NEWS LESSON

Who Should Control a Copy of Your Face?



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Would you recognise a convincing fake video of yourself?
2. When is copying someone's voice funny, and when does it go too far?
3. Would you trust a surprising video before checking where it came from?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**impersonate**	☐	A	the way a person looks, or a picture that looks like them
2	**circulate**	☐	B	made up in order to deceive
3	**manipulate**	☐	C	to pass from person to person or place to place
4	**fabricated**	☐	D	ways of putting right a problem or harm
5	**advocates**	☐	E	made by people or machines, not natural
6	**likeness**	☐	F	to pretend to be another person, usually to deceive
7	**remedies**	☐	G	to control or change something in a clever, often dishonest way
8	**synthetic**	☐	H	people who publicly support an idea or cause

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

Denmark has proposed giving people more control over AI copies of their face and voice. The harder questions are how to enforce it and what to protect.

1 A video appears to show you saying something you never said. The face looks right. The voice sounds familiar. But no camera recorded it: someone made it with AI. Denmark's proposal to give people more control over copies of their face and voice starts with that unsettling possibility.

2 Denmark responded in October 2026 by announcing proposed legislation aimed at limiting the unauthorised distribution of realistic AI-generated reproductions of individuals' faces and voices. Its significance lies in treating a person's digital likeness as something deserving specific protection, rather than as an incidental by-product of being photographed or recorded in public. Whether the eventual text can match that ambition is another matter. The proposal should not, however, be described as a law already in force.

3 The potential harms extend well beyond embarrassing online jokes. Fabricated recordings can be used to impersonate people, circulate humiliating material, damage professional reputations or manipulate public debate at a decisive moment. Even once the falsehood has been exposed, the original impression often survives in screenshots, forwarded messages and private groups, where no correction ever reaches it. Damage of that kind is cumulative rather than dramatic, and it is correspondingly hard to measure or compensate.

4 Advocates of the Danish approach present control over one's likeness as a right rather than a privilege of the well-resourced. The argument carries particular force for private individuals, who seldom command the legal advice, publicity or platform contacts that allow a public figure to mount a rapid correction. For them, a single persuasive clip can reach a workplace or a family group long before anyone can intervene.

5 A workable legal framework must nevertheless distinguish harmful impersonation from legitimate expression. Satire, journalism, artistic adaptation and clearly identifiable fictional performances may all involve portraying real individuals without their direct participation. An excessively broad restriction risks becoming a convenient tool for suppressing criticism, particularly when powerful public figures are the ones complaining. Few legislative tasks are more delicate than drawing that line and making it hold.

6 Practical enforcement is equally challenging. Online content crosses borders almost instantly, while the technical systems designed to flag up manipulated media remain imperfect and are easily outpaced. Taking a video down from one platform achieves little if copies continue circulating elsewhere. Legal remedies may therefore need to be combined with better platform policies and a more sceptical public understanding of what digital evidence can and cannot prove.

7 The Danish initiative illustrates a genuine shift in the meaning of privacy. It is no longer merely a question of keeping existing personal information secret. It is also about preventing others from manufacturing a persuasive identity on somebody's behalf and setting it loose. As synthetic media becomes commonplace, societies will have to decide how much control individuals ought to retain over their own digital doubles, and who should bear the cost when that control fails. The answer will shape not only privacy law but the everyday business of believing what we see.

Sources: Reuters. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. Public figures are better placed than private individuals to correct a fake quickly. T F NG
2. The Danish proposal would send people who create deepfakes to prison. T F NG
3. A correction usually reaches everyone who saw the original fake. T F NG
4. The writer believes legal measures alone will be enough to deal with enforcement. T F NG
5. A fake can go on doing harm after it has been shown to be false. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

compensate **cumulative** **decisive** **exhaustive** **incidental** **intervene** **outpaced** **relinquish**

1. No single insult was serious, but the _____ effect of hundreds of them eventually wore her down.
2. Regulators complained that the rules had been _____ by the speed of technological change.
3. Teachers are reluctant to _____ in a quarrel unless someone is in danger.
4. The extra publicity was merely _____ ; the project's real purpose lay elsewhere.
5. No payment can fully _____ a family for the loss of a home.
6. The goal in the final minute proved _____ , because it settled the match.

6 Word forms

Use the word in brackets to make a word that fits the gap.

1. Even specialists struggled to confirm the _____ of the recording. (AUTHENTIC)
2. Critics warn that vague wording could lead to _____ enforcement, with only unpopular speakers punished. (SELECT)
3. As synthetic media improves, fakes may become _____ from genuine recordings. (DISTINGUISH)
4. A fine of that size seemed _____ to the harm the clip had actually caused. (PROPORTION)
5. A healthy _____ about viral videos is now part of being an informed citizen. (SCEPTIC)

7 Language focus: prepositions

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. At this level the preposition is often part of a formal chunk. Learn the whole phrase: tantamount to, fraught with, contingent on.

at for in of on to with

1. A ban that is too broad could be tantamount _____ censorship.
2. Any attempt to regulate satire is fraught _____ difficulty.
3. Whether the law succeeds is contingent _____ how well platforms cooperate.
4. A platform could be held liable _____ the harm caused by clips it failed to remove.
5. Anyone acting _____ breach of the order may be fined.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. Who should have to remove a fake: the person posting it or the platform?
2. Would a clear AI label make every fake video acceptable?
3. What would help ordinary people challenge a fake about them?

9 Role-play: a fake video of me

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the person in the video

A friend made a joke video of you using AI. Your voice and face look real and people have started sharing it. Ask the website manager to remove it today. Explain why it matters to you.

Student B · the website manager

You run a video website. The video may be a joke, and you don't want to limit free speech. Ask at least two questions. You can remove it, keep it, or add a clear label.

Useful phrases

I'd like you to remove this video today.
I never said that, and I didn't agree to it.
It's a joke, so is it really harmful?
Who made it, and did you give permission?
We could add a label saying it's AI.
I'm afraid I can't promise that, but I'll look into it.

Afterwards, tell the class: was the video removed, and was that a fair decision?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 F · 2 C · 3 G · 4 B · 5 H · 6 A · 7 D · 8 E

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 NG · 3 F · 4 F · 5 T

5 Vocabulary

1 cumulative · 2 outpaced · 3 intervene · 4 incidental · 5 compensate · 6 decisive

6 Word forms

1 authenticity · 2 selective · 3 indistinguishable · 4 disproportionate · 5 scepticism

7 Language focus

1 to · 2 with · 3 on · 4 for · 5 in

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