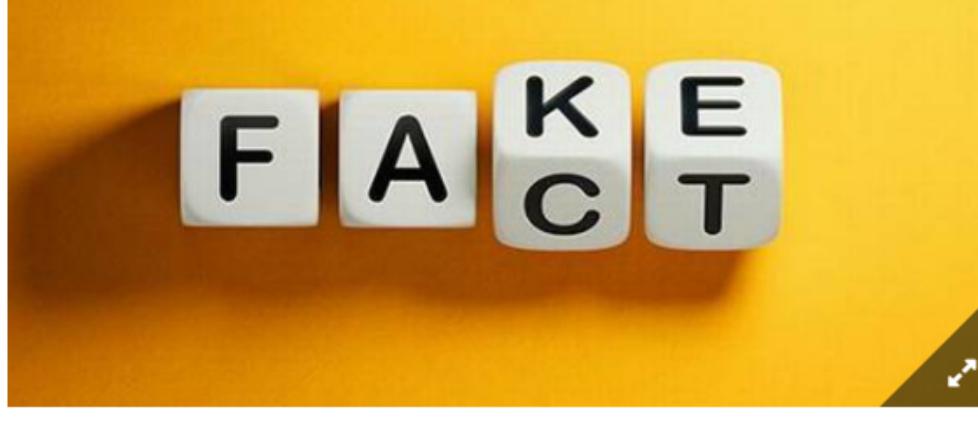


## **Info-tech**

# 1 in 3 individuals aware of deepfakes inadvertently shared them on social media: Study

Hemani Sheth | Mumbai | Updated on November 27, 2020 | Published on November 27, 2020



As the AI technology behind the creation of deepfakes evolves, it will be even more challenging to discern fact from fiction

Individuals are likely to inadvertently share ‘deepfakes’ on social media despite being aware of their existence, a Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU Singapore) study has found.

Deepfakes, a portmanteau of ‘deep learning’ and ‘fake’, are fake videos developed with the help of artificial intelligence (AI) software to depict people doing or saying things that they have never done. These videos may seem quite realistic.

In a survey of 1,231 Singaporeans led by NTU's Assistant Professor Saifuddin Ahmed, 54 per cent of the respondents said they were aware of deepfakes. Out of these respondents, one in three reported sharing content on social media that they subsequently learnt was a deepfake.

The study also found that more than one in five people aware of deepfakes said that they regularly encounter deepfakes online. The survey findings, reported in the journal *Telematics and Informatics*.

## Danger of non-consensual porn

"Fake news refers to false information published under the guise of being authentic news to mislead people, and deepfakes are a new, far more insidious form of fake news," Assistant Professor Saifuddin of NTU's Wee Kim Wee School of Communication and Information said.

"In some countries, we are already witnessing how such deepfakes can be used to create non-consensual porn, incite fear and violence, and influence civic mistrust. As the AI technology behind the creation of deepfakes evolves, it will be even more challenging to discern fact from fiction," he said.

"While tech companies like Facebook, Twitter and Google have started to label what they have identified as manipulated online content like deepfakes, more efforts will be required to educate the citizenry in effectively negating such content," he added.

The study also benchmarked the survey findings against a similar demographic and number of respondents in the United States. According to the report, 61 per cent of respondents in the US were aware of deepfakes as compared to 54 per cent in Singapore. Respondents were also more concerned by and frequently exposed to deepfakes. 39 per cent of respondents in the US reported sharing content that they later learnt was a deepfake.

Saifuddin said: “These differences are not surprising, given the more widespread relevance and public discussion surrounding deepfakes in the US.”

A recent rise in deepfakes has further raised concerns among people regarding the “destructive potential of this form of disinformation,” he said.

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