


Chapter 13


Challenges Faced When Utilizing Service Bots in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

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ABSTRACT

Service bots are revolutionizing the tourism sector, offering a promising avenue to elevate productivity and augment customer experiences. However, their integration isn't without hurdles, encapsulating a spectrum of challenges that demand attention. Primarily, the advent of service bots sparks concerns about potential job displacement. As these bots assume roles traditionally performed by humans, the necessity for human labor diminishes, potentially leading to workforce reductions—especially for small and medium-sized enterprises in the tourism sector. In essence, while service bots hold immense promise, navigating their integration demands careful consid-

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eration of the potential downsides. Balancing technological advancement with the preservation of human connection and addressing privacy, security, and financial considerations are imperative for a harmonious symbiosis between automation and human-centric hospitality within the tourism industry.

INTRODUCTION

The hotel and tourism industry is continuously evolving, with firms continually looking for new methods to increase operational efficiency, improve visitor experiences, and cut costs. The employment of service bots is one of the most recent advancements in this field. Service bots, also known as chatbots, are computer programmes that converse with customers and perform a variety of functions, such as answering queries, making reservations, and giving recommendations, using artificial intelligence and natural language processing.

Service robots, or “system-based autonomous and adaptable interfaces that interact, communicate, and deliver service to an organization's customers,” are the newest wave of service technologies (Wirtz et al., 2018). Wan, Chan, & Luo (2020) Service robot adoption in the hotel sector has increased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic because more customers are aware of the potential risk of infectious diseases from social contacts. Service robot adoption could indicate less human interactions and lower the perceived danger of virus transmission, which could lead to an increase in the intention to visit. Service bots have restricted capabilities. While these bots are capable of doing a wide range of jobs, they may be incapable of dealing with unforeseen events or sophisticated tasks that require human interaction. This can cause delays and have a detrimental influence on passenger experiences.

Service robots can be equipped with different levels of artificial intelligence: mechanical, analytical, intuitive, and empathetic while installing service bots in the hotel and tourism industries, trust and acceptance are important factors to consider. Huang & Rust (2018). Building trust and approval among guests may be challenging for businesses. Finally, when deploying service bots, security and privacy considerations provide a big challenge. Guests' sensitive information, such as personal information, booking data, and payment information, may be collected by service bots. Businesses must take precautions to protect and secure guest data

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