

Media release

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BDO employs audit bots

In April 2018, BDO started using a computerised, automated dialogue system to support audits.

BDO's new Digital Audit Assistant is a chatbot called LISA. The computer program automatically conveys information, answers questions and requests documents without a BDO professional behind the scenes. LISA assumes simple, repetitive tasks that would usually be performed by an audit assistant. As a 'pull bot', LISA's main purpose is to collect information.

Using the bot offers clients greater time flexibility and efficiency. They can log on via the client portal on the BDO website to connect with LISA anywhere and at any time. "The sector is undergoing transformation. People want to see that we're modern and contemporary, and that we apply a future-oriented approach," says Martin Nay, Head of Audit at BDO. "Using Bot technology is our ticket towards a digital future."

Pilot phase under way

The program will initially be launched only for selected clients in a pilot phase to test acceptance. BDO wants to understand the circumstances in which the bot is welcomed, and how much it actually gets used. The findings will help in designing the program for a positive and straightforward client user experience. For example, it is important that the bot does not wrongly interpret input and that the system understands what the client is trying to express in order to provide an appropriate answer or pose a follow-up question. LISA also needs to be able to recognise incorrectly written words to a certain extent. Chatbots need to have some amount of artificial intelligence. "We're working closely with the international BDO network to evaluate the various needs that LISA could meet," continues Nay. The goal is to develop bot technology that can be used in all audits.

Human factor remains critical

The system must also recognise when it has reached its limits. As soon as LISA encounters a critical situation, the bot automatically passes the reins to the human auditor. Ultimately, personal contact between auditor and client remains vital even with the technology in use. Clients can also contact the responsible auditor directly at any time.



www.bdo.ch
media@bdo.ch

BDO Ltd
Schiffbaustrasse 2
8031 Zürich

Contact for further information:

Stefan Wyer

BDO Ltd
Head Office Switzerland | Media Office
Biberiststrasse 16 | 4501 Solothurn
Phone: 032 624 66 99
media@bdo.ch

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