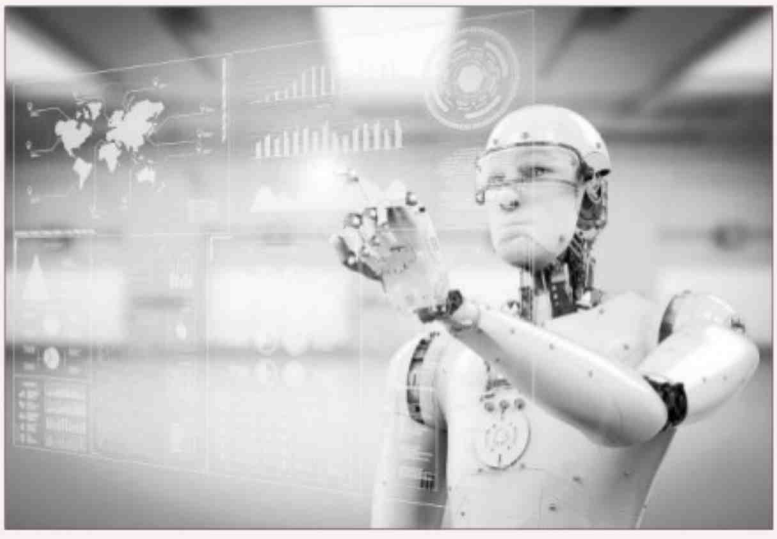
Artificial Intelligence as a tool to empower

Various businesses and companies are employing AI to handle business problems differently



AS SOON AS the words "AI" and "music" are used in the same sentence, one comes across skepticism. If robots are making call centre jobs useless, one is scared to think of what would happen to all the musicans who are anyway underpaid.

"In the world of personalisation and on-demand services, music is one of the very few remaining static artefacts," says Ken Lythgoe, head of business development at creative AI technology company MXX, based in London, England. The company has created the world's first AI tech that allows individual users to instantly edit music to fit their own video footage, complete with rises and fades.

According to Lythgoe, AI doesn't need to be the enemy of music, and instead of replacing us, AI can empower us. MXX's AI tech listens to music and creates a metadata based on its understanding of it. This data includes where it can edit in and out of sections, as well as what the sections might mean to a human, such as "building tension", "climax", "chorus" and "verse". When the user provides a brief for the music they want, AI can edit the original track to fit the brief.

Not only the UK, Japan, which is known for its brilliant technology had its beauty giant, Shiseido introduce its first subscription service recently with a mobile application offering personalised, high-tech skincare to consumers in Japan for about $92 per month. The service, called Optune, is among the industry's first Internet of Things (IoT) systems to pair augmented reality (AR) and artificial intelligence (AI) with a serum and moisturiser dispenser. Using 80,000 skincare patterns, the application works with iPhones, collecting facial data from the built-in camera. Data is analysed with AI, taking into account personal and environmental skin conditions. Based on the result, a cartridge-loaded dispenser selects an appropriate formula for the user twice daily.

More businesses are finding it difficult to trust the quality of existing user information and are looking to use artificial intelligence to clean up large pools of data to make business sense. For instance, when Swedish media group Bonnier AB faced challenges in adhering to GDPR (the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation) for its 180 companies, a solution developed by Accenture brought together its diverse data sources. The company deployed machine learning and artificial intelligence for faster compliance for these sources which are largely processed manually.

Businesses are now eyeing a data strategy independent of IT strategy to get "actionable insight". According to Sanjeev Vohra, group technology officer and global data business lead at Accenture Technology, this has made the technology services leader take a different approach to solving business problems by "putting artificial intelligence to data and not data into the AI".

Tech Mahindra has implemented an AI-based facial recognition to register the attendance of employees, thereby reducing the work load of an HR associate

It's not that the approach is full proof. Vohra noted that there have been cases of AI solutions, or bots, built using business data, fail. This proved that the existing data was "incomplete".

Accenture has been investing heavily in its innovation hub in Bengaluru during the past three years to use AI for making sense of data and clean large sets of user information, he said. "We have a big strategy on talent growth in data, as this is a hyper growth area for us globally. We will do this organically in India (we are already there in terms of skilling our talent) and in markets where we require certain complementary talent, we will go with inorganic growth," Vohra said.

For campus hires, Accenture has a "strong boot camp" to train people upfront to make them ready for jobs and the transformational work it focuses on. Accenture takes people in data strategy and architecture segments (one of the four broad segments) through its Data Master Architect programme, which has been co-created with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to equip people with the right skills, he said.

Company officials reckon that K2 is a perfect blend of knowledge and kindness. It will take over the routine HR transactions to provide constant assistance to the HR team in creating an enhanced employee experience. Tech Mahindra's first HR humanoid K2 is a present-day, very functional Humanoid created by Tech Mahindra and deployed at its Noida Special Economic Zone Campus in Uttar Pradesh.

K2 leverages Artificial Intelligence technology and initiates conversation without any need for wake-up commands. Keeping in mind the needs of specially abled, K2 can respond to queries with text display along with the speech. It can address general and specific HR-related employee queries as well as handle personal requests for actions like providing payslips, tax forms etc. Besides, it would enable the HR team to focus on other important areas for employee development.

Tech Mahindra has already implemented an AI-based facial recognition system to register the attendance of employees, thereby drastically reducing the time spent by an associate in updating the timesheet. Recently, it also launched Talex – the world's first AI-driven marketplace of talent that maps skills of the existing talent pool.