

Three challenges and a puzzle: A philosophical appraisal of therapeutic chatbots

Abstract:

Recent years brought a rapid increase in the popularity of therapeutic chatbots, i.e., conversational systems designed to support or even autonomously deliver psychotherapy. We can look at this phenomenon from multiple perspectives. Probably the most common one is the practical perspective represented by chatbot designers and empirical mental health researchers. It focuses on two questions: "Are therapeutic chatbots effective?" and "How can we improve them?" Without undermining the validity of the practical perspective, in my talk, I will offer a more theoretical or philosophical appraisal of this phenomenon.