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Russia Targets Deepfakes Amid Surge in Phone Scams – Vedomosti

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Sergei Kiselev / Moskva News Agency

The Russian government is developing regulations on deepfake technology, the Vedomosti business daily reported Friday, citing an unidentified source familiar with the agenda.

The newspaper writes that the issue gained urgency this year amid a rise in elaborate phishing attacks, known as "fake boss scams," in which cybercriminals pose as their targets' employers in order to gain access to sensitive company information.

Deepfake software allows users to swap faces, voices and other characteristics to create digital forgeries that can hide their real identity.

Russia's Digital Development and Communications Ministry, together with the Interior Ministry and the state media watchdog Roskomnadzor have been tasked with developing deepfake regulations by Nov. 1, according to the publication.

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Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin ordered the Communications Ministry to report on the identification of AI-generated fakes by March 19.

Vedomosti said it confirmed the government’s plans to regulate deepfakes with an unnamed representative of the Communications Ministry. Roskomnadzor and the Interior Ministry did not respond to the newspaper's requests for comments.

Lawyers argued the legislation may be excessive given that deepfake technology is being used to commit crimes for which criminal punishment already exists, according to the newspaper.

But while current legislation bans the unauthorized use of a person’s image, it does not explicitly ban audio deepfakes, according to Stanislav Goncharov, a Russian cybersecurity expert.

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