

AI Deepfake Scams Are Here – Can You Spot the Fakes?

Imagine getting a frantic call from a loved one, their voice trembling as they plead for help. It sounds just like them—but what if it isn't? Scammers are now using AI-powered deepfake technology to impersonate family members, government officials, and even CEOs to steal money and personal information. These scams are more convincing than ever, making it crucial to know the warning signs before it's too late.

What Are AI Deepfake Scams?

Deepfake technology uses artificial intelligence to mimic a person's voice, making it nearly impossible to tell the difference between real and fake. Scammers can take a short clip from social media or a voicemail and create a completely fabricated call that sounds just like someone you trust. Common scams include:

- **“Grandparent scams”** – A caller pretends to be a grandchild in distress, begging for immediate financial help.
- **Fake government officials** – Scammers impersonate the IRS, law enforcement, or other agencies, demanding payment for a supposed fine or legal issue.
- **Business fraud** – Criminals clone the voice of a company's CEO or manager, instructing employees to transfer money or share sensitive data.

How to Protect Yourself

1. **Slow down and verify** – Scammers create urgency to pressure victims into quick decisions. Take a breath, hang up, and call the person directly.
2. **Use a “safe word”** – Set up a family code word for emergencies that only your loved ones would know.
3. **Limit social media sharing** – The less personal audio and video content online, the harder it is for scammers to clone your voice.
4. **Be skeptical of unusual requests** – If someone asks for money or personal info over the phone, double-check before acting. If the request feels urgent or emotional, take a step back and verify the situation through a trusted source, like calling the person directly or checking with a legitimate organization.

AI deepfake scams are unsettling, but by staying alert and thinking critically, you can outsmart the fraudsters. Scammers rely on fear, urgency, and our instinct to help those we care about—but taking a moment to pause and verify can make all the difference. Whether it's a panicked phone call from a “family member,” a stern warning from a “government official,” or an urgent request from a “company executive,” always question the source before taking action. Technology may be advancing, but so is our ability to recognize and stop these scams. By staying informed, sharing this knowledge with others, and adopting a “trust but verify” mindset, we can protect ourselves and our loved ones from becoming victims.