



Should You Use Chatbots In Your Customer Service?

Global Technology Leader Mahindra Comviva shares an enterprise look at chatbot technology and the pros and cons for enterprises and consumers alike.

GURUGRAM, HARYANA, INDIA, March 2, 2018 /EINPresswire.com/ -- There's been a lot of discussion in the last couple of years about the rise of AI. This conjures visions of intelligent machines taking our place in performing many tasks. It creates fear in some and it excites others, but the truth is we've been talking about human interaction with machines for decades. The chatbot as we now know it is not a new development.

Alan Turing first considered the possibility of conversations between humans and computers in 1950. He created something called the Turing test, which was designed to test the intelligence of machines. If a human observer couldn't tell the difference between a computer text response and a machine text response the computer passed the test.

Computer programmers have tried to create machines and programs that can pass the Turing test ever since it was created. The first taste of success came with Eliza in 1966 – an early chatbot program that appeared to pass the test. It was able to answer in what appeared to be an intelligent manner by looking for certain keywords. The results were controversial, but it was definitely a step in the right direction.

Slow Progress

After the initial success of ELIZA and a few similar programs in the 70's and 80's it became clear that we had a long way to go. There's been plenty of debate since about the usefulness of such technology over the years – can we successfully develop it and do we really want to? [Aditya Dhruva](#), Vice President of Messaging and Broadband Solutions at [Mahindra Comviva](#) is a firm believer that it can be of great benefit to both businesses and their customers.

It might be impractical and unaffordable for business to have human support available 24 hours a day. In many cases, chatbots answer most of a customer's questions without any indication they're not dealing with live support personnel in the other end. They get the solutions they're looking for which increases their satisfaction with a company and its products.

Dhruva points out that the interaction with the chatbot has to approach true human interaction for it to be accepted. That's the key challenge for developers and until recently, they haven't done a very good job. It wasn't hard to tell when it was a programmed response versus a human response. As AI technology has advanced the lines have begun to blur.

Huge Potential Cost Savings

In the next few years, we're will see an explosion of chatbot adoption. Businesses that don't adapt will be left behind. They're relatively inexpensive programs, but also quite powerful. By using chatbot technology a small company can rapidly expand their customer service department and compete with

much larger competitors. The technology actually has the potential to level the playing field.

There are multiple benefits for all size businesses. Chatbots can help a company to increase its sales potential by creating a 24/7 online presence. That also means the company can answer technical support and general inquiries at a moment's notice. Overall, these systems can simplify and enhance the customer experience and that's the goal of all successful businesses.

Answering the Critics

Critics argue that customers satisfaction could be compromised. They argue that bots often appear less than human creating the so-called "uncanny valley" response. This theory argues that computer software that appears almost, but not quite human, actually leaves the user feeling strange and repulsed. They're likely to react negatively as a result.

These criticisms of chatbot technology are valid to a point. At least they have been. Our machine learning and AI technology is advancing at a rapid pace. The lines between human intelligence and intelligent machines are beginning to blur. Many families are now having fun with their Google Home's and their Amazon Alexa's.

What's the point anyway? Human customer service reps can do anything a chatbot can do and in most cases, they can do it better. The problem is they're also expensive and not typically available whenever a customer has a question. As our AI technology continues to get better, the question will no longer be if companies should adopt chatbot technology, but can a business survive without it?

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