

Hundreds of sexual ads using deepfakes ran on social media

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Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

A massive advertising campaign launched this week by a deepfake app featured the faces of actresses Emma Watson and Scarlett Johansson.

The ads, which ran across Meta platforms Facebook and Instagram, featured a scantily clad woman with Emma Watson's face digitally imposed, as the woman began to perform what looked like a sexual act.

Many of the ads included captions such as "Replace face with anyone" and "Enjoy yourself with AI swap face technology."

Over the course of Sunday and Monday, the Deepfake FaceSwap app rolled out over 230 ads total, with 127 using Watson's likeness and 74 using the face of Johansson, NBC News reports.

Lauren Barton, a journalism student in Tennessee, tweeted out a screen recording of the ad when she saw it on a separate app. Her tweet has received more than 12 million views.

"This could be used with [high schoolers](#) in [public schools](#) who are bullied," Barton said. "It could ruin somebody's life, they could get in trouble at their job. And this is extremely easy to do and free."

After NBC News attempted to reach out to Meta for comment, they removed all the app's ads from their platforms.

"Our policies prohibit adult content regardless of whether it is generated by AI or not, and we have restricted this page from advertising on our platform," Meta said in a statement.

Apple also removed the app from its App Store after being contacted by NBC News, but it remains available through Google Play where it's rated "Teen" for "suggestive themes."

The incident is an example of how the relatively new [deepfake](#) technology is already being distributed to the public through easily accessible channels.

While there are strict laws in all states regarding the sharing of sexually explicit photos and videos, only California, Georgia, New York and Virginia currently have laws restricting deepfake media.

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