In the digital world, the movement of your mouth can be altered, the sound of your voice can be replicated, the content of your speech can be beautified, too. Your mouth is like a blank canvas that can be made to express literally anything. Is there anything you wouldn’t want people to think you said? Or that you would like to say but can’t? Now deepfake technology can change all of that.

In India in early 2020, a local politician created a deepfake video of himself that was distributed widely on WhatsApp, which made him seem like he was speaking a language he did not know.

Fun video filters on social media can already swap your face in a video with a cute animal or your favourite film star, or can transport your face into different scenarios. Today more than 95% of these types of deepfakes put people’s faces into unpleasant and compromising positions on other people’s bodies. Consider which real-life scenes you would not want to be transferred into, like parties, protests or even riots that you were never at.

Deepfake videos can make your body move in different ways – your arms, legs or your whole body can be seen doing things it normally can’t. This technology can be fun but it can also be used by others to make your body do things you never did.

Recent research from the University of California Berkeley shows how deep learning algorithms can transfer professional dancer’s moves onto the bodies of amateurs. This same technology is used by some advertising companies to produce work that is personalized for different users by presenting them with body types and movements aligned to their online preferences.

There seem to be no limits to how we can improve the way we present ourselves. In fact, we don’t have to be ourselves at all. Are you always sure that the person you are watching in a video is real?

Will we eventually get used to creating digital versions of ourselves from different periods of our lives as easily as we upload our DNA to ancestry services or create a realistic 3D-printed model? Will we be able to make ourselves digitally available forever?

Will we ever trust videos again?