Avanade’s New Chatbot Consultant

June 15, 2017, Chris Myers (Forbes)

On Tuesday, June 6, 2017, Avanade revolutionized their customer service by releasing a new feature on their website, a chatbot called Ava. Consultants and clients can now interact with the website via speech or text to find answers to their questions quickly and efficiently.As an affiliate partner with the University of Washington, Avanade partnered with students in the University’s iSchool on a sponsored capstone project to provide and implement the bot to Avanade.com.

Always readily available, Ava is built on Microsoft’s Bot Framework and is hosted on Azure cloud services utilizing both LUIS, Microsoft’s learning AI, and Skype.This technology is used by sales, marketing, and visitors to the website to drill down on specific questions and provide the appropriate content based upon queries posed to Ava.

Start-upery CEO, Vivek Kumar is extremely happy with Avanade’s new service, “It’s becoming increasingly easier to get people we’ve onboarded up to speed with the services Avanade offers us. The bot saves us time preparing, scheduling, and proceeding through meetings with our consultants.”

In a fast paced world where people are often on the go, people do not have the time required to browse a website to find the answers to their questions. Currently, it is difficult to navigate the full breadth of the services that Avanade offers and their respective FAQ’s. The Avanade.com bot streamlines this process by getting you exactly what you need fast.

Avanade Consultant, Sally Rosenthal shares her experiences using the new tool, “Before Ava existed, I would spend hours talking to other consultants to find specific information about our latest solutions. Now, I can use Ava as I’m running into a meeting with a potential client to find these solutions in minutes.”

The bot also uses machine learning to continuously get smarter the more it is used, as project overseer, Will Hutchins, explains, “Our new service allows our clients to effectively communicate with our consultants through a new medium. As the bot continues to learn through LUIS, the service will become even more effective. We’re extremely proud of the University of Washington team that brought this to fruition.”

Experience the new customer experience for yourself at <https://www.avanade.com/botbeta>.

**Problem Statement:** How might we improve customer service so that Avanade and their clients can ask and answer each other’s questions with quality and in a quick manner.

**Untapped Potentials:** AI and emerging bot/learning frameworks, machine learning via LUIS, natural language processing, mobile chat bot interfaces.

**Unfair Advantage:** We’re all students and have 6 months to work on this project. We have unfettered access to FUSE labs, the team responsible for building bot framework. We have a sponsor in Avanade who is offering resources and a project plan. Avanade is a Microsoft partner, giving us additional access to partner resources, partner hackathons (for bot framework), etc.