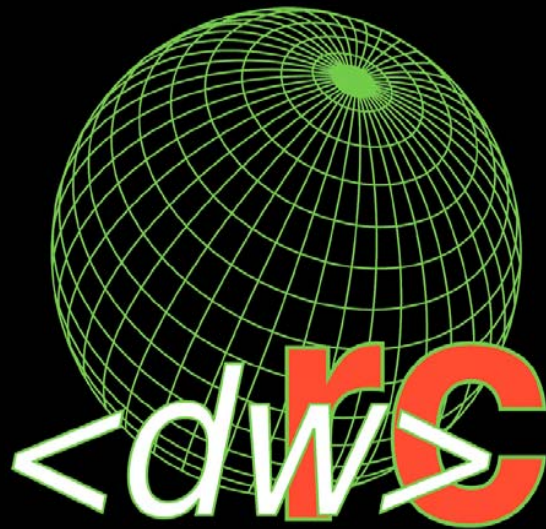


Bots *Mean* Business

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Bots: Boon or Bane?



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Bots a Boon?

Improved customer services at lower cost

- save money
 - eg reduced consultation time by 75%
- increase sales
 - eg a Bot increases conversion from browsers to buyers from 2% to 30%

Customers like Bots because...

- They don't always want face-to-face advice
- Finding information online can be daunting
 - eg a survey about virtual financial advisers found that many people were happy to use one



But the Bots must be trusted

OED defines trust as:

a firm belief in the reliability, truth and ability of someone or something

Reliability

- Bots are always available
- Bots can emulate best practice
- Bots don't
 - get tired
 - have moods or the Monday morning feeling

Truth

- Bots are controllable as they can only say what they are programmed to say - so Bots are as truthful as their programmers!
- BUT Bots can inadvertently mislead

Client: "I'm looking for a safe investment"
Bot: "Our Precipice Bonds are very popular."

Ability

- Commercially applied Bots have failed because of “lack of intelligence”
 - existing Bots give too many inappropriate responses

Bot: What's your name?

Human: My name's irrelevant

Bot: Hello, irrelevant

Won't this be solved soon?

Bots in 2003

- Eliza, written in 1965, just 15 years after Turing

Human : Perhaps I could learn to get along with my mother.

Eliza : Tell me more about your family.

Human: My mother takes care of me.

Eliza: Who else takes care of you?

- 50 years after Turing, still well away from passing the Turing Test

Playing with “trust”

What would a 2003
Bot make of these?

- Trust in God
- Trust Bob to be late
- My money's in trust
- National Health Trust

Me: What is trust?

Bot: The firm belief or confidence in the honesty, integrity, reliability, justice, etc. of another person or thing; faith; reliance.

Me: I have money in a trust fund.

Bot: That's nice. I have a Lisp processor

Me: Tell me about trust funds

Bot: Ambiguous

A good sales person?

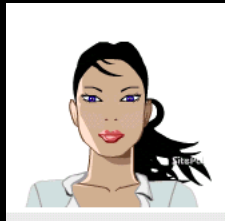
- Builds trust
 - Power
 - ability to control another
 - Familiarity
 - reciprocal exchange of information
 - Solidarity
 - having things in common

Power



- Users wanted an asymmetric relationships with Bots in which users dominant
 - Users insulted the Bot eg “stupid”
- and worse!
 - But if the Bot criticised a user, the user was annoyed
- Users expected a Master/Servant relationship

Many Bots are "female"...??



ALICE



Eliza



Ella



Ford's Kate



Pepsi's
Lisa



Artificial
Life's Luci



Maybot's
Maybelle



Nativemind's
Nicole

Familiarity & solidarity:

REA, the Real Estate Agent



- Small talk could increase offer price BUT only for certain personality types
- ... which shows how difficult emulating a good salesperson is

Social dynamics

“Success of social agents highly depends on understanding the social dynamic underlying user-agent interaction”

De Angeli, Johnson, Coventry
*Proceedings of the International Conference
on Affective Human Factors Design, 2001*

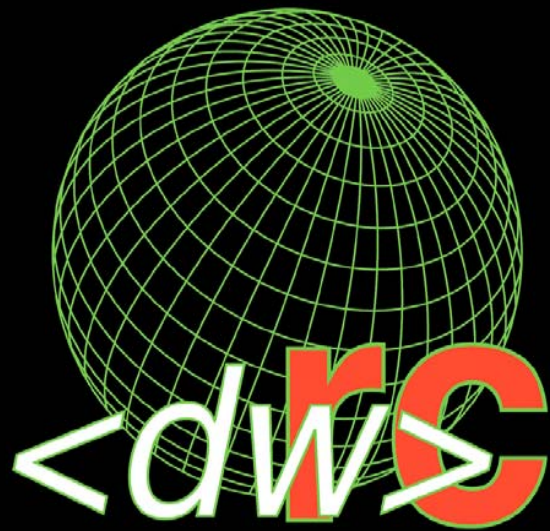
Are call centres satisfactory?

- Think about the last time you dealt with a Call Centre
 - Could you understand the speaker?
 - Could they understand you?
 - Were they able to answer your questions fully?
 - Were they authorised to carry out your request?
 - Did you get the required goods/services?

Bots: boon or bane?

- To get a boon:
 - talk before you buy
 - many faked demos
 - ask questions & look out for evasions
 - don't be overambitious:
 - use for routine interactions
 - restrict the domain
- don't try to pass the Bot off as a human
 - undermines trust
- understand the social dynamics

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