

Watson Assistant

The AI assistant that solves customer issues the first time



Highlights

After reading this brief, you will better understand the value of:

- Automating both simple and more complex customer inquiries across any channel
- Understanding complex language as well as conversational digressions
- Natural Language Processing (NLP) to continuously learn from and improve customer conversations
- Integrating conversational AI into existing applications, content, and data
- Ensuring security and data ownership while maintaining ongoing flexibility
- Selecting an AI-powered virtual assistant versus a simple chatbot
- How you can save time and money by avoiding the pitfalls of legacy systems by taking advantage of the latest Watson features

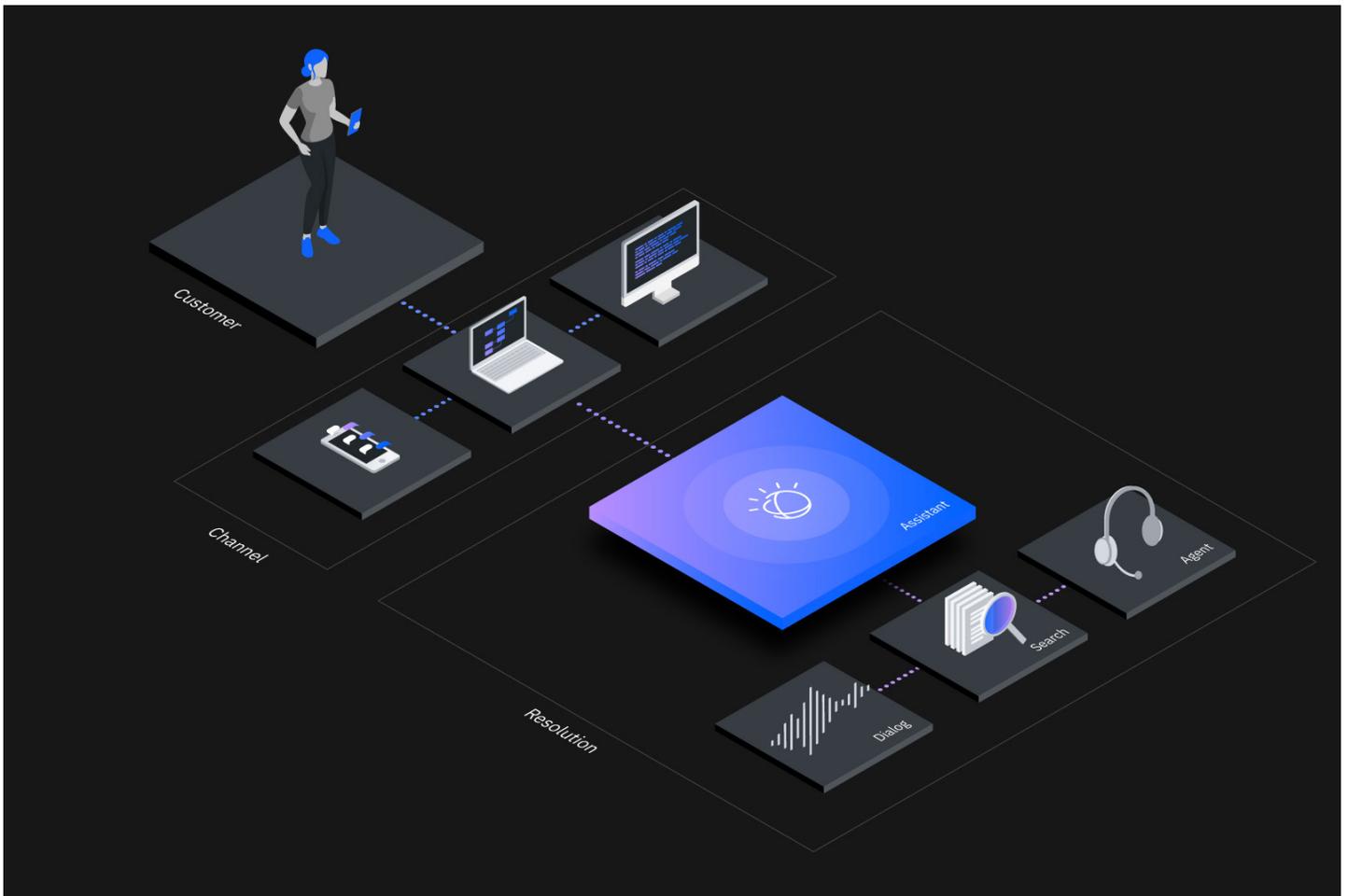
Give your customers what they need, wherever they are

In a world of seemingly limitless options, organizations rely on customer experience as the primary way to define and differentiate their brands, as well as build and maintain customer loyalty. In fact, according to a recent report from NTT, more than 80% of organizations say customer experience offers a competitive edge and more than half consider it their primary differentiator¹. But instead of deciding between customer satisfaction or costs, a recent IBM Institute for Business Value study showed one-way organizations can achieve both. Based on the study, 99% of organizations using AI-based virtual agent technology report it increases customer satisfaction and 96% exceeded, achieved or expect to achieve return on their virtual agent investment².

Watson Assistant provides customers with fast, straightforward and accurate answers to their questions, across any application, device or channel. By automating responses to both common and complex customer inquiries, Watson Assistant reduces costs, allowing your agents to focus on more complex issues—not repetitive questions.

How Watson is different

Today's customers demand more from virtual assistants and simple chatbots, with canned answers and wlimited lifespans, aren't cutting it. Watson uses sophisticated machine learning technology and Natural Language Processing (NLP) to elevate customer experiences and accomplish so much more than relaying basic information from a website. It can assist customers with changing an appointment, tracking a shipment, or checking a balance. It remembers who they are, and can surface information based on their previous interactions. Watson uses machine learning to ask follow-up questions to better understand customers, and can pass them off to a human agent when needed within the same channel.



Watson Assistant provides customers with a single path to resolve their issues, the first time, with conversational AI and AI-powered search that can connect to any customer care application or system.

Watson Assistant works across any channel

We've all had poor customer service experiences where we must relay the same information to a series of bots and agents, and a few more agents, getting more frustrated by the minute.

Customers need a virtual assistant that remembers them, wherever they are and however they choose to interact. What's more, these customers expect the same caliber of service at every touchpoint, whether that's in their Facebook Messenger app, your website chat window, or a phone call. They want to be able to quickly pick up where they left off, no matter where.

Since Watson Assistant is a single solution that works across any channel, your organization can simply train the assistance once and deliver a consistently great omnichannel experience no matter where the customer chooses to interact.

Add Watson Assistant to your phone, web, and social channels

The days of waiting on hold, dialing menu options, and confusing agent transfers are finally over! Watson Assistant seamlessly integrates with your existing telephony and interactive voice response (IVR) systems, eliminating call wait times and increasing call capacity up to 90%³ without the need for additional staffing.

Most customers looking to self serve will start on your website. But building a web chat interface has traditionally been a long process, and requires an even longer period of testing and iterating to ensure a meaningful user experience. Watson Assistant includes an out-of-the-box web chat interface, built with our customer experience and design best practices. It can be deployed in minutes using a single script.

Watson also plays well with social messaging apps like Facebook, Slack, and Intercom, giving your customers the ability to converse with your assistant without having to leave their current environment.

Integrates with other platforms

The modern customer service experience isn't limited to a single conversation. It encompasses a holistic ecosystem that includes customer service representatives, virtual assistants, and an ever-growing array of third-party applications. Watson is designed to plug into this ecosystem, integrating with your platforms and tools, making the entire customer service experience smarter and simpler, from start to finish. This makes your customers' interactions with your business feel more like a meaningful relationship with someone who genuinely cares, and less like a series of random, fragmented conversations with strangers.

It's easy to integrate Watson with customer care systems like Salesforce, Zendesk, Intercom, and more, using a one-click integration, or create custom connections to whichever platforms you use. You can connect to external applications, sites, or systems, enabling Watson Assistant to supply information, translate text, trigger a notification and so much more. You can also power your own applications with Watson's conversational AI using our REST API and corresponding SDKs.

Create great customer experiences with best in class AI

There are plenty of tools, products and best practices around how to build the ideal customer experience, but at a basic level it's about helping customers reach their goals in the fewest number of steps.

While that sounds simple enough, in reality the varied needs of your customer base makes that incredibly complex. Most chatbots fall down when attempting to understand these distinct goals and intentions, as well as differences in how customers communicate them.

Watson knows what you mean, and knows its limitations

Watson Assistant comes out-of-the-box with the latest NLP techniques courtesy of IBM Research. This means that Watson Assistant can handle complex customer queries and conversations on Day One.

For example, customers can start a conversation on one topic, then ask an unrelated question, then return to the original thread. Watson Assistant can manage these different topics, can respond to the off-topic question, and be able to return to the original topic.

Watson Assistant also reduces frustration by asking customers for context when they provide ambiguous statements, rather than making them continuously rephrase the question. If the customer intention still isn't clear, Watson Assistant provides them with some suggestions, and if it's unable to resolve a particularly complex customer issue, Watson Assistant can seamlessly pass the customer to a human agent, right in the same channel.

Make Watson your own

Nobody likes having a stiff conversation with a robotic voice with no personality. Watson Assistant understands human language, but it can also learn the vocabulary of your industry and even internal terminology unique to your organization. You can also customize Watson to understand the nuances of human language, like regional dialects and colloquialisms.

Put your data to use with Watson Discovery

Watson Assistant is supercharged with Watson Discovery, a powerful AI search tool that allows it to quickly search your existing data for the most accurate, up-to-date information on the fly. Whether it's in spreadsheets, knowledge bases or unstructured data like PDFs, Watson Discovery can find and pull up the information that customers need fast. This ability to extend the knowledge of your assistant without necessarily having to train it means fewer customer inquiries will need manual intervention. In addition, because Watson Discovery can pull information based on intervals you decide, customers can always get the latest information no matter where it resides.

Manage the assistant lifecycle

With Watson Assistant, you benefit from the decades of AI research at our labs from day one. And the more you use it, the smarter it gets. But unlike other AI technologies geared only to data scientists and developers, Watson Assistant has been designed so that anyone can create, modify, and maintain a virtual assistant. This usability means that you can support your organization's short and long-term goals with capabilities that not only allow you to get started quickly, but can also improve and expand over time.

Smarter, right out of the box

Watson Assistant includes a set of tools and capabilities that help even non-technical users get started quickly. A simple drag-and-drop dialog builder helps users design conversations based on how a customer would discuss an issue. Watson Assistant also includes predefined content packages for common use cases, including financial services, telecom, retail, customer service and more.

Instead of building all your conversations from scratch, Watson Assistant uses machine learning to mine your existing conversation transcripts and chatlogs for recurring topics. It then suggests which ones to use for training, using the previously answered questions to create new intents, automating its handling of the topic when it comes up again.

Gets smarter over time

Watson is designed to learn as it goes. To do this, Watson provides users with a robust analytics dashboard, enabling them to spot trends, understand points of friction, and take actions to improve how Watson operates. You'll be able to automatically track the most common customer frustrations, before and during interactions, then use that data to reduce call times and allocate resources more efficiently and effectively.

Watson also improves automatically over time, with gaining knowledge from every conversation, through a process called "autolearning." Watson surfaces the most relevant responses to customer queries, improving its capabilities with no human supervision.

Trust in IBM's enterprise ready solutions

The most robust conversations don't mean much if customers are worried about their privacy when they interact with your company. That's why IBM brings its world-class security, reliability, and compliance expertise to bear on the design of all Watson products.

In addition, IBM helps you protect your investment by giving you the flexibility to deploy Watson Assistant on-premise, in the IBM Cloud or another cloud provider of your choice.

Protect your data and your network

Maintain ownership over your data with available data isolation, mutual authentication, and data privacy by default. Feel confident that IBM has the network, physical and application security you need, from encrypting data at rest to controlling who can access it.

High availability & disaster recovery

Sometimes it's not hackers that cause a data loss, but inevitable technical failures. Watson Assistant provides continuous service to your customers no matter what, with enterprise-grade availability and no single point of failure.

Compliance & certifications

Complying with government and industry regulations is just as important as protecting data from malicious actors and technical hiccups. Fulfill your compliance and governance obligations with a solution that is ISO 27001, 27017, and 27018 certified and supports both GDPR and HIPAA compliance.

Lives on any cloud

Watson deploys on any cloud – IBM, Amazon, Google or Microsoft – your own private cloud or on-premises with IBM Cloud Pak for Data with the ability to move to a different deployment with Red Hat OpenShift. This agility enables your business to select the right solution and deployment method today, while proving more options as your needs change over time.

Why your customers hate your chatbot (and how a true virtual assistant is different)

Organizations and their customers understand the value of being able to resolve issues without having to wait for a live agent. But while chatbots have historically provided a simple way to surface the most common answers, their lack of understanding has often left customers feeling frustrated rather than satisfied.

Likewise, organizations are creating chatbots for specific, but overly simplistic purposes, meaning that once those immediate use cases are satisfied, the chatbot has little to no use afterwards.

Instead of investing in short-lived point solutions, organizations need to adopt a platform approach—utilizing the same framework to design, deploy and manage conversational AI that can serve customers consistently well no matter where they interact. In addition, organizations need AI that can accurately identify what a customer is trying to accomplish, especially when the intent is unclear.

Chatbots were not designed to learn, expand their use cases or find answers on which they haven't been trained. Virtual assistants are aptly named; they look for ways to understand, predict meaning, and search for the resolutions customers need, and to do it at the scale and speed of business.

Where to go next

Now that you understand the value of AI to serve your customers, it's time to take the next step. Learn about how organizations like yours have used Watson Assistant to enhance their customer experience at ibm.com/watsonassistant

If you're ready to create your own success story, book a free consultation with one of our AI experts here: [book a consultation](#)

© Copyright IBM Corporation 2021

IBM Corporation
Watson Assistant
Route 100
Somers, NY 10589

Produced in the United States of America
January 2021

IBM, the IBM logo and ibm.com are trademarks of International Business Machines Corp., registered in many jurisdictions worldwide. Other product and service names might be trademarks of IBM or other companies. A current list of IBM trademark is available on the Web at "Copyright and trademark information" at www.ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml.

This document is current as of the initial date of publication and may be changed by IBM at any time. Not all offerings are available in every country in which IBM operates.

THE INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED "AS IS" WITHOUT ANY WARRANTY, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING WITHOUT ANY WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE AND ANY WARRANTY OR CONDITION OF NON-INFRINGEMENT. IBM products are warranted according to the terms and conditions of the agreements under which they are provided.

1 NTT 2020 Global Customer Experience Benchmarking Report,
<https://www.dimensiondata.com/en-gb/expertise/intelligent-customer-experience/customer-experience-benchmark-report-2020>

2 IBM Institute for Business Value, "The value of virtual agent technology",
<https://www.ibm.com/thought-leadership/institute-business-value/report/virtual-agent-technology>

3. MRS BPO, ibm.com/case-studies/mrsbpo-voice-gateway

