



The
Economist

EDUCATIONAL
FOUNDATION

DEEPFAKES

PART 1: IN THE KNOW

Radu Bercan/Shutterstock

LEARNING INDEPENDENTLY?

Check out this week's
introduction video

bit.ly/NewsCycle

KEEN TO HAVE YOUR SAY?

Share your opinion on
this week's News Cycle

bit.ly/NewsCycleJan12

KEY VOCABULARY

DEEPPFAKE =

A fake photo or video that makes it look like someone is saying or doing something

CONTROVERSIAL =

When lots of people might disagree with something

DUBBED =

When a voice is played over a video

NEWS CYCLE

WHAT'S HAPPENED SO FAR?

Will new technology make fake news even harder to spot?



On December 25th, the Queen delivered her traditional televised Christmas message to 6.3 million people. Shortly afterwards, a rather different version aired on Channel 4. It looked and sounded similar to the Queen, but it was actually a “deepfake” made using computer technology.

The digital trickery lasted for five minutes and showed what appeared to be the Queen talking about her family and dancing. In reality, the voice of actress Debra Stephenson had been dubbed over pictures of the Queen, but the latest technology made it look convincingly real.

Channel 4 said the broadcast was intended as a “stark warning” about fake news in the digital age. Deepfakes, which have been around since 2018, are getting easier for people to create themselves and becoming harder to distinguish from reality.

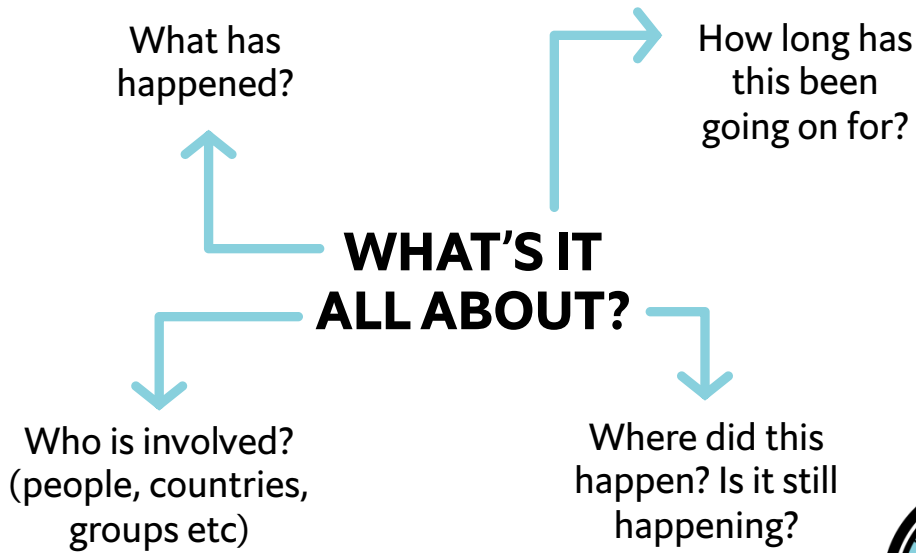
Ian Katz, director of programmes at Channel 4, said that this deepfake should act as “a powerful reminder that we can no longer trust our own eyes”.

However, the deepfake of the Queen has received a lot of criticism, with some people calling it “disrespectful”, “disgusting” and “in poor taste”. So far, the UK’s media regulator Ofcom has received over 200 complaints about the video but it has not yet decided whether to take action against Channel 4.

When approached by reporters, Buckingham Palace had no comment about the broadcast.

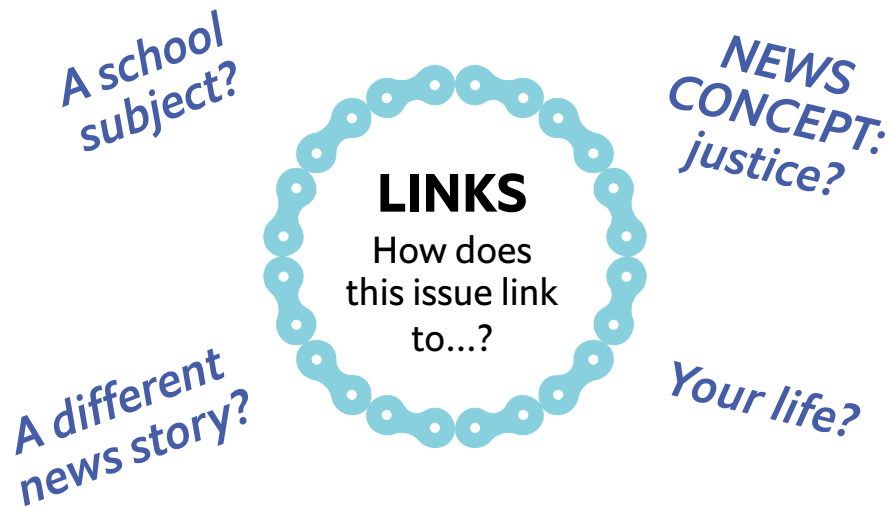
Was this deepfake video a fair warning about fake news or a step too far?

WANT TO KNOW MORE? Look here! [bbc.co.uk/news/av/technology-51223254](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/technology-51223254)



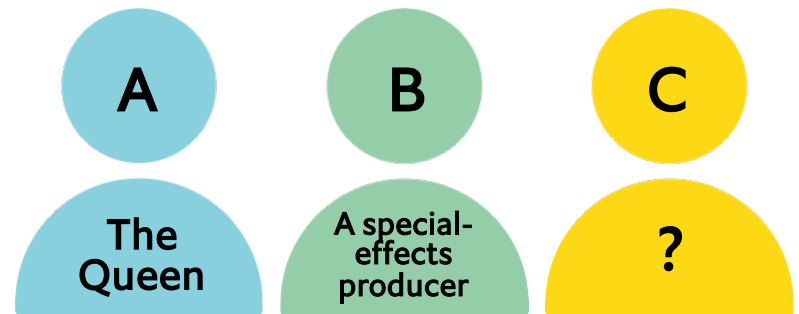
NEWS SCALE

How much of a problem are deepfakes for you?
Mark your opinion on the scale below with an X.
What about for a celebrity? Where would they put their X? What about for people who only find their news online?



PERSPECTIVE FLIP

What would Person A think about this issue?
How are they affected by the issue? Now flip to Person B and think about the same questions.
Are any perspectives missing?



CHALLENGE: how is this issue developing in the news?



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PART 2: THINKING HARDER

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NEWS CYCLE WEEK 2 OF 2 THINKING HARDER

First, limber up by thinking about everything you learnt last week:

- What was the key information about this issue? (Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?)
- Why was this issue news? (How big was this piece of news? How many people does it affect? Is it global or local news?)
- What did you think about it? Did everyone you talked to have the same opinion?
- What have you seen about this in the news? How is this issue developing?

Then, take a ride through this week's activities.



WHAT'S THE FULL STORY?

The Artificial Intelligence (AI) firm **DEEPTRACE** found that between January and September 2019, the number of deepfake videos online doubled to

15,000.

This number is likely to be much larger now. Most of the deepfakes are of women.

Audio can be deepfaked too.

In March 2019, a fraudster used a fake voice to steal

£200,000

from a German energy company. The thief called and pretended to be the CEO of the company, which the workers believed.



Deepfakes make it easier for people to infiltrate private groups by pretending to be someone else. Whilst this is a security risk for governments, it is also an advantage. For example, they could use deepfakes to infiltrate and disrupt criminal groups.



MICROSOFT

has developed a tool that can help people to spot deepfakes. However, deepfake technology is progressing so quickly that tools to tackle it may soon be outdated.

When asked about the deepfake of the Queen, Debra Stephenson, the actress, said:

"As an actress it is thrilling but it is also terrifying if you consider how this could be used in other contexts."

TURN THE COGS

1. This issue is about more than the Queen's Christmas message. Can you explain the bigger picture?
2. What might happen if the deepfake of the Queen is taken out of context?
3. Look at the facts on the previous page.
 - Who might be affected most by deepfakes? For example, celebrities or non-celebrities? Educated people or uneducated people? Why?
 - What are the benefits of deepfakes? What are the risks?

Support your answers with a fact and explain why.

SHOW OFF YOUR SKILLS



How have you changed your mind about deepfakes?



What three keywords should we use when talking about this?



How else might deepfakes be used in the future?



When should the creators of deepfakes face consequences? What should they be?

PUSH YOURSELF

In April 2020, the "Impressions" app was launched. It allows users to face-swap with a celebrity to make a "convincing" film. Users can say anything they like with a celebrity's face instead of their own.

This is one of many deepfake apps available.

- Should deepfake-creation apps be made so easy to access? Why / why not?
- Does the quality of a deepfake matter? Why / why not?

TYRE CHANGE

Brakes on! Let's change the scenario.



Someone didn't realise that there was a deepfake of them?



Someone created a deepfake that got the real person into trouble?



Journalists struggled to spot deepfakes?

Challenge: can you spot this issue in the news? How has the issue developed since last week?