Media Backgrounder
Fujitsu Social Command Center (SCC) – Enabling a Service Desk Fit for the Future

Munich, February 2019

The way we work is changing and the workplace is now digital - seamlessly bringing together all the technologies an organization needs to drive organization performance. By deploying customized, flexible ways of working with digitized processes and efficient services, staff and organizations are empowered to make the most of their working day.

This transformation is emphasized by two key statistics of demographic change and technological innovation. First, Millennials are replacing the older workforce, starting to rise to senior levels and bringing totally new expectations of the workplace with them as they displace older generations. Second, leading industry analysts predict that over 50 billion "things" will be connected to the Internet by 2022, creating vast new quantities of data and new, still-to-be-imagined ways of harnessing the potential insights contained within that data through Artificial Intelligence (AI) to improve customer service and user support.

The combined impact of these changes – a double whammy – is having a profound influence on how organizations provide customer service and support people in their work. Many such changes will be accomplished with the support of AI, which will continue to evolve and become embedded in every aspect of working life. AI will move on from its current domain in IT support of structured, scripted tasks, to the state where AI-powered machines are able to assist with unstructured tasks.

In this transition, we'll see the increasing use of intelligent virtual assistants. Fujitsu's Social Command Center, for example, provides personalized, dynamic support via an AI-powered virtual assistant to workers during their working day, allowing them to relinquish mundane, repetitive tasks and add value to the organization and their customers on more complex issues. Digital virtual assistants will assist employees as they interact with different forms of data – ranging from forging new organizational connections based on a machine-determined best match of skills, to delivering a highly personalized, dynamic and context-based experience for work day task scheduling. AI will be able to make full use of real-time traffic information to provide dynamic routing, avoiding congestion, helping optimize both journeys and modes of transport to meetings or appointments for example. Employees working in offices will be dynamically allocated hot desks close to colleagues with whom they interact the most frequently and digital assistants will take care of calendar scheduling and administrative tasks such as travel booking.

Fujitsu Social Command Center (SCC) is already underpinned by AI capabilities such as Robotics Process Automation (RPA) and Operational Service Orchestration (OSO) and is soon to be enhanced to include cognitive analytics and other cutting-edge AI automation capabilities. Fujitsu refers to these as "Service Intelligence" and the Service Intelligence-powered Fujitsu Social Command Center can go far beyond just resolving technology issues. By identifying the underlying cause and impact of problems and mitigating their impact, it can then go on to invoke the use of AI-type tooling from within Service Intelligence layer to prevent problems from occurring in the first place.

New attitudes to work and the impact of AI

AI-powered virtual assistants won't just help alleviate the on-going skills shortages, they will also make the workplace more palatable for a future workforce already comprised of Millennials. These are people born into a world where digital technology was becoming the norm and soon to be joined there by Generation Z, who have not experienced a world without ubiquitous internet. This demographic shift has already generated expectations of flexible working schemes from groups who embrace an always-on culture and value the diversity of different age and cultural groups working together. These are all factors that an organization must now consider. In a recent whitepaper and survey, Workplace 2025, created for Fujitsu, leading independent research firm Pierre Audoin Consultants (PAC)[1] predicted that these changing demographics, as well as the rise of AI, replacing the traditional office environment, mean organizations should expect a transformative effect on their workplace. PAC foresees that the pace of AI adoption will continue to accelerate between now and 2025, and will impact all aspects of future workplaces, rendering many of today's working practices and productivity tools obsolete by as early as 2025.

The whitepaper also warns that organizations must start to foster a culture of innovation and collaboration, both inside and outside their organization, and highlights that outdated technology and outmoded working practices can stifle productivity and demotivate employees. The study found that the large majority of organizations believe their current approach to be far from perfect. For example, more than three quarters (79 percent) of participants view their current working hours and practices as simply not flexible enough to get the best out of their workforce.

In fact, AI is already leading to the emergence of more personalized user experiences, able to dynamically adapt to recognize context, location and preferences. In the consumer market, digital virtual assistants such as Microsoft Cortana and Amazon Alexa are already familiar AI applications. However, adoption remains at an early stage in the enterprise world. This could be about to change as, according to the study, close to half (47 percent) of organizations plan to invest in this area in the next two years. Uptake will be particularly strong in the public sector (70 percent), utilities (67 percent) and financial services (64 percent), with banks including Sweden's Swedbank and India's HDFC Bank already using AI-powered virtual assistants in customer services roles.

Responding to skill shortages and changing workplace expectations - AI-powered virtual assistants

The ability to attract the best and brightest talent will be a defining factor in deciding which organizations can thrive in the fourth industrial revolution. With many organizations looking to recruit new and increasingly diverse skills into their ranks to support their digital transformation initiatives, the winners will be those that can provide the right roles, culture, environment, technology and experience to meet the demands of an evolving workforce.

The Service Intelligence-powered Fujitsu Social Command Centre is a next-generation service desk that meets the pace of change that is occurring in the world of work – predicated on understanding users and providing them with a simple-to-use, consistent experience that is personalized and, as tooling helps us learn more about our end users, becomes even more contextual. Virtual assistants are readily available and are now familiar in everyday life, and Fujitsu's intelligent virtual agent helps employees with various tasks, from HR to IT – for example, helping employees log expenses or book organization travel. Such virtual assistants learn from interactions with users to adapt and develop the services they provide.

The SCC is (by default) available from any internet-enabled device, so people can access support in the way they want. By assisting employees in a quick and user-friendly way, the SCC enables them to solve issues with easy-to-use tools in any location and at any time and quickly return to productive work in a stress-free way. For example, self-service password resets can reduce service desk calls by as much as 40 percent. And for Service Desk agents, the SCC gives them more time, through removing less-fulfilling tasks, such as password resets, and giving them time to think proactively.

Service Intelligence - more effective interventions

With the application of AI, we are also now seeing a transition from traditional Service Desk environments to what Fujitsu describes as a 'Service Intelligence' paradigm, in which the emphasis is on anticipation of needs and prediction of possible bottlenecks or points of failure.

The Fujitsu SCC incorporates Fujitsu's thinking about Service Intelligence and uses automation to prevent things from breaking in the first place or to mitigate issues if they do, getting the basics done without human intervention. Our intention is to aggregate data from multiple sources and organization languages into a single repository, enabling contextual data points to be provided back to the end user or organization, with the purpose of improving service and the end-user experience. Service Intelligence therefore moves away from reactive support to one that is proactive and focused on organizational outcomes. It already uses analytics to identify potential problems and through automation, resolves them before they become issues, driving down incident rates and minimizing resolution times, improving the customer experience, driving cost efficiencies and delivering support at a time that suits the user.

The SCC has already introduced automation technologies into workplace solutions, including first generation AI (discussed above) and voice biometrics. These help us simplify a wide spectrum of user requests and needs by blending the familiarity, consistency and versatility of a virtual personal assistant with the ease and usability of an intuitive natural language interface, both of which *The White Book of Next-Generation Service Desk*, published by Fujitsu, identifies as the expectation of technology-savvy users today. User voice pattern recognition is supported by the SCC for situations where biometric verification is required in addition to single sign-on. What's more is that Fujitsu's vision is for this technology to become a seamless part of everyday work life. As Conway Kosi, Senior Vice President, Head of Digital Technology Services, Fujitsu EMEIA said at the launch of the SCC: "Our goal is that virtual agents will eventually pass the Turing test: most of the time, people won't even realize they're talking to a machine. And because we are automating a range of everyday support requests, live agents are able to act faster than ever in resolving more complex user support needs."

As touched on earlier, the SCC integrates multiple automation/AI type technologies, using Robotics Process Automation (RPA) engines to make basic process-driven decisions on behalf of workers, based on historical records and decision-based logic. It is automation that gets the basics

done quickly and removes low level tasks that need no human intervention. But it is AI that creates a consistent, simple to use, end-to-end user experience based on individual references and needs. Because AI literally learns employees' preferences, it can provide an experience that is personal, tailored and built on the needs and preferences of each user.

Over time, Machine Learning allows us to increase our knowledge of any supported device behaviors and activities to which it is connected and adapts to and anticipates user behavior. This is an organic process that boosts efficiency and then builds and maintains knowledge and expertise at a high level that simply isn't humanly possible. Intelligent virtual agents that use AI simplify and converge support, helping users make the most of their working days.

The process is two-way. AI interprets users' and device requests and behaviors to make specific and relevant recommendations. As an employee seeks information or guidance, over time and though real interactions, the SCC will be able to learn what that individual needs and our intention is for it to use cognitive analytics designed to solve problems the way humans solve problems; by thinking, reasoning and remembering. Further usage reduces the need for human intervention, leaving the agent free for higher level, higher value interventions and therefore reducing costs.

Virtual assistants and AI operate 24/7, empowering and encouraging people to fix problems as they arise, anytime and anywhere. One positive side effect of virtual assistants is the prevention of 'Shadow IT', where individuals or departments resort to setting up their own support mechanisms to overcome a perceived lack of timely, effective support through approved channels.

Planning for the future

AI-driven service support is the most promising strategy to improve the employee experience and to address the strategic challenges of demographic and technological change, achieving this through new levels of insight into employee behavior, preferences and context. However, there is also a risk that many organizations will fail to embrace this emerging technology and miss the opportunities to reap its potential rewards. While most organizations are starting to lay the right foundations to future-proof their workplace – for example, by introducing AI-based technologies such as digital virtual assistants, many are already struggling to keep up with employees' changing workstyle preferences. Instead, Fujitsu recommends that organizations should plan for an era in which AI is pervasive, workers are always connected, freelance and flexible work are commonplace, and traditional industry systems are broken down and reinvented. Forward-looking organizations are already developing a vision of their future workplace and making plans to embrace the different role played by employees in a workforce reshaped by AI.

Notes to editors

[1] The Workplace 2025 study included interviews with 1,278 senior organization and technology decision makers at large and mid-sized commercial and public-sector organizations in Europe, the United States, Australia and New Zealand, across five main industries including financial services, manufacturing, retail, utilities and the public sector.

Online resources

- Fujitsu Next Generation Service Desk – the Social Command Center: http://www.fujitsu.com/uk/services/infrastructure/service-desk/
- The White Book of Next-Generation Service Desk: https://www.fujitsu.com/uk/Images/White-Book-next-generation-service-desk.pdf
- PAC Survey on Workplace2025: www.fujitsu.com/workplace2025
- Fujitsu's Digital Workplace Services site: https://digitalworkplace.global.fujitsu.com/
- Fujitsu's Human Centric AI vision: http://www.fujitsu.com/global/vision/human-centric-ai/
- Follow Fujitsu on Twitter: http://www.twitter.com/Fujitsu_Global
- Follow us on LinkedIn: http://www.linkedin.com/company/fujitsu
- Find Fujitsu on Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/FujitsuICT
- Fujitsu pictures and media server: http://mediaportal.ts.fujitsu.com/pages/portal.php
- For regular news updates, bookmark the Fujitsu newsroom: http://ts.fujitsu.com/ps2/nr/index.aspx

Media contacts

Isabell Horvath
Director of PR
Tel +49 (89) 62060 4419 isabell.horvath@ts.fujitsu.com

About Fujitsu
Fujitsu is the leading Japanese information and communication technology (ICT) company, offering a full range of technology products, solutions, and services. Approximately 140,000 Fujitsu people support customers in more than 100 countries. We use our experience and the power of ICT to shape the future of society with our customers. Fujitsu Limited (TSE: 6702) reported consolidated revenues of 4.1 trillion yen (US $39 billion) for the fiscal year ended March 31, 2018. For more information, please see http://www.fujitsu.com.

About Fujitsu EMEIA
Fujitsu promotes a Human Centric Intelligent Society, in which innovation is driven by the integration of people, information and infrastructure. In the Europe, Middle East, India and Africa region (EMEIA), our 28,000-strong workforce is committed to Digital Co-creation, blending organization expertise with digital technology and creating new value with ecosystem partners and customers. We enable our customers to digitally transform with connected technology services, focused on Artificial Intelligence, the Internet of Things, and Cloud - all underpinned by Security. For more information, please visit http://www.fujitsu.com/fts/about/