September 1, 2020

262 N Dithridge St

Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Professor Karen Reardon

University of Pittsburgh

4200 Fifth Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Dear Professor Reardon:

I would like to write my trend report on deepfake technology, which consists of faked videos and recordings that are, ideally, indistinguishable from the real thing. While an untrained eye can still identify a faked video with relative ease, recent innovations in the field of artificial intelligence have increased the difficulty of identifying deepfakes.

I believe that the topic of deepfakes is relevant for an internet-savvy generation in which media outlets value click generating content highly, sometimes without regard for that content’s truth. News, especially, is no longer designed solely to inform; rather, it is primarily designed to engage by eliciting emotional responses from its audience. This phenomenon could be exacerbated considerably with the use of deepfakes, as it would be feasible to post and circulate fake images or videos created without the subject’s consent.

My report would be structured as follows: an overview of deepfakes and the technology used to create them, how deepfakes have seen recent improvements to their quality, and the applications of deepfakes, both positive and negative. If possible, I would also like to write about the actions companies are currently taking to combat deepfakes. I am ultimately pursuing a career in the field of data science, so the issues presented by deepfake technology fascinate me greatly.

Sincerely,

Avery Peiffer