

Elon Musk's X Faces EU Inquiry Over Sexualized AI Images Generated by Grok

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European Union regulators on Monday announced an investigation of Elon Musk's social media platform X after the authorities said that it had failed to stop the spread of [sexualized images generated by artificial intelligence](#).

The inquiry is likely to escalate a confrontation between Europe and the United States over [the regulation of online content](#). Mr. Musk and his allies in the Trump administration have sharply [criticized European Union internet regulations](#) as an attack on free speech and American companies.

The European authorities said that X was being investigated for possible violation of the Digital Services Act, alleging that the company had not properly addressed the "systemic risks" of integrating the A.I. chatbot Grok into its service. Starting in late December, sexually explicit images generated by Grok, including of children, [flooded the service](#), drawing worldwide criticism from victims and regulators.

Mr. Musk was facing mounting scrutiny in Europe even before this latest Grok controversy. Last month, X was fined 120 million euros, or about \$140 million, for violating Digital Services Act rules around deceptive design, advertising transparency and data sharing with outside researchers.

The European authorities have another investigation underway about X's recommender algorithm and policies for preventing the spread of illicit content.

“Nonconsensual sexual deepfakes of women and children are a violent, unacceptable form of degradation,” Henna Virkkunen, the European Commission executive vice president who oversees enforcement of the Digital Service Act, said in a statement. “We will determine whether X has met its legal obligations under the D.S.A., or whether it treated rights of European citizens — including those of women and children — as collateral damage of its service.”

The European Commission, the executive body for the 27-nation European Union, did not give a timeline for the investigation, but said that it had the authority to order X to make changes during the inquiry in the “absence of meaningful adjustments” to the service.

A spokeswoman for X referred to a previous statement the company had made about Grok. “We remain committed to making X a safe platform for everyone and continue to have zero tolerance for any forms of child sexual exploitation, nonconsensual nudity and unwanted sexual content,” the statement said.

The latest investigation illustrates a growing divide between the European Union and the United States over free speech and regulation of the internet. European officials argue that the lack of safeguards on platforms like X has allowed hate speech, misogyny and violent content to flourish online. Mr. Musk and the Trump administration have said efforts to force the companies to more proactively police the services [amounts to censorship](#).

Thomas Regnier, a spokesman for the European Commission, said at a news conference on Monday that the X investigation had “nothing to do with freedom of expression or with censorship.” He said regulators had identified content spreading on X that is illegal across the continent, including antisemitism, non-consensual deepfakes and child sexual abuse material.

“Happy or not, compliance is not an option,” he said.

The Digital Services Act, passed in 2022, requires companies to meaningfully address the spread of illegal content, the definition of which varies from country to country in the European Union. It can include material that targets individuals based on their race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality or religion.

European regulators said that the integration of Grok into X exposed “citizens in the E.U. to serious harm.” The British authorities are also investigating the issue.

The problems began last month. In response to simple user prompts on X, the chatbot automatically created and publicly posted manipulated photographs of real people, including children, to remove their clothes, put them in skimpy clothing or pose them in sexualized situations.

As criticism grew, X limited Grok's A.I. image creation to users who paid for premium features, which reduced the number of images. X later expanded those guardrails, saying that it would no longer allow anyone to prompt Grok's X account for "images of real people in revealing clothing such as bikinis."

European Union regulators said that they would take X's policy changes into account during the investigation.

Koba Ryckewaert contributed reporting from Brussels.

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