

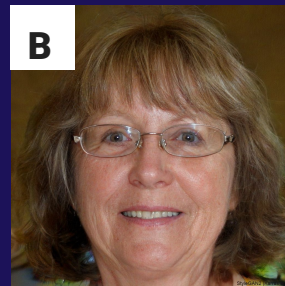


This Person Does Not Exist (15 min)

How do generative AI tools influence the way we see the world?

Which of these
faces are real?

Which of these
faces were made
with AI?



People are overconfident about spotting AI faces, study finds

Can you tell a real face from an AI-generated one?
[Take the UNSW AI Faces Demo Test.](#)



Adobe Stock image used in the original article from University of Sydney.



Why are psychologists interested in this research?

What are some of the implications of image-generation tools?



Extension Activities

How are the children in our communities already being impacted by image generation technologies?

1. Engage with additional psychological research about how human biases impact both the development of these tools and our responses to their outputs.
2. Explore news stories about the challenges families, schools, and governments are facing as they work to keep children safe from harmful applications of image generation technologies.



1a. AI Hyperrealism:

Why AI Faces Are Perceived as More Real Than Human Ones

Abstract: Recent evidence shows that AI-generated faces are now indistinguishable from human faces. However, algorithms are trained disproportionately on White faces, and thus White AI faces may appear especially realistic. In Experiment 1 (N = 124 adults), alongside our reanalysis of previously published data, we showed that White AI faces are judged as human more often than actual human faces—a phenomenon we term AI hyperrealism. Paradoxically, people who made the most errors in this task were the most confident (a Dunning-Kruger effect). In Experiment 2 (N = 610 adults), we used face-space theory and participant qualitative reports to identify key facial attributes that distinguish AI from human faces but were misinterpreted by participants, leading to AI hyperrealism. However, the attributes permitted high accuracy using machine learning. These findings illustrate how psychological theory can inform understanding of AI outputs and provide direction for debiasing AI algorithms, thereby promoting the ethical use of AI.

Miller, E. J., Steward, B. A., Witkower, Z., Sutherland, C. A. M., Krumhuber, E. G., & Dawel, A. (2023). AI Hyperrealism: Why AI Faces Are Perceived as More Real Than Human Ones. *Psychological Science*, 34(12), 1390-1403.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/09567976231207095>

1b. AI-generated images of familiar faces are indistinguishable from real photographs

Human users are now able to generate synthetic face images with artificial intelligence (AI) tools. Although indistinguishable from real photographs, these images have tended to feature fictional identities that do not exist in the real world. As a result, their use in applied contexts, including the spread of fake information, is similarly limited. Here, we investigated a new method for generating face images (via ChatGPT plus DALL·E) and its application to both fictional and real (in this case, celebrity) identities. Our results demonstrated that generated images of both fictional (Experiment 1) and celebrity identities (Experiment 2) could not be distinguished from real photographs. Further, providing additional real photographs for comparison during the task resulted in limited gains (Experiments 3 and 4). Finally, prior familiarity with celebrity faces produced only modest performance improvements. Therefore, new methods of detection should be explored as a matter of urgency since the latest 'off the shelf' AI tools can now generate face images of real people that are essentially undetectable as synthetic to most human observers.

Kramer, R. S. S., Jones, A. L., Fitousi, D., & Tree, J. J. (2025). AI-generated images of familiar faces are indistinguishable from real photographs. *Cognitive research: principles and implications*, 10(1), 70.

<https://doi.org/10.1186/s41235-025-00683-w>

2. Select A News Story to Engage With Further

How Deepfakes Tore a High School Apart

With AI, Illegal Forums Are Turning Photos of Children Into Abusive Content

Criminal gangs blackmailing schools with deepfake child sex abuse images at 'shocking' scale, experts say

From 404 Media:

After five teen girls were targeted by AI-generated child sexual abuse material, Radnor Township High School in Pennsylvania has become a case study in how schools and police around the country grapple with how to respond to deepfake crimes involving children.

From Nucleo / Funded by Pulitzer Center:

Images of young girls skating, playing soccer, and practicing archery are being pulled from social media and repurposed by criminal groups to create AI-generated child sexual abuse material (CSAM) in forums operating on the so-called dark web.

From The Independent UK:

Nearly half of headteachers have reported pupil images being used for harmful acts including blackmail and extortion, new research reveals



Which questions about image generation technologies do we want to keep exploring together as a learning community?