

Hoax video shows Michael Jackson alive

Broadcasters say they were testing misinformation on the internet

Last Updated: Tuesday, September 1, 2009 | 5:47 PM ET [Comments 15](#)[Recommend 29](#)

The Associated Press



A fake Michael Jackson is seen emerging from a coroner's van in this image from a hoax video posted on YouTube by German broadcaster RTL. (YouTube)

A hoax video purportedly showing Michael Jackson emerging from a coroner's van was an experiment aimed at showing how quickly misinformation and conspiracy theories can race across the internet, German broadcaster RTL said Tuesday.

The video was posted by RTL on YouTube for a single day a week ago and received 880,000 hits. The broadcaster has since removed the video from YouTube, but it has been picked up by other websites around the world.

"We wanted to show how easily users can be manipulated on the internet with hoax videos," spokesman Heike Schultz of Cologne-based RTL told The Associated Press.

"Therefore, we created this video of Michael Jackson being alive, even though everybody knows by now that he is dead — and the response was breathtaking."

Jackson died June 25 in Los Angeles.

The video, posted under an "anonymous source," shows a coroner's van entering what seems like a parking garage and the King of Pop getting out of the back with another person. The lighting is bad, the sound muffled and the footage appears amateurish.

"Unfortunately, many people believed it was true," Schultz said. "Even though we tried to create the video in a way that every normal user can see right away that it is a fake."

He said the video was shot near Cologne, "definitely not in the U.S." The van in the video had the word "CORONER" printed in English, suggesting it had been recorded in America.

RTL admitted to the hoax in an Aug. 26 report on its daily news show *Explosiv*.

Hoaxes and rumours commonly spread like wildfire on the internet. Videos of flying saucers and impossible stunts routinely are among the most-viewed on video-sharing sites, though purported evidence of the deceased being alive is less common than false rumours of someone's death.

The rise of Twitter and its real-time microblogging has quickened the pace. American actor Patrick Swayze, who is battling pancreatic cancer, had to declare that he is still alive this year after thousands of Twitter users spread news that he was dead. Actor Jeff Goldblum had to do the same.

The RTL spokesman said some Jackson fans were upset by the German broadcaster's actions.

"We didn't want to dishonour Michael Jackson, but we needed a strong name to get this experiment going," Schultz said. "Had we used Britney Spears, then the fans of Britney would have complained."

© The Canadian Press, 2009

THE CANADIAN PRESS 

- [Post a comment](#)
[15](#)Comments have been posted
- [Recommend this story](#)
[29](#)People have recommended this story

Story comments (14)

Sort: [Most recent](#) | [First to last](#) | [Agreed](#)

[FISHERMAN27](#) wrote:Posted 2009/09/01
at 5:27 PM ETJust sick!

- [6](#)
- [24](#)

[6](#)Agree [24](#)DisagreePolicy Report abuse

[Mind Guerrilla](#) wrote:Posted 2009/09/01
at 5:27 PM ETLast year we had Elvis at our fall festival. I hear this year we're getting Michael. I have no doubt, both will live on for eternity.

- [21](#)
- [4](#)

[21](#)Agree [4](#)DisagreePolicy Report abuse

[TeeBlack](#) wrote:Posted 2009/09/01

at 5:11 PM ETPeople still think (and have always thought) Elvis was still alive, and that was in a time with no internet let alone youtube.

- [20](#)
- [2](#)

[20](#)Agree [2](#)DisagreePolicy Report abuse

[jaskon109](#) wrote:Posted 2009/09/01

at 4:55 PM ETHow bout how fast misinformation can race across mainstream media... rofl fail

- [24](#)
- [6](#)

[24](#)Agree [6](#)DisagreePolicy Report abuse

[NoelKing](#) wrote:Posted 2009/09/01

at 4:51 PM ETStop it - the guy is dead and so should these constant updates.

- [26](#)
- [18](#)

[26](#) [Agree](#) [18](#) [Disagree](#) [Policy](#) [Report abuse](#)

- [Previous](#)
- [1](#)
- [2](#)
- [3](#)
- [Next](#)

Comments on this story are pre-moderated. Before they appear, comments are reviewed by moderators to ensure they meet our [submission guidelines](#).

Comments are **open** and welcome until Tuesday, September 08, 2009 at 11:59 p.m. ET.
We reserve the right to close comments before then.

Post your comment

Note: The CBC does not necessarily endorse any of the views posted. By submitting your comments, you acknowledge that CBC has the right to reproduce, broadcast and publicize those comments or any part thereof in any manner whatsoever. Please note that comments are pre-moderated/reviewed and published according to our [submission guidelines](#).

You must be logged in to leave a comment. [Log in](#) | [Sign up](#)

Comment:

Post [Submission policy](#)