Title: How AI is shaping new food production

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In 2014, it was common to see people lining up in front of markets and convenience stores in the morning waiting for the arrival of new deliveries to arrive at the shop. What all the people were waiting for was ‘Honey Butter Chips’ which was a huge sensation at that time waiting to taste the sweet and crispy potato chips. People not only waited there, but people were even reselling them at higher prices which was quite an expensive price for a crisp and was even mentioned in the news as a hot issue, or even as a social problem. There are also always hot items in a variety of categories that become a hot issue and there was always a ‘who’ behind the birth of these items as well as food. In the future though, maybe the term ‘who’ might be the wrong way to put it. As AI became such a boom in society, now there are movements that even AI might participate in the marketing of new products.

The food industry achieved a milestone in AI's participation through IBM Watson's AI, which excels in food creation and product development. From 65 original recipes, Watson now has thousands of recipes and ingredients in its database. So, when you have ingredients at home but you don’t have a clue what to make for your meal, ask Chef Watson, then it will come up with surprising combinations. Starting from Watson one of the largest snack companies, Mondelez International, uses AI as a guide to developing new flavors and products shortening the time for new product development. The company sees AI as a key to producing fewer prototypes when manufacturing new products and thinks AI has a better understanding of consumers’ reactions to products.

In Korea, AI started taking part in the food industry as well. On May 17, GS25 launched a lemon sparkling highball developed by the chatbot AskUp, an AI chatbot service from Kakao Talk. AI participated in the entire process of production which makes it special. It also has significance because it’s the world’s first highball alcoholic product developed by AI.

How far can AI participate in new product production is still a question mark. It is clear though that companies are paying attention to these movements and some companies are embracing the changes, particularly in new product development (NPD), even by teaming up with AI specialists in product production. Although we don’t know how much AI will intervene in product development in the future, it is anticipating whether AI will steal the hearts of our consumers by making ideas for products that even humans could not think of.