Communicating With Customers Using Artificial Intelligence: Enhancing the Digital Experience – An Industry Report

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence is everywhere. It helps us to find the next movie to watch and guide us in the city to avoid traffic jams while driving. It is also replacing human operators in call centers in order to help customers in need of assistance. This replacement is a piece of software called a chatbot, which is capable of processing natural language to answer instantly a question of a customer. This industry report tells the story of Easybots, a start-up focused on delivering chatbots for medium to large companies willing to improve the experience of digital customers.

KEYWORDS

Artificial Intelligence, Chatbot, Machine Learning, Media Entrepreneurship, New Media

It was about midday when we got to the offices of a large company. We were there to meet the head of the contact center. She was worried about the rising costs of training people to serve customers over the phone. The future contact center agents have to pass an exam after thirty days of training in order to be prepared to answer customer calls. But the main problem was that agent turnover was high meaning new training courses needed to be set in place too frequently. In the middle of the meeting, she complained about this situation and wished all agents were robots. We all laughed at the futuristic idea of robotic agents and the meeting continued normally. Later that day we talked about the meeting and started commenting on the idea of robots answering customers’ calls. We were not laughing anymore. It was actually a good idea and the technology was beginning to show promising results in that direction. In less than two months we founded Easybots, a company dedicated to build the solution that company and many others need.

CONTEXT

The concept of artificial intelligence (AI) dates back to the fifties. But it was not until recently when it became so popular beyond science fiction films. One of the main areas of AI is machine learning, where computers are able to learn in contrast with being programmed to do a specific task. By learning we mean computers can find patterns in data and predict a result. In the case of natural language processing (NLP), machine learning algorithms can predict the intent of a user saying something to the computer. That is how Apple’s Siri or Amazon’s Alexa work. You say something to them and get a result back. Fortunately, this power to translate user messages into defined intents is available to anyone connecting to an API provided by any of the big tech companies, such as Google, IBM, Microsoft or Amazon.

DOI: 10.4018/JMME.2019010106

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