

How Artificial Intelligence is transforming start-ups, small firms

This technology is no longer the preserve of the big companies

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) — the technology that tries to mimic human behaviour and thought processes — has decisively broken the size barrier. No more is it the preserve of big tech firms, as small and medium outfits and start-ups are increasingly using it to great effect.

For instance, last month travel-search marketplace ixigo launched an AI-powered chatbot — ixibaba — for its users. The chatbot (an automated response system that gives users the feeling of chatting with another human) helps travellers find the cheapest travel deals, hotels, vacation destinations and things to do in a city.

“Now AI is better po-

sitioned for an uptake, especially in domain-specific contexts, as a lot of Big Data is available. AI, one part of which is machine learning, is the next big thing,” said Alope Bajpai, co-founder and CEO at ixigo.

Traditionally, AI is the ability of computers to run self-learning and self-improving algorithms on data. This helps create intelligent machines that can perform tasks that require human intelligence including visual perception, speech recognition, learning and decision-making.

Online education portal Pagalguy.com’s learning app for the competitive exams Prepathon runs a number of chatbots using AI. These bots break down the functions of a teacher (monitoring, motivating,



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revising lesson, and so on) for the student.

The bots (programs trained on data) have significantly reduced the amount of time coaches have to spend on repetitive work.

“This is the realm of AI. Data is abundantly available, so much of computing power is available and now

even processors on cloud can crunch a lot more data,” said Allwin Agnel, CEO and Founder at Pagalguy.com.

BPO firm Intelenet Global Services uses AI for its iFARE, an in-house developed airline ticketing tool.

“iFare allows transactions and bookings without human intervention and it re-

duces potential errors by 77 per cent,” said Rajendra Deshpande, Chief Information Officer at Intelenet.

Cost of AI

“The more data you feed the system, the better the accuracy. To analyse such Big Data, we need powerful machines. A deep-learning machine with single graphics processing unit costs somewhere around ₹2 lakh,” said Atul Rai, co-founder and CEO at Delhi-based AI start-up Staqu.

Staqu is providing fashion search features on two Karbonn Mobiles smartphones — Fashion Eye and Fashion Eye 2.0 — using its AI engine.

The engine searches for it across all the major e-commerce catalogues and then help users find the exact product.

These maybe be small steps but are surely the precursor to a giant leap for AI.