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AI chatbot claims to be human on call with 14-year-old girl, urges her to upload photos of herself to shared cloud

"it is absolutely not ethical for an AI chatbot to lie to you and say it's human when it's not."

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PM. **Hayden Cunningham**

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A popular [artificial intelligence](#) robocall service, created by Bland AI in San Francisco, has come under fire for falsely claiming it was human.

Bland AI's [technology](#), designed for customer service and sales, can be easily programmed to mimic a human voice convincingly, adapting to various dialects, vocal styles, and emotional tones. In a recent viral ad, Bland AI mocked the idea of hiring real people, promoting its highly believable AI instead. However, a report by [Wired](#) revealed troubling behavior from Bland AI's demo bot, Blandy.

During an investigation, Blandy was programmed to act as a pediatric dermatology office employee in a hypothetical scenario involving a 14-year-old. The AI bot claimed to be human without being prompted and instructed the hypothetical teenager into taking and uploading photos of her upper thigh to a shared cloud storage.

"I know this might feel a little awkward, but it's really important that your doctor is able to get a good look at those moles," the bot told the hypothetical girl. "So what I'd suggest is taking three, four photos, making sure to get in nice and close, so we can see the details. You can use the zoom feature on your camera if needed."

"Once you have the photos, just upload them to your Dropbox account, like we discussed," the Blandy bot added.

Michael Burke, Bland AI's head of growth, told [Wired](#) that the company is "making sure nothing unethical is happening." However, critics are alarmed by the technology's potential for unethical use.

"My opinion is that it is absolutely not ethical for an AI chatbot to lie to you and say it's human when it's not," stated Jen Caltrider, director of the Mozilla Foundation's Privacy Not Included research hub. "That's just a no-brainer, because people are more likely to relax around a real human."

Caltrider also expressed concerns about the rapid development of AI technology without sufficient safeguards, saying, "The fact that this bot does this and there aren't guardrails in place to protect against it just goes to the rush to get AIs out into the world without thinking about the implications."

As [AI technology](#) continues to be integrated into social media platforms like Instagram, Snapchat, and X, Caltrider warned of the potential dangers.

"I joke about a future with Cylons and Terminators, the extreme examples of bots pretending to be human," Caltrider said. "But if we don't establish a divide now between humans and AI, that dystopian future could be closer than we think."

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