

ACTO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

GOVERNANCE & GOOD GUIDANCE NOTES FOR MEMBERS

Subject: **Interim Statement of the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in websites and apps used in mental health**

Issue Date: **14 June 2018**

Last Update: **10 November 2018**

We would warmly welcome members sending contributions to this subject. These should be sent to info@ACTO-org.uk.

*The Board of Directors has put together these **Governance and Good Guidance Notes** in good faith for the benefit of ACTO members and the general public whom we serve. It has been prepared as honestly as it can be with the knowledge available. Nevertheless, the Board of Directors declines all responsibility for any inaccuracies and would encourage each reader to go and to their own research on this subject.*

Members of the AI working Group: Liz Ashall-Payne (ORCHA), Rachael Klug, Lisa Slingsby, Geoff Simons (PPH), Jan Stiff, Pip Weitz (Chair)

The Board of Directors has begun to consider the issue of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its role in mental health care, whether through apps for mental health or psychotherapy websites. This is a provisional statement pending a far larger piece of work including a literature search and consultation by the R & D Working Group.

The R & D Working Group is looking for members of ACTO with an interest in AI and associated matters to take part in a consultation process over the next year. If you're interested please contact Pip at rd@ACTO-org.uk.

As a summary we feel it is essential that all, therapists and clients, should be able to look at mental health websites and apps and be informed if they use AI in any way to engage with the user. Transparency must be at the heart of all we do and offer, both as therapists and in the tools we use or promote.

We recognise that AI has a very valuable role to play in the work we do. However, we have a concern over transparency of some "counselling or psychotherapy" sites as it is clear that those using online services and apps are completely unaware of the use of AI within these websites. For example a website that purports to offer therapy but is no more than a chatbot. We can see that a chatbot might be very helpful to some people and in some circumstances but we are sure that it is important for all those using a site to know when they are not "talking" to a person. Equally, we feel we should all be informed when an app uses your own data, as part of the information it is providing you.

Association for Counselling and Therapy Online

This is an interim statement as we will need to consult and explore the far reaches of mental health care and the use of AI before coming back to you with a more detailed statement. We will put any updates in the R & D area on the website. <https://acto-org.uk/rd-working-group/>

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