

# 10 tips for developing a chatbot for youth work

Koordinaatti (Finnish youth work expert organization) has compiled a list of tips on utilizing a chatbot in youth work. Once an idea and a need for developing a chatbot has arisen, it's good to first investigate a few basic things before commencing its development. The basis for the list of tips is the chatbot trial by Koordinaatti. The list of tips consists of ten questions, which the developers should think about at the beginning of the process. Comments and corrections are welcome.

## Plan and investigate

### 1. Why a bot?

- i. For what purpose is the bot being developed? What goals are going to be set for the bot? What is necessary to achieve with the bot?
- ii. What use does the customer or the service provider have of the bot? Does the bot solve a problem related to a specific service, such as shortening chat queues or making information search easier?

### 2. The structure of the bot?

- i. Is the bot capable of interaction (answering questions), or does it help the user look for information based on pre-made alternatives?
- ii. Develop a service path model; does the bot replace a human and act independently, or does it shorten customer queues and direct the customer to other parties if necessary?

### 3. What next?

- i. When the structure of bot has become clearer (what, for whom, why? etc.) then make a preliminary plan of the development process. Make a schedule and map out the necessary resources: personnel, time, necessary measures.
- ii. Who will participate in the development of the bot? Involve the target group in all phases of the development. Utilize different participatory methods and platforms.

# Build, test and launch

## 4. Where is the bot going to be built?

- i. Choose the most suitable development platform for the bot and start already thinking about how the bot can be connected to the website or service where you want to use it.
- ii. You can for instance utilize the Ninchat interface, with which connecting a bot to a website, as well as collecting user statistics and feedback is easy.

## 5. Who is your bot?

- i. What kind of personality does the bot have? Does the bot speak formal or informal language? You can highlight the bot's personality through for instance choosing a suitable avatar for your bot, as well as naming your bot.
- ii. Regardless of personality, it's important that the bot speaks coherently. Depending on the target group, the bot's "tone" and the manner of the text it produces can be finetuned.

## 6. How to market your bot?

- i. Inform and notify your customers about the purpose of your bot, as well as its limitations in relation to dialogue or information topics.
- ii. In the age of modern bots who have been trained on more sophisticated language models, peoples' expectations of chatbots are high, and therefore it's important to be clear about your bot's competencies and the limits to the information you can search with it.

## 7. Who tests?

- i. Most bots need constant training, and especially Finnish-speaking bots are challenging, due to the complexity of the language. Utilize the target group as part of the testing.
- ii. Your bot will require extensive and continuous testing throughout its development. This will ensure that any added content will not result in any internal conflicts, and the bot will still be able to answer the questions posed.

# Evaluate and develop

## 8. When to launch?

- i. When the defined goals are starting to be fulfilled, and the bot is technically functioning, it's sensible with regards to the continuation of the work to launch the bot for testing as "sufficiently ready".
- ii. It's impossible to take everything into account in the development stage, so launching the bot in its testing phase makes for more effective further development, as the target group get to test the bot in real life.

## 9. Would you have a moment to give feedback?

- i. Make it possible to give feedback on the functionality of the bot. Many bot platforms include an inbuilt feedback system, through which it's possible to give the bot feedback, or, alternatively, you can utilize a third-party service for the collection of feedback (e.g. Ninchat).
- ii. Decide beforehand what information you want to collect through the feedback. This information is important for further development.

## 10. What next?

- i. Once the bot has been launched and feedback is being collected, you'll get a clearer picture of what resources are needed for further development. You should agree on who is responsible for the further development of the bot, and how much resources are available for it.
- ii. The world is changing and information is being updated, so depending on the purpose and function of the bot, the need for updating it may well be very frequent.
- iii. Make sure to document the development of the bot. This way you can ensure the continuity of development even after changes in personnel.

For further information regarding the list of tips and bot development, you can contact us at Koordinaatti by email: [nutikoordinaatio@ouka.fi](mailto:nutikoordinaatio@ouka.fi)