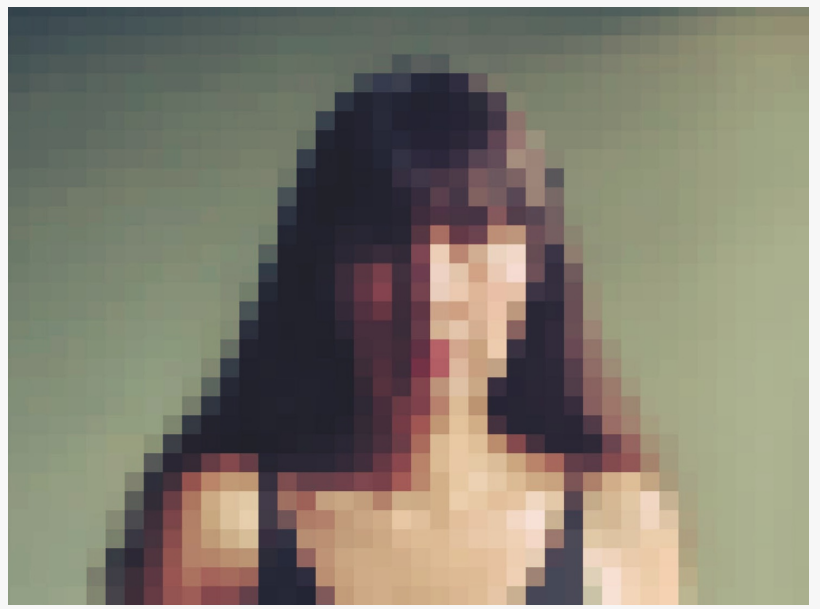


Pandemic of deepfake image-based sexual abuse requires urgent response from lawmakers

New research reveals the need for comprehensive legal frameworks to combat the production, circulation, and consumption of deepfakes worldwide.

NEW YORK, USA, January 25, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The production of deepfake image-based sexual abuse is proliferating at an exponential rate globally. New research reveals how current legislation is failing to keep pace with developments in and the increasing use of rapidly evolving artificial intelligence (AI) technology exploited by perpetrators to generate and disseminate this harmful content.



Advancements in AI and machine learning are making the production of deepfakes increasingly easy, accessible, and inexpensive, while an expanding deepfake ecosystem is fuelling demand and distribution online. To stem the creation, circulation, and consumption of deepfakes, comprehensive legal frameworks must urgently be established and implemented within countries and across borders.

STRONGER LAWS ARE NEEDED TO TACKLE DEEPPAKE SEXUAL ABUSE

A new policy briefing, '[Deepfake image-based sexual abuse, tech-facilitated sexual exploitation and the law](#)', by the Alliance for Universal Digital Rights (AUDRI) and Equality Now provides an overview of current regulation laws. The research explores international human rights law and gives a snapshot of legal frameworks in different jurisdictions around the world, including the European Union, Australia, England and Wales, Kenya, New Zealand, Nigeria, Scotland, South Africa, and California, Texas, and Virginia in the United States.

The research was conducted with pro-bono assistance from international law firm Hogan Lovells International LLP, which provided analysis on over 100 different laws across four continents.



Victims face not just emotional and reputational damage, but barriers to justice if they attempt to block this non-consensual dissemination of their likeness, and hold perpetrators to account.”

Emma Gibson, Global Coordinator for AUDRi

With profound personal, professional, and emotional impacts, deepfake sexual abuse raises complex legal and ethical questions about privacy, consent, and online harassment. The authors of this policy brief aim to spark discussions among diverse stakeholders about the challenges and solutions for tackling this growing problem.

The majority of victims are women and girls, and the impacts on those whose identities have been used without their consent to produce manipulated image-based sexual abuse content can be extremely traumatic, potentially life-changing, and in some cases, life-threatening. Technology

is making it increasingly difficult for viewers to distinguish between reality and deception, and legal measures to provide access to justice for victims, punish perpetrators, and remove abusive content from online are often woefully inadequate.

Emma Gibson, Global Coordinator for AUDRi, emphasizes the urgency of this research. "The potential for harm caused by deepfakes is not only real, but is increasing day by day. Victims face not just emotional and reputational damage, but barriers to justice if they attempt to block this non-consensual dissemination of their likeness, and hold perpetrators to account. Our research is a clarion call for the development of comprehensive legal frameworks that can keep pace with this rapidly evolving technology."

Amanda Manyame, Equality Now's Digital Law & Rights Advisor and author of the brief, explains, "The law has not kept pace with technological advancements, and in many parts of the world does not provide protection from deepfake sexual violations. Where the law does provide protection, there is very little evidence of whether the law will indeed provide adequate protection. Furthermore, deepfake sexual violations are global and multi-jurisdictional and demand a harmonized and coordinated response from the international community."

FAKE VIDEOS, REAL HARMS

To support this research, AUDRi and Equality Now co-hosted a webinar, [Unmasking deepfakes - real life impacts and the legal labyrinth](#), featuring Sophie Compton and Reuben Hamlyn, co-founders of the #MyImageMyChoice campaign, which seeks to amplify the voices of victims/survivors of deepfake-based exploitation and encourage governments and regulators to block websites that disseminate sexually explicit deepfake content.

Compton and Hamlyn are also co-directors of [Another Body](#), a powerful award-winning documentary about how deepfake abuse deeply affects survivors and how reporting cases to authorities entails the types of victim-blaming, lack of action, and other barriers frequently faced

by survivors of sexual and gender-based violence when they seek help.

Compton says, “The failure to address this is grounded in misogyny and a failure to listen to women’s experiences. The lack of meaningful response might be blamed on new technology, but women experience these violations as a form of sexual abuse, and this is not new.”

Compton explains that legal responses to these violations are crucial because the dissemination of deepfake material is increasingly profitable for both sites dedicated to sharing non-consensual explicit content as well as big tech companies, such as Google, who facilitate the searches for and sharing of the content.

“Their whole business model is built around violating consent. And they’re not going to give that up unless they are forced to,” Compton adds.

Amanda Manyame reiterates that recommendations in the policy brief are based on a profound understanding of the traumas faced by victims of sexual exploitation, both by the act itself and in the struggle to overcome barriers to justice. “Efforts to mitigate deepfakes should prioritize the well-being and rights of women and other groups experiencing gender-based discrimination, fostering a safer digital environment that upholds principles of consent, privacy, and gender equality.”

ABOUT

The Alliance for Universal Digital Rights (AUDRi) exists to explore ways of creating a digital future in which everyone can enjoy equal rights to safety, freedom, and dignity – whoever they are and wherever, whenever, and however they exist and connect in the digital world.

Co-founded by Equality Now and Women Leading in AI, AUDRi focuses on women, girls, and other people from discriminated-against groups, all of whom face intersecting forms of discrimination and gender-based stereotypes in the physical world. Because it is only when the most vulnerable in society are protected that everyone is safe.

For more information on AUDRi, go to www.audri.org.

Equality Now is an international non-governmental human rights organization that works to protect and promote the rights of all women and girls around the world by combining grassroots activism with international, regional, and national legal advocacy. Our international network of lawyers, activists and supporters achieve legal and systemic change by holding governments responsible for enacting and enforcing laws and policies that end legal inequality, sex trafficking, online sexual exploitation, sexual violence, and harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child marriage.

For more information about Equality Now, go to <https://equalitynow.org>

#MyImageMyChoice aims to amplify the voices of intimate image abuse survivors, and create cultural change. Starting as a grassroots project, it has gone on to have an outsized impact, working with over 30 survivors as well as organizations including The White House, Bumble, World Economic Forum, and survivor coalitions.

For more information go to <http://myimagemychoice.org>

Tara Carey
Equality Now
+44 7971 556340
tcarey@equalitynow.org

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/683806337>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2024 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.