The branded company digital assistant
ITS ROLE AND EVOLUTION

William Meisel
President, TMA Associates
Digital assistant

- Interaction through **text or voice** in “natural” (human) language
“Understanding” is the key capability

Speech-to-text is required as a “front-end” for voice interaction
“Understanding” is the key capability

- Speech-to-text is required as a “front-end” for voice interaction

Supporting a “conversation” with a digital system
General digital assistants

- Interaction through text or voice in “natural” (human) language

Apple’s Siri

Amazon’s Alexa

Microsoft
Messaging chatbots

Messenger Platform connects you to over 1.3 billion people each month

Come see why bots mean business.

2 Billion
messages between people and businesses each month, includes both automated and people-initiated

53%
of people who message businesses say they are more likely to shop with a business they can message*

100,000
monthly active bots on the Messenger platform, and counting**

Facebook Messenger
text chatbots
- Text a company
Chatbots get more attention than email

- A/B test by Oslo, a Facebook Messenger chatbot development platform
  - Sent the same campaign to users using both a Messenger bot and email
- The **CTR (click-through rate) was 12 times higher** for the bot than e-mail
- The **opening rate for the chatbot version was 98%**
There are a range of channels

- Web site: Chatbots or voice interaction
- Mobile phone
  - Through general personal assistants or as independent apps
- Messaging applications
  - Text a company
- Home speakers or connected home systems
- Call centers
- ...
“Today's Call Center Is A Relic In Waiting”

- The title of an article in Forbes
  - Andy Peart, Chief Marketing & Strategy Officer at Artificial Solutions
Today's Call Center Is A Relic In Waiting

The title of an article in Forbes

Andy Peart, Chief Marketing & Strategy Officer at Artificial Solutions

More than half of customers reaching out to a call center hang up without having their issue resolved. “It’s clear this system can’t persist.”
Today's Call Center Is A Relic In Waiting

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Andy Peart, Chief Marketing & Strategy Officer at Artificial Solutions

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Artificial Solutions provides tools for developing virtual assistants
Agents can be a hidden part of the “automation”

WE GET WHAT YOU’RE SAYING.

Only Interactions uses a blend of AI and human understanding which enables your customers to talk or type in their own words to easily get things done.
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YOU REALLY CAN BE EVERYWHERE AT ONCE.

Your customers need to reach you when, where and how they want. We provide a consistent, efficient experience on any channel.
Cooperating digital assistants

- Nuance Communications’ “cognitive arbitrator” unifies digital assistants
Cooperating digital assistants

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- Dragon Drive uses the technology to allow vocal requests such as
  - “Ask my bank what my balance is.”
  - “Order my usual Chinese takeout after my last meeting today.”
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A company can’t cooperate with other digital assistants if it doesn’t have one
Is the technology ready?
Is the technology ready?

- Limited context helps

Fidelity Bank. How can I help you?

I’d like a hamburger and fries.
There is a range of help

- Professional services
- Template-like tools
- Pieces to assemble
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In my research, over 120 companies that could help build a complete digital assistant for at least one channel
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Over 120 others that can provide a piece of the solution
It’s happening

- In my latest newsletter, *LUI News*, on commercial activity involving the Language User Interface
  - Published at the end of January

- Over 150 companies mentioned in articles in the issue
  - Both vendors and companies using those vendors
Big data versus small data

- Machine learning is a part of the technology behind language technologies
  - Requirement for lots of labelled data?
Big data versus small data

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  - Requirement for lots of labelled data?
- Tools and services available that
  - (1) Help generate such data
  - (2) Extrapolate from limited examples
Big data versus small data

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  - Requirement for lots of labelled data?
- Tools and services available that
  - (1) Help generate such data
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- Analytic software and services can help understand what customers ask
But why a branded digital assistant?

Why a company web site?
A company assistant independent of channel

- Working through channels that can impose restrictions can be limiting.

“We reserve the right to reject or suspend any skill that includes advertising or promotional messaging we determine is misleading or confusing, results in a poor customer experience, or is otherwise inappropriate.”

- Amazon
A branded digital assistant can retain memory of:

- A customer
- The customers’
  - Previous actions
  - Preferences
  - Prior communications
  - ...

A branded digital assistant
The digital assistant can encourage engagement

- Customer service and technical support
- Proactive notifications and suggestions
- Entertainment
Eventually...

- THE WAY to engage with a company
In summary

- Big companies are promoting conversational interfaces with big investments
- Digital assistant technology is here and improving
- Tools are available
- Improve customer experience while reducing costs
- Can motivate customer connections
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