

How AI-powered bots are helping local government reshape public services



Invaluable messages from eighth Kerv Experience local government roundtable

Matching AI efficiency with human empathy

Following our seventh roundtable forum in March 2024 – introducing bots as semi-autonomous access channels to contact centres and other invaluable information sources – this eighth forum brought contact centre leaders, practitioners and technologists together to share bot progress and observations first-hand.

The business case for citizens to self-serve is becoming ever more compelling, thanks to advances in AI, open APIs, and cloud platforms. Yet, that doesn't mean every single interaction ought to be automated. Far from it. The clearest and most persuasive path to automation is one that demonstrates—from citizens' or users' points of view—how comparatively easy it is to design and implement.

So, how does one decide when to drop in faster, more efficient AI solutions to replace slower and more expensive human interactions. Well, word soon gets around, as demonstrated by our three stat-bytes below.

Chatbot adoption

Although it's origin is obscure, the top 5 chat bot-using countries across the world are reckoned to be the United Kingdom, the United States, India, Brazil, and Germany. Possibly a chance regular use of the English Language among the first three the addition of Brazil and Germany seems a bit random. Nevertheless, chat bots occur regularly enough without needing a linguistic rationale. Of course, it could be simply that analysts' reports on bots tend to be written in English. (See the two Gartner examples and comment alongside.)

Gartner

By 2026: "One in ten agent interactions will be automated."

By 2027: "Chatbots are expected to become the primary customer service channel for a quarter of businesses."

These two Genesys stat-bytes show how the bot universe is growing year-on-year and indicate how it is transferring the knowledge and expertise from contact centre agent to service centre personnel.

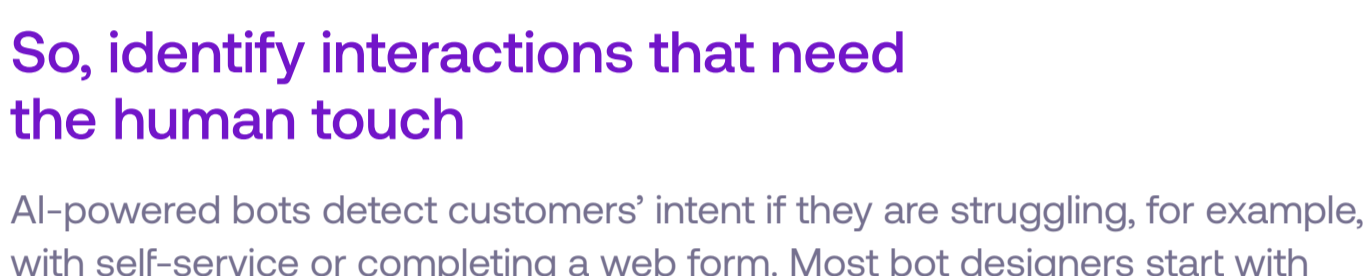
A recent survey confirmed that most customers would prefer to self-serve than wait in line.

62% chatbot

38% queue for human

This stat-byte shows how auto-bots are catching on when it comes to rapidly transferring key data for mass adoption.

Furthermore, the Shep Hyken behavioral survey below, ranked speed of answer and resolution as the two top service expectations among customers, with empathy ranked third. So, the ground has been well prepared and appears prime for first bot adoption, a topic discussed in more detail in the next section.

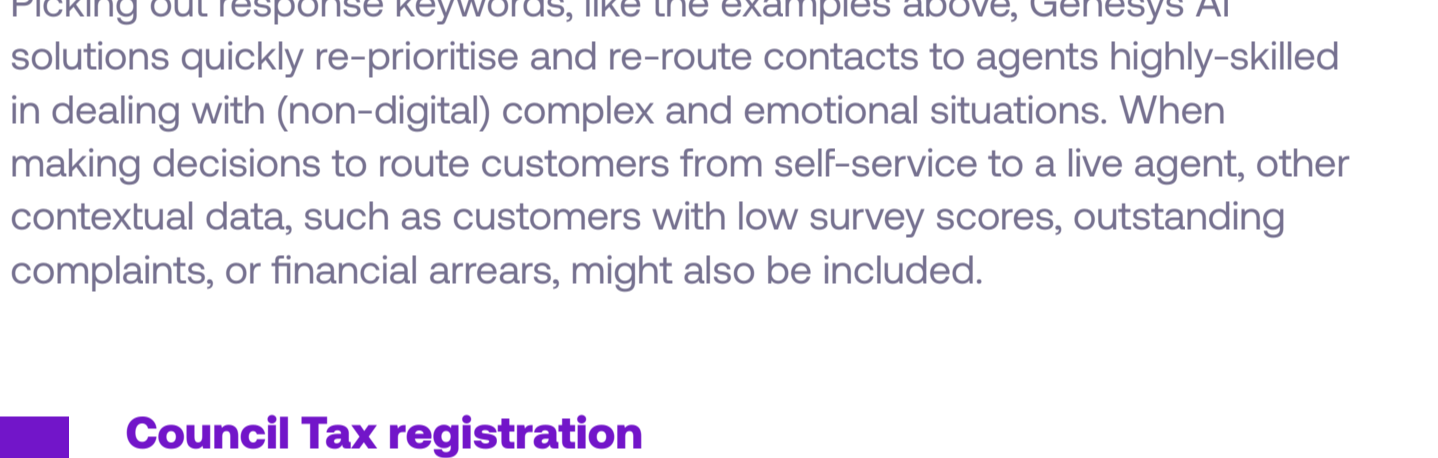


Depending on their intent and circumstances the same person may prefer a quick bot response (e.g., if they're filling in a form) to bearing the wait for an agent to respond with all the detail.

The choice, then, of selecting early examples as bot local government trialists make sense as they can be based (1) on their propensity to be attached to common service categories in the local lexicon and (2) the ease with which they can be attributed to human or automatic handling as shown in the following chart.

So, identify interactions that need the human touch

AI-powered bots detect customers' intent if they are struggling, for example, with self-service or completing a web form. Most bot designers start with a blank sheet of paper to decide on the first step, often thinking whether a human touch or automation is most efficient.



Two local government AI scenarios

Picking out response keywords, like the examples above, Genesys AI solutions quickly re-prioritise and re-route contacts to agents highly-skilled in dealing with (non-digital) complex and emotional situations. When making decisions to route customers from self-service to a live agent, other contextual data, such as customers with low survey scores, outstanding complaints, or financial arrears, might also be included.

Example 1: Council Tax registration

- Website FAQs:** Having recently moved to the area Mike browses the council's website
- Website journey tracking:** Using CRM lookup a chatbot greets him personally and establishes intent
- Knowledge base:** Pulling answers from a knowledge base the bot confirms that Mike does qualify for a discount as he lives alone
- Conversational self-service:** The bot continues to guide Mike and completes the registration process

Example 2: Anti-social behaviour reporting

- Voice bot triage:** The bot recognises Maddie's number, personally greets her and asks how can I help?
- Reason for calling:** Next, the bot runs a CRM query and spots Maddie has a vulnerable customer flag
- Real-time AI assistance:** The bot promotes the call to the front of the queue
- Customer transcript:** Upon transfer, the agent can see what Maddie previously said to the bot
- Agent assist:** Helpful hints and tips are surfaced to help the agent guide the conversation with next best recommended actions

AI Solutions in Action Click here to read excerpts from the Somerset Council case study.

Chatbot Progression Path

- 1 Greeting & Triage:** Context predicted by channel and recent contact history plus gen AI analysis and recent use of FAQs.
- 2 Data Gathering:** Recent purchase and interaction history (e.g., planning application) and relevant questions therefrom.
- 3 Knowledge Bot:** These use pre-written articles; not generated from AI. Savings from reduced contacts. Improved agent experience from fewer random questions.
- 4 ID & Verification:** House number and postcode; or application number.
- 5 Process Automation:** Savings from shorter AHT. Improved customer experience from 24/7/365 service.
- 6 Voice Enablement:** Pre-recorded voice comparison confirms identification. No agent intervention needed.
- 7 Generative AI:** Gen AI from library appropriate to context makes interactions more human. Transcription and translation match context to improve machine and self-service understanding. Auto-FAQ responses.

Worked examples

1 Greeting & Triage

Digital Flow: Chatbot → Mike → Chatbot → Planning, Bins & Recycling, Council Tax

Benefits: Shorter AHT through transfer reduction, while gathering data on popular intents to improve chatbot performance

2 Data Capture

Digital Flow: Chatbot → Joe → Chatbot → Joe → Chatbot → Council Tax → Screen-pop

Benefits: Savings from shorter AHT and markedly positive effect on agent and customer experience

3 Knowledge Bot

Digital Flow: Chatbot → Ines → Chatbot → Ines → Chatbot → Knowledge article → Knowledge base

Benefits: Reduced number of contacts and improved agent experience through reduced number of redundant questions

4 ID & Verification

Digital Flow: Chatbot → Sam → Chatbot → Sam → Chatbot → Sam → Chatbot → Planning → Screen-pop

Benefits: Certain foundation for future process automation along with parallel AHT savings

Final takeouts

- Sometimes there's no substitute for the human touch
- There are times when the same customer may prefer speed and convenience
- It's crucial to consider both the person and their current situation
- AI-enabled triage gives us the best chance of making the right decision

How Kerv Experience can help

One of six Kerv Group innovation-led practices, **Kerv Experience** is the longest standing **Genesys Cloud** partner in EMEA with the most successful deployments.

We've helped many local councils and public sector organisations accelerate AI and digital plans. Whether that's developing financially sound roadmaps, simplifying adoption, or driving employee and citizen experience innovation.

Get in touch today to discover how to unlock more benefits from your AI investment and join our virtual local government forum.