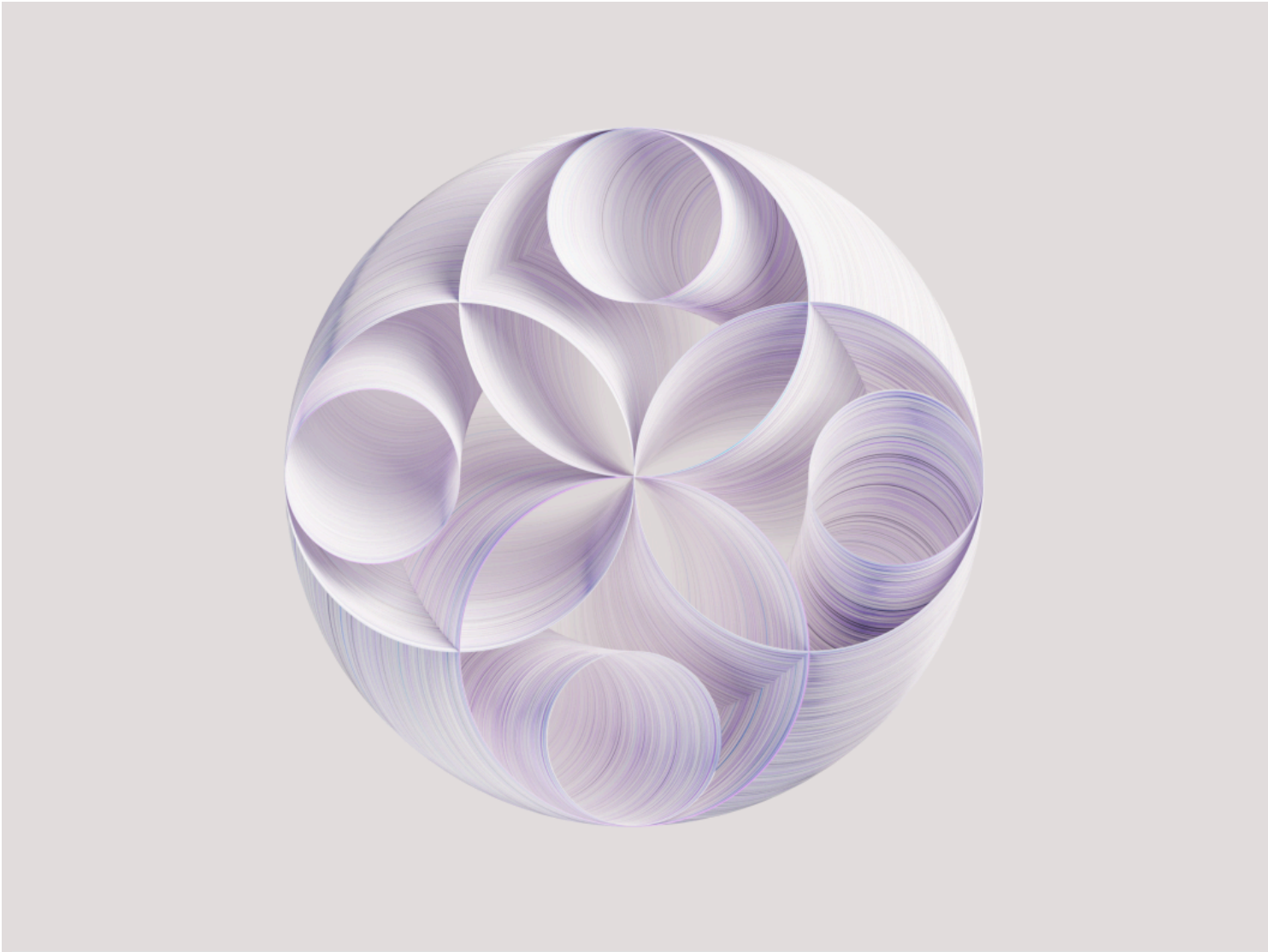


New virtual assistant gets it right with IBM watsonx

South Waikato District Council + IBM



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Answering the call

The South Waikato District Council (SWDC) in New Zealand was looking for answers. The council oversees the district’s local infrastructure, public services, regulatory services

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and more. With such a wide range of responsibilities that significantly impact citizens' daily lives, it's imperative that the council provides easy access to the information those citizens need, when they need it.

However, citizens and employees often struggled to find answers to questions, which could be deeply buried in siloed repositories. It could take hours or even days to locate what they needed.

The council wanted to help citizens find relevant information in a timelier, more efficient manner. To that end, it sought to create a virtual assistant that could quickly guide them to the information and resources they sought. Initially, the council attempted to implement the virtual assistant on its own but lacked the technical expertise to do so. Inaccurate results from the assistant prevented the council from being able to move it forward into production.

The SWDC called upon IBM to help.

An intelligent, robust solution

Working together, IBM and the council created a proof of concept (POC) of an intelligent virtual assistant. The new virtual assistant combines the capabilities of [IBM® watsonx.ai™](#), [IBM watsonx™ Assistant](#) and [IBM Watson® Discovery](#). It relies on watsonx.ai to boost the advanced intelligence capabilities of watsonx Assistant in answering questions. Watson Discovery provides data discovery capabilities, enabling the solution to dig deep into archival and difficult to access documents and data to find the right answers.

Powered by generative AI technology and a commitment to transparency, IBM and the council prioritized ensuring the integrity and clarity of every interaction throughout the development process.

91.5%

accuracy rate validated across 300 test questions

Boosting accuracy and efficiency

The new virtual assistant has generated greatly improved responses, with an impressive accuracy rate of 91.5% validated across 300 test questions. Other benefits include:

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- Improved functionality and tailored interactions: Provides the ability to quickly filter through large volumes of documents and find the correct subset of data using Watson Discovery.
- Advanced intelligence using large language models (LLMs): Incorporates watsonx.ai into the assistant, enhancing its capabilities and introducing advanced intelligence for more sophisticated answers.
- Transparency to the user: Integrates results with document URLs to facilitate easy access for users seeking additional details, thereby providing them transparency.
- Enhanced user experience through conversational search: Enables user interaction with data using natural language queries and quick retrieval of information, performing operations on data and receiving instant feedback.

As a result of the successful implementation, the SWDC decided to fully invest in the solution to bring it into production. The council expects to reduce the time employees spend answering questions and to be able to shift that effort into other community initiatives.



About the South Waikato District Council (SWDC)

Located in New Zealand, [SWDC](#) (link resides outside of ibm.com) is the territorial authority for the South Waikato District in New Zealand. Founded in 1989, the council acts as the governing body for the district, overseeing local infrastructure, public services and regulatory functions.

Solution components

[IBM® watsonx.ai™](#)



[IBM watsonx™ Assistant](#)



[IBM Watson® Discovery](#)



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