

# Research: How viable is a drop-down menu for a chatbot?

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## Findings

- Rich UI elements such as drop down menus and buttons fill the blank space with a structure that communicates the expected format of the reply. [1]
- Buttons and quick replies are almost integral for keeping users on the happy path and away from too many apologetic error messages. [2] But these buttons and quick replies also create limited options when they are in abundance.
- Chatbots should respond to user's minimal action [4], which can be obtained by using pre-made functions such as in a drop-down menu or buttons (but when creating too many buttons, a menu would be better in my opinion).
- It is best to do user research and client research to find out if this is what the client wants and if a drop-down menu will indeed help the user [5].
- Chatbots are smart, automated conversational identities that make tapping on drop-down menu buttons, opting for search functions and navigating through pages on websites redundant [6]. From the previous sentence you can deduce that chatbots are there to avoid pressing on drop-down menus, but instead use buttons as options to a specific question.
- Keep drop-down options no less than 7 and no more than 15 [5].
- Drop-down menus can be used as short cuts for users that don't know the commands for it or don't want a whole conversation before doing what they want (such as first letting the chatbot guess by their explanation what they mean instead of go directly to the send email procedure because they know their question is too personal).

## Ideas for drop-down menu

- Contain an option that again shows the FAQ questions.
- If interested, maybe create an option to switch over to a human staff member who can answer your question directly. If a human staff member is not available (because it is outside the hours of availability), then display the message that human staff is only available during specific hours (and thus give those hours).
- Switch to different language, which I think the client wanted but that was more of an option for later. With this, we can make a small beginning, but when switching, the chatbot will display a message that it did not learn that specific language yet.
  - I don't know if this is what we want or that we want the chatbot to recognize via an input message the language that the user wants to use. With this option, we need to take into account that for example Dutch users use English sentences like "I see what you did there" or "I don't know" instead of "Weet ik niet", which is frequently used by Dutch native speakers. In addition to these frequently used sentences, Dutch uses a lot of English loanwords, such as "shopping".
- Contain a change-name option.

## Conclusion

It seems that a drop-down menu could be useful to our chatbot to make it easy to use for the user and improve the user experience. But we need to determine which options are the best to include in the drop-down menu. It is also a good option to use a drop-down menu, otherwise buttons, so that the user can use minimal action to respond and it is easier for the chatbot to receive pre-made function answers and thus guaranteed good (and hopefully specific) answer to the question or action of the user.

[13/12/2020] In this research there are 4 options for in the menu, but maybe because this is just a few and less than 7, the drop-down menu will be redundant. I will discuss this with my team mates to determine some options and I think it will be best if we try to make such an implementation and show it to the client. If the client's vision doesn't include our drop-down menu that we will represent, then it won't be used but it is not a bad option to suggest it to the client.

[16/12/2020] In the last scrum meeting, a lot of my teammates were of the same opinion as I am that the best thing to do is make (a prototype of) the drop-down menu. The rest did not give their opinion, which suggests in my opinion that they don't mind if I make it or not. The suggestions for the drop-down menu that I found and wrote down in this research were accepted by the team and are in development. Even though the amount of ideas for the options in the menu are not 7 or higher, for now the basic 4 mentioned in this research

(and maybe additional ones that I come up with during development) is good and the menu can be expanded if needed.

## Remarks that I found for our chatbot

- I found that most users find a message longer than 3 sentences for a chatbot too long (except if that contains the answer to the question I think). This applies to opening messages, ending messages, feedback asking messages, etc.
- Create a voice for the chatbot, like saying this in first person such as "Are you satisfied with my response". For a better explanation see the reference [3]

## References

- [1] <https://medium.com/impossible/a-small-ui-change-for-bots-a-giant-leap-for-usability-3ea72c0f337c>
- [2] <https://chatbotsmagazine.com/19-best-practices-for-building-chatbots-3c46274501b2>
- [3] <https://chatbotsmagazine.com/11-more-best-ux-practices-for-building-chatbots-67362d1104d9>
- [4] <https://marutitech.com/traits-good-chatbot/>
- [5] <https://slickplan.com/blog/dropdown-menus-best-use-cases>
- [6] <https://www.sitepoint.com/chat-bots-and-the-future-of-web-development/>