

DISTINGUISHED LECTURER SERIES

The Use of AI in Psychology and Its Impact on the Research Field



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Kinesiology Hall, Room 101**

Abstract: Applications of artificial intelligence (AI) in psychology arise from two broad types of AI: (a) discriminative AI, which could be used to improve the understanding of psychological processes and the detection, prevention, and treatment of mental disorders; and (b) generative AI, which enables rich interactions with computer programs, virtual people, and virtual psychologists. The hype cycle of generative AI is at its peak, and it is important to understand how Large Language Models work and why they have been called 'stochastic parrots'. The relevance of different tools for researchers in psychology will be illustrated, as well as research implications on accuracy, social bias, content modulation according to clinical disorders, addictions, social presence and anthropomorphism.

Dr. Stéphane Bouchard held the Canada Research Chair in Clinical Cyberpsychology for 21 years and teaches cyberpsychology and psychotherapy at the Université du Québec en Outaouais. Dr. Bouchard's research is dedicated to both meaningful clinical applications of cyberpsychology and rigorous science in the treatment of anxiety and other mental disorders. Projects have included developing virtual environments for the treatment of complex anxiety disorders and pathological gambling, conducting randomised control trials on the efficacy of in virtuo exposure for mental disorders, and conducting experimental studies to understand why virtual reality is an effective treatment tool. Another prolific area of expertise is telepsychotherapy, where he conducts randomised control trials and process studies on the efficacy of delivering cognitive-behavioural therapy via videoconferencing. He is now incorporating discriminative and generative artificial intelligence tools into his work, as well as exploring issues of cyber security and digital trust.