NLP 245 Spring 2023

Assignment #3

EnjoyOutDoors.com is an outdoor recreation and adventure equipment and supplies company. They have a wide range of items for sale and rent (e.g. bicycles and bicycling gear, personal water craft and associated gear, skiing equipment, rock climbing gear, and most anything fun and exciting you can do outdoors) They have hired you because you have background in NLP. They want a conversational interface to interact with their customers, but they have no idea how to make that happen. Your job is to advise them about platforms and give them some ideas about what is possible. To do that you should compare 3 platforms:

DialogFlow (Google)
Plato (Uber)
RASA

Your end product should be a report that lays out the advantages and disadvantages of each platform, makes a recommendation and has a demo built on each platform relevant to EnjoyOutDoors.com that supports the information in your report and shows what is possible. Turn in demo videos with your report. It would be good to give the company demos that they will think are cool so they'll hire you for more consulting. A good demo doesn't have to do everything, it just has to do enough interesting things well.

In evaluating the platform keep in mind that EnjoyOutDoors.com employees spend more time outdoors than in front of a screen so not very AI savvy. They would like to maintain a conversational AI system in-house but wish to avoid huge costs in labor. The company has a casual friendly style and a reputation for reliability and would like the behavior of the system to reflect that company image.

It is part of your job to decide what attributes you should compare across platforms, you should base your criteria for comparison on what you know about the company, what you think they need, and what you think is useful for developing and maintaining a good system.

You can do this assignment in groups of 3 or less. In addition to the report and the demo videos, each group member should answer the discussion questions below individually:

1. What criteria did you use for comparison and why did you choose them?
2. What conversational AI platform would you choose for doing a very sophisticated system? Would it be the same as what you would pick for EnjoyOutDoors.com?
3. Do you think you knew enough about EnjoyOutDoors.com to give them a useful comparison? What else would you have liked to know?