Chapter 6
Shaping Consumer Perception Through Deepfake Marketing:
Ethics and Implications

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ABSTRACT

The advent of deepfake technology has introduced transformative possibilities in marketing, reshaping consumer perceptions and engagement through hyper-realistic digital content. This book chapter examines the ethical dimensions and potential implications of deepfake applications in marketing, specifically focusing on their power to shape consumer perception. With the ability to create synthetic

yet believable visual and audio representations, deepfakes have provided brands with innovative tools to captivate audiences and personalize experiences. However, this comes with ethical concerns, including risks of deception, manipulation, and consumer mistrust. This chapter explores both the opportunities and challenges posed by deepfake marketing, emphasizing the need for responsible practices to maintain transparency, authenticity, and consumer trust. It also discusses regulatory and policy considerations, proposing ethical frameworks to guide marketers in the responsible use of deepfake technology.

INTRODUCTION

Definition of Deepfake Marketing

Deepfake marketing leverages deepfake technology to create highly immersive and engaging marketing experiences through advanced storytelling techniques (Frank, 2022). Deepfake technology, rooted in deep learning, enables computers to perform tasks independently without explicit programming (Frank, 2022). This technology also incorporates computer vision, which allows machines to recognize and identify objects within images and videos (Frank, 2022). For instance, computer vision can utilize deep learning algorithms to detect whether an image contains a specific object, such as a dog (Frank, 2022). The process of creating deepfakes for marketing involves image synthesis, where one image is combined with another to produce a realistic composite (Frank, 2022). By utilizing these sophisticated technologies, marketers can create content that captivates audiences in novel and compelling ways, though they are still in the early stages of experimentation ((Frank, 2022).

Understanding Deepfakes in Consumer Marketing

Deepfake technology has become a captivating yet controversial force in the world of marketing. As the lines between reality and manipulation blur, the use of deepfakes in marketing raises significant ethical concerns. This technology enables the creation of synthetic media that makes it increasingly difficult to discern fact from fiction, presenting both new risks and opportunities for the advertising industry (Wright, 2023b). One striking example of the impact of deepfakes on consumer marketing occurred in late March 2023, when images of Pope Francis wearing a white Balenciaga puffer jacket went viral on social media. These images, which also showed the pontiff donning stylish sunglasses, gloves, slacks, and sneakers—attire not typically associated with the Catholic Church's highest office—shocked and amused the world. The virality of these deepfake images highlights the powerful

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