

MODULE 7

# Misinformation & Deepfakes

Truth in the AI Era

STUDY GUIDE

AI Ethics for Higher Education

EduPolicy.ai / ScholarBar Education LLC

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## 1 The Asymmetry

Fabrication is infinitely cheaper and faster than verification. AI generates thousands of unique false articles per hour, personalized to individual targets. One operator with a laptop replaces an entire propaganda department. **A lie takes seconds to generate; debunking takes hours.**

## 2 Deepfake Capabilities

Video deepfakes: \$25M fraud via deepfake CFO on video call. Voice cloning needs only 3-5 seconds of sample audio. AI image generators create photorealistic images from text (Pope Francis puffer jacket hoax). All tools are free, open-source, and require no expertise.

## 3 The Liar's Dividend

When deepfakes exist, ALL evidence becomes questionable. Real video can be dismissed as fabricated. Politicians have already dismissed genuine recordings as AI-generated. The mere existence of the technology provides plausible deniability. **The cost isn't just lies created — it's truths dismissed.**

## 4 Academic Integrity Threats

AI fabricates citations with real-sounding authors and journals (50%+ of AI academic citations are fake). AI generates realistic research datasets. Detection tools falsely flag genuine student work. Citation fabrication attacks the trust infrastructure that scholarship depends on.

## 5 Epistemic Crisis

When AI generates unlimited convincing false content, shared reality fractures. The 'dead internet theory': 50%+ of web traffic may be non-human. A society where nobody trusts anything can't hold elections, conduct trials, do science, or maintain public health.

## 6 Content Provenance (C2PA)

Cryptographic metadata embedded at creation recording origin, edits, and AI involvement — a chain of custody for digital media. Adopted by Adobe, Microsoft, BBC, Sony, Nikon. The most promising technical countermeasure.

## 7 Continued Influence Effect

Debunking never fully erases the original impression. Emotional first reactions create stronger memories than corrections. Prevention beats debunking every time.