

A Historic AI Crime Wave Is Underway – Here's How You Can Protect Yourself

Global cybercrime is expected to cost more than \$10 trillion this year. Scams and online criminal activity have exploded through the use of artificial intelligence.

AI-enabled crimes are already up 456% since last year.

Email phishing attacks, identity theft, ransomware attacks, financial scams, and deepfake child pornography are all becoming more sophisticated and prevalent.

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Artificial intelligence has become the tool of choice for online criminals because it is erasing the line between the real and the fake. Google's newly announced video generator is about to flood the internet with AI-created clips that have the look of expensive films.

AI can take any video of someone and turn it into a very realistic deepfake that says or does anything the creator programs it to do.

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"I've never seen anything move faster in my lifetime than AI. Not the internet, not crypto, not anything else. And what we're doing is we're measuring this technology in days," says former federal prosecutor Ari Redbord, the global head of policy at TRM Labs, a blockchain intelligence company.

Redbord says, "Criminals are often early adopters of new transformative technologies. AI has removed the human

bottleneck from scams, from cybercrime and from other types of illicit activity.”

State actors such as China and North Korea are using AI against Americans to influence politics, social issues, and to steal.

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“North Korea just stole \$1.5 billion in one day to use for weapons proliferation and other destabilizing activity,” says Redbord. “They’re now using AI and data science to programmatically launder the funds from that hack.”

“Every major American adversary is experimenting with AI,” says Leah Siskind, an AI expert at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies.

“At the outbreak of the war between Ukraine and Russia, Russia created deep fakes of Ukrainian President Zelenskyy surrendering,” Siskind said.

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You can sometimes detect a deepfake if the voice and facial movements seem unnatural, however, online criminals are already working to fix these kinds of imperfections, according to cybersecurity expert Neal O’Farrell, CEO of DropVault, which offers cybersecurity solutions.

“So, if you’re looking for those as a way to tell the difference between deepfake and real, you’re probably setting a trap for yourself because the bad guys know those are the giveaways. So, they’re working very, very hard on fixing those telltales,” O’Farrell says.

How can you protect yourself from these scammers? O’Farrell

says if you receive a voice or video call from a friend or family member claiming to be in trouble and requesting money or personal information, you need to ask questions.

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