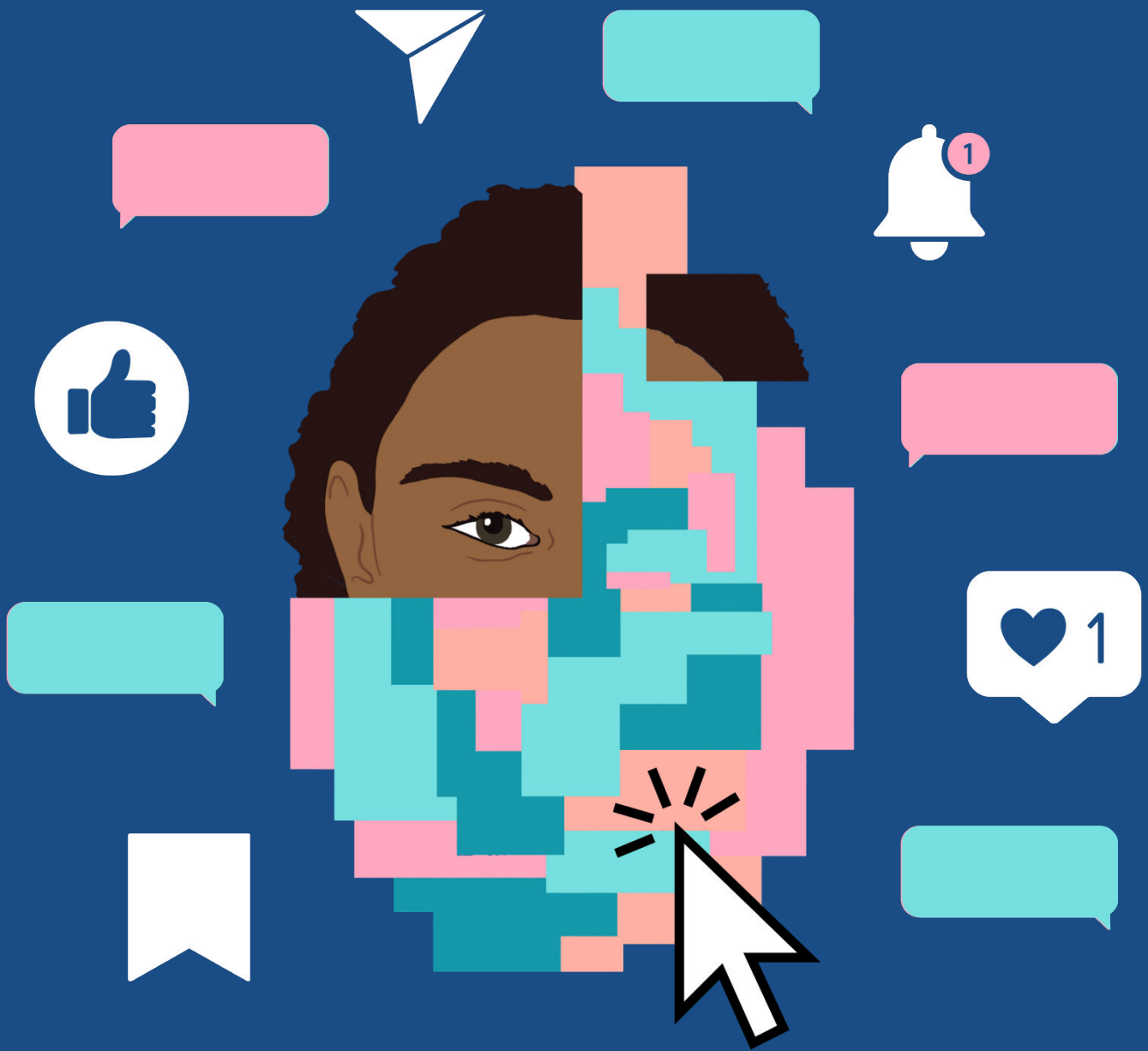


AI and Gender-Based Violence



An Explainer

Prepared by Aubrey Abaya and Rosel Kim

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LEAF is a national, charitable, non-profit organization founded in 1985. LEAF works to advance the substantive equality rights of women, girls, trans, and non-binary people in Canada through litigation, law reform and public education using the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The information contained in this resource is current as of April 2026.

Acknowledgements

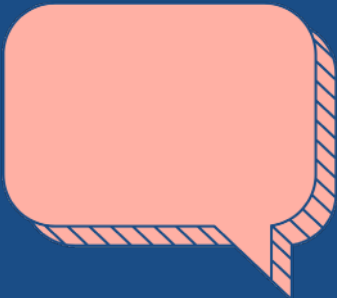
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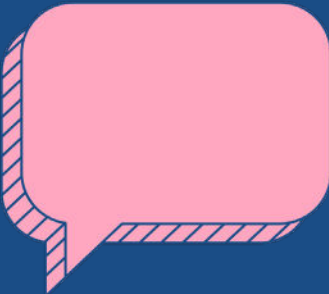
1

What do we mean when we say generative AI?

When we say generative artificial intelligence (AI), we are talking about machine-learning models that can be trained on data, often scraped from the internet, to create new content, like text, images, video, etc.



Examples: ChatGPT, SnapChat My AI, Google AI, Gemini, Grok, Nano Banana



Content that is created by generative AI, whether that's a text response to a question or an image created by a prompt, is using only data that is available to it – either from the internet, or from data that was given to it.



How does generative AI carry out gendered harm?

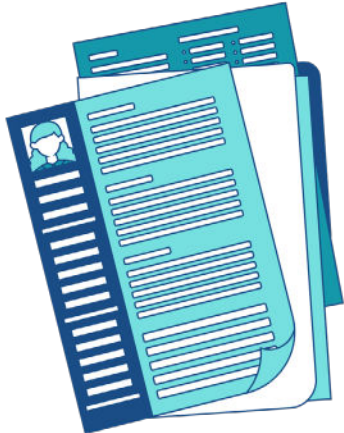
Content created by generative AI can reproduce gendered harm that disproportionately impacts women, girls, trans, and non-binary people.



If the data that is used to train generative AI includes harmful stereotypes or abusive content, the AI tool can reproduce those harms in its content.

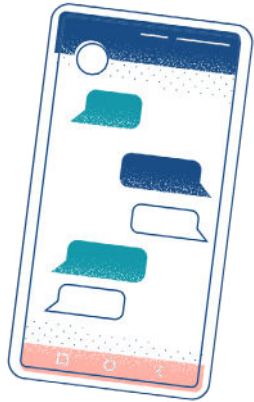
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A recent study showed that when ChatGPT evaluated resumes, it assumed that the women applicants were younger and inexperienced compared to the male applicants.¹



[-] [□] [X]

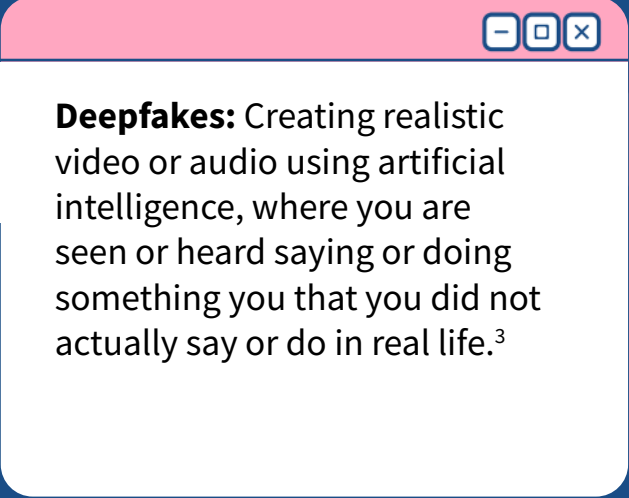
Users of Luka Inc.'s Replika companion chatbot reported that it sexually harassed users, sending unsolicited explicit photos and manipulating users into paying for upgrades.²




3

How are AI image generators used to carry out gender-based violence?

Some AI image generators are designed to or are being used to create nude or pornographic images and videos without the consent of the person whose images are being altered.

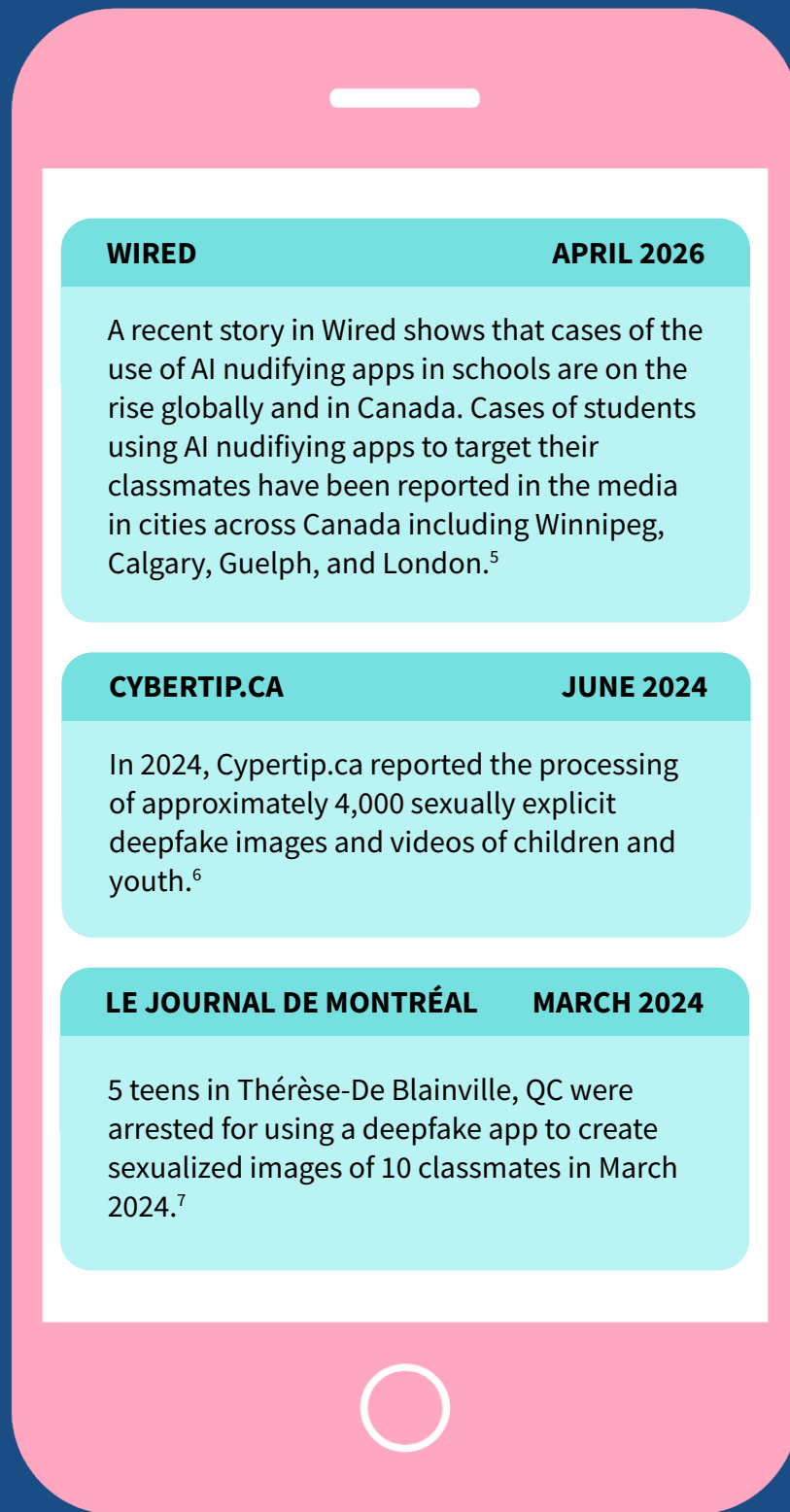


Deepfakes: Creating realistic video or audio using artificial intelligence, where you are seen or heard saying or doing something you that you did not actually say or do in real life.³



Deepnudes: A nudification app uses AI to create a nude image of a person when they are clothed. Many nudifying apps only work on bodies of women and girls.⁴





WIRED

APRIL 2026

A recent story in Wired shows that cases of the use of AI nudifying apps in schools are on the rise globally and in Canada. Cases of students using AI nudifying apps to target their classmates have been reported in the media in cities across Canada including Winnipeg, Calgary, Guelph, and London.⁵

CYBERTIP.CA

JUNE 2024

In 2024, Cypertip.ca reported the processing of approximately 4,000 sexually explicit deepfake images and videos of children and youth.⁶

LE JOURNAL DE MONTRÉAL

MARCH 2024

5 teens in Thérèse-De Blainville, QC were arrested for using a deepfake app to create sexualized images of 10 classmates in March 2024.⁷

A recent analysis of deepfakes by Grok, X/Twitter's AI tool, found that 81% of the images presented as women. Women are the non-consenting targets or subjects of pornographic deepfake videos.⁸

How is this harmful for those who have experienced it?

4

We should be able to control all sexual content about us online. It is a violation of the person's integrity and autonomy to create deepfake images of them without their consent. Just because someone posts their photos online, does not mean their photos should be digitally manipulated and sexualized without their permission.

Just like our bodies where we get to decide who touches us and when, the same goes for our images where we get to decide and consent to what happens to them. If we do not consent to our images being manipulated and nudified, it is abuse.



People who have experienced this report a number of harms, including:

| | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|
|  <p>Insomnia</p> |  <p>Anxious thoughts</p> |  <p>Isolation</p> |  <p>Depression</p> |  <p>Anger and defensiveness</p> |
|  <p>Loss of appetite</p> |  <p>Mood swings</p> |  <p>Substance use</p> |  <p>Financial loss</p> |  <p>Reputational harm</p> |

For young people, it can also have consequences for their ability to attend school.

5

What does the law say and how can it help?

Is it a crime to make and share deepfakes/deepnudes (together, “synthetic intimate images”)?



Yes, if the individual in the image is under the age of 18, it is considered child pornography (*Criminal Code*: s. 163.1(1)) though certain exceptions may apply for close-in-age teenagers consensually sharing intimate images.



If the individual in the image is over 18 years old, it is unclear whether sharing a synthetic intimate image without their consent is illegal.



It is a crime to share an intimate image of someone without their consent (CC: s. 162.1(1)). However, a court in Ontario recently ruled that a deepfake does not count as an intimate image.



In December 2025, the federal government introduced a bill that would amend the *Criminal Code* to make sharing synthetic intimate images of someone without their consent a crime.⁹ As of April 2026, the bill has not passed yet.

Creating and sharing (or threatening to share) synthetic intimate images can be considered a form of criminal harassment (CC: 264(1)) or extortion (CC: 346(1)).

Can you sue someone for making and sharing synthetic intimate images?



Yes, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Quebec, Prince Edward Island – have laws that allow legal action against someone who distributes synthetic intimate images of an individual without their consent – however, it does not apply if it is created but not shared with others.



Other provinces protect against the sharing of intimate images of someone without their consent; however, they do not explicitly apply to synthetic intimate images.

1 Legislation – Alberta, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia



2 Ontario – privacy torts (publicity placing person in false light)



If the claim is successful, there are a range of options a court can impose like monetary penalties, ordering the images be taken down, support resources or publication bans (options depend on the law in each province). There are fast-track takedown options available for taking down images in British Columbia and Quebec.

Resources

<https://techsafety.ca/for-survivors/>



Tech Safety Canada

Resources for survivors of technology-facilitated gender-based violence (TFGBV) in Canada, including safety planning, digital evidence, and legal information toolkits

<https://needhelpnow.ca/en/>



Need Help Now

Support for youth under the age of 18 with non-consensual distribution of intimate images online

<https://stopNCII.org>



Stop Non-Consensual Intimate Image Abuse

Resource to help identify and takedown non-consensual intimate images online

<https://www.thedsvsc.ca>



Digital Sexual Violence Support Centre

Survivor-led support centre for adult survivors of technology-facilitated sexual violence (TFSV)



*Current as of April 2026.

Citations

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