

What is a bot? Bots are interactive services that provide a conversational experience. They are developed to make people's lives easier and replace apps. For example, imagine texting a number to order pizza and having it delivered without ever talking to a real human, that is what bots do.

Bots are one form of artificial intelligence. It is technology that can do things humans can uniquely do, whether it's talk, see, socialize and reason. Specifically, a bot is a piece of software that performs an automated task, such as setting an alarm, telling you the weather or searching online.

Siri is a bot, as is Microsoft's Cortana and google assistant. These bots are all artificially intelligent enough to answer questions like a human being would. There are many kinds of bots developed for different needs. To name one, there are chat bots, a type of bots that can hold a conversation with the user to accomplish a task.

What can bots do?

A bot is a type of automated technology that is programmed to execute certain tasks without human intervention. That is, it might be prompted by a human to perform an action, but it can carry it out on its own.

Bots perform simple, structurally repetitive tasks much more quickly than is humanly possible. In a traditional static apps, the user has to learn how to operate each control; whereas, in a conversational UX, the user just has a conversation.

Many bots are programmed to act like humans when the user talks to them so it feels like asking a person for help instead of just typing in a search engine. It means bot understands what the user wants to do and responds dynamically.

The most prevalent use of bots on the internet is for web spidering, also called crawling. Search engines use bots to crawl the web and archive new pages for future searchability as well as search up companies to analyze millions of files on servers throughout the world. Without bots, Search engines like Google could not exist.

Bots are also used in cleaning floors, enhancing elder care, and conducting businesses. Yet, bots can also be used for malicious purposes, like transmitting computer viruses or artificially increasing views on YouTube videos or web articles.

History?

Bots have been around since the beginnings of the internet. The Turing Test also known as the Imitation Game is considered as the very first bot developed. It was generated by a computer scientist Alan Turing in the 1950s. And his work may have set into motion a series of events that led to AI as people know it today.

Following that was the development of ELIZA, one of the most significant AI development of the 1960s. A bot whose purpose was to simulate a psychotherapist. And it was discovered that humans have a desire to communicate with technology in the same manner that people communicate with each other.

And that leads to the development of SmarterChild in 2000. SmarterChild took advantage of the popularity of text messaging services and added the ability to process natural language — or, simply put, it understood human-speak. And responded.

SmarterChild the instantaneous fact-finding technology was eventually able to handle a wide variety of topics, ranging from sports and weather to news and movie timings. In some level, SmarterChild was a primitive version of voice search tools like Siri.

Where?

Bots are everywhere in technology and have become essential to some of our most routine tasks. A bot exists either in its own apps or lives inside of Slack or Facebook and other messaging platforms. Chatbots for instance, can be found primarily in messaging apps such as Facebook messenger, WhatsApp and telegram.

There are also bots in Slack, the business-focused messaging service, many of which aim to help with work-related tasks like expenses or to-do lists. And there is Kik Messenger, that includes bots to send people Vine videos and get makeup suggestions from Sephora.

With the rise of instant messaging, over 2.5 Billion people have at least one messaging app installed. Bots not only offer a way for brands and publishers to reach the population, they offer a means to do so individually. Moreover, optimizing consumers' emotional value is fully aligned with good AI, as it serves customers with what they really want even if they are not aware of it.

Future?

So, are bots the future? The answer for this question is not matter of if artificial intelligence will irreversibly transform every industry, but rather when and in what form. Whether bots become the primary way people interface with technology remains to be seen.

As some developers and companies believe that people are tired of apps and would rather use bots. Instead of having many different apps on the phone, the user could have one with multiple bots that can help with different tasks. With that being said, there is still a majority of people preferred to do things themselves instead of talking to a robot.

Since people all know how frustrating it can be to ask Siri or Cortana something only to have them not understand. But what seems to be certain, is that bots will become increasingly capable. Even if bots don't overtake the way people use their personal devices, they will bear an increasing amount of behind-the-scenes work. And it's just a matter of time that bots will rewrite our underlying technology.