CHATBOTS: RESHAPING E-RETAIL INDUSTRY AND REINVENTING CUSTOMERS' SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Ranu Gupta
Research Scholar
School of Commerce &Management, Vardhman Mahaveer Open University, Kota

Prof. Pawan Kumar Sharma
Director
School of Commerce and Management, Vardhman Mahaveer Open University, Kota

──────── **ABSTRACT** ────────

The world is now experiencing the emergence of the new e-commerce technologies that are going to revolutionize the way customers and businesses are treated. The e-business has completely changed the way of selling products. E-commerce is one of the e-business models, which mostly do business over the internet. The major drawback of this field is the quality of customer service they provide. In the e-commerce sites, there are deals with many kinds of products throughout the world. An artificial chatting system integrated with e-commerce site contains different services to make user feasible in e-shopping time. When the user wants to buy anything from these sites, he needs guideline about the product and other things in this system just like do shopping in a physical store. In every e-business model, customers miss a sales representative of traditional shopping and have to wait for a long time to get a response from the customer service representative. As some customers increase, the need for customer service also increases. As a solution to this problem, e-commerce chatbots are the brightest spot that has drawn a lot of attention. They are a powerful tool for personalizing and even reinventing customer service, which is definitely a pillar of any e-commerce business. This conversational commerce approach is growing very fast. Chatbot market is anticipated to witness a substantial Growth in near future. The present Research Article is all about taking e-commerce industry to the next level. The study focuses on understanding the current state of Chatbots and their outlook, its possibilities and limitations of uses and the objective is to understand and forecast industry trends and business sentiments.

Keywords: E-commerce, Chatbots, Artificial Chatting System, Conversational Commerce

INTRODUCTION

Chatbot, is a term popularized by Mark Zuckerberg when he launched the Facebook messenger platform. It is a software that is designed mainly to mimic conversations with humans. It uses NLP (Natural Language Processing) to attempt to understand what asked to it and then it replies accordingly. It is an intelligent robot that follows a set of rules and in some cases, utilizes artificial intelligence. It is very similar to walking into a physical store and talking to an employee there.

The chatbot is a conversational interface, infused with the artificial intelligence, cognitive abilities and the power of natural language processing. It is a contemporary and fast-growing technology through which people can access the information. Because of cloud technology and Artificial Intelligence, the top examples of the Chatbots are no longer a simple greeting tool which only sends "hello" or "how are you," but in fact is stimulating an excellent customer service for businesses across all industries. In this business world where customer service is a crucial area, modern chatbots can surely give the fastest solution to the different queries of different customers. It has been seen that 65% of consumers are willing to interact with a company via chatbot, indicating a substantial opportunity for various brands.

According to a report, Chatbot market is growing at a CAGR of 37.11% and is expected to reach USD 6 billion by the end of 2023. As the digital interactions are scaling high, it is essential for the digital marketers to stay on a level with the latest trends in the market. The developers of modern chatbots are making it more human-like, making the interaction more comfortable.

These Chatbots turned out to perfectly fit in e-commerce as

customer support option. Though there are many good alternatives to phone calls, contact forms, and online chat, email, remains the fastest and, in many cases, the most convenient means for various visitors to get answers. Live web chat is an another akin to chatbot support option, but it is linked to the browser and requires a user to remain online during the conversation. different from other live web chats, chatbots are typically based on messaging apps, and their unique advantage is that they are personal and mobile.

E-commerce is a booming, continually transforming the industry. Mobile shopping is steadily but surely gaining pace regarding global online sales. In alignment, the leaders of digital retail are continuously innovating their service offerings with the freshest groundbreaking technology, i.e., chatbots.

E-commerce has been robustly implementing chatbots for its business purpose. Reportedly, by mid-2018, AI-powered chatbots are expected to rise exponentially in the retail sector and e-commerce. Today modern consumers also spend almost 90 % of their time on messaging apps via mobile rather than the social media. As chatbots do not require the installation of a native app, it makes more comfortable for the e-commerce owners and retailers to tap and nurture the potential as well as existing clients. E-Commerce websites through chatbots can easily increase brand loyalty by engaging with customers on a personal note. It also helps the retailers to send promotional deals and regular updates. The ultimate motive of the e-commerce sites implementing chatbots is to take care of customer support. Chatbots can also cross-sell and upsell by recommending different products based on a customer's previous purchases. This is known as "conversational commerce."

Automated personal assistant or Chatbots will bridge the gap between personalization that customers face in online shopping. Consumers nowadays are knee-deep into chat culture and are already turning to chat platforms for their day-to-day needs. Chatbots are going dramatically to advance the shopping experience of most of the consumers. Reports show that today consumers expect personalization from the various sellers. They want such websites that treat them like an old friend. E-commerce Chatbots will provide a conversational assistant, who can acknowledge the shopper's intent and personalize the recommendations that are presented to the shopper.

In the e-commerce world, chatbots can be very helpful on multiple levels and provide a complete shopping service. They can be used for accurate and quick product search. They can simultaneously handle more product orders from various customers, therefore speed up the ordering and shipping process. Also, customers can even pay your purchased products directly via chatbots so that the customers can have a complete and integrated shopping experience.

According to areport of Ubisend:

- 1 in 5 consumers would consider purchasing goods and services from a chatbot.

- 40% of consumers want deals and offers from chatbots.

- Consumers are willing to spend more than $410 through a chatbot.

Chatbots act as the in-store sales assistant, always available, instant, highly knowledgeable. They do more than just offer a new channel for people to find deals and make e-commerce purchases. They also help consumers to identify what products they want and need. Rising inclination of e-commerce enterprises towards increasing customer experience and reducing operational costs will garner the growth of global Chatbots market over next five years.

Chatbot Platforms:

- Facebook Messenger

- Amazon Alexa

- Kik

- Telegram

- WeChat

- SMS

- Apple iMessage

- Slack

Chatbots can have many different skills and perform many different tasks for organizations. Imagination and inventiveness will give rise to more and more functionality.

BENEFITS OF CHATBOTS

- **Smart Communication:** Chatbots can assist in retention of customers. Clever use of push messages, text message and emails can be structured into chatbots. Either by offering a reminder or by pushing a special offer that encourages the customers to return.

- **Improve the User Experience (UX):** Customers want to interact with a service provider in a seamless, natural way otherwise they look elsewhere. Small business often suffers from workforce shortages, which can leave customers frustrated. Chatbots offer urgency, immediacy, and speed. Personalize the shopping

experience at a potentially higher capacity than standard response, due to the speed and accuracy of customer data gathering/analysis.

- **Chatbots Never Sleep:** Chatbots enable 24/7 customer service and guidance, without the extra resource costs. They are also capable of fielding thousands of requests at the same time, so can potentially be handling thousands of sales. They Streamline response times.

- **Prevent Cart Abandonment:** It is so frustrating to see the potential customers leaving before they complete a sale. There are so many reasons why cart abandonment happens, but one of the biggest is life. The phone rings, or the baby cries, they suddenly realize school is ending. Life just gets in the way sometimes. Having a chatbot handling the sales means there is a virtual brain on-board to monitor or find out what is happening. If a cart is left, then the bot can prompt the user with a few helpful reminders or offers of assistance.

- **Hyper-Personalization:** Chatbots technology exists to not only maximize efficiency but to build customer loyalty and affinity through what the customer deems to be real understanding on the brand's behalf. When customers feel appreciated and understood, they will be more inclined to remain devoted.

- They eradicate human error.

- Surging Sales and Reduced Costs: use of chatbots have been proven to increase revenue as well as profit due to efficient customer assistance that requires less human support. It gives an expansion room to business without the immediate need for more staff.

- Greater convenience, deeper personalization, improved customer satisfaction. it's a way to success in any e-commerce brand's digital strategy.

- Chatbots don't require a download. They run inside messaging applications like Skype or Facebook Messenger or on websites

- **Enhanced Brand Image :** In today's world, trust is often portrayed not only through excellent service; but also alongside the perception of being up-to-date and innovative.

- Chatbots can provide information such as store opening hours but can also carry out more complex tasks like helping users complete online forms and payments.

- Once the customer has purchased, chatbots can, after acertain period, check if they liked the product, offer services and additional products, and help them write,

and post product reviews.

- Developing a chatbot is very hassle-free and less expensive in comparison to developing an app for a business.

- **Product recommendations:** famous fashion brand H&M launched a chatbot on its messenger app Kik, which allowed customers to share, see and purchase products in their catalogue that is very effective.

- Chatbots help with product comparisons and can gently make additional product recommendations once the customer has selected an item in cart. Chatbots can capture shipping address, billing, preferences, and manage the entire payment process.

TECHNOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF CHATBOTS

Chatbots, or conversational interfaces as they are known, present a better and efficient way for individuals to interact with computer systems. Traditionally, to get a question answered by a software program involved using a search engine, or filling out a form. A chatbot allows a user to directly ask questions in the same manner that they would address a human. The most well-known chatbots currently are voice chatbots: Alexa and Siri. However, chatbots are presently being adopted at a high rate on computer chat platforms.

The technology at the core of the rise of the chatbot is natural language processing ("NLP"). Recent advances in machine learning have significantly improved the accuracy and effectiveness of NLP, making chatbots a viable option for many organizations. Mostly commercial chatbots are dependent on platforms created by the technology giants for their NLP. These include Microsoft Cognitive Services, Amazon Lex, Facebook DeepText, Google Cloud Natural Language API, and IBM Watson.

To bring a chatbot online for e-commerce, one needs to ensure that they have shopping cart integration. This gives the chatbots access to the information it will need to retrieve to handle the customer with no glitches. Stock levels, shipping terms, product details, etc. All the things a customer will want to know. Many companies are encouraged to use and create chatbots. Microsoft generated Bot Framework to support programmers to develop bots for their apps. Facebook strengthen developers with instruments to make more structured messages, such as call-to-actions, images, descriptions, and URLs. It also helps to speed up the relationship between chatbots and e-commerce and expands Facebook's audience. Google created a messaging app

"Allo", which also includes the Google assistant.

People generally prefer to receive information about the brands while they are shopping, and chatbot seems as service description or product and FAQ. A chatbot is a highly interactive and engaging way to cut down the whole shopping time. It allows enhancing ROI, keeps costs low. Brands may build the robots with actual answer decision trees that level off with developing ways to services and products. It is essential to understand that chatbots allow capturing data in advance to create a more personalized experience for clients.

Shopping Cart Integration for Chatbots:Brands build their stores on shopping carts, and that is where all the information from the online shops is stored. Once a chatbot system is integrated with one of the shopping carts, it can work with all of the stores based on that platform. The more shopping carts the chatbot application supports, the more potential clients it has.Also, such systems need shopping cart integration to retrieve product quantities, details, shipping terms and other information.

Integration with shopping carts is necessary for chatbot systems to get its proper market share in the e-commerce industry, which is very powerful these days. However, along with the profits, the integrations process brings many challenges to overcome. Shopping cart integration is among the most significant pain points for enterprises, due to the high technological complexity. Setting up a real-time data exchange and synchronization between two different systems involves hard tech work, and so does their maintenance. That is why many companies choose to entrust shopping cart integration to professionals. Thus, they save money, time, efforts and get more qualitative and secure connection with shopping carts.

APPLICATIONS

A chatbot can be used anywhere a human is interacting with a computer system. These are the areas where the fastest adoption is occurring:

- Customer Service - A chatbot can be used as an "assistant" to a live agent, increasing the agent's efficiency. When trained, they can also provide service when the call center is closed, or eventually even act as an independent agent, if desired.

- Sales/Marketing/Branding - Chatbots can be used for sales qualification, e-commerce, promotional campaigns, or as a branding vehicle.

- Human Resources - An HR chatbot can help with frequently asked questions ("how many vacation days do I have left?") and can act as an onboarding assistant.

Some of the major chatbots from India:

1. **Gupshup:** One of the most advanced bots and messaging platforms, it enables developers to quickly and easily build, test, deploy and manage chatbots across all messaging channels.

2. **Aisha by Micromax:** A 'desi' version of Siri, Aisha can perform tasks like initiate Google search, make calls, give movie reviews, read news among other tasks. It is one of the most popular bots in India.

3. **Alexa:** E Commerce companies like Amazon have also launched their E Commerce Chatbot "Alexa" to assist their customers in the best way they can.

4. **MagicX:** MagicXhelps in day-to-day tasks like bill payments, food order, travel bookings, among other daily chores. It learns from human interaction, giving a sense of more human like responses, but highly scalable at the same time.

5. **Engati:** It allows build, manage, integrate, train, analyse and publish personalized bot in a matter of minutes.

6. **Niki.ai:** Niki.ai started by responding to requests for services such as cab, food delivery and phone credit top-ups. This fully automated chatbot now works up on the concept of artificial intelligence with no human intervention.

7. **Syphora:** Sephora is a Virtual Artist on Facebook, which allows people to try on different lip colors using selfie photos.Sephora's chatbots are helping consumers find deals and make purchases, but also make fashion choices and find products that meet their unique style and tastes. That's something a simple ecommerce website doesn't offer.

8. **Shopbot :** eBay first started using chatbot technology by piloting a simple Facebook Messenger tool that reminds bidders 15 minutes before an auction listing is about to end. Now they've expanded to offering ShopBot, a virtual personal shopping assistant that helps people find items they want (at the price they want) on eBay.It's another great example of how AI can improve the shopping experience beyond what a regular ecommerce site has to offer. In the end it improves engagement, retention, and can drive sales.

9. **SnapTravel :** SnapTravel is a Facebook Messenger bot that helps people find deals on hotels. Using AI to search Expedia, Priceline, and more than 100 other

sites, SnapTravel goes above and beyond by helping automate the process of finding the right hotels for your travel needs.

10. **1-800-Flowers :** 1-800-Flowers was one of the first bots on Facebook Messenger. It serves as a great example of how older brands can benefit from adopting new technologies early on. Their bot allows users to send flowers and gifts. It prompts to select items based on the kind of event (birthday, romance, anniversary, etc) and offers suggestions for different gifts.

11. **Aerie :** Clothing and lingerie retailer Aerie by America Eagle Outfitters is another early developer of chatbots for the Kik messaging app. Their bot allows users to browse products based on personal preferences. After a few rounds of the game, the bot is able to make personalized recommendations based on your style preferences.

12. **Spring Bot :** Spring Bot is one of the first to launch on Facebook Messenger. It's a live messaging and personal shopping service that fashion brands can use to connect with customers. Brands like Balenciaga, Givenchy and Lanvin use the tool to sell to customers.Consumers can make purchases right from the bot and it will give you receipts, shipping information, and answer any other purchase-related questions.

13. **H&M :** Clothing brand H&M developed an interactive bot for the Kik messaging app that recommends products based on your own preferences. The H&M bot uses photo options and asks questions about style to create a comprehensive profile of what consumer like.

14. **Engazify :** Engazify Bot is a faster and better way to appreciate your teammates, capture all your team wins, and save it for everyone to see.

15. **FitCircle :** FitCircle is a health and fitness chatbot which offers users personalized weight loss workouts, personalized yoga guidance and similar features. It also offers nutrition guidance.

16. **GoHeroAI :** It assists you in booking flight, hotel, taxis etc. It integrates with messaging apps to use sophisticated algorithms and understand traveler's preference.

17. **HDFC :** Eva is India's first AI-based banking chatbot and can answer millions of customer queries across multiple channels instantly, HDFC Bank said in a statement.

18. **Ruhh :** A chatbots developed by Microsoft India team. Specially for Indian market. You can talk in English as well Hindi.

19. **Lawbot :** This Chennai-based chatbot or rather Lawbot analyses and reviews legal documents, like license agreements, which can help you save time, money and simplify the process.

20. **Haptik :** Haptik can perform a wide array of activities ranging from finding the best shopping deals, checking train status, book movie tickets, get food delivered, and book flight/train tickets among others.

21. **Gupshup :** it enables developers to quickly and easily build, test, deploy and manage chatbots across all messaging channels.

22. **IxiBaba :** A chatbot that can answer all your travel queries, brought to you by ixigo is the perfect example of how companies are improving on interacting with customers and enhancing customer experience.

23. **MagicX :** One of the first bots on the Facebook messenger, MagicX lets you carry day-to-day tasks like bill payments, recharge, food ordering, flight booking and other services via chat.

24. **Yana :** YANA help users to book cabs, order groceries, etc. The chatbot's intelligence has been developed by it's more than 50,000 messages that it has received over time.

25. **Yatra:** Yatra has launched what it claims is the first Facebook Messenger chatbot in the Indian online travel sector. The intelligent chatbot helps customers search and book flights directly from their Facebook Messenger.

Prepathon

26. : Prepathon messages students the topic of the day, it answers questions and also sends across motivational messages. Aimed at helping students perform better at their exams, this chatbot is making their life easier.

RechargeBot

27. : Payjo is India's first messenger bot that lets you recharge your phone, sets reminder for recharge and shows suitable plans for your number.

LIMITATIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

The retail sector companies strive to combine physical experience and digital in one amalgam. They recognize the

opportunity to reduce costs and boost efficiency in one stroke. Still, bear in mind that chatbots are not a one-size-fits-all solution. They have to be used in the right context to understand client needs and ensure a proper response.

Eventually, one of the main limitations of chatbots is the lack of ability to properly empathize. Also, some people are merely weary of interacting with bots. That is why an e-commerce business should always have a human representative ready to jump in. This brings us to the point that chatbots still far from replacing humans, or even apps and websites. Besides, they need to be maintained and "educated" by humans through machine learning. That does not change the fact that they are an incredible asset to a multichannel chat strategy and a powerful automation tool, though.

Implementing AI software is a good solution for companies that have to struggle with a lot of queries and need to hire a lot of agents. Chatbots can handle repetitive questions from the clients. Sometimes, clients are unsatisfied with an agent that can answer only fundamental issues in most cases and want to continue the conversation with only human staff.

Retailers tend to overrate these new technological possibilities. They often use self-service opportunities because they believe clients hate connecting with employees. But the cause of it is that live service is struggling, through high turnover and lack of training. Clients prefer high quality live customer service.

The technology has pitfalls. For example, brands don't have entire control over the client's experience, so developing excellent services will be very tough.Clients want to get quick responses and opportunity to buy necessary things quick and easy. The conversational interface with Bot-guided commerce may bring better shopping experience. Chatbots can handle the flow of information from millions of requests at the same time and build meaningful responses. They provide product recommendations and use their expertise to improve the conversations. Chatbots may improve the entire retail service as well by capturing feedback and product reviews from the users.

FUTURE SCOPE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In a recent survey by Oracle, 80% of business owners stated they want to implement chatbots by 2020.Understanding the context brings deeper insight into the possibilities to improve customer experience. Additional information such as location and time allows ensuring a contextual response. Also, use images to build more crucial conversations and

clarify the client's need when having trouble understanding.

Experts ensure that it is very cheap to develop a chatbot, but it's very challenging to create a very efficient bot. Build it around the client experience, and genuinely implement into e-commerce backend frames. One need to make it flexible and include all innovative chatbot technologies.Global revenue from artificial intelligence is expected from $643.7 million in 2016 to $36.8 billion by 2025. And by the looks of things, e-commerce brands will take a fair share of the pie.

Chatbots, artificial intelligence is not just for cutting-edge tech companies like Google and IBM Watson. Chatbots can come with a mix of machine learning, natural language processing, and live operators to perform all types of tasks that help businesses better serve their customers. They are growing in popularity on Skype, Facebook Messenger, Kik, Slack, andby chatbots. It will make possible to solve issues and refine customers' engagement through AI, connecting to a human assistant rarely.

In the close future, chatbots will understand the emotional state of clients to serve them better. Nowadays, they cannot identify your mood and openness for jokes or further conversation. Soon, these conversational apps will be gaining by itself new points and provide more relevant and sympathetic response. Developers work on the real application as well.

Implementation of chatbots helps to be proactive regulating status changes on any deal. Conversational commerce allows companies to tackle the steady growth that has appeared in mobile commerce up to 30% in 2015. With such significant increase, organizations need to sell to clients through any app, especially through messaging that is used very often.

Chatbots allow attracting clients one-on-one where they already spend their time and develop new buying opportunities.The retail sector has made a huge contribution in combining physical and digital channels together to refine customer experience. Many retailers apply messaging, digital helpers, automated dialogue to bring direct accommodation with the personal approach and decision maintenance that a client wants to get.

Chatbots are here to rock the world of e-commerce. They are changing the face of the industry, delivering information efficiently than humans ever could. Hence, numerous companies are in a position to explore buying opportunities and tap into new markets. Chatbots, however, do not yield results by merely existing: They must actively contribute to the effort of taking customer experience and service to the next level.

Experts predict that in the future a mix of storytelling, service and product exploration will be guided by chatbots. It will make possible to solve issues and refine customers' engagement through AI, connecting to a human assistant rarely. In the close future, chatbots will understand the emotional state of clients to serve them better.

Smarter AI and the ability for customers to search by image. In this age where everyone seems to be snapping photos, it only makes sense for future bots to be able to "speak" through images. Visual search represents the future of eCommerce and chatbots alike. Through Fashwell's visual search technology, customers and brands alike benefit from a more personalized shopping experience.

Deployed artificial intelligence platforms in today's business world augment processes at a more rapid pace than they replace them. While we have yet to determine the exact impact of Artificial Intelligence, a recent report from the World Economic Forum estimates automation will return at least five million jobs by 2022. Now AI is driving fundamental changes in how people conduct their jobs and how companies think about staffing for the future.

The forthcoming years will witness newer innovations and technologies continuing to revolutionize the consumer shopping experience and churn more online sales. Powered by technological innovations, E-Retail is already on the brink of a significant transformation.That is why Apple and Amazon both announced that they are currently focusing on machine learning technology this year.

According to Satya Nadella, the Microsoft CEO, "bots are the new apps". According to recent research, by 2018, if companies don't implement chatbots in their business, then their sales will suffer.

According to Aji Issac Mathew, Co-Founder, and CEO of Indus Net Techshu, chatbots will gain more momentum shortly. The information available on the internet is too much for our brain to consume. Bots will consolidate the data, process it and pass it onto retailers in a simplified format. This result in better quality control and faster decision-making.

According to Gartner by 2017, only one-third of the overall customer service interactions will need the efforts of a human being. Though it is difficult to predict whether chatbots will replace mobile applications, one thing is for sure: the future of the chatbot looks promising. And for the time being, chatbots seem to be the latest face of technology.

CONCLUSION

Artificial Intelligence is currently the buzzword, empowering marketers and brands and with valuable customer intelligence. These insights not only improve but also help anticipate futuristic consumer needs and make decisions for them.

e-Retailers can leverage this Virtual Reality to provide a better and transformational, virtual shopping experience, with a touch and feel concept while doing away with the brick and motor concept. Brands can create bolster customer experience, personalized customer experiences and eliminate the pain points effectively.

Chatbots, next-gen platforms can serve e-retailers with cost-effective benefits and aid in tasks automation. With the help of chatbot, companies can make more comfortable and more personal conversation flow, build a better brand presence, help customers better understand things they have interest for, drive sales, and grow their business, and optimize the customer service. Using e-commerce chatbots now results in double-sided benefit – for customers and e-retailers- which is surely the primary reason to try this new technology in e-commerce.

In today's world, messaging apps have become the most natural and most effective form of communication. Now Chatbots, powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI), has become the critical method customers interact with business. From booking dinner reservations, ordering flowers to renew insurance policies, chatbots have probably made our life manageable, more relaxed and productive.

According to Business Insider, messaging apps now have more users than social media networks. And the trend continues to grow. We may not be too far from such time when the customers no longer shop at superstores, but within personal, real conversations privately. Shopping chatbots will improve in the coming years. Chatbot design and architecture will evolve to the point that shopping bots will become standard for retail.

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