The University of Auckland enhances student experience with IBM watsonx-powered chatbot
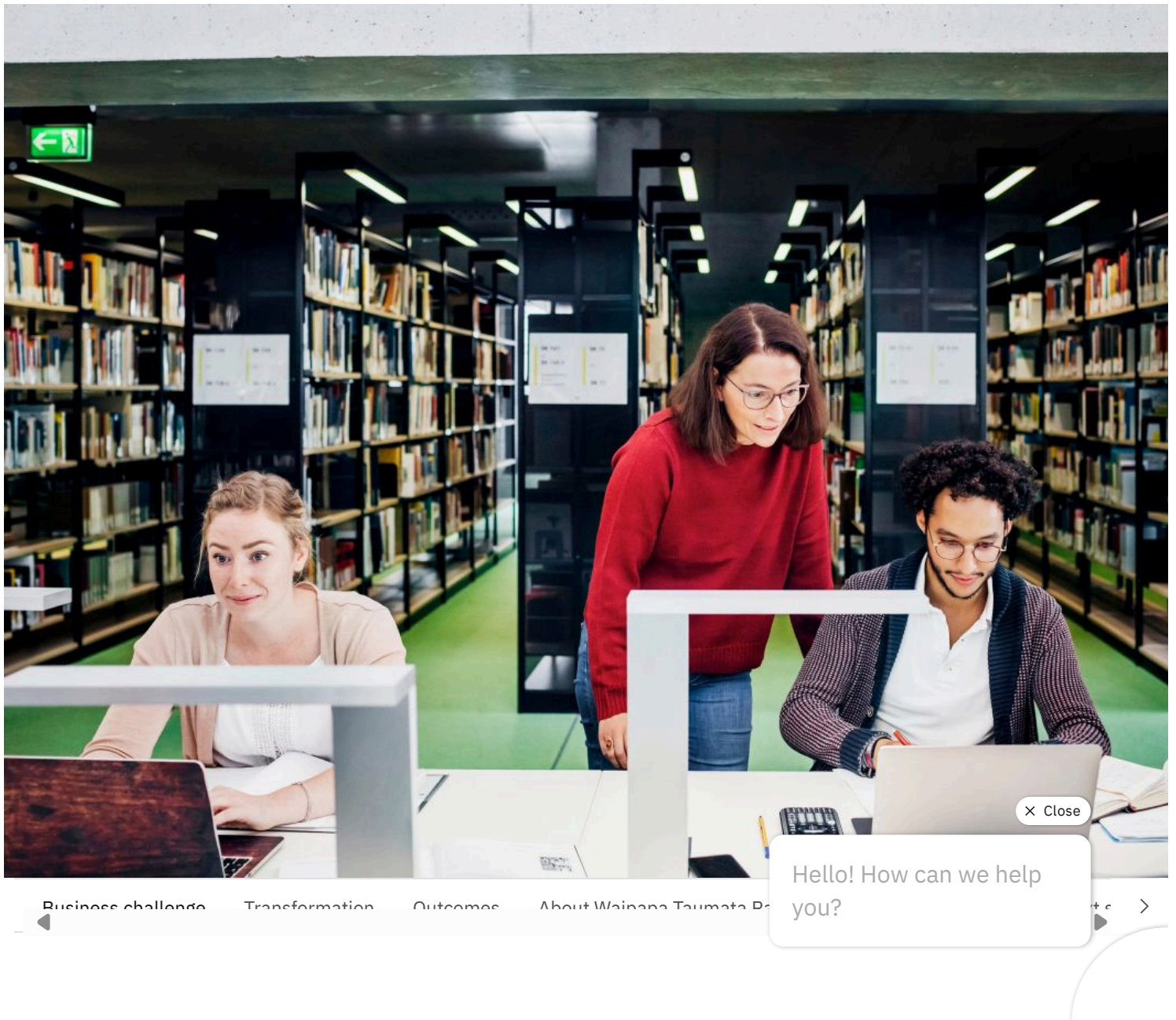
The University of Auckland and IBM

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Navigating the shift to virtual learning

Waipapa Taumata Rau, The University of Auckland, with its 46,000 students, faced significant challenges affecting students, faculty and the broader community as it transitioned to virtual learning during the pandemic. The surge in student queries, coupled with the dynamic nature of information due to evolving restrictions, strained the university's ability to provide timely and accurate support. Students sought answers that frequently changed, making it critical to deliver up-to-date information swiftly. Additionally, the lack of a robust search system hindered efficient information retrieval. Language barriers and the need for culturally sensitive communication further complicated student interactions. Without addressing these challenges, the university risked diminishing student satisfaction, straining resources and stalling innovation.

Revolutionizing student interaction with AI

In response to these pressing challenges, IBM, in partnership with ElementX, developed a tailored conversational AI solution for the University of Auckland (UoA Assistant). The solution involved a comprehensive scoping process to identify the university's priorities and collaborate with staff handling student queries. The UoA Assistant, built on IBM® watsonx Assistant™ and IBM Watson® Discovery, featured advanced natural language understanding (NLU) capabilities, enabling it to learn and adapt over time. This AI chatbot addressed high-volume, repetitive questions and seamlessly integrated with existing systems for personalized responses. A standout feature was the ease with which the university staff could update information, allowing swift modifications in response to changing circumstances. The implementation of this innovative solution revolutionized student interactions, providing a dynamic and responsive support system.

40%
improvement in first-time resolution

58%
improvement in the service

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Enhanced efficiency and student satisfaction

The introduction of the UoA Assistant significantly improved efficiency and student satisfaction. The goal was to increase the proportion of student interactions that got resolved first time and via self service, while maintaining the existing high customer satisfaction levels. As a result, first-time resolution improved by 40%, and the ratio of self service over assisted service improved by 58%. Students satisfaction measures also remained high, with the UoA Assistant at 81% and the experience centre at 91%. The AI system efficiently manages routine inquiries, allowing students to easily find information on a single platform without navigating multiple search pages. The UoA Assistant boasts over 90% coverage and containment rates, resolving most queries without human intervention. Its dynamic update capability ensures students receive the most current information. These enhancements have elevated student support services and solidified the university's position as a leader in educational innovation, paving the way for continued collaboration with IBM and ElementX to introduce additional capabilities and broaden communication channels.

About Waipapa Taumata Rau, The University of Auckland

Waipapa Taumata Rau, The University of Auckland (link resides outside of ibm.com) is New Zealand's largest university, with about 46,000 students passing through one of five campuses each year. It is renowned for its commitment to fostering an environment of academic excellence and innovation. The university's dedication to enhancing student services and its rapid adaptation to changing educational landscapes is evident in its recent investment in AI technology, ensuring that every student's experience is both seamless and enriching.

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About ElementX

[ElementX](#) (link resides outside of ibm.com) is a technology company specializing in developing advanced AI and machine learning solutions. They focus on creating innovative products that enhance user experience and efficiency through intelligent automation and data-driven insights. ElementX collaborates closely with clients to tailor solutions that meet their unique needs, leveraging cutting-edge technologies to solve complex challenges and drive digital transformation. Their expertise spans various industries, ensuring robust, scalable and impactful outcomes.

Solution components

IBM watsonx Assistant™ →

IBM Watson® Discovery →

Deliver consistent and intelligent customer care with conversational AI

IBM watsonx Assistant is a next-gen conversational AI solution—it that empowers a broader audience that includes non-technical business users, anyone in your organization to effortlessly build generative AI Assistants that deliver frictionless self-service experiences to customers across any device or channel, help boost employee productivity, and scale across your business.

Learn more about watsonx Assistant →

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