

DigitalGenius

Human+AI™ Customer Service

The New York Times

“That was a ‘wow’
moment for me”

Jenn Ackerman for The New York Times

Sarah Seiwert, customer representative

It took two weeks for Ms. Seiwert to notice that her company's A.I. computer system was starting to pick up on her work patterns.

Ms. Seiwert, 37, a customer representative at the online test-prep company Magoosh, answers student emails. When a question comes in, she searches a database of preapproved responses and finds the appropriate answer.

There are thousands of different responses. Finding the right answer isn't as easy as it sounds.

When Magoosh implemented an A.I. system in February to help its customer service team work more efficiently, Ms. Seiwert noticed that it was reading the questions and suggesting responses.

If the suggestions were good, she would add a few niceties and send back a quick reply. But within two weeks, she no-

ticed that even when she wasn't responding directly to an email, but following up to one that she had sent earlier, the software was suggesting the proper response.

“That was a ‘wow’ moment for me,” said Ms. Seiwert, who works from a home office in Mankato, Minn. “It's been studying and learning my patterns.”

As more customer service moves from phone calls to text-based conversations through chat or email, companies are looking to machine learning to help the human agents work faster. Magoosh is using software created by DigitalGenius, a London-based start-up.

When an email comes into Magoosh, the system reads the email, categorizes it and routes it to the appropriate employee. After a few months, some DigitalGenius customers start to automate responses for some common questions. Basically, this happens when the A.I. has seen enough examples of how human agents handled the request that it gains confidence that its answer will be correct.

Magoosh isn't there yet. But Ms. Seiwert said the software has reduced Magoosh's queue of customer requests by half, and it has made her team's goal of responding to every customer within 24 hours more manageable.

Even though the A.I. is learning from the human agents, Ms. Seiwert said she doesn't foresee a future where she's out of a job. Too many questions still require a level of human intuition to know the appropriate answer. There are also times when rules need to be broken, like when customers ask for an extension on their account because of some circumstance beyond their control.

“I am not convinced that artificial intelligence is going to replace us,” she said. “You can't program intuition, a gut instinct. So the A.I. might get very intelligent, but I hope as a human I continue to get intelligent and not stand at a standstill.”

DigitalGenius brings practical applications of artificial intelligence into the customer service operations of large and growing companies. Its **Human+AI™ Customer Service Platform** combines the best of human and machine intelligence, enabling over 30 companies and public sector entities to live up to and exceed rising customer expectations. At its core are deep-learning algorithms, which are trained on historical customer service logs and integrated directly into the contact center's existing software. Once enabled, the platform automates and increases the quality and efficiency of customer service conversations across text-based communication channels like email, chat, social media and mobile messaging. For more information, please visit: www.digitalgenius.com.