Rise of the Chatbots!

written by Manoj Khanna | September 2, 2016



In light of building a contemporary digital experience and social engagement, the rise of the Chatbots is quite an advent when combined with the latest tools & technologies. We have clearly seen a growth in digital concierge services from Apple (Siri), Google (GoogleNow), and Amazon (Echo) in past coupled of years if not more – the use of common language and communication with digital devices is increasingly becoming a standard. As Dion Hinchcliffe explicitly references, IRC Bots, Eliza, & Zork – the latter, command line programs from 80's, and the former Internet Relay Chat (IRC) that used to perform automated functions to control the IRC Channels back in the day when I was in high school working on dial-ups.
Today, the world is different, and the Chatbots are a self-learning and evolving machine – they are the new frontier for brand & consumer interaction. Uber's Messina describes it as 'Conversational Commerce', and Facebook's Zuckerburg describes as the 'next big thing' that is being worked on now at Facebook, and they've built a Chatbot roadmap of sorts.

How do Chatbots work?

Chatbots work differently, and they have a human-built intellect that is fed over a course of time and developed using data which is curated based on an archival process of scenarios and cases. The knowledge experience part comes from the business logic and machine learning, and the constant communication of the connected devices (apps, devices, APIs, DBs) which are feeding into the business logic. So your Chatbot essentially becomes a self-learning machine which

should get better and better over time. The information feeders to Chatbot are multi-channel user interfaces – so any data that is visible to us eventually gets fed into its knowledge portal. The accumulated data gets further curated through machine learning and is then queried on through algorithms which utilize the power of cloud computing.

So what's in it for companies?

For Social Media companies – it's about connecting users with their brands, and for brands, it's about their products, brand loyalty, and customer service. And this all leads to the monies. Companies, or in this case the guinea-pig pioneers within social media and brands that are looking at Chatbots as a way to monetize into the building hype of 'conversational commerce', and also, as a way forward to potentially change they interact with customers today.

So how should one get started on Chatbot?

Follow a minimalistic approach – solve a simple problem and then bring complexity. The power of natural language – where users can query simple things – such as service type, any recommendation or what next product to choose from – could be a simple but good start. Worth for brands which are user conscious.
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