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Institute for Governance, Policies & Politics

AI KNOWLEDGE CONSORTIUM

AI & ELECTIONS ACROSS WORLD 2024

HIGHLIGHTING INDIAN EXPERIENCES

Part I: January-June, 2024

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Report by:

Institute for Governance, Policies & Politics (IGPP)

In Collaboration With:

AI Knowledge Consortium (AIKC)

Advisors:

Mr. Ashish Jaiman, Product Lead, Microsoft Bing

Dr. Sarada Prasanna Das, Visiting Fellow, IGPP

Mr. Vivan Sharan, Partner, Koan Advisory

Research Team:

Dr. Manish Tiwari, Director, IGPP

Ms. Heena Goswami, Editorial Consultant, IGPP

Ms. Ranjana Kushwaha, Research Consultant, IGPP

Ms. Amrita Tiwari, Research Associate, IGPP

Mr. Raman Raj Gangwar, Intern, IGPP

Ms. Pranjal Garg, Intern, IGPP

Ms. Priyal Jain, Intern, IGPP

Design and Layout:

Mr. Vansh Sachdeva, IGPP

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We hope this report serves as a valuable resource for understanding the evolving role of artificial intelligence (AI) in electoral processes and inspires further dialogue and innovation in this critical area.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Upon meticulous examination of all the incidents, it has been noted that a significant amount of deepfake content has been produced in this election year. AI has been useful this election season for a variety of objectives, including campaigning, endorsements, and the resurrection of historical figures to increase turnout and vote totals. This year, over 70 countries will be polled, and it is intriguing to observe the emergence of a new technology over ten years after social media.

AI platforms and technologies have been widely utilised to produce fake information that has deceived consumers. Various actors have dragged well-known leaders. Technology has been utilised by political parties and politicians to produce content that depicts these juxtapositions. Targeting female candidates' bodies with deepfake technology has damaged their reputations, which says volumes about the "end-use" of the technology.

It is that these forms of content have affected the way that candidates for office are reaching out to voters and have revolutionised campaigning by making it quicker and more efficient, even though it is difficult to quantify the exact impact they have had on individual or party campaigns or on overall electoral outcomes. In addition to providing ample space for the production and dissemination of false information, particularly deepfakes. This year's election has created a great deal of anxiety about AI taking over, which has dominated conversations among psephologists, academics, researchers, and administrators.

Governments across world are deliberating on possible ways to address the rapid dissemination of AI-generated content on social media platforms. Despite various measures taken by these governments, progress has been slow and often ineffective. Even social media platforms, despite releasing their ‘action-packed manifestos’ are not able to take charge when the information keeps spreading online with lightning-fast speed.

A robust mechanism that will regulate the use of this technology at all levels—the level at which it is developed, deployed, and used by creators to generate AI-based content—remains necessary. End users of social media platforms who share content mindlessly without verifying its authenticity also bear responsibility for curtailing the spread of deceptive AI-generated content aimed at misleading voters and users.

Through studies and research, a fuller understanding of how AI affects elections and related processes, as well as government, is essential. It is crucial to have a thorough conversation with all interested parties, including voters, political parties, candidates, and representatives, to reach an agreement on how AI as a technology may be used as effectively as feasible.

It is imperative that the report's readers comprehend the emergence of AI as a technology, its widespread influence across several industries, and its enduring nature. Understanding the extent of this technology and the potential effects it may have on elections as well as other parliamentary and policy-making processes requires a comprehensive approach.

Objectives

To collate and analyse cases across the world where AI has been used in elections and campaigning.

To assess the impact of AI-generated content (deepfakes and synthetic media) on elections and campaigns.

To explore the ways to counter AI-generated risks in elections and campaigns.

To understand the impact of AI-generated contents on various stakeholders (political candidates, voters, electoral bodies, media and others).

INTRODUCTION

Elections celebrate democracy by allowing voters to choose their representatives to form a government that can make decisions on their behalf. Elections and campaigns have always been experimental spaces for different actors and integration of technologies at various levels of elections has enhanced their effectiveness and efficiency. For instance, in India, with the widespread availability of smartphones with everyone, political parties and candidates in recent times have turned to social media platforms and messaging apps for campaigning. The 2014 Lok Sabha election was dubbed as “social media elections" and 2019 was referred to as the **“WhatsApp election.”** These newer forms of communication methods have reduced costs, resources and time, while allowing parties and candidates to connect more easily with voters, particularly young voters, who predominantly use these platforms. The revolution in the way election is contested has brought a paradigm shift, leading to changes in Model Code of Conduct (MCC) as well.

Now, with GenAI we are witnessing another paradigm shift which is going to further integrate technology to ensure better outreach to voters. AI assists political parties and candidates in analysing voter’s data, enabling hyper personalised outreach, managing logistical tasks, reducing resources and time spent. AI has also come as a monumental and complex challenge in front of us, due to its intricate and versatile nature. This sophisticated technology blurs the line between real and fake, bringing forth issues like hyper-personalised misinformation, disinformation and deepfakes to ethical, legal and regulatory challenges.

In the first half of 2024, a series of elections across the globe provided a unique opportunity to observe and analyse the diverse applications and impacts of AI in various political landscapes. From January to June 2024, the world witnessed elections in countries with varying levels of technological advancement and political contexts. Each of these electoral events presented distinct challenges and opportunities for the application of AI technologies. The report delves into several case studies from different countries, examining how AI has been utilised for a multitude of electoral purposes, ranging from voter engagement and sentiment analysis to misinformation detection and campaign strategy optimisation.

This report explores the ethical and regulatory challenges associated with AI in elections. By examining a range of national and international case studies, this report provides a comprehensive overview of the current state of AI application in elections and campaigns, highlighting both its transformative potential and the critical considerations it entails. With detailed analysis and real-world examples, this report seeks to shed light on the evolving interplay between AI and electoral politics which offers insights into how AI can be harnessed to improve democratic engagement and electoral efficiency while also addressing the challenges that come with its deployment.

Significance

The intersection of elections and AI encompasses several critical areas that significantly influence the democratic process. The misuse of AI is particularly concerning due to its convincing nature and potential to blur line between real and fake. AI-generated content can be used to create misleading information about voting procedures, suppress voter turnout, or create false narratives about candidates. For instance, shortly before the 2024 New Hampshire primary election, an AI-generated robocall simulated US President Joe Biden's voice and urged voters not to participate in that election, falsely suggesting that voters should "save" their vote for the 2024 general elections in November. The average voter hearing this message might have concluded that Biden had recorded the message, and that they should comply with his request- effectively disenfranchising them.

Overall, the integration of AI into elections presents both opportunities and challenges. While AI technologies have the potential to enhance various aspects of the electoral process, including campaign efficiency, voter engagement, and election security, they also raise important questions about privacy, fairness, and the potential for misuse. As AI continues to evolve, it will be essential to carefully consider its role in elections and campaigns, as it will aid in effective regulations.

BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

Over the last few years, with the rapid evolution and advancement in technology adoption, the critical importance of social impact and ethical use of technologies has become paramount. The usage of technology into elections by contesting parties and candidates is not new, leaders, political parties and their strategists are always on their toes looking for newer and better technologies to integrate into the electoral process for better results. In 2014, in India, Facebook emerged as a central hub for political activities, where political parties created Facebook pages for campaigning and events for rallies, even in the USA, Facebook was heavily used in 2016 election campaigns.

2019, WhatsApp played the primary role in digital campaigning in India's general elections, where political parties created WhatsApp groups for campaigning and even personalised messages were delivered to individuals. That period was marked by a flood of fake news, misinformation and dis-information and it continues to flourish, making it harder to trace who is receiving what kind of messages.

Now, the recent rise in GenAI models has granted powerful tools to the public that enable the creation of realistic, yet fake, images, sounds, and videos. In this year's elections, social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp acted more as dissemination tools for distributing AI-generated content such as hyper-personalised messages to reach out to wider masses at once, within minutes.

Instead of crafting visual and textual messages exclusively for WhatsApp forwards, there's a trend of circulating short video clips from YouTube videos, Instagram and X, formerly known as Twitter. In February 2020, BJP MP Manoj Tiwari used deepfake technology for the first time for an election campaign in India during the Delhi assembly elections. A day before elections, two videos of the MP urging citizens to vote for BJP in English and Haryanvi, originally, Hindi, were sent to 15 million voters via 5800 WhatsApp groups to appeal to different voter groups ahead of the elections (Jeearchive, 2020). This was the precursor to much wider application of AI in India.

A still of a deepfake video of Indian politician Manoj Tiwari | YOUTUBE | BJP

Cut to 2024, when this year is being regarded as the year of AI infused elections, as more than 60 countries are going to vote for their regional and legislative representatives. Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, Taiwan, Finland and some other nations have already held legislative elections and have seen the usage of AI in different stages of elections both by the candidates and the voters.

According to the University of Surrey's Institute for People-Centred AI report, **'AI and Elections: Are We Ready to Save Democracy?'**, the issue of disinformation is an age-old challenge existing in human societies. However, GenAI intensifies this longstanding problem, allowing for widespread creation of disinformation on an unprecedented scale and with remarkable believability. This surge particularly affects those with low digital literacy, exacerbating societal divisions and widening disparities. Consequently, undermines the trust in the democratic processes (Institute for People-Centred AI, 2024).

In a **study conducted by AI Democracy Projects** on top 5 leading AI models including Google's Gemini, OpenAI's ChatGPT, more than one-third of AI model responses to election related information were rated as harmful or incomplete, 40% and 39% respectively and 13% responses were biased in one way or another. Further inaccurate information was provided about voter eligibility, polling locations and identification requirements (Angwin et al., 2024). The study established that when such hundreds of small mistakes, falsehoods and misconceptions are presented as genuine facts by AI the cumulative effect could result in the voters giving up as everything could be seen as overwhelmingly complicated and contradictory which could result in steady erosion of truth through misinformation.

The World Economic Forum's **Global Risks Report, 2024**, identified misinformation as the biggest risk in short term, even ahead of climate change, conflict and societal polarization, which might undermine the legitimacy of elected government. AI-generated mis- and dis-information as second biggest risk in year 2024. Mis- and dis-information may radically disrupt electoral processes in several economies over the next two years highlighting the ease of creation of AI based misinformation which does not require any technical expertise. It has become more difficult to discern between AI generated and human generated content even if companies start labelling AI-generated content. The report highlights that the presence of AI generated false content either in forms of text, speech, audio and videos in the sphere of electoral processes could destabilise the legitimacy of newly elected governments risking political unrest, violence and a long-term erosion of democratic process. It also elaborated on how misinformation could be targeted and personalised as per individual voters targeting specific groups and minority communities (World Economic Forum, 2024). Additionally, state backed campaigns could deteriorate interstate relations via increased sanctions, cyber offence operations and detention of individuals. According to the same report, in national risk perception in the context of upcoming elections, India ranks 1st while USA and European Union have been ranked 6th and 8th respectively (World Economic Forum, 2024).

Misinformation and disinformation, censorship and surveillance and erosion of human rights could be cause and effects in the upcoming elections. Additionally, there is a significant risk of consolidation of power and control based on any real or perceived foreign interference in hybrid as well as mature democracies.

The study conducted by European Political Science titled, **'On the Way to Deep Fake Democracy? Deep fakes in election campaigns in 2023'**, suggests that although deepfake videos are perceived to be satirical in nature, they are not insignificant, as they can subsequently influence voters' behaviour and strengthen cognitive bias (Łabuz & Nehring, 2024b). Many scholars predicted that AI would lead to "epistemic and information apocalypse" and is a weapon of mass disruption (Yadlin-Segal & Oppenheim, 2021). The "epistemic apocalypse" means blurring of the boundaries between real and fake. However, others called it just the "pollution of the information ecosystem" and believe that former is a journalistic discourse (Łabuz & Nehring, 2024b). But recent research by Stanford University Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence on **'How Persuasive is AI Generated Propaganda?',** observed that human-machine teaming strategies, involving editing prompts and curating outputs, produced articles that were equally or more persuasive than the original propaganda (Goldstein et al., 2024). According to Viner (2016) also, technological advancements like deepfakes and micro-targeting have significantly simplified the process of mass persuasion (Viner, 2016).

However, there are others who do not agree with such doomsday predictions. Walter J. Scheirer, a computer scientist with extensive experience in media forensics, understands better than most the potential for new technologies to cause a widespread epistemic crisis. However, he sees no evidence of this happening. While doctored videos online can entertain, provoke, intimidate, or amuse, they rarely deceive. In his new book, 'A History of Fake Things on the Internet' (Immerwahr, 2023) On the other side. However, Łabuz & Nehring (2024) argued that the real-life implications of many deepfakes stem primarily from the psychological and social reactions of audiences to AI information manipulation, rather than from technological advancements like improved quantity, quality (Łabuz, & Nehring, 2024a).

Most of the reports and studies predicted misinformation, deepfakes as major challenges in the elections of 2024, which can manipulate voters and destabilize democracies across world going for elections. However, as many countries have already conducted their elections, it is important to understand the overall impact of not just deepfakes but also other AI-generated content on electoral outcomes. These two views on AI's impact on electoral outcomes, one which talks about "information apocalypse" and other which says that the overblown depiction of effects of deepfakes and use of AI in elections, needs careful examination. With this report, we aim to analyse AI use cases in elections and their potential impact on electoral outcomes based on real-world cases.

METHODS AND DATA

This report has been made after careful considerations of how AI is impacting the world of elections, in the year 2024. For this purpose, we identified countries which conducted elections till June 2024 at either national, state, and provincial level. Case studies were collected from different sources, daily updates from a news tracker covering election-based news from all over the world and many other sources were used to collect the cases.

Research design

The major questions that are posed by this account or agglomeration of case-studies of AI usage in elections is: have they impacted elections this year? If they have, what are some of the impacts that have practically infused AI into the whole process. The cases analysed in the report as per the research design provide an insight into the same. The research relies on content analysis of secondary data sources, including news article, newspaper, journals, TV news and social media platforms.

Data collection

There are lot of case-studies which reflect on the usage of AI in elections in different respects involving different stakeholders from election contesting candidates to voters. Data was collected from a variety of sources to ensure a comprehensive understanding of AI use cases and their impacts:

News articles

With the help of online and print editions of leading national and international newspapers of specific countries were tracked. A news tracker was created containing all incidents and use cases of the countries holding elections this year from January to June 2024. Articles were collected using keyword searches such as "AI applications in Elections," “AI in Elections,” “AI in [Country’s name],” etc. Articles were saved and categorised based on their content.

Academic Journals

Peer reviewed journals were explored, particularly based on the AI and elections and campaigns. Also, explored those journals which studied the impact of AI in elections and campaign.

Social media

Platforms including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn were scrolled to capture discussions, opinions, and shared articles related to AI use cases in different countries. Hashtags like #ArtificialIntelligence, #AIinElections, #Election, #Deepfake, #Misinformation, #AIandCampaign and similar terms were used to search for posts. Relevant posts were documented and categorized. Also, used Google Alert to get relevant news and use cases of AI in elections and campaigns in the inbox.

TV News

Leading news channels were monitored for segments related to AI developments and their societal impacts and to analyse framing of news by media. News segments were recorded or transcribed. AI-related content was identified through program schedules and keywords in the news scripts.

Reports

Reports of different organisations, think tanks, political analysis organisations, academic institutions emphasising on the impact and outcomes of AI in elections were also carefully examined to understand existing narrative on the impact of AI in elections.

Official documents

Official documents of the government, agencies, bodies, organisations directly or indirectly involved in the process and giving out advisories, notifications, guidelines etc.

Selection Criteria

Relevance

Incidents that directly involved the use of AI in electoral processes and had significant implications for the election outcome or process.

Impact

Incidents that had a measurable impact on voter behaviour, election results, or public perception of the electoral process.

Geographic Diversity

Selection of incidents was done taking a variety of countries into consideration to provide a global perspective and account for different political, cultural, and technological contexts.

Availability of Data

Incidents with sufficient data available for analysis, including documentation, reports, and firsthand accounts were analysed.

Data analysis techniques

The collected data was analysed using thematic analysis to identify common patterns and themes across incidents. This involved:

1. Theme Identification: Identifying recurring themes and patterns related to AI's role, impact, challenges, and opportunities in the electoral process.

2. Cross-case Analysis: Comparing and contrasting different case studies to highlight similarities and differences in AI applications and their effects.

Limitations

The study is limited by the availability and accessibility of data from various sources. As most of the data which got published in national new outlets got covered and case-studies that might be covered on local news or which was not shared significantly was missed. Interpretation of qualitative data may be subject to researcher bias, which was mitigated through various papers and journal articles published from different perspective.

The methodology outlined above ensures a comprehensive and systematic examination of AI's impact on elections worldwide. By integrating qualitative analysis, diverse data sources, and rigorous selection criteria, this report aims to offer valuable insights into the evolving role of AI in democratic processes.

CASE-ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

CASE-ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS

This year has witnessed AI as a technology revolutionising the world of elections. Several elections worldwide have witnessed the blurring lines between reel and reality due to emergence of GenAI tools and AI models that have facilitated the creation of artificial and synthetic content.

This report presents a detailed analysis of cases coming from different countries who went to poll from January to June 2024. The analysis underscores the usage of AI technology and tools by different actors in elections, the impact of this usage and what it means for the future of electoral processes. To categorise and analyse the cases collected and analysed form all over the world, we have adopted EU's AI law's risk-based approach and divided the use-cases accordingly. The major categories that have been identified are, minimal or no risk, limited risk, and high risk. Furthermore, the report outlines the various measures implemented by governments around the world to combat AI-generated threats. It also examines the role of social media platforms within the broader ecosystem of AI-driven harms during elections and campaigns.

MINIMAL OR NO RISK

MINIMAL OR NO RISK

This section focuses on AI applications that pose minimal or no risk. These are instances where AI is used to improve communication between candidates and voters, deliver multilingual information, personalize voter outreach, and enhance campaign management efficiency without disrupting electoral processes or causing confusion or chaos.

AI TO RESURRECTS DECEASED POLITICAL ICONS FOR EMOTIONAL APPEAL

India

Indian General Elections: April - June 2024

The resurrection of dead leaders who had a large mass appeal has been one of the major utilisations of the technology especially by political actors in the Indian elections. This has been one of the key resorts for parties/candidates to refer to ask for votes based on emotional connection with these leaders.

A deepfake video surfaced featuring late **MP H. Vasanthakumar** endorsing his son's Congress candidacy in Kanniyakumari, exploiting emotional ties with the electorate. He can be seen stating that though he had “departed physically,” he believed he was still with the people of Kanyakumari “emotionally.”

All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) shared a video of l**ate Chief Minister Jayalalithaa** using voice-cloning software to endorse their candidates for the 2024 elections. While the audio was not formally labelled as AI-generated, it begins with Jayalalithaa thanking "the technology that has enabled me to reconnect with you" — a reference to recent advances in voice-cloning software.

Source: The Times of India

DMK used AI to create videos of late leader **M. Karunanidhi** endorsing his son, CM MK Stalin, for the general elections, tapping into nostalgia and authority to influence voters.

An AI-generated Instagram story featuring CPI(M) stalwart **E.K. Nayanar's** voice endorsing a candidate, LDF candidate Attingal V. Joy, went viral. This was done to leverage his enduring popularity. Arun Raj, a visual artist, was responsible for creating the Instagram story. He utilised open-source software and AI technology to achieve this.

Source: The Hindu

Source: The Indian Express

Buddhadeb Bhattacharya Deepfake: CPI(M) shared an AI-generated video featuring former West Bengal CM Buddhadeb Bhattacharya**,** aiming to bolster support for its Lok Sabha candidates. Despite Bhattacharya's health issues and absence from public view since 2019, AI technology simulated his speech addressing unemployment, corruption, and political issues. The video aimed to influence voter perceptions and engagement, leveraging Bhattacharya's credibility to strengthen CPI(M)'s campaign.

Mahendra Kapoor's AI Voice: BJP posted a video with an AI-cloned voice of deceased singer Mahendra Kapoor, known for his patriotic songs praising PM Modi's achievements, raising ethical concerns about using clone of dead figures for political endorsements.

Indonesia

Presidential and Parliamentary Elections: February 2024

AI ‘revives’ long-dead dictator Suharto, ushering in a murky new era of deepfake electioneering

Ahead of elections in Indonesia, a three-minute deepfake video of former Indonesian President Suharto was shared online.

Suharto in the video can be seen as saying, “I am Suharto, the second president of Indonesia.” It garnered 4.7 million views on X and was also widely circulated in TikTok, YouTube and Facebook. The video, an AI-generated deepfake, used tools to clone Suharto’s face and voice. "The video was made to remind us how important our votes are in the upcoming election," said Erwin Aksa, deputy chairman of Golkar, one of Indonesia’s largest political parties. He first shared the video on X ahead of the February 14 elections. While Golkar isn't fielding its own presidential candidate, it supports frontrunner Prabowo Subianto, a former army general under Suharto's regime and his former son-in-law. By reviving a long-dead leader just weeks before the vote, Golkar aimed to rally support for the party associated with Suharto.

An AI-generated deepfake of the late dictator Suharto has sparked debate about using AI technology for political gain. Erwin Aksa/X

These instances illustrate the strategic use of AI to digitally resurrect deceased leaders for political gain. Historically, campaigns have invoked the memory of their founders and popular leaders to garner support. The introduction of AI-generated deepfake videos adds a new dimension to this practice, creating a more vivid and surprising representation of beloved leaders. However, despite the deepfake videos featuring popular deceased leaders, voters were aware that these individuals are no longer alive. Consequently, the effectiveness of such videos likely hinges more on emotional resonance and the exploitation of legacy rather than on conferring genuine legitimacy to contemporary political messages.

NEW METHODS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

An AI Anchor for Elections by Parties

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) in West Bengal has introduced an **AI anchor named Samata** for the Lok Sabha elections. Debuting with a Holi greeting and campaign messages in Bengali on the social media platform X, Samata is part of CPI(M)'s strategy to bring novelty to their campaign approach.

Samata delivers campaign messages and news bulletins, interacting with viewers on CPI(M)'s social media channels and providing updates on party activities and agendas. Notably, Samata's debut video garnered 3.5k views within the first 12 hours, underscoring the potential impact and reach of AI-driven political communication. This adoption of AI technology marks a significant shift in CPI(M)'s campaigning strategy, aiming to reach a wider audience through digital platforms. Samata's introduction offers a new mode of political communication. However, this has drawn criticism from the Trinamool Congress Party, highlighting the varied reactions within the political landscape to the use of AI in campaigning.

Similarly, the **Telugu Desam Party (TDP) has launched an AI anchor named Vaibhavi** on their official YouTube channel. Vaibhavi regularly delivers news and updates about the party's election campaign, and another AI model reads the TDP manifesto in Telugu in a video.

In India’s Tamil Nadu, a party launched an AI-infused robot to promote its candidate

In Tamil Nadu's Dharmapuri district, the AIADMK deployed a digital robot to support its candidate, Asokan. The robot featured videos of esteemed leaders MGR and Jayalalithaa, along with footage of actor-politician Vijayakanth.

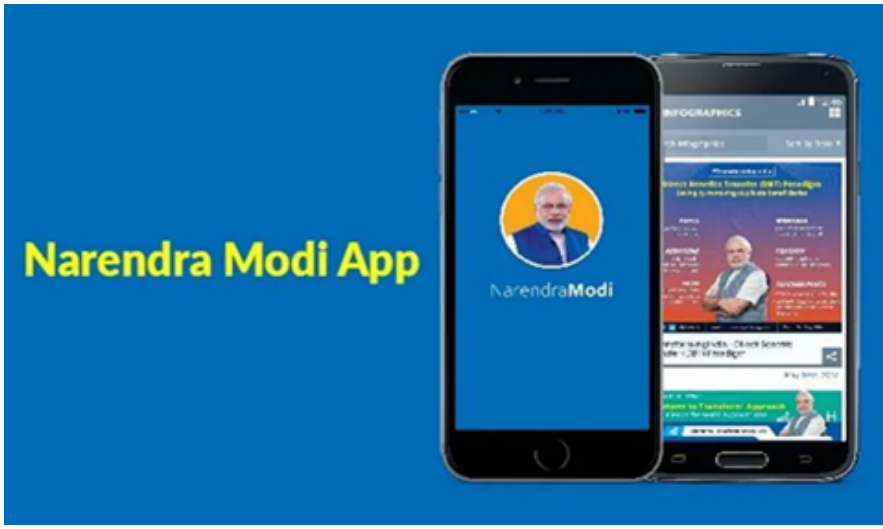
Source: YouTube

In Tamil Nadu's Dharmapuri district, the AIADMK deployed a digital robot to support its candidate, Asokan. The robot featured videos of esteemed leaders MGR and Jayalalithaa, along with footage of actor-politician Vijayakanth. Utilizing artificial intelligence, the robot played these videos and interacted with voters, emphasizing the party's legacy and aligning historical figures with the current campaign. This innovative use of AI technology highlighted the AIADMK's heritage, enhancing voter engagement through modern campaign methods. The robot was strategically positioned outside the Dharmapuri bus terminal to attract and interact with voters.

The Indian Prime Minister introduced an AI-based app called NaMo which gives updates about him

Ahead of the Lok Sabha election, PM Modi's NaMo app introduced an AI-powered chatbot called "NaMo AI" to disseminate information on government schemes and their impact.

This chatbot used artificial intelligence to provide quick summaries and answers to users' questions about PM Modi and his administration's achievements, facilitating seamless interaction across desktop and mobile platforms. NaMo AI likely enhanced outreach efforts, enabling direct communication with citizens and potentially influencing voter perceptions.



Source: JanSatta

India’s national party BJP deployed homegrown AI-enabled translation tool called 'Bhashini' to translate PM Modi’s speeches in real-time

During the 2024 elections, the BJP employed a homegrown AI-enabled translation tool called 'Bhashini' to translate Prime Minister Modi's speeches in real-time. This tool facilitated translations into over a dozen Indian languages, helping to bridge language barriers and expand outreach. Bhashini utilizes AI technologies to provide real-time translation and voiceovers for Modi's speeches in languages such as Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Odia, Bengali, Marathi, and Punjabi. By implementing Bhashini, the BJP enhanced its campaign strategy, enabling Modi to communicate effectively with non-Hindi speaking audiences, particularly in South India. This innovative approach likely boosted engagement and support from diverse linguistic communities. The BJP led the way in using AI for political communication by integrating Bhashini into the Namo mobile app for broader accessibility. AI tools like Bhashini are revolutionizing campaign effectiveness by breaking long-standing language barriers and directly connecting with voters.

These initiatives exemplify a broader trend among political parties to harness AI technology to enhance campaign outreach and voter engagement. The use of AI underscores its role in delivering real-time news and information to voters, interacting with the electorate, and effectively communicating party manifestos and objectives. This strategic adoption of AI technology highlights its potential to reach a wide voter base and transform traditional political communication methods.

TO CONNECT WITH YOUNG VOTERS

France

European Parliament Elections: June 2024

Two AI-generated personas resembling French political figures Marine Le Pen and Marion Maréchal appeared on TikTok. These virtual entities amassed tens of thousands of followers, using glamorous and suggestive imagery infused with nationalism and occasionally racist undertones to subtly push support for the Rassemblement National ahead of the French elections.
The creators of the videos used artificial intelligence (AI) to superimpose the faces of Marine Le Pen and her actual niece, Marion Maréchal, onto images of other people, creating the illusion of younger family members who then proclaimed to be "proud to be French" and admired their "aunt." This incident involved deepfake technology and advanced AI algorithms to create convincing virtual representations of Marine Le Pen and Marion Maréchal. According to French media reports, the account @amandineeette, which had over 32,000 followers, and the account @lena.marechal.lepen have both been deleted. It appears these accounts were created to make the far-right appear more appealing to a younger audience ahead of the upcoming European Union elections.

Indonesia

Presidential Elections: February 2024

Rebranding of Gen Prabowo Subianto to Delight Gen Z voters

A generative AI-created avatar of Gen. Prabowo Subianto, a former special forces commander and current defense minister, has become central to his campaign, attracting the support of young voters with its "gemoy" (cute and cuddly) persona. This avatar, developed using technology from U.S. firm Midjourney Inc., features prominently on billboards, social media, and various merchandise.

Source: Today

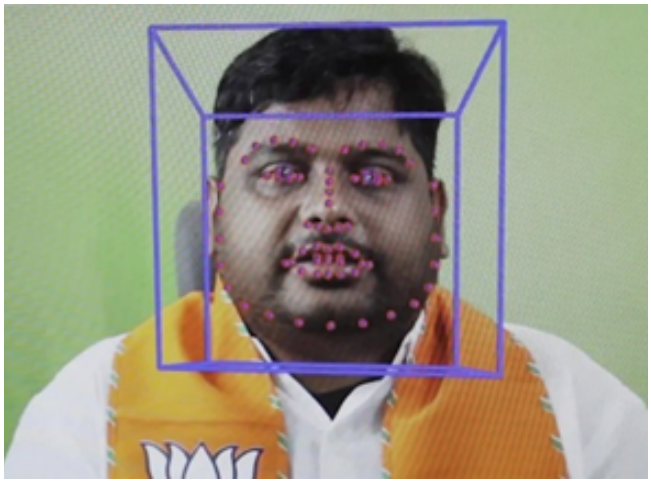
It showcases Prabowo in chubby-cheeked AI avatar makes Korean-style finger hearts and cradling his cat, Bobby, to appeal of Gen Z voters. It's reproduced on sweatshirts and stickers and featured prominently on #Prabowo-tagged posts that have some 19 billion views on TikTok. Approximately half of Indonesia's 205 million voters are under 40, making this demographic crucial for any campaign. Prabowo, with a 20-point lead in the polls and the implicit backing of Indonesia's popular President Joko Widodo, has been the biggest beneficiary of generative AI this cycle, using it to bolster his support among Gen Z. Prabowo's campaign illustrates how AI can be used to rebrand a political figure. In previous campaigns, he portrayed himself as a fiery nationalist. However, for the 2024 elections, his campaign adopted the "gemoy" catchphrase, significantly altering his public image.

In recent political campaigns, AI has emerged as a powerful tool to connect with young voters, employing modern communication techniques that resonate with this demographic. For instance, candidates use AI-driven social media strategies and chatbots to maintain continuous engagement with younger audiences, ensuring their messages remain relevant and impactful. Furthermore, AI is leveraged to reshape candidate's images and craft and disseminate narratives that emphasize the candidates' commitment to inclusive policies, creating a compelling image that appeals to a broad spectrum of voters.

CREATIVE AND PERSONALISED CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

A national party's member created hyper-personalised videos to reach out to as many voters through WhatsApp

On April 18, 500 BJP campaign volunteers in Ajmer, Rajasthan, received personalized WhatsApp videos from Shakti Singh, a BJP member. These videos, created using voice-cloning and lip-matching software, addressed each recipient by name and encouraged them to promote BJP's policies. This AI-driven approach likely boosted volunteer engagement and motivation, enhancing the dissemination of BJP's message during the election.



Source: X

The initiative, led by the BJP campaign team, demonstrates the use of advanced AI technology for personalized political outreach.

Mexico

Presidential Elections: June 2024

A Presidential candidate used an AI platform to anticipate her opponent's questions during a recent presidential debate

Mexican presidential candidate Xóchitl Gálvez revealed that she used an AI platform to anticipate her opponent Claudia Sheinbaum's questions during a recent presidential debate. Gálvez utilised the AI to generate likely security-related questions that Sheinbaum might pose, gaining insights into Sheinbaum's thought process. AI was employed by Gálvez to predict and prepare for potential debate questions. The AI platform analysed patterns in Sheinbaum's previous statements and public positions to simulate likely queries she could ask, providing strategic insights for Gálvez's debate preparation. The use of AI for debate preparation could give candidates a strategic advantage, potentially improving their performance and garnering public support.

Source: WPRI.com

Gálvez's ability to effectively respond to anticipated questions could enhance her credibility and appeal to voters, thereby impacting her standing in the election. Xóchitl Gálvez utilised AI to prepare for the debate, aiming to improve her performance and strategy. The unspecified AI tool provided strategic insights, enabling Gálvez to anticipate and prepare for her opponent's questions.

Turkey

Local Elections: March 2024

A deepfake video of En Buyuk, a mayoral candidate, went viral on social media days before the election

IIn the lead-up to the local elections in Turkey, a deep fake video featuring an opposition Mayor En Buyuk was widely circulated on social media days before the election. In the video, Mayor Buyuk appeared to praise the ruling President Tayyip Erdogan's Justice and Development Party, AKP, for the government's achievements in Istanbul. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan was re-elected for a second term, with the deepfake possibly playing a role in swaying voters.

Source: Dnews

Several actors like The Justice and Development Party (AKP) were allegedly involved in creating the deepfake video to bolster the candidacy of its leader, President Erdogan.

South Africa

South Africa's Referendum Party used AI-generated content on social media platforms to promote their candidate

Starting in November 2023, South Africa's Referendum Party has been using AI-generated imagery on platforms such as X, TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram. Their initial campaign post featured a man holding a light bulb in the dark, symbolising the country's ongoing electrical grid issues, juxtaposed with an image of a brightly lit Cape Town. The party is campaigning for a referendum to make the Western Cape independent from South Africa, as part of the "Capexit" separatist movement. Padre, an Ad-monitoring initiative supported by the Electoral Commission of South Africa and Media Monitoring Africa, confirmed that these images were AI-generated. The Referendum Party admitted to using an AI image generator. AI technology was utilised to create compelling visual imagery for the Referendum Party's election campaign. These AI-generated images were designed to highlight specific issues, such as South Africa's electricity problems, and to support their separatist agenda. The Referendum Party used AI-generated imagery in its campaign. The images were disseminated on X, TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram. Padre, supported by the Electoral Commission of South Africa and Media Monitoring Africa, identified the use of AI technology in these campaign images.

AI was used to raise crucial issues during elections through visual formats. In the this the role played by Padre, an Ad-monitoring turns crucial in identifying AI generated Ads and their purpose.

This is just one instance, there are several other instances in which different actors have been involved in the creation and proliferation of the content via various platforms which have or haven't influenced the election results.

AI FOR FUN

Two top politicians seen singing and dancing in deepfake videos

In one, an AI video of Narendra Modi sporting a trendy jacket and trousers, grooving on a stage to a Bollywood song as the crowd cheers goes viral on social media. Even the Indian prime minister reshared the video on X, saying "such creativity in peak poll season is truly a delight."

Source: X

Source: Facebook

Another video, with the same stage setting, showed Modi's rival Mamata Banerjee dancing in a saree-like outfit, but the background score was parts of her speech criticising those who quit her party to join Modi's. The Modi and Banerjee dancing videos, with 30 million and 1.1 million views respectively on X, were created using a free website, Viggle

AI FOR VOICE AMID CENSORSHIP

Belarus

Parliamentary Elections: February 2024

AI in Belarusian Politics: AI-bot Yas Gaspadar gave voice to opposition against authoritarian repression

Source: @Tsihanouskaya / X (twitter.com)

In a bold move against Belarus's authoritarian regime, opposition campaign manager Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya deployed Yas Gaspadar, an entirely AI-generated parliamentary candidate. Yas Gaspadar, developed using OpenAI's ChatGPT, was presented as the sole honest candidate, aiming to provide a voice for the opposition amid censorship. The technology facilitated the development of a virtual candidate capable of speaking freely within Belarus' censored environment.

Yas Gaspadar served as a tool for the opposition to highlight electoral fraud and bring international attention to Belarus' political situation. By providing a platform for communication and expression in a tightly controlled election, the AI bot aimed to empower citizens, engage in conversations and interact with citizens. It also challenges the legitimacy of the government's narrative and as part of an information campaign against the Belarusian government.

Gaspadar's candidacy aimed to circumvent the severe repression faced by real opposition politicians under President Alexander Lukashenko. While Tsikhanouskaya leads a government-in-exile from Lithuania, Gaspadar—a sophisticated bot—advocated for democratic values without the risk of imprisonment or death.

This innovative use of AI highlighted the potential for generative AI to provide a voice for opposition movements in repressive states. However, it also underscored the broader ethical and regulatory questions surrounding AI's role in politics globally.

POLITICAL SATIRE

An AI-enhanced video of India’s political party Indian National Congress’s member Rahul Gandhi

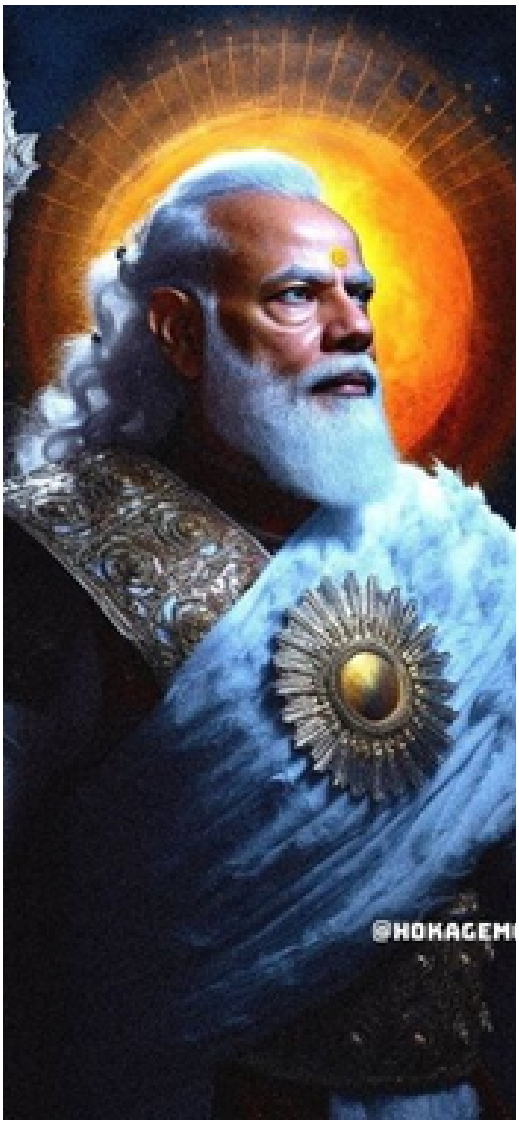
In January, the satirical Instagram account SarcasmPolitics posted an AI-enhanced video mocking Rahul Gandhi, of the Indian National Congress. The video used a scene from the sitcom Sarabhai vs Sarabhai, altered to depict Gandhi and his mother, Sonia Gandhi, with Rahul reciting a poem titled "Main lukkha hoon" ("I am useless"). The video featured disappearing glasses and a realistically AI-rendered face for Sonia Gandhi. By April, it had over 2 million views. The video was created and posted by SarcasmPolitics, presumably run by private individuals or groups.

LIMITED RISK

LIMITED RISK

The categorization of these cases is based on their potential to influence and manipulate voters' decisions and perceptions through AI technologies. These cases highlight the convincing nature of media created with the help of AI technologies and could have influenced voters perception.

AI USED TO EXPLOIT RELIGIOUS SENTIMENTS DURING ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS



Source:
https://facebook.com/HokageModiSama2024

AI-generated images of Prime Minister Narendra Modi as ‘Bhishma Pitamah’ were promoted as political advertisements on Instagram

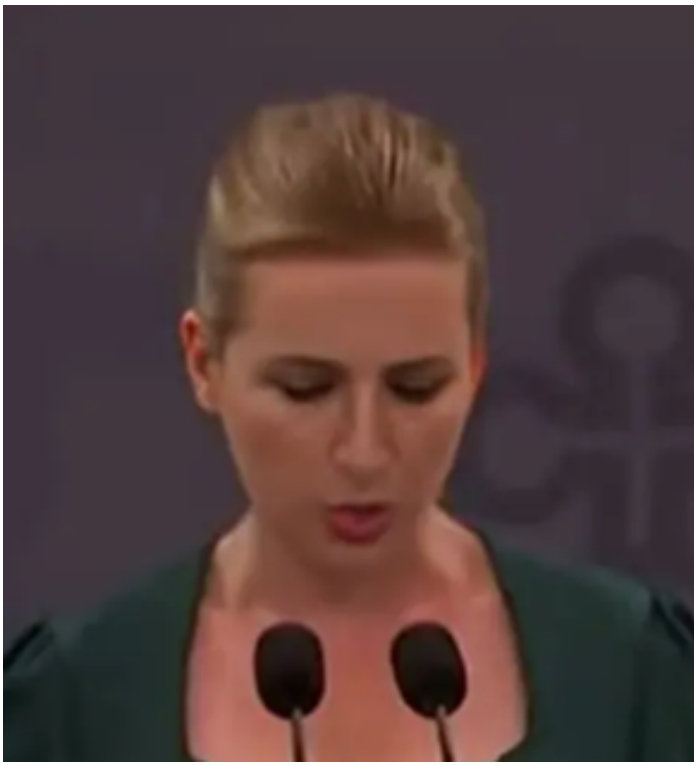
In early March, AI-generated images of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, depicting him as Bhishma Pitamah from the Mahabharata, were promoted as political advertisements on Instagram, quickly garnering 35,000 impressions in two days. These realistic images, along with others portraying Modi as a protector of Hindu heritage, reached millions of viewers. Created by the right-wing Instagram page ‘Hokage Modi Sama,’ these images aimed to enhance Modi's image as a strong leader. While these religious-themed political ads violated the Model Code of Conduct and Meta’s policy on disclosing AI-generated political content, their widespread circulation highlights the significant impact of AI in political advertising.

Denmark

European Parliament Election: June 2024

Different political parties in Denmark utlised deepfake videos in political campaigning

The Danish People's Party and the Liberal Alliance used deepfake videos in their political campaigns. For example, a satirical deepfake video posted by Morten Messerschmidt, chairman of the Danish People's Party, featuring a spoof speech by Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, in which she appeared to announce that Ascension Day, Easter, and Christmas would no longer be public holidays, and that they would all be replaced by the Muslim festival of Eid as the country's sole holiday.



Source: Photo- Danish People's Party/Screen Grab

The Danish People's Party's AI-generated deep fake of Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen was clearly labelled. Despite its recognisable yet robotic voice and video game-like appearance, the video amassed 54,000 views in two days and 206.3K views overall on social media platform X. While many recognized it as a fake video intended for satire, it was still widely circulated and engaged with, highlighting the notable impact of a party chairman sharing such content.

MANIPULATING CELEBRITY VIDEOS TO LEVERAGE THEIR POPULARITY

Deepfake videos of Bollywood celebrities supporting political parties went viral just before elections

Before the Indian general elections, deepfake videos featuring Bollywood actors endorsing political parties surfaced, causing significant controversy. One such video showed actor Aamir Khan purportedly endorsing a political party, and criticising other party. Mr. Khan himself denied any such endorsement.

In a similar case involving another Bollywood actor, a deepfake video of Ranveer Singh making critical remarks about the BJP's Narendra Modi-led government, suggesting that the ruling party thrives on exploiting the hardships and unemployment faced by the people, surfaced online. The video concluded with Ranveer Singh urging voters to make an informed choice and support BJP's opposition.

Source: NDTV

South Africa

National Elections: May 2024

A deepfake video featuring rapper Eminem endorsing South African President Cyril Ramaphosa was widely circulated on social media

The video was manipulated to make it appear as though Eminem was supporting South African opposition party the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) and discrediting the ruling African National Congress (ANC). But it was quickly debunked by fact-checkers. The deepfake video had the potential to mislead voters and influence public opinion. While it was debunked, the incident highlighted the vulnerability of the electoral process to digital misinformation and the necessity for vigilant fact-checking.

The creation and dissemination of the deepfake video involved unidentified malicious actors who aimed to manipulate public perception. Social media platforms facilitated the spread of the video, while fact-checking organisations like Africa Check played a crucial role in exposing the falsehood and informing the public about the deception. Hence, it highlights the role of fact check units to check the spread of misinformation along with social media platforms.

Source : Africacheck.org

Public figures and celebrities are frequent targets of the dangers posed by deepfake technology, where fabricated videos can convincingly portray them saying or doing things they never actually did. This phenomenon not only deceives viewers but also spreads rapidly due to the popularity of these figures. Despite actors and authorities filing FIRs in response, the deepfake videos often accumulate substantial views before they are addressed. This highlights the limitations of social media platforms like X in effectively controlling the proliferation of such misleading content on a large scale.

DEEPFAKE CLAIMING VICTORY

INC member Rahul Gandhi shown swearing in as India’s next Prime Minister in a deepfake video

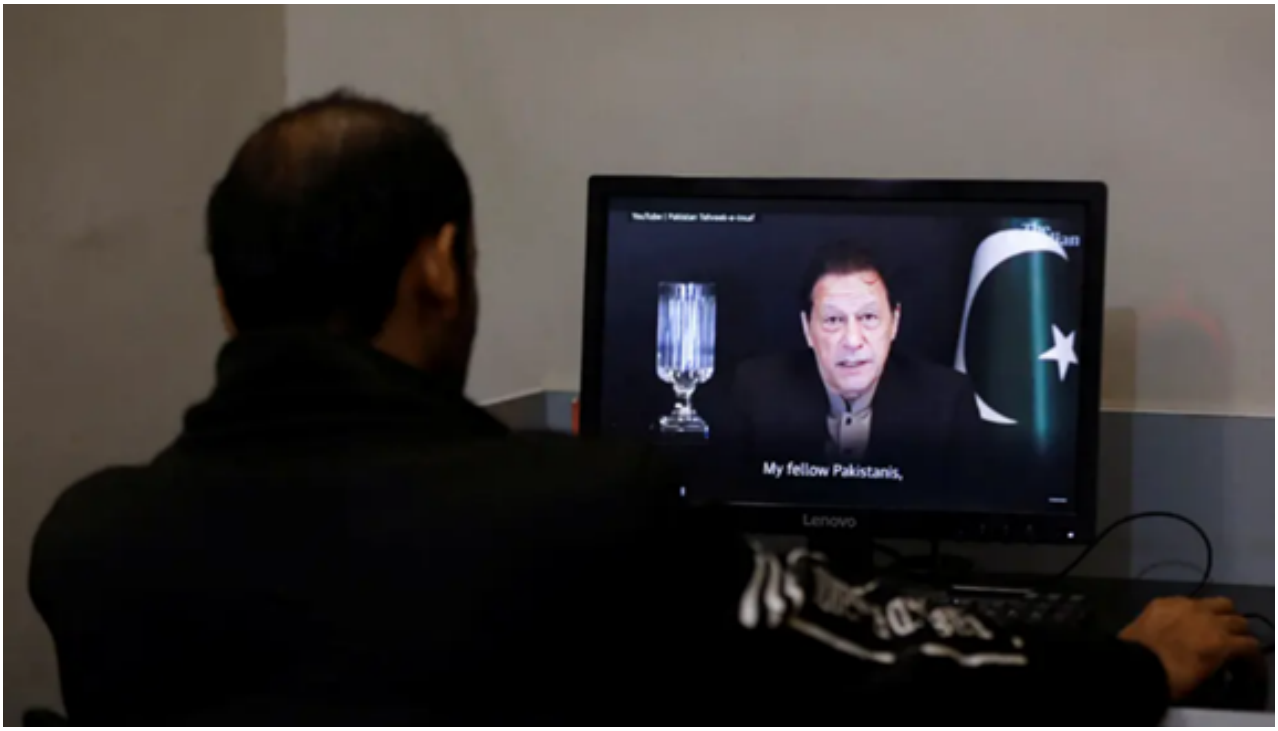
The widespread circulation of an AI-generated video purportedly showing Rahul Gandhi being sworn in as Prime Minister before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections has sparked significant discourse on the ethical implications of AI in political contexts. This video utilized voice-cloning technology, a subset of AI, to convincingly mimic Rahul Gandhi's voice, creating a visually compelling simulation of him taking the oath of office. The inclusion of loud background music and the use of a relatively cheap AI clone underscored the ease with which such manipulations can be created and disseminated. It was confirmed to be AI-manipulated through analysis with Itisaar, a deepfake analysis tool developed by IIT Jodhpur. This highlights the use of AI in campaign and political propaganda.

Source: Cyber Peace Foundation

South Africa

Deepfake video made viral by PTI, Pakistan’s political party claiming Imran Khan to have won the elections

On February 10, 2024, an AI-generated video released by Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party purported him declaring victory in Pakistan's elections, despite being in jail. He can be seen as saying, "I congratulate you all on winning the 2024 elections. I strongly believed in you all, that you would go out to vote”. The video featured Khan's image from a genuine clip and an AI-generated voice mimicking his speech. Utilizing technology from ElevenLabs, known for voice cloning, the video was crafted based on notes passed from jail. This strategic use of AI underscores its dual role: enabling political messaging in defiance of censorship and potentially misleading the public.



Source : Akhtar Soomro/Reuters

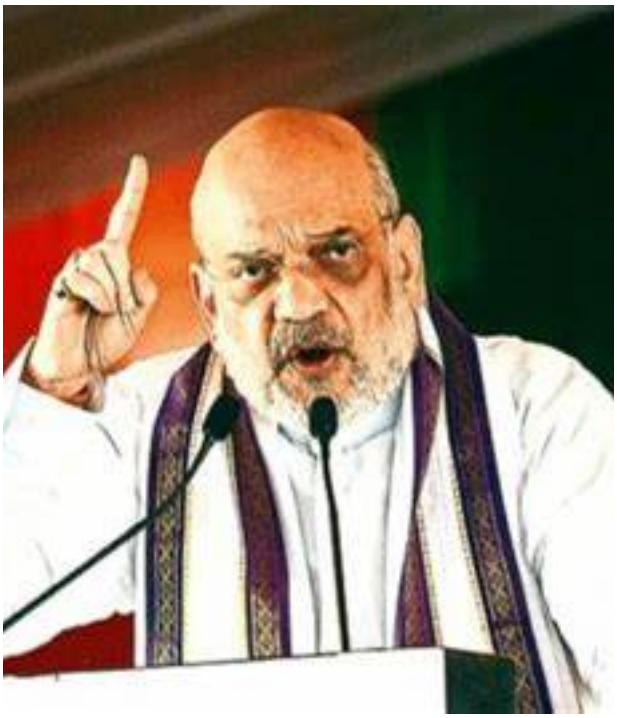
His party used AI-generated videos and images of Khan to reshape the narrative. The PTI also employed TikTok and Facebook Chatbot to promote local candidates, demonstrating a multifaceted digital campaign strategy amid political constraints.

High Risk

HIGH RISK

High-risk cases are those that consistently influenced electoral outcomes, bolstering their narratives over time. These cases might have impacted the election results or potentially swayed the opinions of the voters. The kind of cases covered in this section give insight into what potential does AI-generated content have to make collateral damage to the political aspirations of parties/candidates and project them as villains in the eyes of the voters.

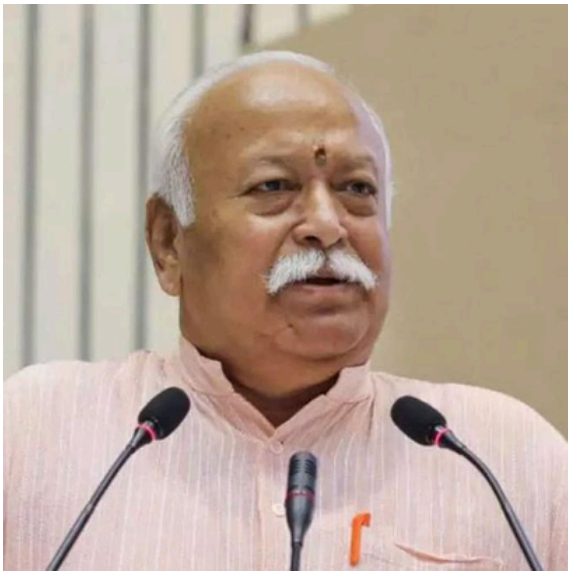
A deepfake morphed video of Indian Home Minister Amit Shah allegedly saying that BJP stands against reservation in the country was circulated just before elections



A deepfake video of Indian politician Amit Shah circulated before the elections. The video, shared on social media by opposition parties, falsely portrayed Shah as opposing reservations, which BJP flagged as fake. Utilizing advanced algorithms, the deepfake convincingly manipulated Shah's facial expressions and voice, causing significant controversy. Shah promptly clarified BJP's stance on reservations to mitigate potential reputational damage. The incident led to accusations between political parties, with BJP alleging Congress's involvement in creating and disseminating the deepfake.

A deepfake video of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat allegedly opposing reservation policies, went viral

At an event marking the inauguration of Vidya Bharati Vignana Kendra (VBVK) in Hyderabad on April 28, 2024, RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat addressed a viral AI-generated video that falsely depicted the RSS as opposing reservation policies.



The eight-second clip manipulated Bhagwat's words, making it appear as though he said, "Sangh people will talk good from outside, but when they go inside, they will say that we are against reservation, we cannot speak about it openly."

The issue of reservation is being called out as the main reason behind BJP losing seats in many constituencies. These videos could have influenced voters' decisions. Given the sensitivity of reservation in Indian politics, such misinformation can significantly sway public opinion and voter behavior, potentially affecting election outcomes by fostering mistrust or backlash against political entities. The widespread sharing of this AI-generated video on social media could have undermined the voters' trust in RSS and its affiliate, the BJP.

Also, the fact that such content was shared by high-profile politicians raises critical questions about the responsibility and ethical obligations of political leaders in utilizing AI during election campaigns. This incident not only highlights the potential for AI to distort political messages but also emphasizes the need for stringent measures to ensure the integrity of information disseminated by those in positions of authority. The involvement of influential figures in spreading manipulated content exacerbates the challenges of maintaining a fair and transparent electoral process, thereby necessitating robust regulatory frameworks to address the misuse of AI in politics.

AI-GENERATED DEEPFAKES TO TARNISH IMAGE OF OPPONENTS

United Kingdon

Parliamentary Elections: July 2024

Deepfake video advertisements of Rishi Sunak, the parliamentary election candidate in the United Kingdom were circulated on Facebook before elections

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak sitting in a pile of money. Source : Midjourney

More than 100 deepfake video advertisements impersonating Rishi Sunak were paid to be promoted on Facebook before the UK parliamentary elections. These deepfakes surfaced in 23 countries, potentially reaching up to 400,000 viewers. Despite violating Facebook's policies, the ads circulated widely, marking the first instance of the prime minister's image being systematically manipulated en masse.

One notable deepfake includes fabricated footage of BBC newsreader Sarah Campbell falsely reporting a scandal involving Sunak allegedly earning “colossal sums from a project that was initially intended for ordinary citizens”. The video falsely claims that Elon Musk launched an app for "collecting" stock market transactions followed by a faked clip of Sunak saying the government had decided to test the application rather than risking the money of ordinary people.

Facebook's lax moderation policies on paid advertising compounded the issue. Despite contravening multiple rules, few ads were removed. This case underscores the vast quantity of deepfake videos that can be created and circulated, despite big tech's commitments to counter AI-generated deceptive content. The widespread reach of these videos likely impacted public perception, potentially tarnishing Sunak's reputation and credibility. The exact effect on his electoral performance remains speculative.

Indonesia

Presidential Elections: February 2024

Presidential Candidate Anies Baswedan Targeted by Fake Audio Scandal Involving Surya Paloh

In late January, Anies Baswedan became a victim of disinformation when a video surfaced on social media with a voice recording appearing to be National Democratic Party chairman Surya Paloh scolding him over his poll performance and recent presidential debates.

In another incident, a manipulated video posted on Facebook in March falsely showed Indonesian vice president-elect Gibran Rakabuming Raka insulting recipients of government benefits, comparing them to zoo animals. The video used AI-generated audio combined with old footage to create a false narrative, aiming to undermine public trust in Gibran and the government benefits program. This disinformation could influence voter sentiment and electoral outcomes.

Mexico

Governor's Elections: June 2024

AI-Generated Audio Clip Sparks Controversy in Morelos Gubernatorial Race

Following her first debate on April 21, 2024, a purported audio clip of Margarita González, a gubernatorial candidate in Morelos, Mexico, surfaced on social media. In the recording, González supposedly suggests threatening citizens with the withdrawal of social programs if they do not vote for her. The recording gained significant traction, notably shared by prominent figures such as news anchor Joaquin López Dóriga.

González claimed the audio was an AI-generated deepfake intended to damage her reputation, a stance supported by forensic analysis and the organization Witness, which specializes in deepfake detection. On April 27, González filed a complaint with the local electoral watchdog, decrying a "dirty war" against her and seeking measures against electoral slander.

This incident highlighted the potential misuse of AI in undermining electoral integrity and targeting candidates. Such manipulated media has the potential to tarnish one's image and possibility of dirty game or "arm race" in the era of AI (Łabuz & Nehring, 2024a).

A deepfake video of former Mexico City mayor and President Claudia Sheinbaum inviting Mexicans to invest for higher returns went viral during the mayoral elections

In Mexico's Mayoral elections, a viral video purportedly showed former Mexico City Mayor and President Claudia Sheinbaum inviting Mexicans to invest for high returns. Morena party presidential hopeful promptly denounced the clip as a "complete fraud." However, it was later revealed to be an AI-generated video, sparking controversy and denunciation. The video aimed to defraud people and potentially damage Sheinbaum's electoral prospects.

Source: Internewscast.com

The edited videos were circulated on social media platforms like Facebook, leveraging AI-generated content taken from Sheinbaum's official YouTube channel. AI-generated audio of Sheinbaum admitting that her campaign was failing in a key Mexican state.

Manipulated Image of Mexican Presidential Candidate Xóchitl Gálvez Circulates on X, Aiming to Discredit Her

On May 13, a manipulated image was circulated on X, depicting Mexican presidential candidate Xóchitl Gálvez waving the country's flag upside down during a rally in central Mexico. The image was shared by the high-profile account @catrina_nortena, which supports the ruling party Morena. The post garnered significant attention, with over 1,300 likes and 48,000 views. A live broadcast of the rally on Gálvez's official YouTube account, however, showed that she waved the flag correctly. AI technologies were likely used to manipulate the image, altering the orientation of the flag to create a misleading visual. The manipulated image aimed to discredit Xóchitl Gálvez by depicting her disrespecting a national symbol, which could damage her reputation and sway public opinion against her. Such disinformation tactics can undermine the electoral process by misleading voters and eroding trust in candidates. The manipulated image was shared by @catrina_nortena, a prominent account backing the ruling party. X was the medium through which the manipulated image was disseminated.

Italy

Local Elections: June 2024

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni fell victim to an AI-generated pornographic videos

Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni attends a joint press conference in Kyiv on February 24, 2024. Maxym Marusenko/NurPhoto/Shutterstock

In another case, the image of a political leader was maligned due to the creation of pornographic content utilising AI technology. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni is demanding Rs 91 lakh (approximately $110,000) in damages after deepfake pornographic videos featuring her were circulated online. These videos falsely depicted her in a sexually explicit manner, damaging her reputation and personal privacy.

USE OF AI FOREIGN INTERFERENCE

Pakistan

General Elections: February 2024

A deepfake video featuring USA's former President Donald Trump pledging support for former Pakistani PM Imran Khan circulated on social media before elections

A deepfake video featuring former US President Donald Trump pledging support for former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan circulated on social media. The video, created using the ParrotAI app, falsely depicts Trump promising to help Khan if he wins the 2024 US Presidential Election. The deepfake aimed at manipulating public opinion and creating false narratives, by promoting fake endorsements and promises.

Video of President Joe Biden threatening sanctions on South Africa if ANC win elections

A viral deepfake video falsely depicted President Joe Biden threatening sanctions against South Africa if the ANC wins the upcoming elections. The video, circulated on platforms like TikTok, Facebook, and Twitter, uses Parrot AI technology to mimic Biden's voice. Investigations have confirmed it is not authentic. This disinformation had no direct impact on the electoral process but contributed to misinformation and potential diplomatic tensions, undermining public trust in media and political figures.

FORCED CANDIDATES TO WITHDRAW

Bangladesh

National Assembly Elections: January 2024

A constituency's Facebook page shared an AI-generated video of an independent candidate falsely announcing her withdrawal from the electoral race

Deepfake video campaign about withdrawing from elections | নির্বাচন থেকে সরে দাঁড়ানো নিয়ে ডিপফেক' ভিডিও প্রচার (boombd.com)

On the day of the National Assembly elections in Bangladesh, the Facebook page of Bornil Bogura shared a falsified AI-generated video of two independent candidate Abdullah Nahid Nigar and Beauty Begum, falsely announcing her withdrawal from the race and support for Jatiya Party candidate Shariful Islam Jinnah. Fact-checking organisation Boom Bangladesh debunked the video as fake, revealing it was based on an old photo of Begum and featured an unmatching voice.

However, Nigar won her seat, but Beauty did not. It is difficult to ascertain what was the impact of these last minute deepfake videos but definitely, it tested the capabilities of enforcement agencies. They might have found themselves confounded because of little time to respond to it. This could have impacted voters' decisions and electoral outcomes at the last hour.

Turkey

Local Elections: March 2024

Deepfake video forced party to withdraw candidate in quake-hit province of Turkey

The Workers' Party of Turkey withdrew the mayoral candidacy of former footballer Gokhan Zan in Hatay after a recording surfaced in which Zan allegedly discussed bribes and a job offer with state-run broadcaster TRT.

Zan filed a criminal complaint, claiming the recording was created using AI and that he was subjected to threats and blackmail. The incident involved deepfake technology, utilizing AI-generated audio to fabricate a recording of Zan discussing illicit activities. This technology used advanced algorithms to mimic Zan's voice and speech patterns convincingly. The fabricated recording led to Zan's withdrawal from the mayoral race, potentially altering the political landscape in Hatay.

It undermined trust in the electoral process, casting doubts on the authenticity of candidates' statements and creating a climate of suspicion and fear. The Workers' Party of Turkey, Gokhan Zan, and state-run broadcaster TRT were directly involved.

Zan accused unnamed parties of creating the AI-generated recording and using it for blackmail. The incident highlights the critical role of political parties, state institutions, and potentially malicious actors in the misuse of AI for political manipulation.

In 2024, a series of case studies examined the use of AI in elections and campaigns worldwide, revealing a wide range of associated risks. These case studies were categorized into minimal or no risk, limited risk, and high risk, showcasing the diverse applications of AI, from enhancing campaign strategies to creating manipulated content. The 2024 elections saw transformational and groundbreaking uses of AI, demonstrating both its potential and its pitfalls. These cases also highlighted the failure of social media platforms to enforce their guidelines effectively. Together, they provide a comprehensive understanding of the current and future role of AI in elections and campaigns.

Big Techs/ Social Media Platforms/ Agencies in 2024 Elections

Big Techs/ Social Media Platforms in 2024 Elections

One common thread running through these case-studies, spread across the globe, is that it is through social media platforms that AI generated content was disseminated. Social media companies have long served as hubs for AI-generated content, facing ongoing criticism for their inefficacy in combating misinformation and deepfakes. This issue is particularly critical during election seasons, as it poses a significant threat to the electoral process and compromises its integrity. These are few commitments by these platforms to combat the negative use of AI in elections.a

A Tech Accord to Combat Deceptive Use of AI in 2024 Elections

Munich Security Conference

February 16, 2024

24 leading technology companies including, Amazon, Google, IBM, Microsoft, Meta, OpenAI, Stability AI, TikTok, Trend Micro, Truepic, and X, signed the Tech Accord. The accord defines Deceptive AI Election Content as realistic AI-generated media that misleadingly alters the appearance, voice, or actions of political figures and provides false information about voting logistics.

The accord aims to manage risks from Deceptive AI Election Content through seven key goals:

1. Prevention: Investing in measures to prevent the creation of deliberately deceptive AI election content.

2. Provenance: Attaching signals to identify content origins.

3. Detection: Detecting and authenticating deceptive AI election content.

4. Responsive Protection: Swiftly addressing incidents involving deceptive AI content.

5. Evaluation: Evaluating and learning from responses to deceptive AI content.

6. Public Awareness: Educating the public on media literacy and protection against deceptive AI content.

7. Resilience: Developing and providing defensive tools and programs to protect democratic processes.

Through 2024, signatories commit to:

- Developing technology to mitigate risks of deceptive AI content.
- Assessing AI models to understand related risks.
- Detecting and addressing deceptive AI election content on their platforms.
- Fostering industry resilience through best practices and tool sharing.
- Providing public transparency on addressing deceptive AI content.
- Engaging with civil society, academics, and experts to understand global risks.
- Supporting public awareness and resilience initiatives against deceptive AI election content.

Google

Google's Measures to Combat Misinformation for the 2024 Elections

December 19, 2023

Enhanced AI Monitoring and Restrictions:

- Google will limit election-related queries on Bard and SGE starting early next year to address misinformation concerns.

Identification of AI-Generated Content:

- Ads Disclosures: Google mandates election advertisers to disclose any AI-generated or digitally altered content in their ads.

- Content Labels: YouTube will require creators to disclose realistic altered or synthetic content, displaying a label to inform viewers.
- Image Credibility: "About this image in Search" feature helps users evaluate the credibility and context of images.
- Digital Watermarking: SynthID by Google DeepMind embeds digital watermarks into AI-generated images and audio.

Providing Reliable Information to Voters:

- Search: Collaboration with Democracy Works and The Associated Press to surface authoritative election information and results.
- News: Enhanced features to help readers discover authoritative local and regional election news.
- YouTube: Measures to connect users with high-quality election news and information.
- Maps: Clear highlighting of polling locations with easy directions and enhanced protections against spam in election-related places.
- Ads: Identity verification for election advertisers and in-ad disclosures showing the payer, along with inclusion in the Political Advertising Transparency Report.

Security Partnerships:

Threat Analysis Group (TAG) and Mandiant Intelligence: Monitoring and addressing threats like coordinated influence operations and cyber espionage, tracking over 270 targeted or government-backed groups across more than 50 countries, and consistently publishing findings to keep the public and private sectors informed.

India

Google had announced the 'Shakti, India Election Fact-Checking Collective' aimed at tackling online misinformation and deepfakes in India ahead of the general elections

Ahead of the 2024 General Elections, Google has launched the 'Shakti, India Election Fact-Checking Collective' to combat online misinformation and deepfakes. This initiative leverages AI technologies to detect and verify false information swiftly. Utilizing tools such as Google's Fact Check Explorer, the project aims to streamline the verification process and ensure the rapid identification and correction of misinformation.

The primary goal is to provide voters with credible, fact-checked information, thereby protecting the integrity of the democratic process. By curbing the spread of misinformation and deepfakes, the collective strives to ensure that voters can make informed decisions. Supported by the Google News Initiative, the effort is led by DataLEADS, the Misinformation Combat Alliance, and other fact-checking organizations.

Google's collaboration with Election Commission of India to curb AI-generated misinformation

Google utilises AI for early detection and removal of synthetic content. This includes machine learning models that identify and eliminate manipulated media, and the Gemini AI chatbot's restricted responses to election-related queries.

The measures are designed to enhance voter awareness, protect against misinformation, and maintain a trustworthy information ecosystem during the elections. Google collaborates with the Election Commission of India, and other tech companies to curb deceptive AI-generated content. Social media platforms like Meta and X were also involved in removing defamatory content swiftly as per regulatory requirements.

South Africa

Google's efforts to curb AI-generated misinformation in South Africa ahead of elections

Google has undertaken significant steps to support election integrity by providing reliable information to voters, protecting its platforms from abuse, and equipping campaigns with advanced security tools and training. AI surfaces authoritative election-related content on Search and YouTube, detects and removes policy-violating content, identifies cyber threats, and enforces disclosures for AI-generated ads. Additionally, SynthID embeds digital watermarks in AI-generated images and audio to manage synthetic content.

Google's efforts aim to ensure voters have access to accurate information, protect high-risk users from cyber threats, prevent the spread of misinformation, promote transparency in political advertising, and support reliable, non-partisan fact-checking, thereby enhancing the overall integrity and transparency of the electoral process. Google provides technology, security training, and policy enforcement. The government and IEC partner with Google for training and information dissemination. Political parties receive training on digital security and misinformation. Media organisations collaborate on fact-checking and reliable reporting. Industry partners work together to combat misinformation and safeguard elections. The general public benefits from accurate information and enhanced election security.

Meta

Meta/Facebook's Labelling of AI in Political and Social Issue Ads

January 3, 2024

Disclosure Policy for Ads about social issues/ elections/ politics:

Meta requires advertisers to disclose when their ads include photorealistic images, videos, or realistic-sounding audio that have been digitally created or altered by AI or other methods. These disclosures are necessary in the following scenarios:

- Depicting a real person saying or doing something they did not.
- Creating a realistic-looking person who does not exist or a realistic event that did not happen.
- Altering footage of a real event.
- Depicting an event that allegedly occurred but is not an authentic recording.

Enforcement:

Meta may penalize advertisers who repeatedly fail to make these disclosures. Additionally, Meta's independent fact-checking partners can label content as "Altered" if it has been misleadingly created or edited, including through the use of AI.

Meta collaborated with third-party checkers to curb AI-generated misinformation and disinformation online in India

Meta prepared for the 2024 Indian General Elections by expanding its network of third-party fact-checkers, launching an Elections Operations Center, and implementing measures to combat misinformation and AI-generated deceptive content. The company aims to support free and fair elections by enhancing transparency, reducing voter interference, and promoting civic engagement. Meta uses AI to monitor and remove misleading content, including AI-generated deepfakes. The platform employs machine learning models and visual verification techniques to identify and demote altered content. AI is also used to label photorealistic images and ensure transparency in advertisements.

Meta's initiatives aim to limit misinformation, prevent voter interference, and promote transparency. By expanding fact-checking efforts and utilising AI technologies, Meta enhances the accuracy of information available to voters, thereby supporting a more informed and fair electoral process. Meta collaborated with the Election Commission of India, third-party fact-checkers, and the Misinformation Combat Alliance. The company had a global team of 40,000 working on safety and security, including content reviewers proficient in multiple languages. It also engaged with local partners and law enforcement for training and awareness initiatives.

OpenAI's Approach to 2024 Worldwide Elections

January 15, 2024

OpenAI has outlined three "key initiatives" to address election integrity in 2024:

1. Preventing Abuse:

- Misleading Deepfakes: Anticipating and preventing the creation of misleading deepfakes and scaled influence operations.
- Political Campaigns: Prohibiting applications for political campaigning and lobbying.
- Impersonation: Banning chatbots from pretending to be real people or institutions.
- Democratic Participation: Disallowing applications that misrepresent voting processes or discourage voting.

2. Transparency Around AI-Generated Content:

- Image Provenance: Enhancing transparency by enabling detection of tools used to produce images, helping voters trust and verify image sources.
- Digital Credentials: Implementing the Coalition for Content Provenance and Authenticity's digital credentials for images generated by DALL·E 3.
- Provenance Classifier: Experimenting with a new tool to detect images generated by DALL·E.

3. Improving Access to Authoritative Voting Information:

- ChatGPT Guidance: Directing users to CanIVote.org for authoritative US voting information and applying lessons learned to other regions globally.

Microsoft

Microsoft's New Measures for Election Protection

November 7, 2023

Microsoft has outlined five new initiatives to safeguard the electoral processes in the U.S. and other nations with critical elections in 2024. These steps are based on principles emphasizing transparent, authoritative election information, protection of candidate integrity, cybersecurity for political campaigns, and resilient election processes.

Microsoft's Election Protection Commitments:

1. Content Credentials as a Service:

Digital signing and authentication of media using C2PA's digital watermarking credentials, ensuring content provenance and authenticity, including AI-generated content.

2. Campaign Success Team:

A team within Microsoft Philanthropies' Tech for Social Impact to aid political campaigns in navigating AI and cybersecurity challenges, and in combating cyber influence campaigns.

3. Election Communications Hub:

A new hub to support democratic governments in building secure, resilient election processes, providing access to Microsoft's security and support teams during critical periods.

4. Support for Legislative and Legal Changes:

Advocacy for protective legislation against deepfakes and other harmful technologies, starting with endorsing the bipartisan "Protect Elections from Deceptive AI Act" in the U.S.

5. Authoritative Election Information on Bing:

Partnership with organizations like NASED, EFE, and Reporters Without Borders to promote reputable sources of election information and ensure that Bing surfaces authoritative election administration sites.

Snapchat

Snapchat's 2024 Election Integrity Plan

January 23, 2024

Snapchat has outlined its strategy for ensuring election integrity in the 2024 elections by reconvening its team of misinformation, political advertising, and cybersecurity experts. The plan includes:

1. Preventing Misinformation Spread:

Snapchat's platform design inherently limits misinformation by avoiding endless feeds, live streaming, and algorithmic promotion of misleading content. Content is moderated before reaching a large audience, and news is sourced from trusted media partners. The platform's Community Guidelines strictly prohibit spreading misinformation and deepfakes, especially content that undermines election integrity.

2. Safeguarding Political Advertising:

Snapchat employs human review for all political ads and collaborates with an independent, non-partisan fact-checking organization to ensure transparency and accuracy. The vetting process rigorously checks for deceptive use of AI in creating misleading images or content.

Spain

A Spanish Media Group developed an AI tool to detect audio deepfakes

A Spanish media group developed an AI tool to detect audio deepfakes to assist journalists during a significant election. This initiative was prompted by the rising threat of disinformation and deepfake audio recordings impacting electoral integrity. The AI tool utilised machine learning algorithms designed to analyse audio recordings and identify characteristics indicative of deepfake manipulation. This technology focused on detecting synthetic audio patterns that are not present in genuine recordings. The deployment of this AI detection tool helped safeguard the electoral process by enabling journalists to verify the authenticity of audio recordings. This, in turn, reduced the risk of misinformation spreading and ensured that voters received accurate information, thereby maintaining public trust in the election.

The media group spearheaded the development of the AI tool, with likely collaboration from AI researchers and technologists. Journalists were the primary users, employing the tool to fact-check audio content.

Spain's data protection agency blocked Meta's use of its AI-powered election tools

Spain's data protection agency blocked Meta's use of its AI-powered election tools. The agency raised concerns over the potential misuse of personal data and privacy violations in the context of election campaigns. Meta's election tools utilised AI to analyse voter data, predict voting behaviours, and target political advertisements. The AI algorithms processed large datasets to optimise campaign strategies and outreach efforts. Blocking Meta's AI tools aimed to protect voter privacy and prevent data exploitation. However, it may also limit the ability of political parties to use advanced data-driven strategies, potentially impacting campaign effectiveness and election outcomes. The Spanish data protection agency (AEPD) led the initiative to block Meta's tools, citing privacy concerns. Meta (formerly Facebook) was the tech company behind the AI election tools. The action reflects broader concerns among governments and regulatory bodies about the ethical use of AI in electoral processes.

Governments in 2024 Elections and AI

Governments in 2024 Elections and AI

Governments worldwide have grappled with the challenge of containing the dissemination of AI-generated misinformation and disinformation, often responding reactively rather than implementing well-calibrated proactive measures to address this growing threat. Below are examples of steps taken by governments in various countries to tackle this issue.

India

Election Commission of India's Advisory on Deepfakes and Misinformation

May 6th, 2024

The Election Commission issued an advisory, instructing all recognized political parties to avoid using deepfakes and misinformation in their social media posts. Parties are required to remove any such fake audios and videos within three hours of becoming aware of them. The EC highlighted the dangers of manipulated content swaying voter opinions, deepening societal divisions, and eroding trust in the electoral process.

Prompted by a Delhi High Court directive to address deepfake issues raised in a petition, the EC's advisory referenced relevant provisions from the Information Technology Act, the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and the Indian Penal Code. Specifically, it mentioned Section 505 of the IPC, which deals with circulating rumors or reports that promote enmity, hatred, or ill-will.

The advisory instructed parties not to disseminate false or misleading information and to refrain from impersonating individuals through synthetically created or modified content. It also reiterated previous advisories against using children in campaigning and promoting content derogatory towards women.

Additionally, the EC directed parties to report such content to social media platforms and the Grievance Appellate Committee under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021.

Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) advisory to take government permission before deploying AI, later withdrawan

The MeitY issued an advisory requiring explicit government permission for under-tested or unreliable AI models before they can be deployed in India. This directive also mandates that all intermediaries ensure their AI tools avoid bias, discrimination, or threats to electoral integrity. Furthermore, MeitY instructed intermediaries to label or embed all synthetically created media with unique identifiers for easy identification. Immediate compliance and submission of an "Action Taken-cum-Status Report" within 15 days were also mandated.

However, this advisory was withdrawn mandating only AI labelling of content. MeitY's advisory reflects reactionary approach amid election season, driven by fear of AI swaying voters' opinions.

State police cracked down on creators of deepfake during elections

The Maharashtra government directed the police to crack down on creators of deepfake content during the Lok Sabha elections. This action came in response to concerns about the potential misuse of AI-generated videos and images to manipulate public opinion and spread disinformation. The Government said such manipulated content is being created using machine learning (ML) or artificial intelligence (AI). The use of deepfake content threatened to mislead voters, spread false information, and undermine the integrity of the electoral process. It could have influenced voter perceptions and decisions, potentially affecting the election outcomes. The government asked the Director-General of Police (DGP) to curb such practices and ensure a clean and transparent electoral process. The police have been asked to take stern action against anti-social elements making and circulating such content.

EU

EU's AI Act

The European Union has called on major tech firms, including Google, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter), to outline their plans to tackle the rise of deepfakes amid fears of their impact on upcoming elections. In a world first, they will be using new laws on artificial intelligence to force companies to root out fake video, imagery and audio. AI technologies such as deepfake generation AI. Companies have until 5 April 2024 to show how they will deal with last-minute; high-impact fake news being dumped on social media on the eve of elections. The EU government is actively seeking cooperation from tech companies like Google, Facebook, and X to combat deepfake threats. A report by the EU's external action service in January showed how Russia had built up a network of fake accounts over a period of months to make them look legitimate just before last year's general election in Spain.

Mexico

The Secretary of State in launched a statewide Ad campaign to warn voters about the dangers of AI-generated misinformation during the 2024 elections

The Secretary of State in New Mexico has launched a statewide Ad campaign to warn voters about the dangers of AI-generated misinformation during the 2024 elections. The campaign aims to educate the public on identifying and mitigating the impact of deepfakes and other AI-manipulated content designed to mislead voters. The campaign addresses the use of deepfake technology, which employs sophisticated AI algorithms to create hyper-realistic but fake audio and video content. These technologies can simulate the voices and appearances of political figures, misleading voters with false information. AI-generated misinformation poses a significant threat to the integrity of elections by spreading false information, potentially influencing voter behaviour and eroding trust in the democratic process. The campaign aims to mitigate these effects by raising awareness and helping voters discern authentic information from deceptive AI-generated content. The campaign involves the Secretary of State's office, which is spearheading the initiative, as well as collaborations with tech companies and media outlets to disseminate the educational materials.

Latvia

Latvia's President proposed regulating the use of AI in pre-election campaigns after concerns arose about the potential misuse of AI technologies to manipulate voters and spread disinformation.

The incident highlights concern regarding the potential misuse of AI technologies, including deepfake technology, to influence electoral campaigns. While specific instances of AI misuse are not mentioned in the article, the proposal aims to address the broader issue of AI's impact on election integrity. The proposed regulation seeks to safeguard the electoral process by addressing the potential threats posed by AI-driven manipulation and disinformation campaigns. By implementing regulations on the use of AI in pre-election campaigns, Latvia aims to maintain transparency and fairness in its democratic processes.

The initiative to regulate the use of AI in pre-election campaigns is spearheaded by Latvia's President, signalling the involvement of the government in addressing concerns related to AI-driven manipulation in elections. The proposal likely involves input from various stakeholders, including political parties, tech companies, and experts in AI and election integrity.

France

France is utilizing AI technology to safeguard its electoral process from the threat of deepfakes

The French government aims to bolster election integrity by implementing measures to detect and counteract the spread of manipulated media, particularly deepfake videos and audio. AI technologies, including machine learning algorithms, are employed to develop tools capable of identifying and analyzing deepfake content. These tools can detect discrepancies in audiovisual material, distinguishing authentic content from manipulated media. By deploying AI-driven solutions, France seeks to mitigate the potential impact of deepfakes on its electoral process.

The proactive approach aims to maintain public trust in elections by minimizing the dissemination of false information and ensuring the integrity of political discourse. The initiative involves collaboration between the French government, tech companies specializing in AI and cybersecurity, and potentially academic institutions with expertise in machine learning and digital forensics. These stakeholders collectively contribute to the development and deployment of effective strategies to combat deepfake threats in the context of elections.

Mississippi

Mississippi passed a bill criminalising the dissemination of deepfakes during elections

Mississippi passed a bill criminalising the dissemination of deepfakes during elections. The bill aims to combat the spread of AI-generated content that could influence voters or undermine the integrity of the electoral process. Deepfake technology, which uses AI algorithms to create manipulated audio, video, or images, is at the center of this incident.

It enables the creation of realistic but false content that can be used to deceive voters or spread disinformation. The bill seeks to protect the electoral process by prohibiting the dissemination of deepfakes that could potentially manipulate voters or disrupt elections. By criminalising such actions, it aims to safeguard the integrity and fairness of elections in Mississippi. The Mississippi state government spearheaded the passage of the bill, demonstrating a proactive approach to addressing emerging threats to election integrity. The involvement of government actors reflects a recognition of the need to regulate and mitigate the risks posed by AI-generated deepfakes in political contexts.

Romania

Romania launches its first official mechanism for reporting deepfake content on social networks

Romania has launched the first official mechanism for reporting deepfake content on social networks.

This mechanism aims to address the rising concerns surrounding the spread of manipulated media, particularly deepfake videos, which can deceive viewers by portraying false information or events. The mechanism likely involves AI technologies for detecting and identifying deepfake content. These technologies utilize machine learning algorithms to analyze and compare media content, identifying anomalies that suggest manipulation or alteration. By enabling users to report suspicious content, the mechanism contributes to safeguarding the integrity of the electoral process and ensuring that voters have access to accurate information. The initiative to launch the mechanism likely involves collaboration between government agencies, social media platforms, and possibly tech companies specializing in AI and cybersecurity. The Romanian government, social networks operating in Romania, and relevant stakeholders in the tech industry would likely be involved in implementing and overseeing the mechanism.

ANALYSIS

The use of AI in elections spans from targeted voter outreach to highly personalized campaigns. Many deepfakes or AI-generated content were deployed to attract young voters and to please them with creating young and appealing images of candidates contesting elections. Also, in regimes which are restrictive or repressive, it was observed that major deployment of AI is to reach voters without the fear of being arrested as happened in Belarus. We have identified following patterns on use of AI in elections:

• **Resurrection of Popular Deceased Leaders:**
AI is increasingly used to create deepfake videos of deceased leaders, leveraging their popularity to evoke emotional responses from voters. However, these efforts primarily capitalize on sentiment and legacy rather than establishing genuine legitimacy for contemporary political messages.

• **Enhanced Campaign Outreach:**
Political parties are adopting AI to bolster campaign outreach and voter engagement. This includes real-time dissemination of news, interactive voter interactions via chatbots, and effective communication of party manifestos. AI's role in modernizing political communication strategies underscores its potential to reach a broader audience efficiently.

• **Creative Campaigning with AI:**
AI has revolutionized political campaigning by enabling the creation of highly personalized and creative content. Candidates are now using avatars and advanced strategies to connect with individual voters. Tools that enhance videos and audios are instrumental in making campaign messages more compelling and effective. This innovative approach helps political actors influence voters more powerfully than ever before.

• **Targeting Young Voters**: Political campaigns are increasingly targeting young voters by creating digital avatars of leaders, including deceased ones, that appeal to this demographic.

For instance, an Indonesian candidate developed an avatar resembling a teddy bear to attract a broader audience. The democratization of AI tools has enabled more creative and diverse content creation for campaigns, allowing campaigns to experiment and effectively engage with younger, tech-savvy voters through popular digital platforms.

- **Ethical Concerns and Misuse:**

The proliferation of deepfake technology poses ethical challenges, particularly when used to manipulate public figures and spread misleading content. Political leaders face scrutiny over their responsibility in curbing misinformation and maintaining electoral transparency, necessitating robust regulatory frameworks.

- **Technological Advancements and Policy Implications:**

The evolving landscape of AI tools, such as OpenAI's applications in crafting campaign strategies, highlights the intersection of technological advancement and regulatory oversight. As countries worldwide prepare for elections, lessons from AI's role in Indonesia serve as a pivotal influence on future policy frameworks and electoral practices.

- **Deepfakes and Misinformation:**

There have been instances where political parties and candidates have used deepfakes and other AI-generated misinformation to tarnish the reputations of their opponents. This tactic is particularly harmful to female candidates, who have been targeted with unethical and pornographic content. Such actions reflect a darker side of AI technology in electoral politics, where the potential for harm and manipulation is significant.

- **Basic Infrastructure for Elections:**

As numerous countries conduct elections, it's essential to consider their technological infrastructure. Not all nations have the necessary digital public infrastructure to effectively deploy AI in their electoral processes. This gap highlights the need for administrations to prioritize building robust infrastructure to support the use of AI and other advanced technologies in elections, ensuring fairness and efficiency.

- **The Changing Role of Social Media**

Social media has been a catalyst for information dissemination for decades. With the rise of AI-generated content, its role has become even more significant in spreading campaign messages to the masses. AI tools enable the creation of engaging and personalized content, enhancing the reach and impact of political campaigns through social media platforms.

The misuse of AI, notably through deepfake media, has been observed globally, from developed countries like the US to developing nations like Bangladesh and increased many folds. Case mentioned above, makes it evident that most deepfake videos were used by political opponents and often shared by high-profile politicians themselves. This begs the crucial question: what responsibility do political parties and candidates bear when employing AI in their campaigns? Can they share media without verifying its authenticity or deploy deepfake videos indiscriminately?

These deepfakes often garnered millions of impressions, amplifying their impact, yet assessing their exact influence remains challenging. Many are identifiable as AI-generated, but not universally so, particularly among less tech-savvy populations, individuals with limited technological literacy may overlook discrepancies like lip-sync issues in deepfake videos. Consequently, many people may unwittingly believe and be influenced by such misleading content, potentially affecting their voting choices. Furthermore, the absence of studies or tools to assess the impact of deepfakes and other AI-generated content across different societal segments complicates our understanding of AI's influence on electoral outcomes. AI is increasingly used to create deepfake videos of deceased leaders, leveraging their popularity to evoke emotional responses from voters. However, these efforts primarily capitalize on sentiment and legacy rather than establishing genuine legitimacy for contemporary political messages.

Social media platforms have emerged as a key player in the proliferation of AI-generated content, facilitated by a lack of regulatory architecture combined with unprecedented AI development. Currently, the primary methods available are content moderation and watermarking for AI-generated content. Social media platforms remove content but have been unable to contain its virality, requiring greater introspection. How can we stop the spread of content in a world where it moves seamlessly from individual users to mass media and encrypted messaging apps? This challenge requires a whole-of-society approach. Social media companies must do more to perform their duties. Several questions must be addressed when assigning accountability to social media platforms in this context.

In cases where the manipulated video was shared numerous times and went viral, posing several questions. First, is it not an indication for social media platforms to review and verify such content? Second, social media platforms this year made many promises to protect the sanctity of electoral processes in their platforms and signed Tech Accord but failed to do so. Third, while controlling and monitoring such activities in Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook is relatively easy, challenging when it comes to WhatsApp due to its one-to-one encryption. How to effectively monitor the spread of misinformation and AI-generated content meant to mislead voters?

According to Mozilla Foundation study, it was found that most of big tech's commitments and their resources and time are focused on developed countries, systemically ignoring and neglecting the developing countries, the global majority. It has led to significant harm in these countries. Specifically, in India, these platforms often lack sensitivities to culture, language complexities which results in proliferation of content violating community guidelines. Compliance reports appear superficial, lacking substantive action and recent downsizing of their content moderation teams portrays a worrying reality and blatant disregard for political and societal concerns and sensitivities.

Governments worldwide have responded to the threat of AI-generated content and misinformation on online platforms, but reactionary measures have often fallen short. Effective regulation requires a carefully calibrated approach to mitigate these challenges comprehensively.

CONCLUSION

Upon meticulous examination of all the incidents, it has been noted that a significant amount of deepfake content has been produced in this election year. AI has been useful this election season for a variety of objectives, including campaigning, endorsements, and the resurrection of historical figures to increase turnout and vote totals. This year, over 70 countries will be polled, and it's intriguing to observe the emergence of a new technology over ten years after social media.

AI platforms and technologies have been widely utilised to produce fake information that has deceived consumers. Various actors have dragged well-known leaders. Technology has been utilised by political parties and politicians to produce content that depicts these juxtapositions. Targeting female candidates' bodies with deepfake technology has damaged their reputations, which says volumes about the "end-use" of the technology.

It is that these forms of content have affected the way that candidates for office are reaching out to voters and have revolutionised campaigning by making it quicker and more efficient, even though it is difficult to quantify the exact impact they have had on individual or party campaigns or on overall electoral outcomes. In addition to providing ample space for the production and dissemination of false information, particularly deepfakes. This year's election has created a great deal of anxiety about AI taking over, which has dominated conversations among psephologists, academics, researchers, and administrators.

Governments across world are deliberating on possible ways to address the rapid dissemination of AI-generated content on social media platforms. Despite various measures taken by these governments, progress has been slow and often ineffective. Even social media platforms, despite releasing their ‘action-packed manifestos’ are not able to take charge when the information keeps spreading online with lightning-fast speed.

A robust mechanism that will regulate the use of this technology at all levels—the level at which it is developed, deployed, and used by creators to generate AI-based content—remains necessary. End users of social media platforms who share content mindlessly without verifying its authenticity also bear responsibility for curtailing the spread of deceptive AI-generated content aimed at misleading voters and users.

Through studies and research, a fuller understanding of how AI affects elections and related processes, as well as government, is essential. It is crucial to have a thorough conversation with all interested parties, including voters, political parties, candidates, and representatives, to reach an agreement on how AI as a technology may be used as effectively as feasible.

It is imperative that the report's readers comprehend the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) as a technology, its widespread influence across several industries, and its enduring nature. Understanding the extent of this technology and the potential effects it may have on elections as well as other parliamentary and policy-making processes requires a comprehensive approach.

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