

THE MENTAL HEALTH APP THAT ANALYSES SPEECH TO PREDICT DEPRESSION

Australian Institute of Business (AIB) Academic, Vishal Rana, is developing a one-of-a-kind app that will predict depression and potentially suicidal behaviour by analysing speech and keeping track of a user's cognitive health.

Watchyourtalk is a SaaS-based platform that monitors a person's speech (ensuring data privacy) in real-time to provide analysis of the words spoken, along with the user's tone of voice, to consciously detect and monitor the percentage of negative versus positive words spoken.

Over a year in the making, *Watchyourtalk* is currently seeking investment for the next stages of development, with a minimum viable product (MVP) available on android devices.

The app works by sieving out meaningful insights from a user's speech through speech-to-text conversion and deploys a state-of-the-art, aspect-based emotion mining machine learning model to identify and understand the user's state of mental health. The technology used to create this was developed from over thirty years of research into the textual analysis, which suggests speech can be an indicator of depression and suicide.

The concept of *Watchyourtalk* was inspired by personal events that are very close to Mr. Rana's heart, "I suffered from depression and battled with suicidal thoughts. I didn't follow through, but many people are not that fortunate."

With one in 20 Australians reported to be experiencing depression, and suicide the leading cause of death for people aged between 15 and 44, Mr Rana has also experienced the tragic demise of a close friend, "During my PhD, a close friend took his life; it led me to research mental health and talk to professionals in the industry to find a solution that would help prevent people from developing depression in the first place," said Mr. Rana.

It is Mr. Rana's goal to help the 300 million people worldwide that are affected by depression by using the *Watchyourtalk* platform, a person can develop an awareness of how negative talk can affect their own mental health, encouraging a more positive way of speaking, with a possibility of connecting users to nearby psychologists if warning signs are triggered.

The Human Resource Management lecturer and PhD Candidate is in conversation with researchers from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) for further collaboration on the project once he is able to raise funding.

Watchyourtalk is for more than just individuals, with organisations from around the world showing interest in the app. Last year, Mr. Rana presented his start-up in Hong Kong at Asia's largest tech event to an audience of 15,000, with insurance and telecommunications industries showing interest in licensing the algorithms of the personal development app.

The *Watchyourtalk* app creator is calling out to investors for the next stage of his project. For more information on the app or to contact Vishal Rana, visit <https://www.watchyourtalk.com/>.

Statistics were sourced from the World Health Organisation:

<https://www.who.int/en/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/depression>

Black Dog Institute: <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/clinical-resources/suicide-self-harm/facts-about-suicide-in-australia>

BACKGROUND

About Vishal Rana: CEO & Co-Founder Watchyourtalk, Lecturer in Human Resource Management and Organisational Behaviour, Entrepreneur, Speaker on Future of Work & Disruptive Innovation, Personal development coach.

About AIB: Australian Institute of Business (AIB) is a global higher education institution and Australia's largest MBA provider. Delivered fully online and designed to fit around the lives of busy working people, AIB's postgraduate business degrees are fully accredited in Australia, internationally recognised and industry aligned. AIB has a history of over 30 years of excellence, and a network of more than 16,000 students and graduates across 90 countries.