

EDITORS' PICK | Sep 9, 2020, 07:20pm EDT | 1,529 views

Fake Video Election? Deepfake Videos 'Grew 20X' Since 2019



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John Koetsier is a journalist, analyst, author, and speaker.



Politicians who have been most targeted by deepfake videos, according to CREOpint. JOHN KOETSIER

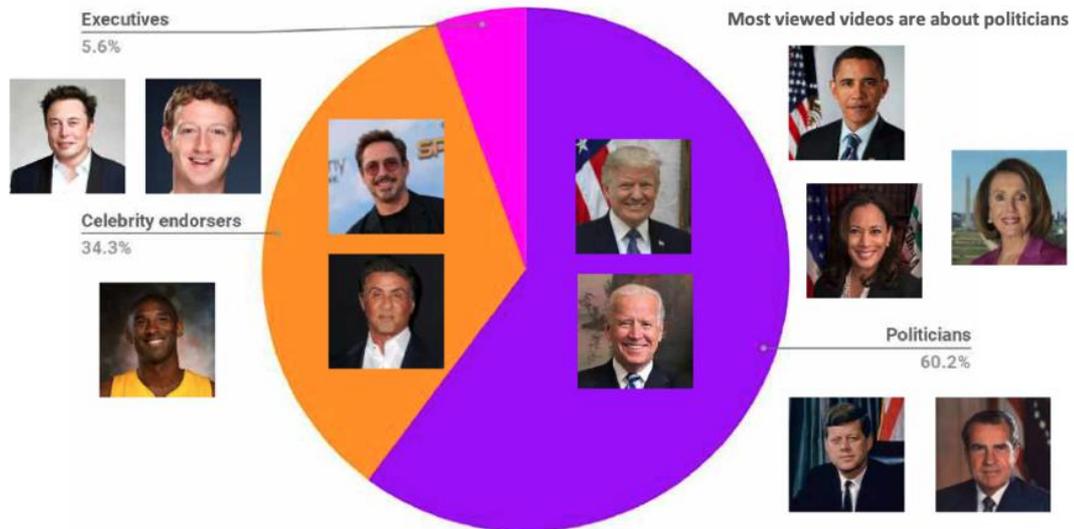
Deepfake videos are proliferating on social media and the internet, and most of them are focused on politics and the coming U.S. election, according to a study by an AI-powered “synthetic media” hunting startup.

“It’s far worse than you might think,” Jean-Claude Goldenstein, CEO of [CREOpint](#), said in a statement. “At a time of political instability paired with rapid technology changes in video manipulation and algorithmic amplification, we’re potentially barreling toward a catastrophically impacted election in just weeks.”

60% of deepfake videos now target politics.

And views are up 2,000% since late last year.

New insights: 60% of the most damaging videos are now targeted to impact politics



60% of the most damaging deepfake videos are targeting political figures, according to CREOpint. CREOPOINT

Donald Trump's fake "Declaration of Independence" video, with President Trump's head superimposed on actor Bill Pullman's body in a scene from the movie Independence Day, is the most-watched with over 18 million views, the company says.

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That's a relatively benign usage of deepfake technology, of course, that does not target someone else with negative intent.

Other videos are made by third parties to target politicians like Joe Biden, Mike Pence, Nancy Pelosi, and Trump himself with the intention of portraying them as incompetent or untrustworthy. All told, deepfakes have generated hundreds of millions of views since September of 2019, and that does not include porn or satire videos.

Other popular targets include Vladimir Putin, Boris Johnson, and Angela Merkel.

Celebrities aren't immune, of course, with Arnold Schwarzenegger a popular target. And business leaders like Mark Zuckerberg and Elon Musk are also the focus of deepfake videos.

Deepfakes are typically used to slander their targets, manipulate events, falsify statements or evidence, and create scandals. They're made with artificial intelligence software like FakeApp that maps targeted people's faces into scenes and onto other people's bodies, or otherwise manipulate parts of videos. Social media and other online platforms typically can't identify and remove videos, or sometimes refuse to do so, even when they are identified for them.

The result is that there were more than seven million views of manipulated videos knocking Joe Biden's cognitive health, and a fake Mike Pence supposed "PR stunt" was viewed over 10 million times.

"I've been analyzing the impact of digital deception since the aftermath of the 2016 election, and I view deepfakes as among the most horrific threats to our democracy," said former U.S. Federal Elections Commission Chair Ann Ravel.

CREOpaint, which makes software to identify deepfakes, says it has "pre-identified" hundreds of damaging deepfakes and is constantly monitoring for new ones. It licenses that software to companies, while making it available royalty-free for non-profits and universities.

The current response from social media platforms like YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok?

Too little, too late, CREOpaint says.

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