

13 September 2023

Case Reference IC-253561-G6Z6

Your request

You asked us for the following:

- "1. Breakdown of artificial intelligence (AI) training which has taken place within your organisation including the number of attendees and course details e.g. introduction to AI*
- 2. Details of the cost of these courses (if applicable)*
- 3. Are chatbots in use within your organisation? If so, please provide details"*

Where your questions satisfy the criteria of a valid information request, we have considered your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

Our response

1&2. We can confirm that we hold information within scope of your request.

Please find attached a breakdown of the relevant training and requested details.

Our [costs over 25k.xls \(ico.org.uk\)](#) records show that the last annual payment for the Skillsoft license subscription as referenced in the attached table was £29,497.02, though this includes content and services outside the scope of your request.

3. We can confirm that we hold information within scope of this part of your request and the details are as follows:

ICO's use of Chatbot technology

The ICO implemented its chatbot solution in conjunction with supplier ICS.AI in 2021. The solution was procured to assist in supporting the Business Services team in providing automated responses to our customers based upon a pre-defined set of questions and answers, its outputs providing responses to defined links or pages on the ICO's website. This was to assist in driving a level of automation to reduce call handling and generate efficiency.

This phase of work also seen the implementation of an

algorithmic tool which was designed to inspect emails sent to the ICO's registration inbox and send out auto-replies in specific cases i.e. changing addresses. The tool has not been designed to automatically change addresses on the requester's behalf. Furthermore, the tool has not been designed to categorise other types of requests sent to the inbox.

The registration inbox generally receives queries from organisations or sole traders who are registered, or are looking to register, with the ICO.

Typical queries may be about registering with the ICO, how to make a payment, or how to change or update details about a registration.

The identified key benefits of the solution included

- Improved efficiency in answering requests sent to the registration inbox
- Helps to avoid a backlog of emails
- Improves the digital user experience
- Provides case officers with more time to respond to more complex requests

The algorithm takes into account the content of the email being sent to the inbox and detects whether it is a request about changing a business address. In cases where it detects this kind of request, the algorithm sends out an autoreply that directs the customer to a new online service and further information required to process a change request.

Only emails with an 80% certainty of a change of address request will be sent an email containing the link to change of address form. Further information can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/information-commissioners-office-registration-inbox-ai>

ICS.AI act as data processors which means that they cannot do anything with information we provide them unless we have instructed them to do it. They will not share information with any organisation apart for us. They will hold it securely and retain it for the period we instruct.

The algorithmic tool does not make any decisions, but instead provides links in instances where it has calculated the customer has contacted the ICO about an address change, giving the customer the opportunity to self-serve. There is no manual

intervention in the process.

The model was trained on a dataset that was collected from emails being sent to the ICO's registration inbox. We provided information about this purpose in our privacy notice on our website. Data collected includes:

- Email address
- Subject title
- Contents of the email, which may contain information relating to registrations queries around address of trader/trading name/contacts for the registrations/payment categories or any other information they input in the email body.

Email header information is removed and not processed by a machine learning text classification service.

The ICO is currently evaluating various potential use of new and emerging technologies and as we implement these, we will provide updates on our website.

This concludes our response.

We hope you find this information helpful.