

Chatbots in Aalborg

WOULD CITIZENS LIKE TO USE A CHATBOT?

Aalborg Municipality is applying chatbots in customer service delivery to give citizens a 24/7 service, and to minimize the times used by employees to answer frequently asked questions. Most answers can already be found on the municipality's homepages, but especially young citizens do not look for information on the municipals website.

Aalborg Municipality organized two focus group interviews with young citizens and one with employees to get their opinion on chatbots. In connection with the interviews the participants tested a prototype of a chatbot helping citizens with "relocation" – moving to a new home.

Relations to Workpackages

This pilot shows how input from citizens can help local government building and testing a new service. The input from citizens is vital for evaluation of a new communication channel/service – is it just smart or is it also useful?

Local partners

PrimusMotor Aps

Project Manager

www.primus-motor.com

The Case Study Paper is produced by Grethe Fallesen

About LIKE!

Local governments, citizens, universities and SMEs have joined forces to co-create smarter, more efficient and more innovative services through 9 transnational pilot projects covering 3 core themes:



Innovation
Culture Approach



Smart
Services



Digital
Dashboards



Focus group interviews with young citizens and employees

Aalborg Municipality engaged a consultant, PrimusMotor A/S, to conduct focus group interviews with two groups of young citizens to get their views on chatbots. Could chatbots be an alternative to the phone or a visit to the Citizen Service Center? In addition, a group of employees from the Citizen Service Center in Aalborg was interviewed to give their opinion on chatbots including the job of taking over from the chatbot if it cannot answer a question. All three groups tested a prototype of a chatbot helping citizens with “relocation” – moving to a new home.



Interviews:

Chatbots can only be a supplement to other channels

Chatbot can only be a supplement to other municipal service channels – it cannot replace other channels. The young citizens emphasized the advantages of the chatbot giving quick answers to simple questions but said they would phone the municipality if they had more complicated questions or more than 5 exchanges of questions and answers.

Essential to know you are chatting with a bot

The young citizens underlined the importance of making it clear to the user of the chatbot that the user/citizen is chatting with a bot and not an employee. This is important for ethical reasons and to adjust the citizens expectations to the service they can expect. The chatbot should therefore clearly and visually indicate that it is a bot.

Great expectations

Although the young citizens didn't think a chatbot could answer complicated questions, they still had great expectations concerning the quality of answers and the variety of questions the chatbot should be able to answer. It is therefore essential that the answers and links given by the chatbot are correct and checked thoroughly by professionals before introducing the chatbot to citizens. Otherwise, citizens will reject the chatbot in the future and keep phoning instead.

The little extra

The young citizens and the employees stressed that citizens will regard a service as very good if they get a little more service than they expect. The chatbot on relocation will for example present the user to a checklist of important things to deal with when moving to a new home. This little extra service will make the citizens feel that they get a very good service from the chatbot and more than they expected, and this can help promoting the chatbot as good and relevant.



Data protection and responsibility

Information security and data protection in connection with the use of chatbots are very important issues according to the young citizens and employees. It is therefore vital that the chatbot technology is in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation and that a data processing agreement with the software provider has been signed. Moreover, it is important that legal issues concerning responsibility of information given via the chatbot are solved.

Chatbot used as internal support

The employees find that a chatbot could be used as an internal support for the employees. A chatbot could help employees asking citizens the right questions when they contact the Citizen Service Center. If employees need to help citizens, who started chatting but gave up and phoned the Citizen Service Center, it is essential that the employees can see the previous chat correspondence when they help the citizens.



'An example of a responding chatbot'

Further development

Aalborg Municipality is working on a chatbot pilot with 35 other Danish municipalities. The findings from the focus group interviews will be used in the further development of this chatbot. The experiences from other Like! partners working with chatbots will also be used in the future.

Ideas for future development of the chatbot

- Possibility of reading aloud for people with visual impairments
- Incorporation of dictionary for people with dyslexics
- Possibility of using English and maybe other languages
- Chat via speech, especially for people who find it difficult to write