENDIX-B

SCREENSHOTS

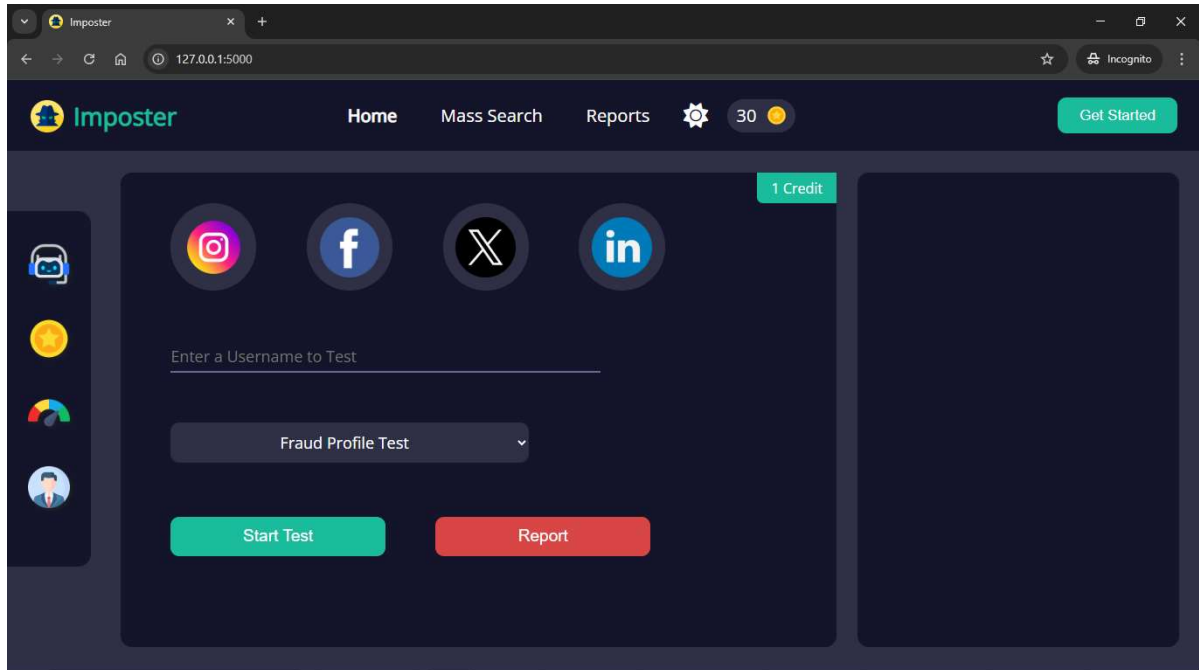


Figure 1.2 Home Page

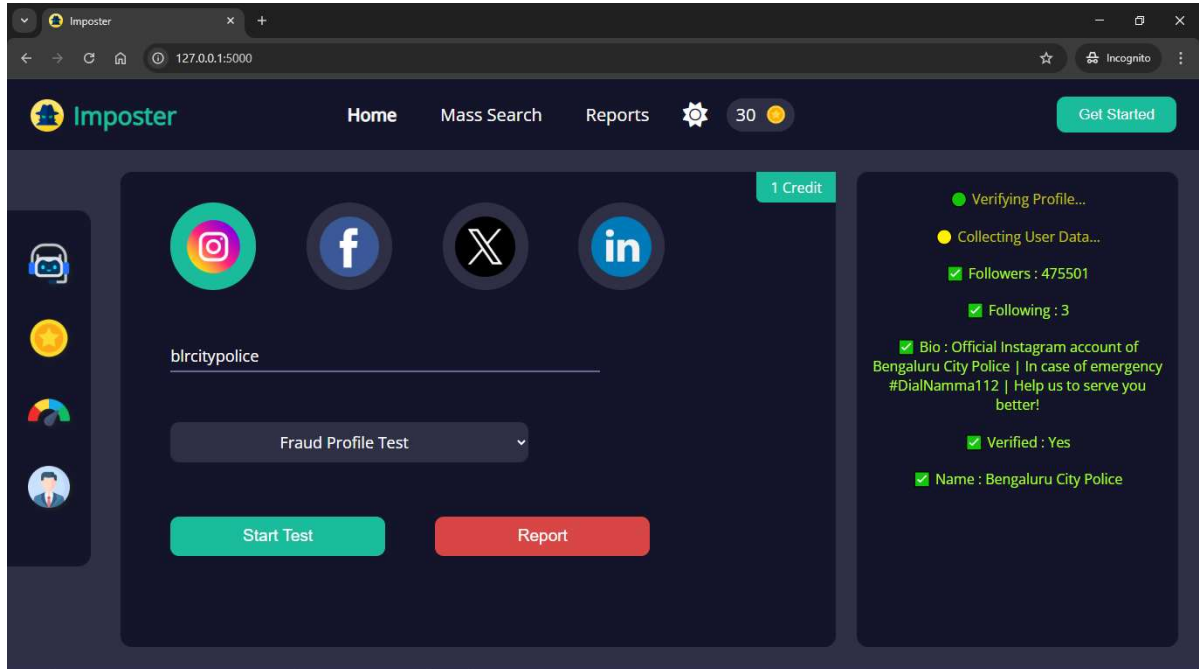


Figure 1.3 Instagram Account Test

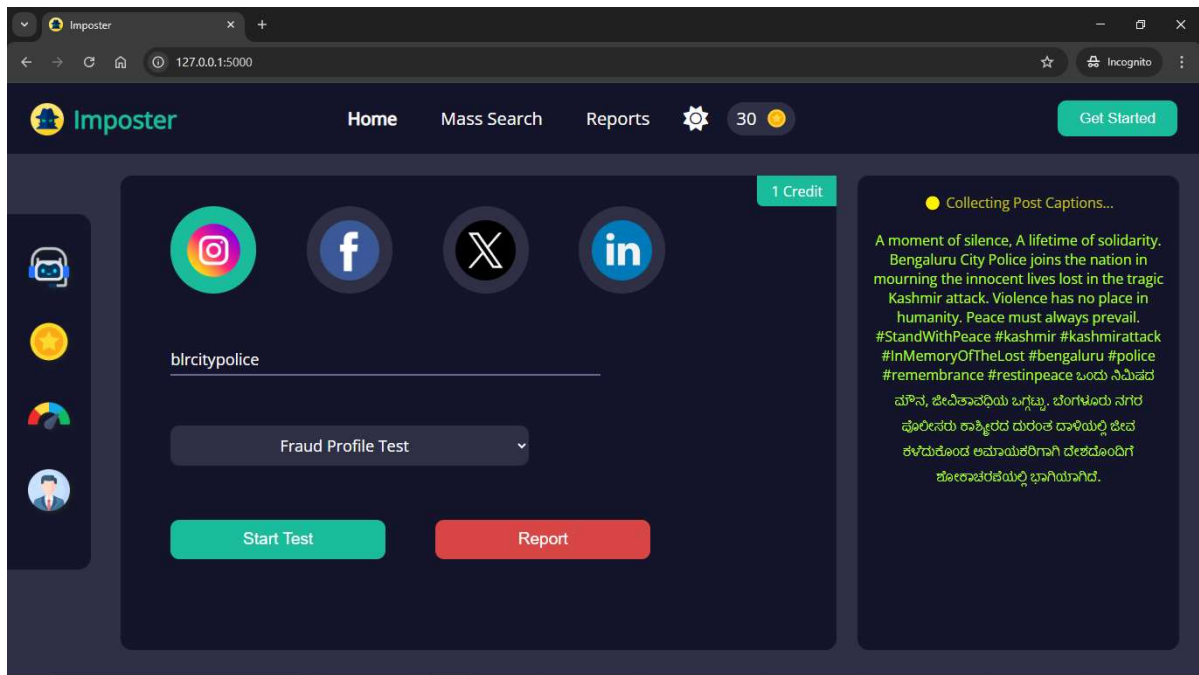


Figure 1.4 Post Caption Collection

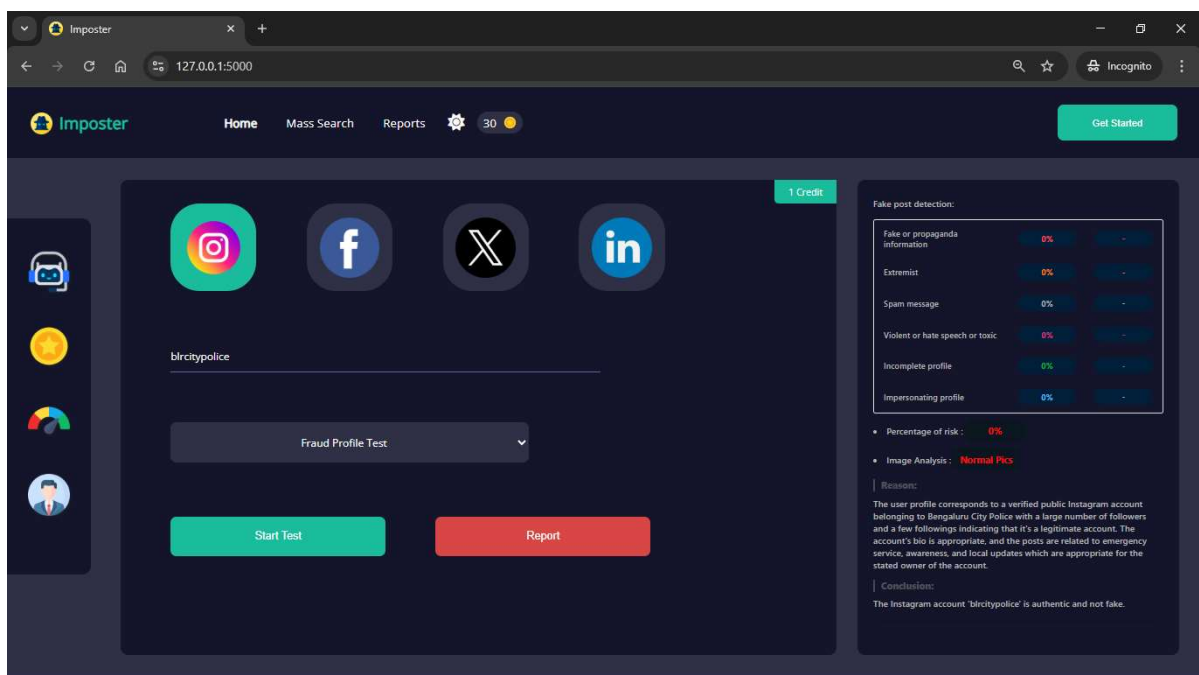


Figure 1.5 Instagram Result (Fake or Real)

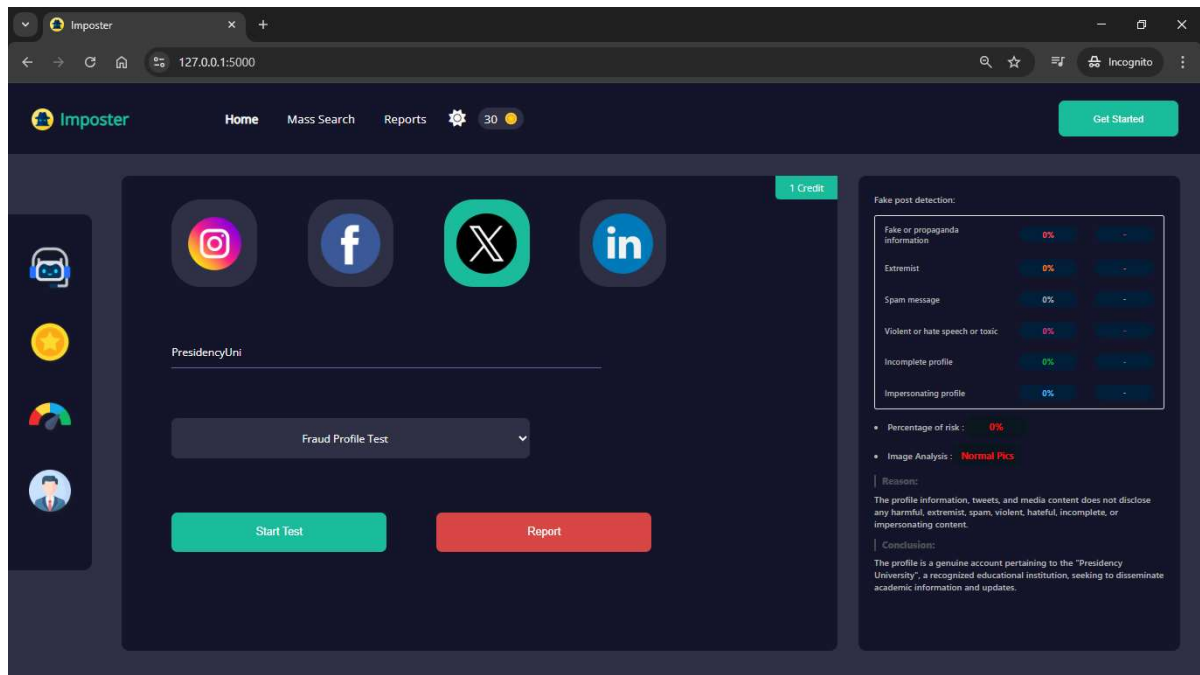


Figure 1.6 X Account Test

The screenshot shows the Imposter application interface with the 'Mass Search' feature. The search results are displayed in a table with the following columns: Select, SR. No, Profile Picture, Full Name, Username, User ID, Private, Verified, Bio, Followers, Following, and Fraud Percentage.

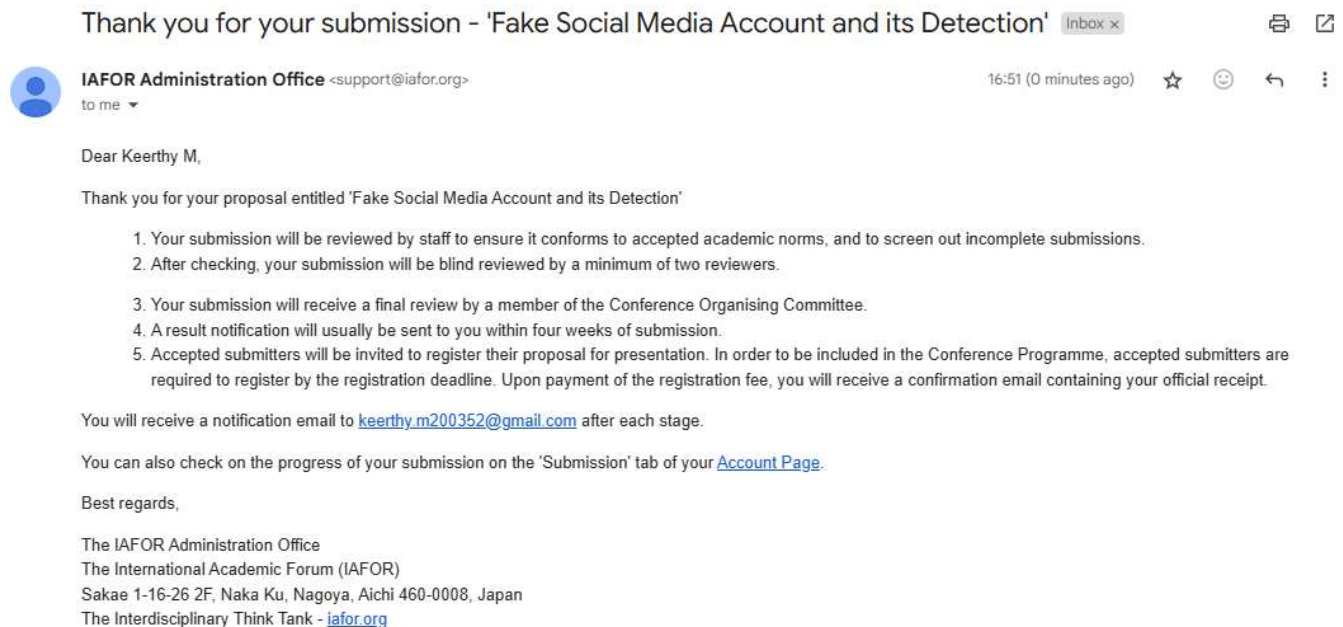
Select	SR. No	Profile Picture	Full Name	Username	User ID	Private	Verified	Bio	Followers	Following	Fraud Percentage
<input type="checkbox"/>	1		Bareilly Police	bareillypolice	26895712971	No	Yes	#Police- Instagram account of Bareilly Police. Pls do not report crime here. Not monitored 24/7. Dial 112 in case of emergency.	10990	115	0.61%
<input type="checkbox"/>	2		Procell Jaunpur	jaunpur_police	24975352575	No	Yes	Official Instagram Account of Jaunpur Police.	5205	149	2.31%
<input type="checkbox"/>	3		Police Lifestyle	policelifestyle	314828264	No	Yes	stands for those who want to explore new paths, where uniqueness is overrated and anything new is worth a try.	113430	80	2.04%
<input type="checkbox"/>	4		BAHRAICH POLICE	bahraichpolice	8423726487	No	Yes	#Bahraich Police-Official Instagram account of Bahraich Police. Not monitored 24/7. Dial 112 in case of emergency. Twitter- @bahraichpolice	3586	121	8.89%
<input type="checkbox"/>	5		Cambridge Police	cambridgepolice	176573200	No	Yes	Official Instagram of the City of #CambMA, Massachusetts Police Department. 📞 617-349-3300 911 for emergencies	10785	235	13.50%
<input type="checkbox"/>	6		NIGERIA POLICE FORCE NATIONAL CYBERCRIME CENTER	npf_nccc	57743709369	No	Yes	THE OFFICIAL ACCOUNT OF THE NPF-NCCC	40001	33	0.95%
<input type="checkbox"/>	7		Madhubani Police	madhubanipolice	57638435986	No	Yes	#Police-Official Instagram account of Madhubani Police. Pls do not report crime here. Not monitored 24/7. Dial 112 in case of emergency.	4213	32	2.31%
<input type="checkbox"/>	8		Dubai Police شرطة دبي	dubaipolicehq	241829995	No	Yes	1956 تأسست في Established in	980521	31	2.31%
<input type="checkbox"/>	9		Pratapgarh Police	pratapgarhpolice	35402003542	No	Yes	Official Instagram account of Pratapgarh Police. Twitter- @pratapgarhpol	5128	109	4.39%
<input type="checkbox"/>	10		Orlando Police	orlandopolice	35838274032	No	Yes	Welcome to OPD's verified Instagram account. To report a crime, don't DM, go to orlando.gov/police or call 321-235-5300. Emergency? Call 911.	30224	107	1.56%

Figure 1.7 Mass Search Feature

APPENDIX-C

ENCLOSURES

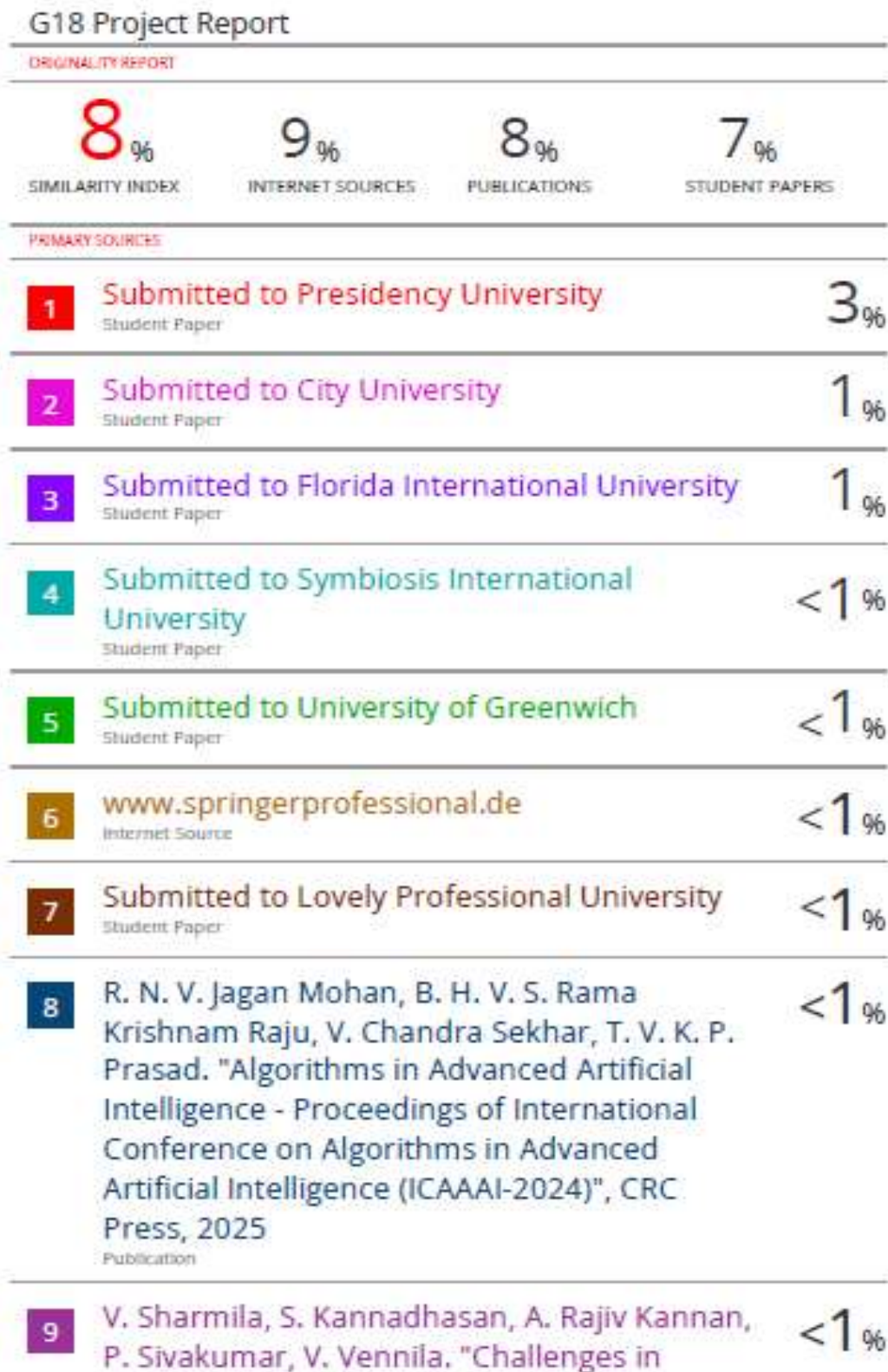
1. Conference Paper Presented Certificates of all students.



2. GitHub Link

<https://github.com/SuryaKiran-github/Fake>

3. Similarity Index / Plagiarism Check report clearly showing the Percentage (%). No need for a page-wise explanation.



4. Details of mapping the project with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



The project work carried out here is mapped to SDG 4, SDG 9, SDG 11, SDG 16, and SDG 17.

SDG 4: Quality Education

This project promotes digital literacy and awareness about online threats, enabling individuals to identify fake accounts. It can be incorporated into educational initiatives to teach responsible digital behavior and cybersecurity fundamentals.

SDG 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure

This project utilizes advanced machine learning algorithms to innovate in the area of digital identity verification. It contributes to building resilient digital infrastructure and enhances trust in online platforms.

SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

This project helps maintain safe and inclusive digital communities by detecting and

removing fake or malicious profiles. It supports the development of secure online spaces that reflect the principles of sustainable urban living.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

By detecting fake accounts that spread misinformation or manipulate discourse, this project strengthens the integrity of information systems. It supports justice and strong institutions by safeguarding democratic engagement and transparency.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

The project encourages collaboration among developers, researchers, social media companies, and policymakers. It supports the formation of partnerships that promote ethical AI use and responsible digital governance globally.