Initially, the end game of the Essilor Virtual Agent work was to demonstrate the accessibility and power of Watson through the cloud-based Bluemix platform. To this end, we were given open scope to work with. In four days, three grads with limited technical/coding experience were able to teach a robot to be able to introduce a visual therapy game for children - a demonstration of how accessible/impressive Bluemix really is.

As part of our further work with Nao-mi we now leverage numerous Watson services through Bluemix. These services include the Watson Visual Recognition, Natural Language Classifier (NLC), Speech to Text, and Personality Insights services. The robot program that we've written now enables a person to control the robot verbally.

1. The user speaks into a microphone and Speech to Text takes the audio data and converts it to text.

2. This text is analysed by an instance of NLC, which we have trained to recognise a number of intents.

3. These intents are mapped to responses, which the robot then speaks or acts out.

4. You can ask the robot to identify an image that you place in front of it - a printed picture or picture on a tablet/smart phone work fine. We have trained an instance of Watson Visual Recognition to recognise various models of cars, but anything is possible; e.g. I also trained an instance to recognise different species of Australian frogs. Watson Visual Recognition has also recently combined with Alchemy Vision, which means that there is a default library of things that the service can recognise, such as landscapes.