Velvet Sundown and Other Fake Stuff

Here, we discuss fake AI-generated videos cluttering one of my favorite streaming sites.

I use ChatGPT, Google Gemini, and Claude almost every day. You can prompt them for answers, summaries, and musings on just about any topic. AI companies train these large language models[1] on the contents of the internet, and I usually find the results spot-on.

But AI can also fabricate dialog, images, and videos of things that doesn't exist. AI applications, such as DALL-E, Sora, and Luma, can create art without paint, videos without cameras, or dialogue without microphones (or people). I've never used any of these apps, so please don't ask me how they work.[2]

Using AI voice creation software, such as ElevenLabs or WellSaid, plus lyrics and music-generating programs like Suno or Beathoven.ai, you can create a song with a simple prompt, like "Write a song about life in the Southwest, sung by a four-member rock band. Create a picture of the band that I can post on YouTube (or Spotify, etc.)."

Velvet Sundown. A band that only exists in the world of AI.

This is how the fake band, Velvet Sundown, was born. You can hear one of their hits, "Dust on the Wind," on YouTube, Spotify, or Apple Music.

Other Fake Stuff

YouTube is one of my favorite sites for news (e.g., PBS NewsHour) and information (e.g., how to repair drywall). But YouTube also recommends videos with exaggerated headlines narrated by an AI-generated voice that sounds human but has little or no "vocal variety," mispronounces words, and droans on, covering things it's already explained. The video may feature "stock" images of random people in meetings, a machine, or an engineer-looking dude using a slide rule with an "ah-ha" expression on his face and a pocket protector. It may include pictures with gibberish and people with six fingers on each of their three hands.

A recent fake lecturer turned up on YouTube that was an AI-generated version of a well-known speaker. After a while, I noticed that her body language was rigid, her steely eyes focused on the camera, and her message seemed a bit "off." She looked convincing – until she didn't. Her three hands were also a clue.

Here are some telltale signs that the video you're watching was AI-generated:
1. Few subscribers to the YouTube channel.
2. Videos that use stock images of random people doing random things.
3. Pirated videos with added speckles to fool YouTube copyright detectors.
4. Videos with "closed captions" that you can't turn off.
5. Videos that constantly show the "Like and Subscribe" cartoon.

There's still lots of fascinating, valuable content on YouTube. Just be wary.

If you need help, just ask our tech team at: **https://engage.cmaprinceton.org/tech-help**.

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1   See January 2026 Computer Guru article, "Thoughts About AI."
2   They use something called a diffusion model. Once I figure out how they work, I'll write a Guru article about them. But don't hold your breath.