14-003-2 Capstone Project - NLP Applications

Compulsory Task 2

Auto Response Technology

There are numerous examples of auto-response technology available in everyday life that have been around for a while now, in some cases for years – automatic suggestion of text in numerous text editors and predefined response buttons in instant messenger chat windows.

Automatic Suggestion of Text

Microsoft has for some time now made available an automatic text suggestion function in most of the text editor windows in all of their Office applications. When typing in Word or Outlook for example in some cases the editor will suggest ways of finishing what you are typing dynamically as you type. For example if you start typing a date the text editor will suggest how to complete it with instruction on how to do so.
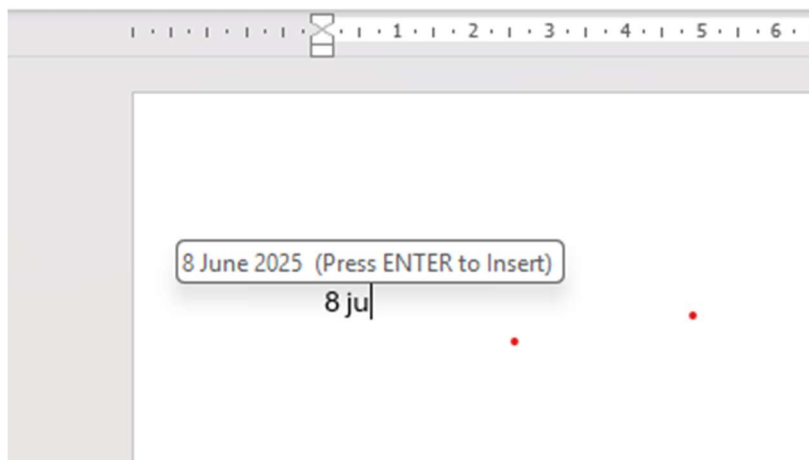
This is not limited to dates either. In some cases the editor will suggest text in the same line where you are typing if it recognises the phrase you are typing. In the screenshot below I had just finished typing are and hit the spacebar and Word suggested 'typing' as you can see by the slightly different text colour.

This can be useful if you are a slow to medium speed typist that often looks at or watches the screen whilst typing but if you are a touch typist who works quite fast the usage opportunity is fairly low as by the time the program has suggested some text the user has already finished typing it.

Predefined Response Buttons in Instant Messenger

This is a bit newer in development and is not present in all IMs I assume for varying business cases. For example in online help and support chats it is almost universal that the user must answer a number of predefined questions before either an automated response is supplied by the chat or you are passed on to a human agent to investigate the issue further. Other IMs such as MS Teams provide buttons at the bottom of the chat window that sometimes line up with possible responses to the last entry from the person with whom you are chatting.

For example when someone types in a message saying 'Hello' or 'Good morning' Teams will add two or three buttons across the bottom of the window with responses such as 'Hi', 'Hello' or 'Good morning'. The user simply clicks on one to add that text to the chat window for the recipient to view. This can be time saving in some cases but isn't always that good as the auto-responses don't tend to be able to capture the users 'speech patterns'. To be more specific I don't use 'text speech' when I use instant IMs I type what I would say so any auto-responses would have to fall in line with my actual speech patterns for me to want to use them. This is not really possible with the low level of programming used in Teams.