

GPA

Global Physicology Alliance



LASALLECUNMUN
2026

“Digital Connections in the 21st Century: Do artificial assistants promote mental well-being, or are they a gateway to more problems?”



BACKGROUND GUIDE



Greetings delegates,

Welcome to LASALLECUNMUN 2026. We are delighted to see that you are interested in the committee and want to be part of this year's model. My name is Bruno Francisco Enriquez Peña, and I serve as the President of Global Psychology Alliance (GPA). We hope to inspire you to learn more about this controversial topic and also provide you with an enjoyable experience.

I am currently in my fifth semester of high school, in the field of Physics and Mathematics. I plan to study mechatronics engineering. My goal in the future is to design technological updates to contribute to society and earn a good income. I have a passion for art, and do not practice a specific hobby or sport, but I lean more towards martial arts. I will lead the committee, along with Jimena Marianela Glory Ruiz, from the Architectural and Construction Design department, as my Moderator, and Edgar Emiliano Ventura de León, from the Hygiene and Community Health department, as my conference officer. I have already been in two models, as a delegate and Conference Officer. This year will be my third participation, this time as president of GPA. When you are starting in MUN, the feeling can be confusing. You may be nervous about the day of the event, even if it is not your first time, because you do not really know what to expect at the debate. It isn't until the day is over that you realize it was not as terrifying as you imagined, but rather a new experience worth experiencing, because in the end, you realize how much you can learn. You never leave MUN without knowing more than before.

I am very excited to share this space with you. I hope you enjoy it and give it the opportunity it deserves. I also hope that you allow yourself to reflect on the issues addressed. Do not hold back and continue growing your interest in debate and in topics like this that need to be seen. If you give your all, you will do very well.

Hoping for the best results,

Bruno Enríquez

Global Psychology Alliance (GPA)

(email)

COMMITTEE DESCRIPTION

The Global Psychology Alliance takes action to apply psychological science to problems, as it is fundamental to all aspects of humanity at the individual, family, and societal levels. Psychologists and specialists play a crucial role in supporting global health and well-being within a human rights framework. The Alliance has created a global community of leaders in psychology through a dynamic and welcoming space. Members are committed to jointly and actively addressing global problems through the growth of psychological science to improve human well-being. Similarly, Alliance members recognize that global challenges require collaborative and global responses, and they understand that bringing together diverse experiences, knowledge, and perspectives strengthens the collective impact and thus achieves effective results.

Topic: “Digital Connections in the 21st Century: Do artificial assistants promote mental well-being or are they a gateway to more problems?”

INTRODUCTION

Recent innovations in technology have been crucial in how we have adapted our lifestyles. Artificial assistants were created with the expectation of being systems that would perform tasks requiring human intelligence. They can be seen as an imitation and improvement of our own abilities. Therefore, they facilitate tasks, improve productivity, and offer digital companionship. AI is increasingly used, thanks to its efficiency, it can adapt its knowledge based on your needs. However, the expansion of its presence in daily life has caused debate; studies show that we have even reached a level where the connection between humans and technology has become concerning.

Emotional dependence occurs when a person looks for stability in something or someone external. In the context of the committee's topic, it can refer to the interaction people have with an artificial support system, which over time they may prefer over human relationships. There are certain types of attitudes or characteristics that lead to this dependence, such as difficulty interacting with others, developing in an isolated environment, or having low self-esteem.

The committee is focused on determining whether the use of this technology is truly viable, considering the negative influence caused by its constant use, and evaluating whether the advancement of digital connections represents a positive step for human well-being.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Since the 18th century, with “The Engine” in Gulliver’s Travels, and later with Torres Quevedo’s The Chess Player, the wish to create automatic systems with their own intelligence appeared. In the mid-20th century, scientific progress made these ideas real, allowing the creation of learning systems. Towards the end of the 20th century, projects such as Yann LeCun’s improved visual recognition. By the 21st century, systems like Watson, AlexNet, AlphaGo, and GPT-3 were already developed between 2011 and 2020, showing the same or even greater ability than humans to process and understand information.

Between 2019 and 2022, the main intelligent systems arrived; these were the ones that made and changed artificial intelligence as we know it today. OpenAI presented GPT-2, a model that showed natural language processing, followed by GPT-3 and finally ChatGPT. Since then, many areas, such as education, medicine, and work, have been positively affected.

The use of conversational virtual agents started as interfaces that copy human conversations, a way for artificial intelligence to play a role in psychological medicine. They can show empathy through verbal and nonverbal language. Projects use these agents to give short motivational sessions to people with anxiety or depression. These technologies make psychological help possible from a distance, improve treatment follow-up, and reduce the stigma related to mental health problems.

The history of artificial intelligence shows a change from simple machines to systems able to interact with human emotions. The committee's challenge is to find a balance between the therapeutic use of artificial assistants and the ethical, privacy, and emotional risks they bring.

CURRENT SITUATION

Technology has become the cornerstone of the modern workplace, effectively shaping how we collaborate, manage space, and are productive. The automation of these virtual collaboration platforms has allowed us to discover a world where flexibility and digital literacy are paramount. Recently, we have seen large companies developing systems that can communicate with people, listen to their concerns, and offer emotional support, providing suggestions, motivation, and helping to manage stress or anxiety.

The WHO announced that the Global Health Initiative (GHID) will operate as a network and platform to support the implementation of the Global Strategy on Digital Health 2020-2025. This aims to promote the adoption of practices and resources for the transformation of these technological systems. The WHO defines mental health as a "state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being," which is currently under constant risk due to the fragile security protecting personal information. Sensitive data is collected, and if not properly protected, it can negatively impact the user. Furthermore, there is also the risk of emotional dependency. If a person develops a strong bond with a virtual assistant, this can affect their relationship with real therapists or other people in their life. In November 2021, UNESCO developed the first global standard on AI ethics: the "Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence." Its aim is to raise awareness about its use.

Currently, there are both benefits and risks associated with the use of digital therapies for mental health. On the one hand, these tools can enhance treatment, support patients, and complement traditional care, as is the case with approved apps for insomnia, cognitive behavioral therapy, or childhood ADHD. However, there is still little research on their adverse effects, and the potential psychological risks are not fully understood, especially when used without supervision. There are cases where the lack of adequate warnings can have the opposite effect to that intended, such as sleep apps that fail to inform users about the impact of blue light on sleep. To mitigate these risks, mechanisms such as the ISO/TS 82304-2 standard, risk assessment tools, and regulatory processes have been established in several countries, including accelerated programs for digital therapies.

These actions aim to ensure user safety, evaluate the effects before implementation, and prevent problems such as dependency or psychological harm resulting from the inappropriate use of artificial intelligence in healthcare.

Technological progress and our better understanding of brain function open new possibilities to help people with mental health problems. New tools are appearing to support diagnosis and treatment, both for help and for care. However, while these new devices are useful, they also bring new responsibilities that cannot be ignored. For example, the creation of an artificial conversational agent in psychiatry raises questions about the future of psychiatrists, with worries that they might be replaced. Some believe that the connection between a patient and a device cannot replace the relationship with a human therapist.

BOX OF REPRESENTATIONS

Albert Bandura
Brennan Spiegel
Carissa Véliz
Demis Hassabis
Elon Reeve Musk
Jorge Castelló Blasco
John Bowlby
Jonathan García-Allen
Jonathan Haidt
Joseph Weizenbaum
Joy Buolamwini
Maximilian Schrems
Pim Cuijpers
Samuel Harris Altman
Satya Narayana Nadella
Shoshana Zuboff
Stephan Herpertz
Susan M Johnson
Timnit Gebu
Yann André LeCun

GUIDE QUESTIONS

- I. Can AI replace parts of traditional therapy, or only support it?

- II. How does emotional dependency on digital systems start?
- III. What dangers appear when a person prefers a chatbot over real people?
- IV. What personal data do AI systems collect during emotional or mental-health conversations?
- V. What laws or international rules should be created to protect users?

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