

BIGMUN 2025

ECOSOC 4: Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD)

# Research Report

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**Topic 1:** Identifying and combatting the spreading issues of deepfakes and fake-news.



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## Introduction

The rapid emergence of digital media has ushered in an age where, more than ever before, information moves with greater speed and reaches wider audiences.<sup>1</sup> What this has done is connect people more and give the general public access to knowledge, both positive and negative, along with serious challenges in discriminating fact from falsehood. Some of the urgent concerns at the moment include deepfakes, Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated synthetic media, and the wide broadcasting of fake news, each potentially undermining civic trust, personal reputations, and even democratic processes worldwide.

## Key Terms

**Digital Media:** Channels of digital information which come to the audience on the screen or by a speaker.

**Artificial Intelligence (AI):** The capacity of digital computers or computer-controlled robots to perform activities that are commonly associated with human intelligence. AI derives data from large databases, algorithms, and live inputs, which continually update performance and judgement via machine learning and other sophisticated methods of development.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ipsos.com/en-us/data-dive-fake-news-age-ai>

**Deep Fakes:** Remarkably lifelike yet artificial images, videos, or audio created with advanced AI techniques. These artificial creations convincingly impersonate reality and, because of that, are a strong tool for the dissemination of misinformation, identity theft, and erosion of trust through the distortion of perceived reality.

## Background Information

The rise of AI has brought several innovations with it, but it has also accelerated challenges in fighting deepfakes and fake news. The problem of deepfakes and fake news is that it uses the power of AI to create and disseminate highly misleading content that threatens to seriously undermine trust in digital information and even social cohesion.

Deepfakes are made with the use of AI, particularly generative adversarial networks (GANs)<sup>2</sup>, which allow the creation of realistic-looking but completely fake media in the forms of videos, audio, and images. While these technologies have some positive applications, such as enhancing creativity and improving accessibility, they are increasingly used for nefarious ends. Deepfakes have been used in identity theft, political manipulation, and even blackmail, raising concerns about their potential to disrupt public trust and compromise personal privacy.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly, the application of AI in generating and spreading fake news has grown alarmingly.<sup>4</sup> AI tools can create credible-looking fake articles and manipulate digital algorithms for wide dissemination, exploiting the vulnerability of social media platforms that favour engagement over accuracy. This makes misinformation easier to create and harder to control, resulting in widespread confusion and polarisation.

These countermeasures against these issues are not without their challenges. Deepfakes require highly sophisticated detection tools, which have to evolve at the same speed as the development of AI generation techniques. The battle against fake news requires the education of the public in digital literacy and the pushing of platforms toward more responsible content moderation.<sup>5</sup> These solutions are resource-intensive and more often than not raise ethical concerns about freedom of expression and surveillance.

Understanding the interaction of AI, deepfakes, and fake news is essential for any meaningful countermeasures. Focusing on technological, societal, and regulatory solutions, this research hopes to make a valuable contribution to mitigating the harm caused by these growing issues while preserving the benefits of AI-driven innovation.

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<sup>2</sup>[https://developers.google.com/machine-learning/gan/gan\\_structure](https://developers.google.com/machine-learning/gan/gan_structure)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.trendmicro.com/enuus/research/22/i/how-underground-groups-use-stolen-identities-and-deepfakes.html>

<sup>4</sup> <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11076802/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://news.vt.edu/articles/2024/02/AI-generated-fake-news-experts.html>

## Major Countries and Organisations Involved

### USA

The United States leads the creation of utilities that detect and combat deepfakes and fake news. Agencies like DARPA (Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency) finance projects such as MediFor, which is responsible for developing automated methods to detect manipulated media. A legal framework on disinformation and AI misuse is still under debate.

### China

PRC has legislations put in place against AI-generated deepfakes, one such rule promulgated in 2023 necessitates labelling of AI-created content. China also does aggressive monitoring and censorship of fake news with strict internet regulations.<sup>6</sup>

### India

Misinformation on social media sites caused such a furore in India that the central government presented fact-checking measures as part of IT Rules 2021 to get platforms to remove fake news reported by authorities.

### European Union (EU)

The EU has enacted the Digital Services Act and the Code of Practice on Disinformation, which makes digital platforms responsible for the proliferation of fake news and manipulated content. Further, the EU finances numerous research and AI projects to counter disinformation.<sup>78</sup>

### Meta (formerly Facebook)

Meta uses third-party fact-checkers along with AI-based detection tools in trying to reduce the dissemination of deepfakes and fake news on its platforms.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/increasingthreatsofdeepfakeidentities0.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2020/07/deepfakes-and-synthetic-media-in-the-financial-system-assessing-threat-scenarios?lang=en>

<sup>8</sup> <https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/protecting-democracy/strengthened-eu-code-practice-disinformationen>

<sup>9</sup> <https://ai.meta.com/blog/heres-how-were-using-ai-to-help-detect-misinformation/>

## Relevant UN Resolutions

- A/HRC/RES/49/21 Human Rights Council, OC 4, 6, 8
- A/78/L.49 General Assembly, OC 5, 9, 12
- A/RES/76/227 General Assembly, OC 3, 7, 10

## Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

The United Nations (UN) has taken significant steps to address the spread of deepfakes and fake news. One such initiative is the "Verified" campaign, launched to combat misinformation, particularly in the context of global issues like climate change. The UN also developed the "Global Principles for Information Integrity" to establish international standards for transparent and accurate information sharing.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) held the 2021 Innovations Dialogue to discuss the implications of deepfakes on international security and explore solutions to address these risks.

Furthermore, in 2022, the UN Secretary-General released the report "Countering Disinformation for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms," which outlines strategies to combat disinformation while protecting human rights. In 2024, the UN advocated for global AI governance through the creation of an oversight body to monitor and mitigate AI-related risks, including the misuse of deepfake technology.<sup>11</sup>

The European Union (EU) has also played a pivotal role in combatting disinformation. The EU's Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Code of Practice on Disinformation hold digital platforms accountable for the spread of fake news and manipulated content. The EU has also funded AI research and projects aimed at countering disinformation across member states.

## Possible Solutions

### AI-Based Detection and Verification Tools

This will be one of the most significant solutions, as it directly applies to solving the identification and halting of deepfakes and manipulated media. In the development of AI tools for deepfake detection, important debates are raised about the balance between technological advance and privacy. At the heart of ongoing debates are questions such as whether an AI system truly finds what is fake and whether this system might embed bias.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/information-integrity/global-principles>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/governingaiuforhumanityufinalreportuen.pdf>

### Stronger Regulations and Legislation

The legal frameworks of deepfakes are very debated. This issue also faces different kinds of governments all over the world while they set regulations around online platforms, considering accountability in the context of disseminating fake news. Top of the discussion: How to strike a balance between free speech and effective countermeasures against toxic content; the international character of platforms presents considerable regulatory challenges.

### Cooperation with Fact-Checkers and Media Literacy

This is a vital solution because it not only detects fake news but also prevents the spread of it. While fact-checking partnerships and increased media literacy are wide-ranging in their implication for society as a whole, they also pose several fundamental questions regarding the part being played by private companies in content policing and the risks of censorship. Debates often centre around the question of who decides what is "true," and the problem of diverse audiences in different regions and cultures.

### Verification of the Authenticity of Content by Blockchain Technology

While blockchain makes this possible, it remains nonetheless one of the hotly debated ways out of verifying the authenticity of digital content.<sup>12</sup> Though providing some transparency and security, debates are still on with respect to scalability, accessibility, and also technical difficulties in integrating blockchain with current digital media systems. With blockchain also comes concern about privacy and questions regarding viability for mass implementation.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/legal/legalindustry/manipulating-reality-intersection-deepfakes-law-2024-02-01/>

## Bibliography

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- (2) <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-24-107292>
- (3) <https://unidir.org/event/the-2021-innovations-dialogue-deepfakes-trust-and-international-security/>
- (4) <https://press.un.org/en/2024/pi2317.doc.htm>
- (5) <https://www.wired.com/story/united-nations-artificial-intelligence-report/>