CSWE **ACADEMIC** RESOURCE LIBRARY

CSWE Commission on Educational Policy Task Force on Technology and Social Work Education Report

Council on Social Work Education

AUTHORS AND TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Clara Berridge, PhD, MSW—University of Washington
John Bricout, PhD, MSW—University of Texas at San Antonio
Lauri Goldkind, PhD, MSW—Fordham University
Tom Gregoire, PhD, MSW—Ohio State University
Barbara Hiltz, MEd, LMSW—University of Michigan
Lauren B. McInroy, PhD, MSW—Ohio State University
Melanie O'Neil, PhD, MSW—Arizona State University
Desmond Upton Patton, PhD, MSW—University of Pennsylvania
Emily Putnam-Hornstein, PhD, MSW—University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Maria Y. Rodriguez, PhD, MSW—University of Buffalo
Mark Trahan, PhD, LCSW—Appalachian State University
Bryan Victor, PhD, MSW—Wayne State University

Shirley Gatenio Gabel, PhD
Chair, CSWE Commission on Educational Policy
Fordham University

Megan Fujita, PhD, MSW
Vice President of Education
Council on Social Work Education

CSWE ACADEMIC RESOURCE LIBRARY

This publication is part of the CSWE Academic Resource Library, a growing collection of academic materials supporting innovation in social work education and higher education. Megan Fujita, PhD, MSW, is the CSWE Academic Resource Library series editor.

ISBN: 978-0-87293-224-1 (PDF)

CSWE Press
333 John Carlyle Street, Suite 400
Alexandria, VA 22314
cswe.org

Contents

Technology is central to social work practice as digital platforms increasingly mediate human interactions and service delivery. In 2024–25, leading social work researchers and educators with recognized expertise in diverse aspects of technology were convened to advise the Council on Social Work Education's (CSWE's) Commission on Educational Policy (COEP). The task force was asked to broadly consider the effects of technology on social work education and practice and, more specifically, recommend changes for CSWE's 2029 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS). The task force explored the types of knowledge and skills that social work educators should address to prepare social workers to practice competently and competitively in the future.

The task force created three work groups. The first group reviewed the digital knowledge and skills social workers need; the second group addressed how technology was changing social work's methods of learning and practice; and the third group considered how technology, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), would affect social work goals. Each work group considered our knowledge of the topic to date, why addressing the topic was important to social work education, and the challenges the topic presented to social work education and practice. Each group ended with recommendations to COEP for the 2029 EPAS.

This report introduces CSWE competency-based education and the importance of technology, as well as skills and knowledge needed in social work education and practice. Additionally, it presents task force work group papers on the aforementioned areas to develop digital skills to practice competently in the future, and concludes with challenges in integrating technology into social work education and practice, along with recommendations to COEP for the 2029 EPAS.

Competency-Based Social Work Education

In 2008, CSWE adopted a competency-based education framework for its educational policy and accreditation standards. Competency-based education is an outcome-oriented approach to curriculum design. The goal is to ensure that students can demonstrate the integration and application of the competencies in practice. In EPAS, competence consists of nine interrelated competencies and component behaviors, which include multiple dimensions: knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes.

Competency-based education rests on a shared view of the nature of competence in professional practice. Social work competence is the ability to integrate and apply social work knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes to practice in a culturally responsive, purposeful, intentional, and professional manner to promote human and community well-being.

The EPAS recognizes a holistic view of competence: that the demonstration of competence is informed by multiple dimensions of competence, including the social worker's critical thinking, affective reactions, and exercise of judgment regarding unique practice situations. Overall professional competence is multidimensional and composed of interrelated competencies. An individual social worker's competence is developmental and dynamic, changing over time in relation to continuous learning (CSWE, 2022, p. 7). Building off established competencies, social work program developers create substantive content, pedagogical methods, and educational activities that enable students to demonstrate these competencies effectively.

The Importance of Technology in Social Work Practice and Education

The task force agreed that technology will continue to transform social work education and practice. Telehealth, mobile mental health apps, social media, virtual reality training and applications, AI, community applications used to obtain resources, and data analytics are reshaping assessment, intervention, and advocacy. Social workers must develop dynamic knowledge and skills to navigate, evaluate, and ethically use digital tools.

The task force raised concerns that the voice of social work was not adequately part of technology adoption, but should be. Social workers help clients navigate and adopt digital tools while addressing privacy concerns and accessibility in the digital age. For example, the rise of digital mental health apps creates new responsibilities, requiring social workers to assess their appropriateness for different populations, their effectiveness and risks, and the equities and inequities fostered by reliance on them. Social workers must engage in national policy discussions on technology's impact on communities. The profession must consider unintended consequences, such as AI-driven discrimination and digital exclusion.

Skills and Knowledge Needed in Social Work

Given the evolving technology landscape, the work groups identified three main areas for social workers to develop digital skills to practice competently going forward: foundational digital skills, practice-integration competencies, and technology leadership considerations.

FOUNDATIONAL DIGITAL SKILLS

- **Digital Literacy:** Navigating and using digital tools in professional contexts, troubleshooting technical issues, and staying current with emerging technologies
- **Information Literacy:** Identifying credible digital sources, recognizing algorithmic bias, and combating misinformation
- **Technology-Informed Professional Identity:** Integrating technology into social work practice while upholding ethical standards and values

PRACTICE-INTEGRATION COMPETENCIES

- **Advocacy:** Using social media, digital storytelling, and online tools to advance social justice and client empowerment
- **Service Coordination:** Mastering digital case management systems and referral platforms for seamless service delivery
- **Technology-Mediated Service Delivery:** Conducting client assessments and interventions online while maintaining ethical boundaries
- **Documentation:** Effectively using electronic case management systems and leveraging data analytics for better service outcomes

TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP CONSIDERATIONS

- **Infrastructure Development:** Evaluating and supporting the adoption of new technology in social service organizations
- **Strategic Technology Planning:** Anticipating emerging technologies and their implications for practice and policy

After evaluating the literature and practice applications, the task force has recommended the following.

Recommendations

- Social work education should prepare students for a future where technology is inevitable. Technology has a great deal of potential to shape social work practice in the future, and by being more involved in its creation, application, and use, social workers will be more empowered and receptive to the integration of technology in social work.
- AI has the potential to bring us together or harm and exclude communities. Social workers must actively participate in shaping AI policy to protect marginalized communities.
- CSWE should take the lead in defining digital competencies for the profession by prominently including technology in the 2029 EPAS. It should be included as a dedicated competency or integrated into other competencies. Field education standards should require students to have opportunities to develop and demonstrate technology competencies in practice settings.
- CSWE should work with other social work organizations on the role technology plays and could play in social work practice.
- Social workers should invest in opportunities to work with technology entities and find opportunities for students to be part of those entities.

Digital Knowledge and Skills Needed by Social Workers

Barbara Hiltz, Desmond Upton Patton, Emily Putnam-Hornstein, and Bryan Victor

The integration of technology into social work practice and education represents one of the most significant transformations facing the profession in the 21st century. Indeed, experts have suggested that social work is among the occupations most likely to be affected by recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI), among other technology developments (Felten et al., 2023). As digital tools and platforms increasingly mediate human experiences and service delivery (Elsaesser et al., 2017; Hua et al., 2024; McNally et al., 2024), social workers must develop new competencies to effectively serve clients, communities, and organizations in technology-enriched environments.

From telehealth platforms and mobile mental health apps to data analytics and AI tools, technological innovations are reshaping how social workers engage in assessment, intervention, and advocacy (Jackson & Malone, 2024). This rapid evolution demands a thoughtful examination of how social work education can prepare practitioners who are both technically competent and ethically grounded in their use of emerging technologies.

In this section, we summarize existing knowledge related to technology and social work and provide a set of recommendations for consideration by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Commission on Educational Policy (COEP). We begin by considering the importance of technology within the current social work practice landscape, drawing attention to the proliferation of digital mental health tools and the increasing need for social workers to guide both clients and organizations in technology adoption. We then outline a set of core technological competencies we think are required for effective practice, including foundational digital skills, practice-oriented capabilities, and technology leadership. Following this, we examine key challenges facing social work education and practice in this area. We conclude with specific recommendations for COEP regarding the integration of technology competencies into the 2029 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS), considering both dedicated competency and infusion approaches.

Importance of Technology in Social Work Practice

The centrality of technology in contemporary social work stems from the increasingly digitized environments in which clients and communities exist. Social work practice now occurs in contexts where technology mediates daily interactions, access to resources, and the delivery of essential services (Hodge et al., 2017). This technological saturation of social environments requires practitioners to not only navigate digital platforms competently but also anticipate and respond to both the challenges and opportunities that emerging technologies present. Social workers must develop the capacity to guide clients through technology use while leveraging digital tools to enhance service accessibility and effectiveness.

The proliferation of mental health and well-being apps also presents both opportunities and challenges that demand social work expertise (Kalgotra et al., 2022). As these digital tools become increasingly prevalent, social workers find themselves in the important position of evaluating them and advising on their appropriate use. This advisory role requires practitioners to assess which apps might benefit specific clients, understand the optimal conditions for their use, and identify potential risks associated with their adoption. Furthermore, social workers must develop a sophisticated understanding of data privacy and confidentiality across various technology platforms, ensuring that client information remains protected while taking advantage of digital tools' benefits.

The profession's engagement with technology also carries broader sociopolitical implications that demand careful consideration. Social workers are uniquely positioned to influence national policy discussions around technology's impact on individual and community well-being, such as the recent surgeon general's report on social media's effects on youth mental health (Office of the Surgeon General, 2021). Moreover, social workers must critically examine the unintended consequences of widespread technology adoption, including how various tools might affect marginalized communities or reshape fundamental aspects of human identity and experience (e.g., Bacchini & Lorusso, 2019). This necessitates developing a professional identity that encompasses both traditional social work values and technological competence, enabling practitioners to shape the development and implementation of technology-informed social services in ways that promote social justice and human dignity.

Core Competencies

The evolving landscape of social work practice requires practitioners to develop and maintain specific competencies that enable effective engagement with and deployment of technology. The following core competencies can be grouped into foundational digital skills, practice-oriented capabilities, and organizational technology leadership:

FOUNDATIONAL DIGITAL COMPETENCIES

Digital Literacy: The ability to navigate, evaluate, and use digital tools and platforms effectively in professional contexts. This includes understanding basic technology concepts, troubleshooting common issues, and maintaining currency with emerging digital tools.

Information Literacy: Expertise in evaluating digital information sources and identifying disinformation, enabling evidence-informed practice in online environments. This encompasses understanding algorithmic bias, recognizing credible sources, and helping clients navigate an increasingly complex information landscape.

Technology-Informed Professional Identity: The capacity to integrate technological competence into one's professional identity as a 21st-century social worker while maintaining core social work values. This involves bridging traditional social work ethics with challenges and opportunities in the digital age.

PRACTICE-INTEGRATION COMPETENCIES

Digital Advocacy: The capacity to leverage technology for social change and client empowerment across digital spaces. This includes utilizing social media platforms, digital storytelling, and online organizing tools to amplify client voices and advance social justice initiatives.

Digital Service Coordination: Skills in using technology to facilitate seamless service delivery and coordination across multiple providers and systems. This includes mastery of case management software, referral systems, and digital communication platforms to ensure comprehensive care.

Technology-Mediated Service Delivery: Competence in delivering social work services through various technological platforms while maintaining professional boundaries and effectiveness. This encompasses understanding the nuances of virtual engagement, conducting client assessments, managing online therapeutic relationships, and ensuring equitable access to digital services.

Digital Documentation: Proficiency in utilizing electronic systems for case notes and identifying meaningful patterns in unstructured data for both individual and organizational benefit. This includes understanding how to maintain detailed, secure records while leveraging data analytics for improved service delivery.

TECHNOLOGY LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

Infrastructure Development: The ability to evaluate, recommend, and support the adoption of new technological systems within social work organizations. This involves understanding both technical requirements and organizational change management principles.

Strategic Technology Planning: Skills in anticipating emerging technologies and their implications for social work practice. This includes staying informed about technological trends and their potential impact on client populations and service delivery models.

These competencies, we argue, are critical for effective contemporary social work practice in a technology-saturation environment. In the next section, we briefly summarize what is known about social workers.

Challenges for Integrating Technology Into Practice and Education

Despite what we believe to be the central importance of technology for contemporary social work practice, its integration within social work education and practice faces some significant challenges that require careful consideration, sustained commitment, and likely resource allocation. Successfully developing a technologically competent workforce will require addressing barriers at individual, organizational, and professional levels.

At the individual level, social workers often exhibit resistance to technology adoption, which stems from multiple sources (Goldkind et al., 2016). Many practitioners report insufficient time to learn new systems, expressing legitimate concerns about the short-term disruption to their practice that technology adoption might cause. This resistance

is frequently compounded by general anxiety about technology use and a tendency to deploy moral critiques of technology—such as concerns about algorithmic bias or depersonalization of practice—as rationales for avoiding engagement with digital tools. While these ethical concerns merit serious consideration, in our experience, they sometimes serve as a shield for deeper anxieties about professional competence in an increasingly digital practice environment.

Organizational barriers present another significant challenge to technology integration in social work practice. Many social service organizations struggle with long-term technology planning, lacking the expertise or resources to effectively evaluate and implement new systems (Bobsin et al., 2019). This challenge is exacerbated by the absence of rich training environments for technology skill development within the profession. The shortage of field placement sites that offer meaningful opportunities to develop and apply technological competencies creates a significant gap between educational aspirations and practical skill development. Furthermore, many organizations lack the infrastructure and support systems necessary to facilitate successful technology adoption and integration.

Perhaps most fundamentally, the profession faces challenges related to its collective identity and its relationship with technology. Many social workers view technology with skepticism, seeing it as potentially threatening to core professional values or as an existential threat to practitioner roles (Dennis et al., 2023; Mishna et al., 2012). This perspective sometimes manifests as a categorical rejection of technology rather than a nuanced engagement with its possibilities and limitations. The absence of technology use as a core component of professional identity creates additional barriers to developing the kind of thoughtful, critical engagement with technology that contemporary practice demands. Overcoming these challenges requires not only practical solutions but also a shift in professional culture toward seeing technological competence as integral to, rather than in tension with, social work values and ethics.

Recommendation for the 2029 EPAS

Professional accreditation standards serve as an important mechanism for shaping both professional identity and educational priorities within social work and, as such, could serve as an effective starting point for addressing the challenges noted previously. Through EPAS, CSWE not only establishes baseline competency requirements but also signals to the profession which knowledge, skills, and abilities are essential for contemporary practice.

While the 2022 EPAS acknowledges technology use within Competency 1 Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior, our analysis suggests that a more comprehensive integration of technology competencies is needed to adequately prepare social workers for contemporary practice. We recognize that COEP will need to determine the most effective approach for incorporating technology competencies in the 2029 EPAS, whether through a dedicated competency or an enhanced integration across existing competencies. Here, we outline potential approaches for each path.

A DEDICATED COMPETENCY APPROACH

Drawing on the task force's analysis, a dedicated technology competency within EPAS could provide a comprehensive framework for ensuring that social workers are prepared for practice in increasingly digital environments. Rodriguez et al. (2024) offer what we see as a useful starting point with their proposed competency focused on generative AI:

> Social workers demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and understanding needed to use generative AI tools responsibly.

However, a broader framing would be needed to encompass the full range of technological competencies required for contemporary practice. Such a competency might establish that social workers understand how technology shapes human experiences and service delivery across system levels, recognize technology's role in both perpetuating and addressing social inequities, and demonstrate the ability to effectively and ethically integrate digital tools into practice.

AN ENHANCED INTEGRATION APPROACH

Alternatively, technology competencies could be thoughtfully integrated across existing competencies in ways that recognize how digital tools and environments shape contemporary practice. Some examples include:

- **Competency 3 Engage Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) in Practice:** Add explicit attention to digital equity and inclusion, including how technology access and literacy intersect with other dimensions of diversity and oppression.
- **Competency 4 Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-Informed Practice:** Incorporate competencies related to digital data collection, analysis tools, and evidence-based technology applications. Set expectations that social workers will be lifelong learners related to technology innovations.
- **Competency 5 Engage in Policy Practice:** Add emphasis on technology policy issues affecting practice and digital advocacy approaches.
- **Competencies 6–8 Engage, Assess, Intervene:** Expand to include specific behaviors related to technology-mediated practice, digital assessment tools, and online intervention strategies.

Under either approach, we suggest revising field education standards to ensure students have opportunities to develop and demonstrate technology competencies in practice settings. This includes guidelines for technology-mediated field placements and expectations for field sites to provide experience with relevant digital tools and systems.

Tom Gregoire, Melanie O'Neil, Maria Y. Rodriguez, and Mark Trahan

This section explores the implications of artificial intelligence (AI) in social work education, specifically focusing on both the methods of teaching and learning and the necessary skills and competencies future practitioners must develop. It includes key considerations, challenges, and initial recommendations for the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Commission on Educational Policy on the incorporation of AI technologies into social work education and practice.

Methods of Learning and Practice

The advent of AI and technological advances in education necessitate a continuous evaluation of the impact of technology on social work education and practice. Key areas where technology is influencing teaching and practice, or has the potential to do so, include:

- **Online/Distance Learning:** An early example of technological disruption, online education, changed how many students learn and led to the development of specific educational policies and accreditation standards. Distance-learning programs seem ripe for the incorporation of AI as alternative training methods are considered. Policy and standards must set parameters for AI use in online and distance education delivery.
- **Technology in Practicum Experiences:** Initially because of online programs, and accelerated by the COVID pandemic, the CSWE educational standards have evolved to include practice with individuals and systems via technology. This leaves us with a concern that online and teletherapy could devolve into non-values-based iterations of AI.
- **Virtual Simulations for Learning:** Simulated learning environments could enhance, but should not supplant, engagement with human clients and systems.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Any appraisal of the role of technology must be committed to continuous development. The rapid pace of technological advancement requires CSWE to reflect upon its role in supporting educators through learning opportunities and educational policy and accreditation standards.
- **Technology Supporting Competency Development:** AI should not replace face-to-face/in-person competency attainment. However, AI and other technology may augment how students learn and demonstrate competencies.

Importance to Social Work Education and Practice

Understanding AI's role in social work education and its potential for influence in practice is critical. Arguably, not preparing practitioners to understand and contribute to the

development of technology can be considered unethical. We offer several points for reflection on this assertion:

- **Balancing Technology With Human Relationships:** Technology is taking us way off course from our profession's focus on human relationships. We must maintain a focus on social work's core values—social justice, dignity and worth of the person, and the importance of relationships. Regardless of further technological advances, AI must not supplant this focus, and yet, it has demonstrably changed human relationships and will continue to do so. Educational policy and accreditation standards can set a context for the balance point in the training of social workers, though other entities, such as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), bear responsibility for advocating for standards of practice.
- **The Role of AI in Education:** Though its potential impacts continue to evolve, AI presents a disruptive innovation that, like online education, requires the establishment of new educational policy and accreditation standards.
- **No Opportunity to Opt Out:** We have seen numerous recent innovations in social work education and practice, including online education, virtual simulation and augmented reality, telehealth/teletherapy, mobile apps, and wearable technology. In every case, the educator or practitioner largely has the capacity to opt out of engaging with any of those technology opportunities, with little to no consequences. The same cannot be said for AI. The deployment of AI is so distributed and ubiquitous that opting out is not possible, and endeavoring to do so, particularly in an educational context, will result in social work practitioners who are incapable of understanding and engaging in practice in an emerging technical environment.
- **Professional Responsibility:** Social workers have an obligation to engage in discussions about AI, as it is increasingly being incorporated into society. It is essential that our profession understands the opportunities posed by AI, along with its limitations, while retaining the profession's value of centering human relationships. It is also vital for educators to prepare students to interface with AI in meaningful ways that have the potential to advance practice.
- **Technological Competency:** Social workers must ensure that they understand how AI systems affect their practice and continuing education, particularly concerning bias, decision-making, and social justice. This includes distinguishing interfacing with AI beyond just being able to use AI. We must not produce practitioners who lack skills in the appraisal of AI, critical or complimentary.
- **Upending the Educational Paradigm:** We see the possibility of an educational paradigm shift related to, and in response to, AI development and deployment. We propose that social work higher education devote resources to examining what form this shift might take and its potential consequences, and articulate strategies for maximizing the benefit to social work education.

Our Knowledge to Date

To set a course for the future of social work education in 2029, it's important to reflect on what is currently known:

- **Guidelines and Standards:** A joint task force of the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) and the Modern Language Association (MLA) has provided two working papers offering guidance on the role of AI in higher education (MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force, 2023, 2024). NASW guidelines should be further reviewed to inform ongoing discussions about AI's role in social work (NASW, n.d.) The Grand Challenges for Social Work's Harness Technology for Social Good outlines opportunities to incorporate technology strategically to affect social good (Grand Challenges for Social Work, n.d.).
- **Experimentation With Technology:** Many schools are exploring the use of simulated learning environments, such as virtual simulation and augmented reality, as well as AI applications in online practicums and teletherapy.
- **AI Limitations:** While machine learning shows great potential in terms of recall, social data are inherently uncertain, making it challenging to apply AI principles without a deep understanding of its limits. This understanding of AI limitations is absent in social work education. To that end, the human–computer interaction field is an area for social workers to explore, understand, and contribute to.
- **Social Workers' Understanding of Technology:** It is crucial for both students and professionals to understand the evolving nature of AI as a tool in the profession, particularly its complexities and limitations.
- **AI as a Decision-Support Tool:** While AI may not be useful for prescriptive tasks, it can aid social workers in understanding options for treatment and client support. More can be done to further articulate the benefits of AI for social work practice, and the possibilities of human–computer interaction and AI–human decision-making.

Challenges Presented to Methods of Learning and Practice in Social Work Education

The integration of AI into social work education presents many challenges, not the least of which include:

- **Resource Disparities:** There are considerable differences in the personnel and technological resources available at different social work programs. These differences have the potential to create considerable inequity. As CSWE reflects on education policy, we also encourage the establishment of strategies for collaborative learning and other dissemination methods.

  Inequity in the Student Experience: Students who are taught to appropriately employ AI as an educational tool will have a significant advantage over those who do not acquire that skill. While the responsibility to provide the skill does not reside solely with social work programs, our commitment to equity should cause us concern.

- **Late Adoption:** Social work, as a profession, has been slow to embrace technology, particularly AI, and it is critical to catch up with advances in other disciplines and lead further innovations, where appropriate.
- **Building AI Systems:** AI development and understanding require knowledge of advanced mathematics, such as differentiating between probability and causal inference. While not likely to be reflected in undergraduate and master's education, it is critical that schools of social work produce graduates with the capacity to grasp these concepts to contribute meaningfully to AI's application in the profession. We should not depend exclusively on other disciplines. Perhaps a conversation with colleagues aligned with the Grand Challenges and with the Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work would be of benefit.

Recommendation for the 2029 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)

Looking ahead to the 2029 EPAS, while we are early into our discussions and find it premature to provide specific guidelines, current suggestions would include several preliminary recommendations:

- **Promote a View That AI Is Not Just a Problem to Be Solved:** This would include helping the profession see the opportunity and potential for AI and extending some optimism about what might be possible. Adopt and disseminate strategies that contribute to lowering anxiety and a lack of agency in responding.
- **Collaborate Across the Academy:** While social work is late to the discussion, we are among the experts in understanding human behavior and human systems. We should amplify the current interdisciplinary work of social work scholars and seek to motivate additional team science.
- **Collaboration Within the Discipline:** We have noted several examples of work within social work education and practice that are contemplating the role of technology and social work practice. CSWE has the capacity to convene further discussion.
- **Survey the Broad Landscape:** These conversations should not be confined to social work or the academy. We need to identify the voices outside social work who are having an impact. That would include understanding governmental and proprietary agencies that are working with AI and data to make decisions that affect our profession. We need to understand who is creating those apps, their intended uses, and consistency of use by social workers.
- **Reach Beyond Conferences:** We need to reach beyond conferences as a mechanism for advancing knowledge. Conference attendees may exclude individuals whose response to AI is primarily informed by fear or a lack of self-efficacy, or those whose program resources limit attendance. Developing webinars and educational campaigns may make important information much more broadly available.
- **Engage All Constituents:** It is essential that we include the perspective of smaller programs to understand their needs and concerns, and how best to make AI learning

opportunities as available as possible. To that end, we should engage the Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors, whose membership includes many smaller programs, and collaborate with that group on strategies for dissemination.

- **Competency Discussions:** Having engaged a broad constituency, we need to reach agreement as educators regarding the level of competency around AI in social work education. What minimum knowledge and skills should all social work students attain? The current competencies in social work education must be reviewed to assess how knowledge, values, and skills related to AI and other technologies can be incorporated. There may also be a need for a specific competency in technology and AI, though specific guidance on ethics, equity, and social justice should likely also be incorporated into existing competencies.
- **Policies and Ethical Frameworks:** CSWE should participate in continuing discussions with other social work organizations to further policies that guide the ethical use of AI in practice and incorporate those agreements into educational policy and standards.
- **Critical Thinking Skills:** Social workers must develop strong and specific critical thinking frameworks to analyze and interpret AI outputs effectively.
- **AI Prompting:** Learning how to interact with and prompt AI systems for maximum benefit will become a crucial skill for social workers.

AI presents both opportunities and challenges for the future of social work education. There is no opting out of participating in AI; it is ubiquitous and will significantly affect social work education and practice. This inevitability creates an ethical obligation to engage with AI, develop relevant competencies, and address the concerning disparities in resource availability. In doing so, we can ensure that social workers are well prepared to use AI to enhance practice while maintaining a focus on core values like social justice and human relationships. We must also consider how to increase the impact of our profession in the creation and training of AI systems and promote a message of opportunity.

Artificial Intelligence and Social Work Goals

Clara Berridge, John Bricout, Lauri Goldkind, Lauren B. McInroy

Social work, as a human-rights-based profession, is globally recognized for its commitment to enhancing human well-being and helping to meet the basic needs of all people—with a particular focus on those who are marginalized, vulnerable, or oppressed. Artificial intelligence (AI), a subdiscipline of computer science, focuses on developing computers with decision-making capacity. The potential intersections of these two disciplines are not well understood and have considerable unrealized potential (Garkisch & Goldkind, 2025).

Social work has demonstrated historic resistance to adopting digital technologies across levels of practice (Goldkind et al., 2016). However, the pervasive use of AI at individual, organizational, and community levels makes it impossible for the field to continue to disengage. A digitally literate and digitally competent social work workforce, skilled in socio-technical approaches, is critical to positioning social workers to engage meaningfully in the design, development, and deployment of AI and other digital tools.

Importance to Social Work Education and Practice

AI is infused across most arenas of public and private life, with particular consequences for the populations often served by social workers (Garkisch & Goldkind, 2025; Goldkind et al., 2021). However, in a poll of more than 300 attendees (most of whom had an MSW) of a recent National Association of Social Workers webinar on AI, 72% rated their knowledge of AI as "low," compared with only 1% who selected "high" (personal communication; Berridge et al., 2024). This "digital divide" has implications for vulnerable or marginalized communities, rooted in the structural inequalities on which the United States is founded (Raihan et al., 2024). While social work and computer science each have rich histories, neither discipline has explored the other as potential interdisciplinary partners in the training of either social workers or computer engineers and software developers. This lack of mutual cross-disciplinary understanding has led to significant disconnects from the actual contexts in which data and information technologies are deployed. We now observe unregulated digital tools such as AI reproducing problematic social relations, stigmatization, and isolation through uncritical absorption of current social prejudices on the one hand, and displacement of human judgment and agency on the other (Tulğan & Güre, 2024). Perhaps most problematic of all is the "black box" of machine learning and decision-making processes, which prioritizes goals of optimization and efficiency without proper vetting or adequate understanding of potential harms (Brandtzaeg et al., 2024; Kundi et al., 2022; Ross et al., 2022).

For all these difficulties and limitations, AI applications simultaneously have the potential to enhance the well-being of those same vulnerable communities, through AI-enabled advances in areas such as social welfare, human services, health care, assistive technologies, and education, when properly scoped and purposefully designed for

inclusiveness, accountability, and transparency. Crucially, current actions are shaping the direction of future scenarios in an anticipated AI-pervasive world (Kitsara, 2022). It is essential to rapidly close the gap between "safe" AI, which eschews first-order harms to vulnerable people (such as algorithmic bias), and "humane" AI, which advances social justice and the betterment of society. In the words of UNESCO's Gabriela Ramos, "AI may change the world we live in—but it is the ethics behind it which will determine the way the world will look" (Kitsara, 2022, p. 265). Social work education, research, and practice have important roles in informing key decisions on AI and the broader digital environment. Key to this effort is engaging institutions and legislative action, while fostering the conditions for human–technology interactions that enhance human agency, inclusion, and sustainability and serve the social good (Bricout et al., 2021; Goldkind, 2021; Singer et al., 2023).

AI literacy—including a fundamental understanding of systems that blend social and technological elements in asymmetrical relations of power, with implications for social justice and human agency (Joyce et al., 2021; Holton & Boyd, 2019)—is a crucial first step toward equipping social workers with knowledge and skills to inform, guide, and co-create more socially just AI outcomes. Social work scholars who embrace a sociotechnical approach have been calling for digital competence and social work informatics for the last 20 years (Parker-Oliver & Demiris, 2006). There is a long history of attempts to infuse digital competence, e-competence, and tech literacy into social work training, along with social work values and ethics (Young et al., 2018).

Almaguer-Kalixto and Marcuello-Servós (2023) frame the integration of digital social work and digital society from a sociocybernetics perspective, with roots in systems theory, on the premise that the social worker is both an observer and an agent of change in the system, offering opportunities for reflexivity and second-order change. The sociotechnical framework focuses on the integration of the technical and social spheres. On that basis, it can be argued that the sociotechnical framework lends itself to reflexivity on the part of the social worker as a change agent, purposefully influencing both nontechnical and technical elements of the system. Thus, social workers need to be equipped with digital competencies that speak to both sides of the equation, such as possessing the knowledge and competencies necessary for ethical approaches to weighing the likely impacts of new AI-enabled technologies on social services, social service organizations, and/or the communities implicated in the changed landscape.

AI has come to be an umbrella term associated with diverse and constantly changing technologies, functionalities, and techniques. It refers to everything from automated decision-making (e.g., using algorithms to classify, suggest, or make decisions), to facial recognition, to platforms for generating synthetic text or images (e.g., ChatGPT, Bard). Misleading jargon and anthropomorphizing descriptions (e.g., ascribing empathy, sentience, and "brain power") give AI a sense of "magic" that can be difficult to challenge. Even those who actively use tools labeled as AI often lack a clear definitional scope of what a given technology is doing—including how it works, what data are employed, and its limitations. This lack of clarity benefits development companies, but puts social workers at a disadvantage. Not understanding how a particular tool works,

what data are used, etc., makes it difficult to assess its ethical and political implications. Suchman (2022) explains:

> The term "AI" can be read as a label for currently dominant computational techniques and technologies that extract statistical correlations (designated as patterns) from large datasets, based on the adjustment of relevant parameters according to either internally or externally generated feedback. At the time of this writing, research and development under the sign of AI primarily comprise so-called machine learning and neural network approaches, applied to projects of natural language processing (NLP), the analysis or generation of various forms of "content" (e.g. text, images, data sets and computer code) and automated decision/recommendation systems.

AI has received significant attention in academia, practice, and popular media for its potential risks and opportunities for society. The magnitude of AI's impact on social work remains unknown, but the impact is and will continue to be significant. According to Fulmer et al. (2018):

> Asking if AI has significance to the counseling community is like asking if counselors should be concerned with global warming or if social media has an impact on the lives of our clients. AI … promises to touch the emotional lives of clients in untold ways.

Of particular concern is the rapid expansion of AI-driven automation, which has implications for clients (e.g., jobs, relationships, daily living) and social work practice (e.g., client communication, professional decision-making).

AI bias—sometimes called machine-learning bias or algorithmic bias—refers to the tendency of AI-generated output to reflect human biases. This phenomenon arises when an algorithm delivers systematically biased results because of erroneous assumptions in the machine-learning process. Importantly, biased results are not due only to biased programming or incomplete datasets that the AI learns from. In other words, it is not just a "technical problem." Bias is also generated from *human and systemic* biases:

> Systemic biases result from institutions operating in ways that disadvantage certain social groups, such as discriminating against individuals based on their race. Human biases can relate to how people use data to fill in missing information, such as a person's neighborhood of residence influencing how likely authorities would consider the person to be a crime suspect. When human, systemic, and computational biases combine, they can form a pernicious mixture—especially when explicit guidance is lacking for addressing the risks associated with using AI systems. (NIST, 2022)

Automation bias is another concept social workers must be familiar with. It is the tendency of people to assume that computers are objective, authoritative, and fair, even when there is evidence to the contrary. Automation bias describes when someone goes along with a machine's output even if it doesn't sit right with them. Understanding this phenomenon is an important step to guard against it.

AI may feel immutable. However, it is crucial to emphasize that there remain many possible AI futures, shaped by factors such as governance, policies, infrastructure, availability and nature of training data, and, through it all, the ethical precepts that guide AI development and deployment (Kitsara, 2022). The underlying ethical challenge is to mitigate, rather than reinforce, the pernicious social, economic, and political disparities; human and social biases; and social power imbalances that unregulated AI only amplifies. For the discipline of social work, this means the co-creation of policies, knowledge, resources, and inclusive practices that bridge divides and augment professional practice (Isbanner et al., 2022). Algorithmically mediated decision-making and other AI applications are disproportionately used on marginalized populations. It is incumbent on social workers to promote community-led practices that provide opportunities for AI with and by the people whose lives a given application will most affect.

Challenges Presented to Social Work Education and Practice in the Area

Social work's historic disconnection from the design and development of new digital technologies challenges the profession's ability to engage in redirecting the deployment of new digital tools. The algorithmic turn refers to "the profusion of algorithmic decision-making in our daily lives, even in the absence of established regulatory or ethical frameworks to guide the deployment of those algorithms" (Ajunwa, 2020). Navigating the algorithmic turn is difficult precisely because of many unresolved ethical issues, as well as policy and evaluation gaps. For example, as of 2024, the *Artificial Intelligence Index Report* emphasizes that "robust and standardized evaluations … are seriously lacking." This creates significant barriers regarding accountability and mitigation of harm. For example, AI tools risk overrepresentation of hegemonic views (Gillespie, 2024)—perpetuating ableism, transphobia, racism, Islamophobia, and other forms of discrimination at scale.

AI—whether driving treatments and diagnostic tools (Simões et al., 2024), mobile apps (Drydakis, 2021), chatbots (van der Schyff et al., 2024), or documentation (e.g., Blease et al., 2024)—raises critical questions around a central tension between practice efficiency, often framed in terms of cost, scalability, and optimization, and ethical practices, attuned to trust building, accessibility, equity, and transparency. This essential tension for social work is further confounded by limited knowledge about the costs and benefits of AI, as well as divergent opinions about what those might be. For the most vulnerable populations, as well as the social work professionals and community partners who engage them, there are additional considerations. These include building shared understanding, creating opportunities for technology co-design, and embedding ethical imperatives around self-determination, human dignity, and human rights. Only serious reflection on and adaptation of AI by stakeholders can halt a potentially vicious negative spiral of divides within society (Dieterle et al., 2024).

Imperatively, greater public participation is needed to inform what governance structures are needed to prevent and address harms caused by AI tools. In a policy brief on the need to build requirements for public participation into AI policy, Gilman (2023) lays out key areas where AI poses the greatest risks to civil and human rights, demanding the

input and participation of a broader range of people. Each key area is also a signature aspect of social work practice, such as access to government services and benefits; gathering and retention of biometric, health, or other sensitive personal information; surveillance of vulnerable populations; and gatekeeping access to necessities such as housing, credit, education, employment, and health care (Berridge et al., 2024).

Finally, the potential for AI de-skilling social work and related disciplines is a significant concern. De-skilling occurs when humans lose the ability to complete tasks that have now been delegated to AI, resulting in professions that are effectively "de-skilled" (Isbanner et al., 2022). For example, in an Australian survey on the implications of AI use in health care and social services, the potential for hospital algorithms to de-skill physicians was viewed as a negative potential of AI (Isbanner et al., 2022). In a similar vein, the de-skilling potential of AI extends to biasing human decision-making (decisional de-skilling) of professionals, bypassing human-to-human processes in favor of automated or partially automated decision-making and intervention (Lehtiniemi, 2024).

Recommendation for the 2029 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS)

1. Apply a sociotechnical perspective to all social work practice:

    - Social workers must become skilled at applying social work's contextual knowledge to sociotechnical practices; that is, they must learn to apply a sociotechnical perspective (Bipartisan Policy Center, 2024; NIST, 2022; Oduro & Kneese, 2024). A sociotechnical perspective "means viewing society and technology together as one coherent system … [understanding] that a technology's real-world safety and performance is always a product of technical design and broader societal forces, including organizational bureaucracy, human labor, social conventions, and power" (Chen & Metcalf, 2024). A sociotechnical approach also requires recognizing the social (and inevitably ethical) nature of questions that may be narrowly framed as technical.

    - Social workers are ideally positioned to understand the pivotal role context plays in shaping the social impacts of a given technology. This includes anticipating the likely social outcomes from AI use, while valuing human contribution and the use of AI *in support* of human decision-making (Lehtiniemi, 2024). This attention to the human–AI dynamic reflects an application of a sociotechnical approach. It is the responsibility of social work to advocate for technology use grounded in best practices, professional ethics, and social work's contextual knowledge.

2. Assess the multilevel social impacts (e.g., individual, group, community, systemic) of a given AI application, including in particular contexts and concerning social work values and principles. Social work programs need to develop students' capacity to conduct critical, continuous assessments of the impacts of sociotechnical practices concerning the core social work values, which are: service (prioritizing client needs and addressing social issues), social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity, and competence. This should be paired with understanding the five core principles operationalized in the 2022 White House's Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights: safe and effective systems, algorithmic

discrimination protections, data privacy, notice and explanation of the use of AI, and meaningful human alternatives.

3. In the context of AI applications, effectively apply social justice and the principle of protection from discrimination to:
    - Understand how automated and algorithmically mediated decision-making affects life changes across sectors (e.g., housing, health, benefits access, employment, criminal justice, child welfare).
    - Understand different vulnerabilities to the harms of AI.
    - Understand the consequences of power or credibility asymmetries in human–AI interactions.
    - Foreground the impacts of sociotechnical systems on the capabilities and service delivery access for individuals, groups, and communities (e.g., "smart" devices and networks: smart homes, smart cities, smart assistants).
4. Apply the principles of meaningful human alternatives and the value of service to work toward equitable access, accessibility, and usability of technology for marginalized populations, in order to:
    - Anticipate the risks of service and information access gaps created by transitions to AI-based platforms, tools, or other technical systems—particularly digital and AI literacy gaps.
    - Guard against the widening of the digital divide for those who are already marginalized in their societal participation in and receipt of services.
    - Advocate for AI systems to complement and enhance human relations and agency, rather than replace humans (e.g., social robots to enhance clients' social relationships, rather than take their place). Here the contextual knowledge social workers possess must be applied to understand likely scenarios in environments characterized by resource scarcity or under austerity. Attention to impact versus intention is critical.
    - Attend to those left behind and determine whether more basic technologies or access to human support are being prematurely abandoned. The digital divide was initially conceptualized in terms of the gap in access to digital services, which, combined with contextual factors around usability, personal demographics, and affordability, yields divides in digital outcomes and engagement (Carter et al., 2020).
5. Being accountable for, and requiring accountability of, employers for uses of AI applications. Accountability promotes trust integral to the social work values of therapeutic human relationships, integrity, and social justice. This requires that social workers understand what accountability means in the context of AI applications. This includes:
    - Building accountability into social work technology practices such that there is always at least one human held responsible for decisions

- Ensuring clear communication with clients about how to appeal decisions and seek redress for errors or discriminatory decisions
- Advocating for and ensuring people's ability to challenge bias and unfair systems
- Promoting democratic public participation in technology and AI governance to ensure that technologies are deployed in the public interest
- Building public capacity to promote innovation that contributes to the public good/public interest. Engage primary stakeholders (i.e., service recipients, community members, the general public) to design, co-create, adapt, and evaluate technology
- Advancing inclusive technology policy designs informed by and co-created with primary stakeholders
- Promoting and preserving autonomy in technology choices, including opportunities for resistance and refusal

Despite the recognized importance of technology in future social work practice, the work groups identified several barriers hindering the integration of technology into social work. Many social workers lack training in and knowledge of how to integrate technology into social work practice. Rather than addressing professional competence, some social workers offer resistance and cite time constraints as impeding their professional development. Social workers have ethical concerns, such as algorithmic bias and the risk of technology replacing human relationships, yet, to date, these are not being adequately addressed within the profession.

Many agencies lack the expertise and resources to implement new technologies, and many social work organizations do not engage in effective long-term technology. Students are rarely offered meaningful opportunities to develop digital skills in their field placements.

Unfortunately, many social workers perceive technology as conflicting with core social work values. Many social workers are skeptical of AI and digital tools, fearing they may dehumanize client interactions. A cultural shift is needed to see technology as enhancing, rather than undermining, social work values, and with the knowledge to do this ethically and responsibly. Social work education should play a critical role in preparing social workers for this cultural shift.

AI is rapidly influencing social work, raising both opportunities and ethical concerns. AI can enhance service delivery by aiding decision-making, data analysis, and client engagement. Social workers need AI literacy to critically assess AI tools and the ethical use of AI, ensuring they align with social work values and avoid harm to marginalized communities. For example, algorithmic bias in AI systems can reinforce discrimination, affecting client access to resources. Another concern is that social workers may over-rely on AI recommendations without critically evaluating their implications, reducing human expertise in clinical decision-making.

AI's integration into social work education raises ethical concerns about balancing technology with human relationships, ensuring equitable access, and maintaining social work's core values. AI affects vulnerable communities, often exacerbating biases and systemic inequalities through unregulated decision-making. The "black box" nature of AI obscures its ethical implications, reinforcing discrimination and social divides. However, AI can also enhance social work through improvements in service delivery, health care, and education if developed with inclusivity and accountability in mind.

Unlike past technological advances, opting out of AI is not feasible, necessitating that future social workers develop critical AI literacy. Other challenges include disparities in access to AI resources, slow adoption within social work, and the need for interdisciplinary collaboration.

These concerns reinforce the importance of integrating AI critical-thinking frameworks into social work training, educating on ethical AI use by emphasizing the criticalness of transparency and accountability, and encouraging the interdisciplinary collaboration with tech fields to ensure AI aligns with social work ethics.

Recommendations for the 2029 EPAS

Two approaches to integrating technology competency in social work education are suggested for the Commission on Educational Policy's consideration:

DEDICATED TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCY APPROACH

This approach would establish a new competency in EPAS focused on digital literacy, AI ethics, and responsible technology use. It could provide a comprehensive framework to ensure that social workers are well prepared for digital practice. Consideration should be given to an EPAS competency on generative AI, which would require social workers to know how to responsibly use AI tools.

ENHANCED INTEGRATION ACROSS EXISTING COMPETENCIES

Instead of creating a new competency, technology-related skills could be integrated into existing competencies. For example, EPAS would describe how each competency should address the integration of technology:

- **Competency 3 (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion):** Addressing digital equity and technology access disparities.
- **Competency 4 (Research and Evidence-Based Practice):** Teach students how to use digital tools for data collection and analysis.
- **Competency 5 (Policy Practice):** Include digital advocacy and engagement with technology policy issues.
- **Competencies 6–8 (Engagement, Assessment, and Intervention):** Incorporate telehealth, AI-assisted case management, and online intervention models.

To address these challenges, social work education must integrate AI literacy, emphasizing a sociotechnical approach—understanding both the social and technical dimensions of AI. Social workers must critically evaluate AI's multilevel impacts, advocate for ethical technology use, and participate in shaping AI policies that protect human rights. Public participation and interdisciplinary collaboration with computer science are essential to ensuring that AI aligns with the social work values of justice, dignity, and equity. All students should have opportunities to gain experience using digital tools in their field education/practicum. We should explore furthering technology-mediated field placements.

In sum, there is no question of the inevitable further adoption of technology in social work. Social work education should prepare students for this future by teaching them the skills and knowledge needed to practice ethically and think critically about the use of technology in social work practice. Toward this end, social workers must actively

participate in shaping AI policy to protect marginalized communities, and develop methods for AI and digital tools to enhance, rather than replace, the human-centered nature of social work. The 2029 EPAS must address the integration of technology, and CSWE should take the lead in defining digital competencies for the profession.

References

Ajunwa, I. (2020). The paradox of automation as anti-bias intervention. *Cardozo Law Review*, *41*, 1671.

Almaguer-Kalixto, P. E., & Marcuello-Servós, C. (2023). Sociocybernetics for digital social work: A second order approach. In A. López Peláez & G. Kirwan (Eds.), *The Routledge international handbook of digital social work* (pp. 81–93). Routledge.

Bacchini, F., & Lorusso, L. (2019). Race, again: How face recognition technology reinforces racial discrimination. *Journal of Information, Communication and Ethics in Society*, *17*(3), 321–335.

Berridge, C., Goldkind, L., & Bricout, J. (2024, spring). If AI has you feeling clueless and concerned, you're in good company. *Social Work Advocates*. National Association of Social Workers. https://www.socialworkers.org/News/Social-Work-Advocates/2024-Spring-Issue/If-AI-Has-You-Feeling-Clueless-and-Concerned-Youre-Not-Alone

Bipartisan Policy Center. (2024, May 30). *Advancing sociotechnical considerations for AI*. https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/advancing-sociotechnical-considerations-for-ai/

Blease, C., Worthen, A., & Torous, J. (2024). Psychiatrists' experiences and opinions of generative artificial intelligence in mental healthcare: An online mixed methods survey. *Psychiatry Research*, *333*, 115724.

Bobsin, D., Petrini, M., & Pozzebon, M. (2019). The value of technology affordances to improve the management of nonprofit organizations. *RAUSP Management Journal*, *54*, 14–37.

Brandtzaeg, P. B., Skjuve, M., & Følstad, A. (2024). Understanding model power in social AI. *AI & Society*, *40*, 2839–2849.

Bricout, J., Greer, J., Fields, N., Xu, L., Tamplain, P., Doelling, K., & Sharma, B. (2021). The "humane in the loop": Inclusive research design and policy approaches to foster capacity building assistive technologies in the COVID-19 era. *Assistive Technology, 34(6)*, 644–652. https://doi.org/10.1080/10400435.2021.1930282

Carter, L., Liu, D., & Cantrell, C. (2020). Exploring the intersection of the digital divide and artificial intelligence: A hermeneutic literature review. *AIS Transactions on Human-Computer Interaction*, *12*(4), 253–275. https://doi.org/10.17705/1thci.00138

Chen, B. J., & Metcalf, J. (2024). Explainer: A sociotechnical approach to AI policy. *Data & Society*. https://datasociety.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/DS_Sociotechnical-Approach_to_AI_Policy.pdf

Council on Social Work Education. (2022). 2022 Educational policy and accreditation standards. https://www.cswe.org/getmedia/bb5d8afe-7680-42dc-a332-a6e6103f4998/2022-Educational-Policy-and-Accreditation-Standards-(EPAS).pdf

Dennis, S. R., McCarthy, K. M., & Glassburn, S. L. (2023). Grievers, skeptics, pragmatists, converts, and champions: Social work educators' transition to online teaching. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *59*(2), 544–557. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2021.2019644

Dieterle, E., Dede, C., & Walker, M. (2024). The cyclical ethical effects of using artificial intelligence in education. *AI & Society*, 39, 633–643. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-022-01497-w

Drydakis, N. (2021). Mobile applications aiming to facilitate immigrants' societal integration and overall level of integration, health and mental health. Does artificial intelligence enhance outcomes? *Computers in Human Behavior*, *117*, 106661.

Elsaesser, C., Russell, B., Ohannessian, C. M., & Patton, D. (2017). Parenting in a digital age: A review of parents' role in preventing adolescent cyberbullying. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*, *35*, 62–72.

Felten, E., Raj, M., & Seamans, R. (2023). *How will language modelers like ChatGPT affect occupations and industries?* [Working paper]. https://arxiv.org/abs/2303.01157

Fulmer, R., Joerin, A., Gentile, B., Lakerink, L., & Rauws, M. (2018). Using psychological artificial intelligence (Tess) to relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety: Randomized controlled trial. *JMIR Mental Health*, *5*(4), e9782.

Garkisch, M., & Goldkind, L. (2025). Considering a unified model of artificial intelligence enhanced social work: A systematic review. *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work*, *10*, 23–42.

Gillespie, T. (2024). Generative AI and the politics of visibility. *Big Data & Society*, *11*(2). https://doi.org/10.1177/20539517241252131

Gilman, M. E. (2023). Democratizing AI: Principles for meaningful public participation. *Data & Society*. http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4628755

Goldkind, L. (2021). Social work and artificial intelligence: Into the matrix. *Social Work*, *66*(4), 372–374. https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swab028

Goldkind, L., Wolf, L., & Jones, J. (2016). Late adapters? How social workers acquire knowledge and skills about technology tools. *Journal of Technology in Human Services*, *34*(4), 338–358.

Goldkind, L., Wolf, L., & LaMendola, W. (2021). Data justice: Social work and a more just future. *Journal of Community Practice*, *29*(3), 237–256.

Hodge, H., Carson, D., Carson, D., Newman, L., & Garrett, J. (2017). Using internet technologies in rural communities to access services: The views of older people and service providers. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *54*, 469–478.

Holton, R., & Boyd, R. (2019). 'Where are the people? What are they doing? Why are they doing it?'(Mindell) Situating artificial intelligence within a socio-technical framework. *Journal of Sociology*, *57*(2), 179–195. https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783319873046

Hua, S., Jin, S., & Jiang, S. (2024). The limitations and ethical considerations of ChatGPT. *Data Intelligence*, *6*(1), 201–239. https://doi.org/10.1162/dint_a_00243

Isbanner, S., O'Shaughnessy, P., Steel, D., Wilcock, S., & Carter, S. (2022). The adoption of artificial intelligence in health care and social services in Australia: Findings from a methodologically innovative national survey of values and attitudes (the AVA-AI study). *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *24*(8), e37611.

Jackson Jr., W. W., & Malone, J. (2024). Emerging technologies in social work: Solutions and challenges to traditional and modern interventions. *International Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, *5*(1), 11–19.

Joyce, K., Smith-Doerr, L., Alegria, S., Bell, S., Cruz, T., Hoffman, S. G., Noble, S. U., & Shestakofsky, B. (2021). Toward a sociology of artificial intelligence: A call for research on inequalities and structural change. *Socius*, *7*. https://doi.org/10.1177/2378023121999581

Kalgotra, P., Raja, U., & Sharda, R. (2022). Growth in the development of health and fitness mobile apps amid COVID-19 pandemic. *Digital Health*, *8*. https://doi.org/10.1177/20552076221129070

Kitsara, I. (2022). Artificial intelligence and the digital divide: From an innovation perspective. In A. Bounfour (Ed.), *Platforms and artificial intelligence* (pp. 245–265). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-90192-9_12

Kundi, B., El Morr, C., Gorman, R., & Dua, E. (2022). Artificial intelligence and bias: A scoping review. In C. El Morr (Ed.), *AI and society* (pp. 199–215). Chapman and Hall/CRC.

Lehtiniemi, T. (2024). Contextual social valences for artificial intelligence: Anticipation that matters in social work. *Information, Communication & Society*, *27*(6), 1110–1125.

McNally, K., Wright, K., Goldkind, L., Kattari, S. K., & Victor, B. G. (2024). Disability expertise and large language models: A qualitative study of autistic TikTok creators' use of ChatGPT. *Social Media + Society*, *10*(3). https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051241279549

Mishna, F., Bogo, M., Root, J., Sawyer, J.-L., & Khoury-Kassabri, M. (2012). "It just crept in": The digital age and implications for social work practice. *Clinical Social Work Journal*, *40*, 277–286.

MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on Writing and AI. (2023). *Working paper 1: Overview of the issues, statement of principles, and recommendations*. https://aiandwriting.hcommons.org/working-paper-1/

MLA-CCCC Joint Task Force on Writing and AI. (2024). *Generative AI and policy development: Guidance from the MLA-CCCC task force.* https://hcommons.org/app/uploads/sites/1003160/2024/04/MLA-CCCC-Joint-Task-Force-on-Writing-and-AI-Working-Paper-2.pdf

National Association of Social Workers. (n.d.). *Standards for technology in social work practice.* https://www.socialworkers.org/Practice/NASW-Practice-Standards-Guidelines/Standards-for-Technology-in-Social-Work-Practice

National Institute of Standards and Technology. (2022, March 16). *There's more to AI bias than biased data, NIST report highlights.* https://www.nist.gov/news-events/news/2022/03/theres-more-ai-bias-biased-data-nist-report-highlights

Oduro, S., & Kneese, T. (2024). AI governance needs sociotechnical expertise: Why the humanities and social sciences are critical to government efforts. *Data & Society*. https://datasociety.net/library/ai-governance-needs-sociotechnical-expertise/

Office of the Surgeon General. (2021). *Protecting Youth Mental Health: The U.S. Surgeon General's Advisory*. US Department of Health and Human Services.

Parker-Oliver, D., & Demiris, G. (2006). Social work informatics: A new specialty. *Social Work*, *51*(2), 127–134.

Raihan, M. M. H., Subroto, S., Chowdhury, N., Koch, K., Ruttan, E., & Turin, T. C. (2024). Dimensions and barriers for digital (in) equity and digital divide: A systematic integrative review. *Digital Transformation and Society*, *4*(2), 111–127.

Rodriguez, M. Y., Goldkind, L., Victor, B. G., Hiltz, B., & Perron, B. E. (2024). Introducing generative artificial intelligence into the MSW curriculum: A proposal for the 2029 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *60*(2), 174–182. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2024.2340931

Ross, J. N., Eastman, A., Laliberte, N., & Rawle, F. (2022). The power behind the screen: Educating competent technology users in the age of digitized inequality. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *115*, 102014. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2022.102014

Simões, J. P., Ten Klooster, P., Neff, P. K., Niemann, U., & Kraiss, J. (2024). Editorial: Artificial intelligence and mental health care. *Frontiers in Public Health*, *12*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2024.1461446

Singer, J. B., Creswell Báez, J., & Rios, J. A. (2023). AI creates the message: Integrating AI language learning models into social work education and practice. *Journal of Social Work Education*, *59*(2), 294–302. https://doi.org/10.1080/10437797.2023.2189878

Stanford University Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence. (2024). *Artificial intelligence index report 2024.* https://hai.stanford.edu/ai-index/2024-ai-index-report

Suchman, L. (2022). Imaginaries of omniscience: Automating intelligence in the US Department of Defense. *Social Studies of Science*, *53*(5), 761–786. https://doi.org/10.1177/03063127221104938

Tulğan, B., & Güre, M. D. P. (2024). In the echoes of tomorrow: The intersection of social work and artificial intelligence through the eyes of Turkish students. *Journal of Social Service Research*, *50*(4), 620–636. https://doi.org/10.1080/01488376.2024.2354930

van der Schyff, E. L., Ridout, B., Amon, K. L., Forsyth, R., & Campbell, A. J. (2023). Providing self-led mental health support through an artificial intelligence–powered chat bot (Leora) to meet the demand of mental health care. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *25*, e46448.

White House. 2022. *Blueprint for an AI bill of rights.* https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/ostp/ai-bill-of-rights/

Young, J. A., McLeod, D. A., & Brady, S. R. (2018). The ethics challenge: 21st century social work education, social media, and digital literacies. *The Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, *15*(1), 13–22.