# AI-generated TikTok videos fuel surge in misleading sexual health scams



The rapid evolution of artificial intelligence has ushered in a troubling era characterised by the proliferation of deceptive content across social media platforms. A striking example of this phenomenon is found in the emergence of AI-generated videos on TikTok, which are being harnessed to promote dubious sexual treatments. These videos often feature exaggerated claims and fabricated celebrity endorsements, capitalising on the ease with which generative AI can produce convincing yet misleading material.

In one particularly alarming instance, a shirtless man brandishes a large carrot in a promotional video, using the vegetable as a euphemism for male genitalia. This creative approach serves to bypass content moderation systems, enabling the promotion of unverified supplements that claim to enhance male virility. "You would notice that your carrot has grown up," the man states in a robotic voice, leading viewers to an online purchasing link. Such content not only perpetuates misinformation but also poses real health risks, as it encourages consumers to buy into products lacking scientific backing.

Experts in misinformation have observed that this trend underscores the utilisation of AI as a potent tool for grifters. Abbie Richards, a researcher in the field, notes that the low cost of producing such content makes it an attractive strategy for those looking to exploit internet users. "AI is a useful tool for grifters looking to create large volumes of content slop for a low cost," she explains, emphasising how generative AI has facilitated a new wave of advertising that prioritises quantity over quality.

Moreover, the implications of these technologies stretch beyond mere consumer merchandise. In recent months, the rise of AI-generated deepfakes has given rise to a burgeoning industry of fraud. High-profile individuals, including celebrities, have had their likenesses manipulated to lend credibility to scams. Notably, the use of deepfake technology in financial fraud has cost consumers billions, as the unassuming public falls prey to hyper-realistic digital fabrications.

These deepfakes amplify existing concerns about the authenticity of online content, especially as they are adeptly crafted to appear genuine. A recent report detailed how manipulated videos using AI-generated voices have further obscured the lines between reality and deception. Alexios Mantzarlis, director of the Security, Trust, and Safety Initiative at Cornell Tech, remarked that these impersonation videos undermine public trust in online interactions.

The pacing at which these AI-generated videos can be created presents unique challenges for moderation efforts. Even as platforms like Facebook and TikTok strive to remove harmful content, virtually identical materials can surface in a matter of minutes, making traditional oversight increasingly inadequate. Such rapid reproduction not only complicates enforcement but also contributes to a cycle of misinformation that can rapidly escalate, creating a digital landscape rife with disinformation.

The implications of these developments have not gone unnoticed by authorities. Reports detail how the FBI has issued warnings regarding the use of AI and deepfakes in sextortion schemes, where malicious actors exploit these technologies to trap victims in compromising situations. This highlights a darker aspect of AI's integration into our social fabric: the potential for abuse against vulnerable individuals, including minors.

In response to mounting concerns, government agencies are beginning to seek collaboration with tech companies to address the rampant production and distribution of non-consensual AI-generated images. Meanwhile, the tech industry faces increasing pressure to devise innovative solutions to detect and mitigate the impact of these deceptive practices, underscoring the urgent need for comprehensive strategies in safeguarding public trust and privacy.

As we continue to navigate this evolving landscape, it becomes imperative to acknowledge the potential for AI to be used for both creative and malicious purposes. While generative AI offers remarkable new opportunities, it equally serves as a double-edged sword that can facilitate manipulation and harm, emphasising the necessity for informed and proactive engagement from both regulators and the technology sector to curtail its misuse.

### Reference Map

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7. Paragraphs 6

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

* <https://www.digitaljournal.com/tech-science/tool-for-grifters-ai-deepfakes-push-bogus-sexual-cures/article> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
* <https://www.digitaljournal.com/tech-science/tool-for-grifters-ai-deepfakes-push-bogus-sexual-cures/article> - This article discusses how AI-generated deepfake videos on platforms like TikTok are being used to promote unproven sexual treatments. It highlights instances where AI creates videos featuring fake celebrity endorsements of dubious products, often using euphemisms to evade content moderation. Experts express concern over the rapid spread of such misleading content and its potential impact on consumer health.
* <https://www.forbes.com/sites/chriswestfall/2024/11/29/ai-deepfakes-of-elon-musk-on-the-rise-causing-billions-in-fraud-losses/> - This Forbes article examines the rise of AI-generated deepfakes, particularly those featuring Elon Musk, and their role in a multi-billion dollar fraud industry. It explains how scammers use hyper-realistic digital fabrications to deceive consumers, leading to significant financial losses. The piece also discusses the technological advancements that make these deepfakes increasingly convincing and accessible.
* <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bernardmarr/2024/11/06/the-dark-side-of-ai-how-deepfakes-and-disinformation-are-becoming-a-billion-dollar-business-risk/> - In this article, Forbes contributor Bernard Marr explores the business risks associated with AI-generated deepfakes and disinformation. He highlights how manipulated content can lead to stock market manipulation, reputational damage, and financial fraud. The piece emphasizes the need for businesses to develop strategies to detect and mitigate the impact of such content.
* <https://www.foxnews.com/media/fbi-warns-ai-deepfakes-being-create-sextortion-schemes> - This Fox News report details the FBI's warning about the use of AI and deepfakes in sextortion schemes. It describes how malicious actors manipulate photos and videos to trap victims, including minors and non-consenting adults, into explicit content, which is then circulated online for harassment or extortion purposes.
* <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/meta-facebook-sexualized-ai-deepfake-celebrity-images-spread/> - CBS News investigates the spread of sexualized AI-generated deepfake images of celebrities on Facebook. The report reveals that numerous fake, explicit images of famous female actors and athletes have been widely shared on the platform, raising concerns about Meta's ability to curb such content and its impact on the victims.
* <https://www.thehill.com/policy/technology/4682067-white-house-pressures-tech-industry-on-sexually-abusive-ai-deepfakes/> - This article from The Hill covers the White House's efforts to pressure the tech industry to address the market for sexually abusive AI deepfakes. It discusses the administration's call for voluntary cooperation from companies to curb the creation, spread, and monetization of nonconsensual AI-generated sexual imagery, including explicit images of children.