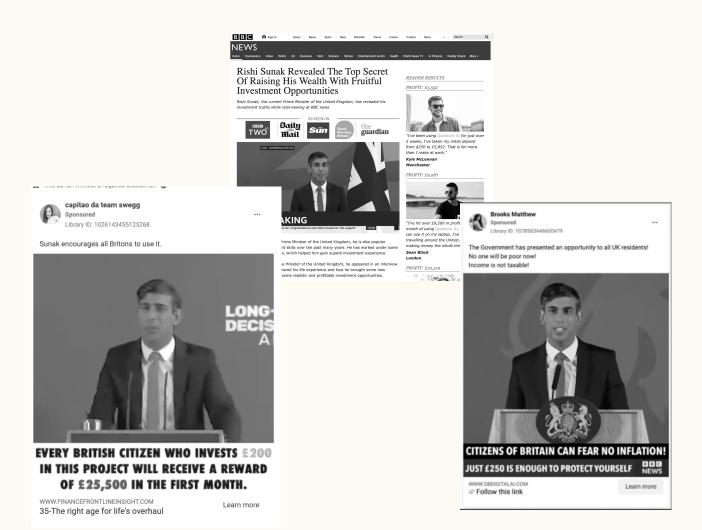


# OVER 100 DEEP-FAKED RISHI SUNAK ADS FOUND ON META'S ADVERTISING PLATFORM



FENIMOREHARPER.COM

#### REPORT

## Facebook Deep-Fake Advertisements of Rishi Sunak Reaching Thousands Every Day

#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

 Over 100 deep-fake video advertisements impersonating Prime
Minister Rishi Sunak were paid to be promoted on Meta's platform in the last month.

 These ads may have reached over 400,000 people, despite explicitly breaking several of Meta's ad policies.

 143 individual ads were uncovered and up to £12,929 has been spent on these advertisements in the last month alone (December 8th 2023 - January 8th 2024).

 Funding for the ads originates from 23 different countries including Turkey, Malaysia, the Philippines and the United States.

 It appears to be the first widespread paid promotion of deep-faked video of a UK political figure.

• This is likely to be **the first of many AI-enhanced misinformation campaigns** of 2024, raising questions about social media platform's ability to moderate election interference at scale.

#### Introduction

Over the last year, <u>Fenimore Harper has been monitoring advances in</u> <u>generative artificial intelligence</u> and how it enables misinformation.

Since the middle of 2023, we have observed dramatic advancements in voice cloning, generative video AI tools and 'deep-fakes'.

Misinformation is deliberately spread online for a variety of reasons. Sometimes it is for political gain, sometimes it is for social gain. Often, the source of misinformation is financially motivated. In 2016, <u>teenagers in Macedonia reached millions</u> with fake news during the US Presidential election in order to generate vast sums of advertising revenue. More recently, an Instagram page <u>caused searches</u> <u>for 'Rishi Sunak Trading Ban' to surge</u> on the day the Prime Minister first commented on timing for the general election.

In 2024, <u>Fenimore Harper</u> will be actively documenting examples of AI being used to deceive and manipulate the public. Today, we are reporting a deception campaign has been used to scam people out of their money by creating a fake endorsement from Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

To conclude, we suggest **actions to take** for organisations who are worried about AI-powered impersonations, in addition to a **guide on how to spot deep-fakes**.

#### 1. What do the ads say?

In the ad, a BBC Newsreader (resembling <u>Sarah Campbell</u>) appears to reading breaking news, opening with:

"People are outraged to learn that for several consecutive months Rishi Sunak has secretly been earning colossal sums from a project that was initially intended for ordinary citizens."



The advert then goes on to claim Elon Musk has "launched an application capable of autonomously conducting stock and market transactions." It then shows deep-faked footage of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, giving a 'comment.'

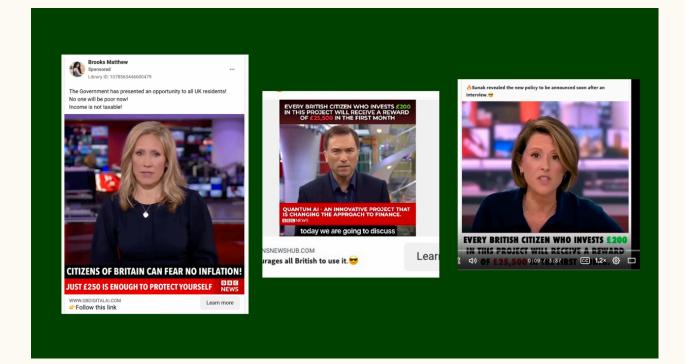
A 3 minute endorsement of the app follows, opening with: "I personally can vouch for the reliability of this investment platform and express gratitude to Elon Musk for choosing our country as the first one where this application will operate."



Full Video 1 (3min27s) View at fenimoreharper.com

Adverts in 2024 have skewed more towards eliciting emotional responses. The use of words such as "people are outraged" and the framing of deep-faked Sunak responding to allegations were not used prior to this year. This structure more closely replicates a breaking news bulletin and is likely to fool the vulnerable.

Previously, adverts we uncovered use a variety of newsreaders, such as Sophie Raworth and Ros Atkins. These focused on the app providing a "fix to inflation."



Deep-Faked BBC Newsreader Adverts Featuring Rishi Sunak

### 2. Who is behind it? And what are they trying to do?

These lead to a spoofed BBC News page promoting an scam investment platform called 'Quantum AI'.

A similar set of deep-faked advertisements from the same company were reported on <u>by Full Fact in October 2023</u>. These videos used deep-faked clips of other BBC presenters such as BBC World News presenter Matthew Amroliwala and financial journalist Sally Bundock, with additional deep-faked clips of Elon Musk.

<u>As explained by malwaretips.com</u>, 'Quantum AI' is a scam investment platform which pressures users into making deposits, generates a fake growing account balance, then does not allow the user to make withdrawals.



# Rishi Sunak Revealed The Top Secret Of Raising His Wealth With Fruitful Investment Opportunities

Rishi Sunak, the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, has revealed his investment truths while interviewing at BBC news



Rishi Sunak is the new Prime Minister of the United Kingdom; he is also popular because of his investment skills over the past many years. He has worked under some reputed investment firms, which helped him gain superb investment experience.

After becoming the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, he appeared in an interview at GB news, where he shared his life experience and how he brought some new changes while grabbing some realistic and profitable investment opportunities.

Fake BBC News Website Promoted by Adverts

Up until now, these malicious adverts have focused on celebrity endorsements from Elon Musk, <u>Martin Lewis</u> or Jeff Bezos. This recent batch of advert featuring Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is the first we have encountered which features a political figure front and centre.

### 3. How many are there and how many people are they from?

Between December 8th 2023 and January 8th 2023 (one month prior to this snap report) Fenimore Harper research has found <u>143 Individual</u> <u>advertisements</u> on Meta's platform.

#### READER RESULTS

PROFIT: £5,552



"I've been using Quantum AI for just over 2 weeks, I've taken my initial deposit from \$250 to £5,852. That is far more than I make at work." Kyle McLennan Manchester

PROFIT: £9,287



"I've hit over £9,200 in profit after just a month of using Quantum AI. Because I can use it on my laptop, I've been travelling around the United Kingdom and making money the whole time!" Sean Black

London

PROFIT: £22,219

They have been published by what appears to be a wide-spread network of Facebook pages. **75 different pages** published adverts which used Prime Minister Rishi Sunak to promote the same.

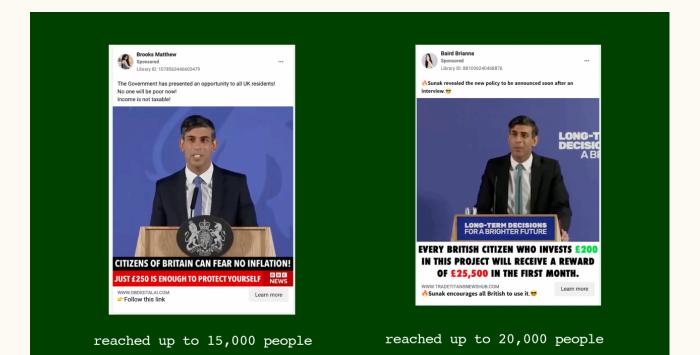
It is unclear whether the page owners are aware of the scam they are publishing. Many of the pages promoting the scam appear to be legitimate business, such as '<u>Plural Brother Filmes</u>', a Sao-Paulo based film production company, and '<u>Binimoy Printers</u>', printing company based in Bangladesh. This indicates that their Meta advertising credentials may have been compromised.

#### 4. How many people have they reached?

Meta does not provide specific numbers regarding how many people have been reached by political advertising, only estimated ranges.

According to their ranges, up to **462,000 people** may have been reached by this malicious advertising.

Most achieved only a couple of thousand 'impressions', however some stretched into tens of thousands. When taken as a whole, it adds up to a large amount of people reached by deep-faked endorsement from Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.



For context, according to Meta's figures, the <u>Prime Minister's</u> <u>Official Christmas Day 'Skit</u>' may have reached up to 250,000 with its paid advertising.

#### 5. Conclusion

This malicious advertising campaign illustrated a danger we warned about last year: the elections of 2024 are at risk of manipulation from a large quantity of high quality AI-generated falsehoods.

With the advent of cheap, easy-to-use voice and face cloning, it takes very little knowledge and expertise to use a person's likeness for malicious purposes.

Unfortunately, this problem is exacerbated by lax moderation policies on paid advertising. These adverts are against several of Facebook's advertising policies. However, very few of the ads we encountered appear to have been removed.

It is incredibly easy to promote false representations and endorsements on Meta's platform, potentially reaching several thousand people for less than a thousand pounds.

This discovery was made possible by <u>Meta's Ad Library</u>. Any ads covering issues, elections or politics are publicly available to view on this portal, in addition to their estimated ad spend and reach.This was an initiative started in the wake of the Cambridge Analytica Scandal of 2016.

However, most other platforms do not have this level of transparency. <u>Twitter's Ad Repository</u> only covers adverts served in the EU, after their political Ad Transparency initiative was shut down in 2019. TikTok does not have a similar publicly accessible ad transparency initiative.

As the UK general election draws nearer, we believe social media platforms must do more to identify and remove deep-faked impersonations of political figures.

#### Recommendations for organisations

- Invest in social media monitoring of public figures in relation to your organisation. Meta's ad library cannot be relied upon for monitoring. Several adverts containing political figures slipped under their radar.
- 2) Teach your organisation how to spot 'deep fakes'. While platforms themselves don't appear to be able identify deep-faked content, a human can discern real humans from bots quite well.
- 3) **Be mindful of AI-powered tools in your workflow.** Many popular platforms for campaigning, such as Adobe's Creative Suite or Canva, have AI built into their features. It's important to ensure these aren't used by people in your team to deceive the public. Make sure to define acceptable use within your teams.

### HOW TO SPOT A DEEP-FAKE

While the technology is advancing rapidly, there are several signs that a video has been generated with 'deep-fake' and voice cloning AI technology.

**Blurry Mouth:** Deepfakes often struggle to replicate the exact movements of the lips and tongue, leading to blurriness or unnatural movements. Look for inconsistencies in the mouth area. Pay attentior to the sync between lip movements and spoken words.

**Strange Pronunciation of Words:** AI-generated voices often don't quite match the speaker's natural speech patterns. Listen for odd phrasing, mispronunciations, or unusual cadence. Compare the voice and speaking style to other known recordings of the individual. Significant deviations in tone, pace, or pronunciation can be red

#### flags.

**Repetitive Movement:** AI algorithms might repeat certain movements unnaturally. This can manifest as repetitive blinking, head movements, or facial expressions that don't vary as much as they would in a real person. Observe the overall fluidity of movement. In you notice a mechanical or looping quality to gestures and facial expressions, this could indicate a deep-fake.

#### ABOUT FENIMORE HARPER

Fenimore Harper is a media insight and research firm. It was founded in 2021 by Marcus Beard, after working as a communications adviser at HM Treasury, Cabinet Office and 10 Downing Street.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Marcus led the UK Government's digital counter-misinformation strategy. Working internationally, he advised partners such as NATO, the G7 and the governments of Ukraine, Bulgaria and North Macedonia.

Marcus' writing and research has appeared in The Times, The Telegraph, The Independent, The Guardian, and Bloomberg. He has also provided political commentary for BBC News and Sky News.

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SPECIAL THANKS

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#### APPENDIX

#### Full List of 143 Adverts (download link at fenimoreharper.com)

#### Video 1 Transcript (January 2024)

0:00 People are outraged to learn that for several consecutive months Rishi Sunak has secretly been earning colossal sums from a project that was initially intended for ordinary citizens.

0:12 Elon Musk personally presented to all British citizens, this application capable of autonomously conducting stock market transactions with a positive outcome in 95% of cases without human intervention.

0:26 Elon plans to initiate a global fight against poverty and the first country where the application was supposed to operate was Britain.

0:33 We decided to seek a comment from Rishi Sunak and hear his version of what's happening.

[Fake Rishi Sunak]

I want to assure you that we simply decided to test how this application works on ourselves in order to avoid risk.

0:47 Now, I personally can vouch for the reliability of this investment platform and express gratitude to Elon Musk for choosing our country as the first one where this application will operate Yes indeed, I and my surroundings have decided have been earning through this application on our mobile phones for

1:05 several months but I assure you that was the plan all along. We needed to thoroughly test everything because we had no moral right to conduct testing on our citizens.

1:16 What if things didn't work out and people lost their money? Then the blame would fall on me and my team and I really didnt want that As for the application itself, I am pleased to announce that starting this month, access to it is literally open to all citizens of Britain.

1:33 All you need to do to work with it is register on the project's website providing your details Next, one of the technical department specialists will assist you in installing the application on your device regardless of whether it is a tablet, mobile phone or desktop computer Then you'll need to make

1:53 a deposit and the minimum entry threshold has been set at 200 as anything less wouldn't make sense The algorithm simply doesn't perform well with amounts lower than that but of course more is better if possible Once the funds are credited to your account the programs algorithm will start working autonomously

2:14 Executing profitable transactions on the stock market Using advanced artificial intelligence technologies without your direct involvement All that will be required from you is to set up the frequency of payouts to your bank card And you can receive payments either daily, weekly or monthly I personally

2:36 instructed not to tax the profit income because the project is social income in nature and aims to help people in Britain improve their financial well-being during a period of increasing inflation worldwide According to our tests, with an initial deposit of \$200 after a few days, returns ranged from

2:54 \$2,000 to \$5,000 Thus you can expect a monthly profit ranging from 25,000 to 50,000 However there is a catch in this honey barrel The project is designed for only 100,000 participants And the application rate is such that at this pace the enrolment will likely be closed permanently in just a week or

3:16 two Fortunately those participants who manage to join will continue to receive profits for a lifetime Therefore if you've long dreamed of making a change in your life I recommend not postponing it for tomorrow as such an opportunity will likely no longer be available tomorrow.

#### Video 2 Transcript (December 2023)

0:02 Rishi Sunak has announced the commencement of a campaign against inflation for the population. He stated that given the current circumstances, where maintaining the inflation rate is nearly impossible, the government has found a solution.

0:16 To ensure that ordinary people do not bear its impact Let's listen to his speech Given the current situation in the world, it is evident that the inflation rate is increasing at an alarming pace and this is particularly affecting the general population In simple terms, the cost of living is rising As

0:34 this phenomenon is not confined to our country but is a global issue it is not possible to entirely halt it However we have found a solution After six months of development and testing we are pleased to introduce a platform designed exclusively for the citizens of the United Kingdom It is built on artificial 0:53 intelligence and designed in a way that absolutely anyone can understand and use it Various private companies attempted something similar but their efforts were not particularly successful due to insufficient resources We have invested £2 billion and are confident to the tune of 200% that this platform

1:13 will bring substantial financial gains to the citizens of Britain You might be wondering how this works All complex processes are automated, providing you with a simple and user-friendly interface The program executes trades on the stock markets with an accuracy rate of 91% Yes, you heard that right,

1:32 91% In other words, you can invest £350 and by the end of the day have over £1000 in your account Since this platform is exclusively available to citizens of the United Kingdom we anticipate that the global community might express dissatisfaction and oppose it However until that point hundreds of thousands

1:52 of British citizens will secure a decent livelihood for themselves All you need to do is register on the platform's website and await a call from a manager who will assist you in getting started with your earnings As it is a government initiative it will be entirely free for British citizens and I personally

2:10 assure you that the income from this platform will not be taxed. Register on the website and seize your opportunity.