

Addressing Deepfakes

Harmful AI-Generated Content Between Criminal Law and Digital Regulation

This book offers a comprehensive legal analysis of the urgent challenges posed by deepfakes, focusing on the restrictive measures proposed or introduced to address their related harms. Readers will gain a clear understanding of the harms associated with deepfakes - especially in areas like non-consensual sexualised content and political disinformation - and how criminal and digital regulatory systems are attempting to respond. From a criminal law perspective, the book offers a dual-level critique. On the one hand, criminal law is invoked for its expressive and symbolic function, particularly in response to the discriminatory and gender-based harms often associated with deepfakes, as well as the broader need to prevent systemic risks to democratic society when it comes to electoral manipulation and freedom of thought. Here, criminal law would play a vital role in affirming societal condemnation of such conduct and in acknowledging the serious impact on victims. On the other hand, its use is increasingly entangled with emerging frameworks of digital regulation, taking on a more instrumental role in defining illegal content and reinforcing standards shaped primarily by private platforms and regulatory bodies. This dual function raises fundamental questions about the legitimacy and efficacy of using criminal law-the most coercive form of state power-for purposes that extend beyond its traditional scope. Additionally, the book explores regulatory measures aimed at controlling deepfakes, considered both as AI-generated content and as harmful online material. Discussions around content moderation, transparency duties-such as labelling and watermarking-and safety by design measures are gaining attention globally, with the European Union's Digital Services Act and AI Act leading the way. The book's primary goal is to bridge the two worlds of criminal law and digital regulation through a careful and critical analysis, making it a valuable resource for a broad audience.

This book addresses the legal challenges posed by deepfakes-highly deceptive content created using artificial intelligence-by examining how criminal law and other emerging regulatory measures are being used to address the harms generated by deepfakes.

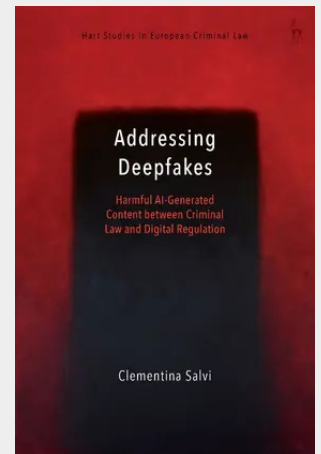
As AI-generated content becomes increasingly realistic and accessible, the risk of misuse grows more pressing. Hence this book firstly identifies and systematises the varied harms associated with deepfakes-from non-consensual pornography and online harassment to political disinformation and reputational damage.

Secondly, it examines the emergent role of criminal law in responding to these harms, highlighting both recent initiatives worldwide and structural limitations. While several jurisdictions are moving toward criminalising certain harmful uses of deepfakes, this book questions whether-and under what circumstances-criminal law is the most appropriate or effective tool. In particular, it examines two case studies: adult non-consensual intimate material and political disinformation.

Thirdly, it analyses emerging regulatory approaches to deepfakes as both AI-generated outputs and harmful online content. It focuses on transparency obligations and content moderation duties-particularly under the EU's Digital Services Act and AI Act-as alternative or complementary responses to criminal law.

Finally, it investigates the intersection between criminal law and digital regulation, arguing how criminal law remains caught between its symbolic role, often seen as the public's preferred solution, and its more instrumental role in defining illegal content and supporting effective regulation shaped by private platforms and providers.

This is the first book in the field that critically examine the challenges and legal responses to deepfakes across both criminal law and digital regulation, offering a comprehensive analysis of the restrictive legal measures used to address the harms generated by deepfakes, using non-consensual pornography and disinformation online as case



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