

SPOTTING DEEPFAKES

Have you ever seen a photo or video online that seemed too good to be true? With today's technology, it's getting harder and harder to tell what's real and what's fake, especially with things called deepfakes.

Deepfakes are images or videos that look real but are actually made with computer programs. They can make it seem like someone is doing something they never did or saying things they never said. Because tools to make deepfakes are getting better and better, we can't count on spotting things like extra fingers or weird lettering anymore.

If we can't tell what's real and what isn't, it's easy to tell yourself that anything you don't want to believe is true is a deepfake.

Here are some ways you can spot deepfakes – and know when an image or video you're seeing *is* real.

TIP #1: DO A REVERSE IMAGE SEARCH

Whenever you see a photo online that seems fishy, try this:

- Copy the image's link or save the image to your computer. You can usually do this by right-clicking on the picture and selecting "Copy Image Location" or "Save image As."
- Go to a reverse image search like TinEye.com. These are special search engines just for pictures.
- Upload the image you saved. The search engine will look for other places online where that picture exists.

What you learn:

- If the picture shows up on reliable news websites or sources you trust, it's probably real.
- If the picture doesn't show up anywhere else, be careful! It could be a deepfake.

TIP #2: CHECK WITH FACT-CHECKERS

Sometimes, a deepfake image or video will go viral – that means it spreads really quickly online. When that happens, people who work as fact-checkers often try to find out if it's real or fake.

You can use websites and search engines dedicated to fact-checking to see if anyone has investigated the image. Start with MediaSmarts [Fact-Checker search](https://mediasmarts.ca/fact-checker) (<https://mediasmarts.ca/fact-checker>) which searches more than a dozen fact-checkers at once.

Remember: Fact-checkers usually focus on important topics like news stories or things politicians say, so they might not have investigated every deepfake out there.

TIP #3: LOOK FOR THE SOURCE

Real photos and videos have a source. You can usually trace them back to the person who took them or the organization that created them. Deepfakes are

different. Sometimes they don't have a source at all, or the source is someone who admits they made a fake.

Here's how to be a source detective:

- Follow the Links: When you read an article online, look for links to where they got their photos or information. Follow the links back as far as you can to see if you can find the original source.
- Check for Photo Credits: News articles and websites should tell you who took a photo or where it came from. Look for words like "Source" or "Via," and then do a little research on that source to see if they seem trustworthy.

Remember: Being a good digital citizen means being careful about what you believe and share online. Use these tips to spot deepfakes and help stop the spread of misinformation!