

Outlook

Who Are You Going to Believe?

I was recently emailed a link to video of a public figure I admire, side by side with someone I believe to be a perfect scoundrel. They were laughing and cavorting like good old friends. The implication of the mail was that “my guy” was clearly a bad fellow—just look at the company he keeps. And I must admit, I was totally taken in. Everything looked and sounded “real,” at least as far as I could tell. So disappointing.

Now happily I have developed the habit of reading the comments on YouTube posts and elsewhere, as they often reveal the true story behind what passes for news nowadays. And sure enough, the comments exposed that the video I had been sent was fake. A creation of artificial intelligence (AI) – from the picture-perfect image to the convincing tone of voice. All fake. Again, so disappointing.

Because if they can AI a scene like the one I saw, what can’t they do? I understand now that the chat versions of AI can answer any question in a convincing written form without any grammatical errors or tell-tale awkwardness. That movie makers can replace an actor’s voice with that of another—speaking a totally different language to boot—and no native speaker can tell the difference. That they can in fact turn a frog into a prince would not surprise me.

Once upon a time there was a popular expression, *who are you going to believe, me or your own two eyes?* I believe it was first voiced by one of the Marx Brothers. Back then of course it was a gag line. Nowadays it would be more of a philosophical riddle since we apparently can no longer trust our eyes and ears to tell us the truth.

And of course, it isn’t just the media who have turned to AI to trick and cheat our senses. The latest “Nigerian Prince” scam email I received was written in flawless English. So even those rascals have gotten on board with AI.

All of which is to say, that in these changing times it is necessary to be a little less trusting, a little more careful, a little more suspect of the things we see and hear. Does “Made in America” mean what you think it means? Does Amazon really have a refund check for you and is it in fact just one click away? Is that nice man on the phone really from Microsoft and does he have your best interests in mind?

Our subsea connector group here at Glenair always starts big meetings and presentations with a “safety moment,” a brief practical reminder on workplace safety. Taking a page from their book, may I remind everyone in our Glenair world to practice safety and caution when it comes to the things we see *with our own two eyes?*

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