

Forbes

Villagers Light Torches, Rush Mothership

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The spaceship is usually round and filled with bright light. Inevitably the benevolent creatures inside are smarter, kinder, and wiser than the torch-bearing townspeople calling for their destruction. Will the human race ever grow up? Will we ever see that great help desk in the sky?

We will if Dr. John Zakos has his way. Zakos is the chief developer of MyCybertwin, the virtual agents geared towards the small-medium business market. These intelligent avatars literally have ‘brains’ that are designed to have emotion and can interact, engage, and answer complicated customer service questions. They can even be trained to “appropriately push back” when treated rudely!

When you first meet MyCybertwin, there is no eerie music playing, you aren’t creeped out, or on edge. The only thing that is the least bit scary is how humanlike MyCYbertwin is. According to Zakos 95% of those who encounter MyCybertwin are unaware that they are dealing with little more than a figment of Zakos’ imagination.

These avatars are designed for businesses to quickly and efficiently deploy state-of-the-art chat to answer customer questions instantly and accurately, decrease staff costs, increase sales and customer engagement, and find out what customers are really thinking by capturing the analytics of the interaction.

The avatars are self-learning and can be designed to answer specific questions or variations of questions. They can also be trained to recognize different ways a person may ask a question. Present an avatar with a question it doesn’t understand and it will search the business’ website for the answer.

Avatars work 24/7/365 never complaining, never calling in sick. And this new generation makes what was once “barely affordable” now almost downright cheap. For small and medium business, this represents a democratization of the marketplace leveling the playing field. For labor the avatars represent a huge threat. How can a poorly educated human that needs to eat, find babysitters, and occasionally take a day off compete with Zakos’ creation?

Should we cheer and say welcome or light the torches and rush the mother ship?

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