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## **MODERN TECHNOLOGIES IN BIBLIOTHERAPY**

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### **Abstract**

The contribution offers an overview of the potential applications of contemporary technologies within the context of therapeutic-pedagogical bibliotherapy. This text is intended for experts and students of helping professions who are interested in the utilisation of bibliotherapy and imagination as tools for the mobilisation of an individual's intrinsic healing capabilities, with a view to supporting their health and well-being.

**Key words:** literary art, modern technologies, bibliotherapy, therapeutic pedagogy

## **СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ ТЕХНОЛОГИИ В БИБЛИОТЕРАПИИ**

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### **Аннотация**

В статье представлен обзор потенциальных возможностей применения современных технологий в области лечебно-педагогической библиотерапии. Данный материал предназначен для экспертов в области терапевтической педагогики и студентов, которые интересуются использованием библиотерапии и воображения в качестве инструментов мобилизации внутренних ресурсов исцеления человека для поддержания его здоровья и благополучия.

**Ключевые слова:** литературное искусство, современные технологии, библиотерапия, терапевтическая педагогика

### **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid advancement of information technology has also created new possibilities for the implementation of bibliotherapy with a therapeutic-pedagogical orientation. While the therapeutic relationship remains the cornerstone of therapy and still nothing else compares to personal contact, information

technology offers new avenues for not only establishing this relationship but also for implementing the therapy itself.

It is important to recognise that literary works, like modern technologies, are always an image of their creator. Although mostly never a complete one. The individual responsible for the creation of such works incorporates aspects of their own identity into them, and as a user, seeks to identify with the characters they encounter. These natural processes of (self-)reflection and projection can be actualised in a number of ways. In essence, the central figure in both modern technology and the literary works employed in bibliotherapy is the human being, although sometimes in a hidden form.

Information technology, like literature, represents an extension of human capabilities in terms of space and time. However, as such, they cannot completely replace humans. It is human who further transmit their thoughts, ideas, feelings, and so forth in the form of images through both literary works and modern communication technologies... and this is also one of the ways in which he/she transcend and transform themselves. This is also how they should be viewed in the context of bibliotherapy, which is oriented towards therapeutic goals and encompasses a range of objectives, including therapeutic, educational, developmental, preventive and counselling aims. The potential in question is one that is within the individual's control, and it is therefore up to the individual to decide how to proceed. While respecting the natural laws of the natural world and the application of information technology, this can ultimately prove beneficial to all parties involved, including patients or clients, students, as well as therapists, and ultimately the entire healthcare system.

## **TELEMEDICINE AND BIBLIOTHERAPY**

In the context of the societal-wide regulations implemented to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus, which entailed considerable limitations on social interaction, there was a notable acceleration in the development of telemedicine. The advantages and disadvantages of telemedicine, which are now generally well documented, also apply to individually or group-led bibliotherapy. One of the key benefits of online consultations is that they can be a valuable source of support for individuals with social phobia or those who are unable to leave their homes. Telemedicine serves to diminish the physical distance between the place of residence of the individual and the place of work of the health professional. It also serves to reduce the time spent travelling, as well as the waiting time for care, or

waiting in a queue for a service that is understaffed.

To illustrate, the recommended diagnostic and therapeutic procedures with a lower level of therapeutic contact intensity, adopted for the field of mental health in Slovakia, [1] posit that digital psychological interventions eliminate the social stigma associated with seeking help for mental health problems exclusively through traditional face-to-face contact. Digital psychological interventions offer universal accessibility, flexibility of treatment, a notably shortened time to treatment initiation, and significantly reduced costs associated with travel to the treatment site.

In their study, Polák et al. [1] cite the work of foreign authors Andersson & Titov (2014), Cuijpers, van Straten, & Andersson (2008), and Lin et al. (2018) to support their assertion that *improving access to digitised therapeutic education programs* can prevent the onset of clinical mental health episodes in underserved resident populations suffering from mental disorders. This should ultimately lead to a reduction in disparities in access to professional support, which is particularly pertinent for populations residing in non-urban areas.

This paves the way for the development of online guided individual and group bibliotherapy, combined forms, and mass bibliotherapy. The implementation of mass bibliotherapy was previously rather rare [2, 3] due to the necessity of collaboration with mass media, which historically encompassed primarily radio and television. However, the advent of novel technology, particularly the Internet, has facilitated the expansion of bibliotherapy accessibility, enabling the delivery of individual, group, and mass sessions to a more diverse demographic than ever before.

Conversely, this also signifies increasing demands for advanced technical abilities and expertise on both the patient and therapist sides, in addition to an intensification in the demands on the quality of their communication in the absence or scarcity of crucial information regarding certain pivotal elements of human communication, such as posture, gesticulation, and facial expressions. These elements are frequently accessible in three-dimensional physical communication within the context of face-to-face interactions.

Therapeutic work in the online domain, utilising two-dimensional (2D) visualisation rather than the conventional three-dimensional (3D) format, may potentially impose sometimes heightened demands on the practitioner's prior experience in conventional face-to-face communication. Information that would otherwise be readily apparent in face-to-face communication can only be discerned

in this mode of 2D communication when the therapist demonstrates a high degree of mindfulness. However, it may also be the case that the client/patient may occasionally feel more at liberty to discuss their issues when they require a greater degree of anonymity. Furthermore, this presents a significant limitation in the range of diagnostic options available. And, last but not least, it necessitates the implementation of robust safeguards to protect individuals and their personal data within the digital domain.

## COMPUTER-GENERATED LITERATURE

If we consider the potential benefits of modern technologies for bibliotherapy, *which involves the creation of healing images, feelings and experiences primarily through the use of artistic language and literary works*, and assuming that both the patient and the practitioner possess the requisite technical capabilities, we can identify next of promising avenues for exploration frxmpl thanks to possibility of creation so-called computer-generated literature [4].

To illustrate, in the domain of creative writing, one may compose poems, texts, songs, or life stories, among other forms, *not merely by hand or in the Word program*, but by leveraging *the words and sentences generated by artificial intelligence (AI)*.

It can be observed that comparable opportunities for artists are emerging in a number of different fields, including literature, where *large language databases or large databases of the content of literary works are used*. Furthermore, these opportunities are also evident in music and the visual arts, which collectively are referred to as digital arts. In this process, *the individual has discerned the "artistic meaning" inherent in the generated words and sentences*, subsequently creating the final content of the poem, text, or song, etc.

The example of the winner of the 2022 Colorado State Fair's annual fine art competition in the digital art category, Jason Allien, illustrates the process of creating a winning image. Allien's work, entitled Théâtre D'opéra Spatial, involved *entering words into a computer program* then followed subsequently into graphic programs. However it is still in valid, the final representation of the masterpiece, which is a highly intricate and detailed piece of art, required a significant amount of additional personal work by the artist [5].

The primary distinction between humans and machines is still **creativity**, defined as the capacity to produce original and distinctive products, *including the ability to create one's own life*.

## ENHANCING CREATIVITY AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF BIBLIOTHERAPY

In a recent research, when scientists measured the impact of AI on a fundamental human behaviour – the ability to be creative — they found [6] that for *people with a low Creativity Index or blocks at the beginning of writing*, AI helped improve ideas and texts, and encouraged the beginning of writing, *but there was less variability, originality and uniqueness* — authors were «more like others» compared to texts from other writers who also used AI. On the other hand, *people with a high creativity index* did not benefit from using AI. It didn't increase the quality of their writing = the writing was similarly interesting, original and usable whether they used AI or not.

It is the same in bibliotherapy. AI, Virtual Reality (VR) and other similar tools/programs can help overcome blocks and support production of new ideas in case of low creativity, show ways of solving situations, are good for possible training - simulating situations into a more positive/pleasant way.

SUBSEQUENTLY, additional measures are required where the person is supported/guided by the therapist to act by: (1) selecting the most enjoyable and personally meaningful version, (2) establishing a connection and transferring this new experience or knowledge into tangible, real-world actions, and (3) repetition, reinforcement, and fixation to cultivate and sustain new habits that promote independent health and well-being, as well as harmonious coexistence with others. As stated by Mitašíková [7], observation of the client together with recording and analysis of the observed is a key tool of procedural diagnostics in therapeutic pedagogy.

It is feasible with contemporary modern technologies, but is not impossible without them, mainly when we wish to cultivate by implementing a bibliotherapeutically oriented therapeutic pedagogical programme, *self-awareness, emotional intelligence, empathy, emotional expression, relationships, resilience, and collaborative skills*.

As is already common practice in bibliotherapy, a variety of formats can be used, including printed books, *electronic* (e-books), *audiobooks* and *audio recordings*, to select and construct the most pleasant/the most beautiful, personalised version of life, for example through the process of 'life script writing' [8], and to repeat, refine and maintain = create and reinforce new habits.

It is possible to create a variety of digital content, including comics, blogs, electronic personal, family, or community newsletters, web pages,

written/audio/video electronic reader's diaries or therapeutic records [9], electronic/audio/video therapeutic correspondence [10], virtual exhibitions, book exhibitions, virtual literary competitions, and more.

The utilisation of experiences with AI and VR in professional bibliotherapy guidance can serve as a source of inspiration for the reframing of one's own life situation in a positive manner, as well as the creation of a healing life plan. In bibliotherapy, avatars from computer games or 3D models, such as heroes from literary works or films (also known as "movietherapy" or "cinematherapy"), can be employed to assist the individual in active handling with potential life contents, and virtual training of situations to prepare competencies for real-life situations and subsequently apply them in physical reality [11].

## CONCLUSION

In our article, we highlighted that while contemporary technologies facilitate novel avenues for the advancement of bibliotherapy, the human element remains a pivotal factor in this process, even in the context of evolving technological landscapes. In the future, new research topics may emerge as areas of interest, such as the impact of modern technologies on the functioning of the human body and brain in the context of modern bibliotherapy, and strategies for enhancing healthy living and well-being. It is of the utmost importance to maintain supportive personal contact, relationships and trust during therapy, both now and in the future.

Shared content is equally important too. It is essential to maintain honesty and kindness, both towards oneself and towards others. In the context of sharing therapeutic successes electronically, it is particularly important to focus on the dissemination of information that is potentially supportive for health, happiness joy, and wellbeing of others/readers [12]. Perhaps today now more than ever.

As Sandra Epstein said [13], homo technologicus, as human in close connection with technologies, can only maintain optimal health and resilience through a conscious, *holistic, and systemic approach to integrating one's body into both the natural and cyber worlds, in a balanced manner*, with respect and responsibility for one's own life and the well-being of others too.

## ADDITIONAL

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