Real Teenagers, Fake Nudes: The Rise of Deepfakes in American Schools

0:01

from The New York Times I'm Sabrina

0:03

tavernes and this is the

0:06

[Music]

0:12

daily a disturbing new problem is

0:15

sweeping American schools students are

0:18

using artificial intelligence to create

0:21

sexually explicit images of their

0:23

classmates and then share them without

0:26

them even

0:27

[Music]

0:28

knowing today my colleague Natasha

0:32

singer on the rise of deep fake nudes

0:36

and one girl's fight to stop

0:39

[Music]

0:41

[Applause]

0:43

[Music]

0:46

them it's Friday June

0:49

[Music]

0:55

7th so Natasha for the past year you've

0:58

been reporting on artificial

1:00

intelligence in American schools and

1:02

your most recent reporting has uncovered

1:05

a pretty new and very disturbing Trend

1:09

involving AI tell me what you've been

1:12

finding it's been a really striking year

1:15

on my beat because we're seeing kind of

1:18

a rapidly spreading new form of peer

1:21

sexual exploitation and harassment in

1:23

schools which is called Deep fake

1:25

nudes and what that means is that we're

1:28

seeing middle and high school boys

1:31

across the United States using these

1:33

widely available notification apps to

1:36

allow people to ctitious take clothed

1:40

photos of girls and women and without

1:43

their knowledge or consent use these

1:46

apps to remove their clothes and so it

1:49

looks like a simulated nude of a ninth

1:52

grader who you know has posed for a

1:54

photo at say a high school football game

1:56

or her High School prom in a dress

1:59

except when these boys use these apps it

2:01

looks like the girls have posed for

2:03

these nude photos at these events right

2:06

and the thing is that boys have been

2:08

sexually harassing girls online for

2:10

decades including using Photoshop to

2:13

make fake nude pictures but the

2:15

difference here is that generative AI is

2:18

an exponentially more powerful tool it

2:21

makes it look realistic but second of

2:23

all it enables the mass production of

2:26

these kind of fake nude images of teen

2:28

girls very very very quickly interesting

2:31

and one expert I interviewed pointed out

2:34

to me that one boy with his phone in the

2:37

course of an afternoon can victimize 40

2:40

girls and then the images are out there

2:42

right right and so the possibility of

2:46

harming many girls instantly and

2:50

permanently is what is the concern here

2:54

okay so this is a very disturbing and

2:56

very new problem where did your

2:59

reporting to understand this problem

3:01

start so one recent afternoon Sydney

3:04

Harper a producer at the daily and I

3:06

travel to Westfield New

3:09

Jersey do you want to tell us a little

3:11

bit about what we're looking at what

3:12

we're

3:13

seeing we are driving through downtown

3:16

Westfield which is a small affluent

3:18

community of a few thousand people it's

3:21

this idyllic tiny suburb outside of

3:24

Newark very manicured loans very

3:27

manicured definitely landscapers

3:31

employed with manicured Lawns and Lush

3:33

dogwood trees in full bloom so here we

3:36

are at the manise and then we went to

3:39

see Franchesca Manny and her mom

3:44

D

3:46

mommy oh my God I told you guys are

3:48

coming at 4: you said 3:30 did I come in

3:51

give me 3 seconds dto was surprised to

3:54

see us at first because she'd been

3:56

expecting us a little later in the day

3:58

hi Franchesca hi hi it was like a half

4:01

hour after school was over and

4:03

Franchesca was in the back you know

4:04

suntanning outside with a

4:07

dog Sydney nice to meet and after we

4:10

said our hos we sat in the living room

4:13

and Franchesca started to tell us more

4:14

about herself okay so I'm Franchesca

4:17

Manny I'm 15 years old and I'm a

4:20

sophomore at Westfield High School

4:22

Franchesca is a typical teen in many

4:24

ways I love playing sports my main sport

4:27

is fencing I love hanging out she plays

4:30

Sports she is training in fencing she's

4:35

really gregarious and she's really

4:38

confident what was your first inkling

4:41

that something had happened that had to

4:43

do with the girls in your class well

4:46

Franchesca began to tell us what

4:48

happened to her at school last October

4:50

so I found out that like there was a

4:53

group of kids in my school and they were

4:55

taking like girls faces pictures of

4:58

girls faces and putting them on like AI

5:00

generated like pictures and it was like

5:04

not rumors but it was like word to mouth

5:06

it was like you know like the game

5:07

telephone was like going around yeah she

5:09

found out that boys in her class had

5:12

created these AI generated fake nude

5:14

images of some of the girls in her class

5:17

it was in history class it was second

5:19

period And I was just sitting down and

5:21

then I came back from the bathroom and

5:23

like the girls were talking about it I

5:24

was like hey what's going on and then

5:26

people were like talking about it and I

5:27

was like oh we were all super surprised

5:30

the girls hadn't seen the images they

5:32

had heard about them from boys who had

5:33

seen them and who knew who was in them

5:36

Franchesca said the girls made a

5:37

Snapchat group to discuss what they

5:39

should do and then they decided that

5:41

some girls needed to go down to the

5:43

principal's office and notify

5:45

administrators about these deep fake

5:46

nude images and what did you tell the

5:48

principal we're like there's these group

5:51

of kids taking pictures of gross faces

5:53

and putting them on AI generated bodies

5:56

and we were just worried and we didn't

5:58

know if it was like one of us so we just

6:00

went down like even for the sake of the

6:02

other girls we just went down to like

6:04

tell the principal so the school isn't

6:05

even aware these images exist until

6:07

Franchesca and her friends notify

6:09

administrators that's right so then

6:12

Franchesca goes back to class and goes

6:14

about her school day like the day went

6:16

on but a lot of girls were worried a lot

6:19

of girls were like crying and you know I

6:22

didn't really think it was going to be

6:23

me so I was I was I was doing my own

6:25

thing I was going to my classes um there

6:27

was a lot of like counseling or

6:29

something but I need to stay on my work

6:32

and at this point Franchesca isn't

6:34

thinking that any of this is going to

6:35

affect her directly But as time goes on

6:38

she begins to hear something troubling

6:40

it was during fourth period I was going

6:42

to go print something out with one of my

6:44

friends and I see one of my other

6:46

friends and I was talking to them and

6:50

they said that they think there's one of

6:52

me so she heard that she might be one of

6:56

the students who had these deep fake new

6:59

photos made of her so as she's worried

7:03

about this the school begins to announce

7:06

the names of girls in her class over the

7:09

loudspeaker and ask them to come down to

7:11

the office and I hear my name over the

7:14

intercom telling me that I have to go

7:18

down to principal's office and at at

7:20

that moment I I knew it it was one of me

7:23

cuz I think all of the girls were

7:24

getting called down from the intercom so

7:27

um I went down and then um the principal

7:31

told me I was one of the victims and

7:34

then that's how I found out and how did

7:37

you feel about that so basically in the

7:39

beginning I I felt shocked cuz I didn't

7:42

think it could happen to me and that's

7:43

the funny part because could happened to

7:45

anyone I'm kind of sad too cuz it's like

7:48

surprising cuz I didn't think my

7:51

classmates could do this to me

7:53

Franchesca is upset and also feeling

7:55

like there's a double standard like the

7:58

girls are not being treated by the

7:59

school with the same sensitivity and

8:01

privacy as the boys who allegedly made

8:04

these fake nudes what I found weird is

8:07

that they announced like the the victims

8:09

over the intercom while the the boards

8:11

that were getting investigated for it

8:13

were like pulled out of class privately

8:16

so no one could know who it was but we

8:18

girls had to get you know called over

8:21

the intercom which I think is like like

8:22

kind of violating our privacy who who

8:25

heard that announcement everyone cuz

8:28

it's the classes finished and you

8:30

usually people like speak over the

8:32

intercom so everyone heard it while they

8:34

were in the hallway yeah and as she

8:36

walks out of the principal's office so

8:38

I'm walking down the hallway to my math

8:41

class and I see these group of boys

8:44

laughing at these group of girls crying

8:46

about the situation and I'm just like

8:49

are you kidding me the first thing she

8:51

sees is a group of girls standing

8:53

together crying and a group of boys

8:55

laughing at them so that's when like I

8:57

started like boiling I was super mad and

8:59

like I just thought it was not fair

9:01

because it's a serious thing like why

9:03

are you laughing at it and what did it

9:06

make you want to do when you were mad

9:07

well I wanted it to stop because girls

9:11

shouldn't be like laughed at because of

9:14

something that had happened to them and

9:17

especially by like you know a guy like I

9:20

really don't think it that's fair you

9:23

know it is a pivotal moment for

9:26

Franchesca she sees the girls crying and

9:30

she talks about how she was just pissed

9:32

off and she wanted to do something about

9:35

it and she says to her mom how are you

9:39

going to help me do something about this

9:41

and I was like Mom this is what happened

9:43

at school um we need to do something

9:47

because I'm super mad this happened to

9:49

me and to other girls and I think we

9:52

could do something to fix it and what

9:54

does Francesca's mom do when she hears

9:56

what happened to her daughter and her

9:57

friends well the first thing her mom

10:00

doota sets out to do is find out what

10:03

consequences there will be for the boys

10:05

who did this one of the vice principles

10:07

call me and informs me that yes there

10:11

has been a

10:12

situation where boys created new images

10:16

but uh you know the boy has been

10:19

suspended so I asked the legitimate

10:23

question of for how long Dera says she

10:26

learned from the school that it's

10:27

primarily one boy who is made and

10:29

circulated these images and that he will

10:32

be suspended for just one day you know

10:35

there was no consternation there was no

10:36

you know we thinking about it we're

10:38

still investigating we're going to

10:39

decide that for now he has been

10:41

suspended and doas had several

10:43

conversations with administrators about

10:46

what has happened and what they're doing

10:48

and she is beginning to feel that

10:50

they're not taking it seriously and

10:51

they're not doing enough she's like but

10:53

don't worry he is gone and I'm sitting

10:57

there and I'm saying go where Gilligan's

11:00

Island he's going to be back on

11:02

Wednesday again you know I'm composed at

11:04

this point I said well he's back on

11:05

Wednesday isn't he do you think as a

11:07

mother as a woman do you think this is

11:10

the right approach she says well you

11:13

know this is what it is uh uh you know

11:15

this is what we have

11:17

decided and I said well then I want to

11:19

inform you that I'm not going to let it

11:21

go and the comination of the idea that a

11:26

the school has announced the names of

11:27

the girls over the loudspeaker further

11:29

humiliating them and violating their

11:31

privacy a b the boy who has instigated

11:35

this has been suspended for one day and

11:38

maybe is taking another day off and then

11:40

he will go back to school with the girls

11:42

he did this to these things in

11:44

combination make doota feel that the

11:48

school is not doing enough to protect

11:50

the girls and is not going to do enough

11:52

to punish the boys that and that's how

11:54

the whole ordeal started it completely

11:59

activates

12:00

her and so one of the first things she

12:03

does is D writes a letter to the local

12:07

online kind of Village News website and

12:11

she explains what happened to Franchesca

12:14

and she says something

12:16

like am I the only one who thinks that

12:19

the school's response is inadequate and

12:22

she puts her phone number on this letter

12:24

to the editor of the local Westfield

12:26

publication calling I think more than

12:28

300 people contacted me it was like a

12:30

hotline older women to young mothers to

12:34

parents uh of Westfield High School

12:37

students two counselors uh some teachers

12:41

so we all connected together through

12:42

that she hears from the parents of other

12:44

girls she hears from the parents of

12:47

girls who have been subject to other

12:48

kinds of sexual harassment in schools

12:50

she hears from local politicians and she

12:53

decides that she's going to hold a town

12:55

meeting about this in her own living

12:56

roomp wow put armchairs and and chairs

12:59

and and you know it was a full room of

13:02

of beautiful people that came to support

13:04

us and and so she has this meeting and

13:08

dozens of folks come including the mayor

13:11

and other parents and local legislators

13:14

and they talk about what needs to be

13:15

done and then we need to put code of

13:17

conduct AI policies and bullying

13:20

policies in place and there should be

13:21

just one approach right if you've done

13:23

the wrong thing you've done the wrong

13:25

thing it's as simple as that and what

13:28

comes out of that meeting meeting is

13:30

dorota and Franchesca decide they want

13:32

to push school districts Nationwide to

13:34

update their policies to better protect

13:37

girls from Deep fakes and prevent this

13:39

from happening

13:44

again so how does the school respond to

13:46

all of this so when I reached out to the

13:50

Westfield Public School District they

13:52

said they had opened an immediate

13:54

investigation into the incident and

13:56

consulted with police but that couldn't

13:59

comment on the specifics of the case or

14:02

talk about any disciplinary actions

14:04

against the boys for privacy reasons

14:06

because the students were under 18 and

14:09

when I asked them earlier this week

14:10

whether they changed any of their

14:12

policies to address AI abuse the

14:15

district declined to comment so Natasha

14:17

the story of the manise I mean it really

14:20

shows how unprepared schools can be it

14:24

seems like the school was completely

14:25

blindsided by this and really fumbled it

14:28

but I guess in the school defense this

14:30

is all really new right I think that's

14:33

an important point this is brand new AI

14:36

technology and maybe School

14:39

administrators principes superintendents

14:41

didn't even know that deep fake nudes

14:45

existed or that there are apps you can

14:48

use specifically to nudify photos of

14:51

women right so you could say they

14:53

weren't prepared for this kind of

14:55

technological abuse and I spoke to

14:57

parents in a number of districts and I

14:59

reached out to schools in a number of

15:01

states and mostly the way that Westfield

15:07

High handled this is typical the typical

15:10

response was there will be minimal

15:13

discipline for the guy or guys who did

15:16

this and you know girls um this is just

15:20

a fact of life or like girls yeah this

15:23

is really bad but it will pass and there

15:26

did not seem to be understanding in many

15:29

districts that actually this could be

15:31

devastating for mental health and also

15:33

that it could have long-term

15:34

consequences for these

15:37

girls I guess the thing that's bothering

15:39

me is it seems pretty clear that what

15:42

these boys are doing is

15:44

wrong but is it illegal I mean are they

15:48

breaking the law when they're doing this

15:50

you would naturally think that it should

15:53

be illegal for anyone to make deep fake

15:57

nudes of 12 and 13 18-year-old girls but

16:01

the answer to this question is a lot

16:03

more complicated than you might

16:05

[Music]

16:19

think we'll be right

16:25

back so Natasha you talked about the

16:28

question of legality as being very

16:30

complicated what do you mean by that

16:33

well what I mean is that there are

16:35

different laws that could cover this and

16:38

so let me break it down there's a whole

16:40

section of the law that Outlaws The

16:42

Possession and distribution of what's

16:44

called child sexual abuse material and

16:47

that's explicit video or photos or

16:51

images of underage children engaged in

16:53

sexual

16:54

acts but that doesn't mean that every

16:57

photo of an unclothed child is

16:59

automatically illegal for example a

17:02

photo of a naked child in and of itself

17:06

may not be illegal like if you think of

17:09

a parent taking a photo of their toddler

17:11

in a bathtub but if the image shows a

17:14

child that is sexually suggestive or

17:16

engaging in explicit sexual conduct that

17:19

is illegal that's the red line the big

17:22

question as we're starting to see more

17:24

and more of these deep fakes is where do

17:27

these images fall on the spect of

17:29

material if an image shows a 17-year-old

17:32

without clothes on does that meet the

17:34

federal definition of a legal

17:37

[Music]

17:38

material this came up in my reporting

17:41

because there is a case in a high school

17:44

where boys made these deep fake nudes of

17:48

their female classmates and according to

17:52

the police reports local police heard

17:54

about it from the parents of the girls

17:55

who complained but they didn't hear

17:57

about it from the school

17:59

and so the police detective went to the

18:01

school and said you know these images

18:05

fall under the child's sexual abuse

18:07

material statute and you as a school are

18:10

mandatorily required to report such

18:14

images and eventually the school

18:16

district does report the Deep fake news

18:18

but when I reached out to them to ask

18:21

the school district about this the

18:23

school district sent me a note saying

18:24

that they had reported the Deep fake

18:26

nudes of female students out of an

18:28

abundance of caution because the school

18:30

district's lawyers said these were fake

18:32

they weren't real and maybe it wasn't

18:34

necessary to report

18:36

them so even within school districts

18:40

there is confusion about the legality or

18:44

illegality of these deep fake nude

18:46

[Music]

18:52

images okay so some of these deep fakes

18:55

are actually illegal sexually explicit

18:57

AI generated IM of minors but some

19:01

images are actually still pretty unclear

19:03

so what is being done to clear up that

19:07

gray area to make it more black and

19:09

white a number of families whose

19:12

daughters have been subject to these

19:14

deep fake nudes want to see a standard

19:17

law or policies to protect their

19:19

daughters and other people's daughters

19:22

and so you see that some families are

19:25

lobbying for states to pass laws to to

19:29

prohibit these images and the Manis are

19:32

one family who have been lobbying for

19:35

New Jersey to pass a law to prohibit

19:37

these deep fakes but many states are

19:41

introducing new bills and there are

19:44

different approaches to doing this some

19:47

states are expanding their laws on child

19:50

sexual abuse material to include these

19:54

AI generated nudes and make those

19:56

illegal got it and then there's another

20:00

approach where states have laws on

20:02

Revenge porn and that prohibits people

20:06

who have taken consensual sexual images

20:10

with their Partners you know when they

20:12

break up if they're pissed off it's

20:13

illegal to post those online without the

20:16

other partner's consent and so states

20:19

are taking these Revenge born laws and

20:21

adding AI generated nudes right and the

20:25

third approach is to come up with

20:27

entirely new laws that are specific to

20:30

these deep fake nudes and to prohibit

20:34

The Possession or production or

20:37

distribution of these AI generated

20:40

sexually explicit images of minors and

20:42

sometimes both of minors and adults so

20:44

you're talking here about state laws is

20:47

there anything happening on the federal

20:48

front so to be clear federal law on

20:52

child sexual abuse material applies here

20:55

it covers computer generated and and

20:58

real images and the FBI has recently

21:01

said that it covers these deep fake AI

21:04

generated images as well and there are

21:07

also efforts to address this more

21:09

directly the White House issued an

21:11

executive order last fall making it a

21:14

priority to find ways to stop AI from

21:18

producing these abusive images and

21:20

Congress also recently introduced bills

21:22

to prohibit these AI generated nude

21:24

images and to allow victims to sue but

21:27

these efforts are not very far along and

21:30

really the momentum for change is

21:32

happening primarily at the state level

21:34

right now and it's important for states

21:36

to do this because these cases are often

21:39

prosecuted at the state and local level

21:42

okay so you talked about the third

21:43

approach creating entirely new laws what

21:46

does that process look like on the

21:48

ground what are you seeing pop up around

21:50

the country we've seen over the last two

21:52

years lawmakers in two dozen states

21:55

introducing these bills that are

21:57

specific to a I generated deep fake news

22:01

and these bills really vary in content

22:04

and in the severity of the

22:07

punishments Massachusetts lawmakers are

22:11

hammering out a new bill that would

22:14

criminalize the sharing of these

22:17

explicit images but it takes a different

22:20

approach to adults and minors it would

22:23

be a crime for adults to make these deep

22:27

fake nudes of minor but if it's teen

22:30

boys making the same kind of images they

22:32

could first be sentenced to a diversion

22:35

program which means that like they'd

22:37

have to learn about what's problematic

22:39

about these images they'd have to learn

22:41

about the responsible use of generative

22:43

AI they'd have to learn what the

22:44

punishments are so Massachusetts is

22:47

taking a more graduated approach you

22:50

know by comparison Louisiana passed a

22:53

law and under the new Louisiana law

22:57

anybody who knowingly makes or shares or

23:00

sells these sexually explicit deep fake

23:02

nudes of minors could face a minimum

23:05

prison sentence of five to 10 years oh

23:08

wow pretty tough right and it raises the

23:10

question of should a teen boy who makes

23:14

images of a teen girl face the same

23:16

punishment as a 50-year-old pedophile

23:19

who makes these images right important

23:21

question and that is very tricky it is

23:23

really tricky and it came up in my

23:25

reporting because at the end of last

23:27

year police off officers in the Miami

23:30

area arrested two Middle School boys for

23:33

allegedly making and sharing these

23:35

simulated nude images of two female

23:38

classmates who were 12 and 13 and

23:41

according to the police documents we got

23:44

the boys were charged with third deegree

23:46

felonies wow under a

23:49

2022 state law which prohibits altering

23:53

sexual depictions without consent and so

23:56

the question is what happens if they

23:58

convicted you know maybe they could be

24:00

sent to a remediation program like the

24:02

one that the Massachusetts lawmakers are

24:04

working on or maybe you know they would

24:08

have to register as sex offenders for

24:09

something they did when they were 13

24:11

years old and that would follow them for

24:12

the rest of their lives and so there's a

24:15

really complicated question about as new

24:18

laws are being passed how should

24:21

students who are doing this in middle

24:23

and high school be treated as opposed to

24:25

pedophiles so Natasha at the end of the

24:28

today we're left with a pretty

24:30

complicated picture here and with a very

24:32

hard question this technology has

24:35

resulted in real harm for young girls

24:38

and their families but at the same time

24:40

addressing that harm raises the question

24:43

of criminalizing young boys I think

24:46

that's the crucial question Sabrina and

24:48

it underscores how schools and parents

24:51

and lawmakers and law enforcement are

24:54

just in the opening stages of figuring

24:56

out how to deal with AI

24:59

[Music]

25:03

abuse and I've come to believe based on

25:05

my reporting over the last year that

25:07

it's actually part of a much larger

25:10

problem young people's increasingly

25:12

toxic relationship with

25:15

technology children and teens

25:17

relationship with technology changed

25:19

during the pandemic we all know that

25:22

many kids and teens began spending more

25:24

and more time online and some kids

25:27

became much more is is olated schools

25:29

tell me they believe that this has led

25:31

to a spike in cyber bullying and some

25:34

psychologists blame it on kids

25:36

compulsive use of social media and I

25:39

think the technology issue is also

25:41

connected to a whole constellation of

25:43

problems that schools are dealing with

25:45

post pandemic like increased depression

25:48

among students and increased

25:50

absenteeism and so I think that this is

25:52

not just a story about AI abuse in

25:55

schools it's a story about how

25:57

technology is fundamentally changing

26:00

childhood adolescence and education and

26:03

it's a story about how the grown-ups

26:05

whether it school administrators or

26:08

state lawmakers parents or members of

26:10

Congress are all racing to catch

26:14

[Music]

26:22

up Natasha thank you thank you Sabrina

26:28

[Music]

26:36

we'll be right

26:40

back here's what else you should know

26:42

today on Thursday an Israeli air strike

26:46

hit a United Nations School complex in

26:48

the central Gaza Strip that had become a

26:50

shelter for thousands of displaced

26:52

Palestinians and Israel said Hamas

26:55

militants Gaza Health officials said 40

26:58

people were killed in the attack

27:00

including 14 children and nine women the

27:03

Israeli military said that its forces

27:05

had targeted a group of about 30

27:08

militants using three classrooms as a

27:11

base including some who had taken part

27:14

in the October 7th

27:16

attacks and Steven Bannon a longtime

27:21

adviser to former president Donald Trump

27:23

was told by a federal judge to surrender

27:26

to authorities by July 1st

27:28

to start serving a 4-month prison term

27:31

Bannon was sentenced in October 2022 for

27:35

contempt of congress after he disobeyed

27:38

a subpoena to give testimony to the

27:40

house committee that investigated the

27:42

January 6 2021 attack on the capital

27:45

Bannon also faces a trial later this

27:47

year on charges of misusing money that

27:50

he helped raise for a group backing

27:52

Trump's border

27:54

[Music]

27:56

wall a ER will be sharing a new episode

27:59

of the interview tomorrow those few days

28:02

that we shot the pivotal scenes in the

28:05

movie I had to call home a lot I I

28:08

really uh

28:10

was a tad unhinged this week Lulu Garcia

28:14

Navaro talks with comedy Legend Julia

28:17

Lou dfus about what it was like to go to

28:21

much darker places in her latest film

28:28

today's episode was produced by Sydney

28:30

Harper and Shannon Lynn it was edited by

28:33

Mark George contains original music by

28:37

Maran Lozano Alicia bitu and Dan Powell

28:41

and was engineered by Chris Wood our

28:44

theme music is by Jim brunberg and Ben

28:46

Lanser of

28:53

[Music]

28:55

wonderly that's it for the Daily I'm

28:58

Sabrina Tavern see you on Monday

29:03

[Music]

English (auto-generated)