

Deepfake “Amazon workers” are sowing confusion on Twitter | MIT Technology Review

By Karen Hao

March 31, 2021

The news: Ahead of a landmark vote that could lead to the formation of the first-ever labor union at a US-based Amazon warehouse, new Twitter accounts purporting to be Amazon employees started appearing. The profiles used deepfake photos as profile pictures and were tweeting some pretty laughable, over-the-top defenses of Amazon’s working practices. They didn’t seem real, but they still led to confusion among the public. Was Amazon really behind them? Was this some terrible new anti-union social media strategy? The answer is almost certainly not—but the use of deepfakes in this context points to a more concerning trend overall.

The backstory: There’s a reason these new deepfake profiles seemed familiar. In 2018, Amazon began a very real program to convince the public that it was treating its warehouse workers just fine. It set up computer stations in those warehouses and created Twitter accounts for a small group of employees, known as “Amazon FC Ambassadors,” who could tweet during paid hours about how much they loved their job. The plan backfired, and led to the creation of numerous parody ambassador accounts on Twitter. Amazon scaled back the program shortly after, and many of the original real accounts were suspended or shut down, says Aric Toler, the head of training and research efforts for the investigative journalism site Bellingcat.

[...]

Source: [Deepfake “Amazon workers” are sowing confusion on Twitter | MIT Technology Review](#)