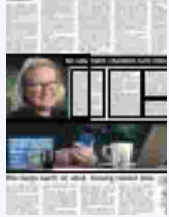


Critical US talks a win-n

30 OCT, 2023



'No judgment' chatbots turn therapist

West Australian, Perth



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'No judgment' chatbots turn therapist

There is a growing interest in harnessing the power of artificial intelligence and adopting it as a form of therapy, according to experts. Rapidly advancing AI technology have led to the creation of chatbots — like the well-known ChatGPT tool — that can simulate human conversations, opening up new opportunities in various fields including medicine.

Alex Jenkins, director of the WA Data Science Innovation Hub, said he had noticed more people using ChatGPT as a form of therapy, even though the technology was not designed for such uses.

“People are often reporting that they’re able to tell things to an AI and be more frank and honest than they would be as opposed to sitting

in front of a doctor because they know they’re not going to be judged,” Mr Jenkins said.

“For some people, this is a much easier experience . . . if we can somehow integrate and find a safe way to use AI as a way to augment therapy, that’s an interesting and unexpected use-case that has come out of ChatGPT.”

Melbourne-based Meg Price — the co-founder of AI-powered health coaching platform Noa Coach — said more people were willing to talk to AI about mental health and stress.

She pointed to research from US computer software company Oracle and mental health app Wysa, which showed nearly three in four people would rather speak to an AI than go to human resources in the

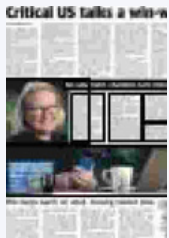
workplace to talk about such issues.

More than two in three would also rather talk to an AI than their GP about stress and mental health.

“A lot of it seems to come down to ‘the AI doesn’t judge me, I don’t have to even think about what I say or how I say it’ . . . and the AI is available 24/7,” Ms Price said.

“What does that say about our human skills to be able to really truly listen and empathise with someone if an AI is doing a better job?”

More than 1000 users across Australia, China, the UK, North America and the Netherlands have signed up on Noa Coach since it was launched in July. Ms Price, pictured, expects this number to grow at an exponential rate based on its marketing efforts.



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