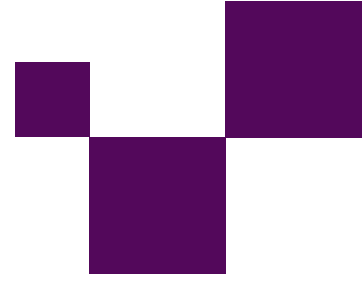




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Radio538 acknowledges image with chatbots

In search of a new innovative development concerning new media, Radio 538 (one of the top 3 Dutch broadcasting stations) discovered a relatively new development: the chatbot, also known as interactive agent. A chatbot is a computer program designed to simulate a human user. This program can be added as a chatbot to the Live Messenger service, previously known as MSN-Messenger.

Radio 538 figured the chatbot was the most effective and yet entertaining way of communicating with their listeners.



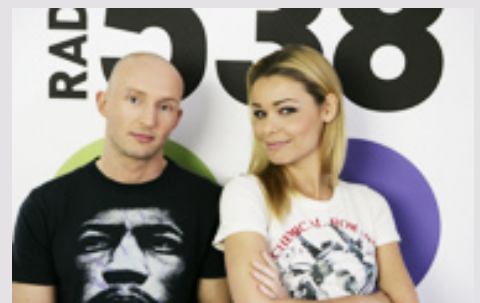
Radio 538 Interactive, one of Radio 538's media related departments, is responsible for developing interactive drafts. These drafts represent the appearance (young, yet cheeky) which the broadcasting station wants to have. When Ecreation, European leader in developing chatbots, asked whether Radio 538 was interested in integrating the Top 40 into the chatbot named Alice, the former Product-Manager Interactive Thomas van de Weerd noticed there were a lot of possibilities regarding the chatbots.

Innovation is the key

The willingness to embrace new media solutions is one of the companies basic principles. Radio 538 is continuously looking for new ways on how to improve their innovative structure towards their target group.

"Radio 538 is continuously looking for ways to increase the number of listeners. I-Mode was one of our new features. In the end the I-Mode appeared to be unsuccessful. Even though we attempted to launch something new - which failed- it still emits how Radio 538 accepts new developments regarding new media. Our motto is: Just give it a try, see what comes out, but continue looking for new opportunities"

- Thomas van de Weerd

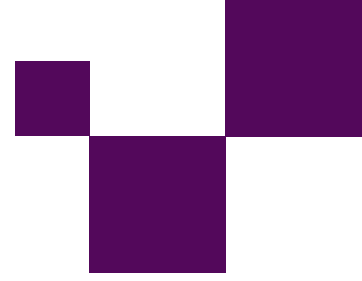


Niels Hoogland and Froukje de Both - Radio 538 DJs

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Two companies, one mission

One week after the initial contact between Radio 538 and Ecreation, Thomas van de Weerd organized a meeting because he wanted Ecreation to develop a chatbot. Within a few minutes Thomas van de Weerd made an agreement with Ecreation for developing a chatbot for Radio 538.

"For most of our listeners, chatting is a very important communication medium. There were even a regularity in listeners who wanted to add a DJ to their Live Messenger list. And by developing a chatbot, we could provide the listeners a DJ chatbot whom they could talk to"

- Thomas van de Weerd

Once Radio 538 and Ecreation decided to work together on the project, their first job was to determine what the content of the chatbot would be. Radio 538 decided to base the pilot on DJ Ruud de Wild, mainly because Ruud was extremely popular among the listeners. Ecreation developed the chatbot, while Radio 538 provided the content for the database. Both the database and the development of the chatbot are the most important parts of the chatbot in order for it to succeed.

What is a chatbot?

A chatbot responds to keywords in a conversation with an actual user. Based on how the chatbot is programmed, it will reply with either a question, or an answer. The database consist of thousands of words. Each word is connected to different answers and related questions.

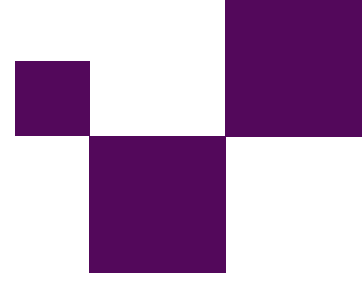
For example a user asks: "When will the train to Woerden depart?". The words: train, Woerden and depart are the trigger keywords for the chatbot. Based on the keywords and the grammar used by the user to compose his sentence, the chatbot knows how to correctly respond to the user by sending him either a question or an answer. That is why Radio 538 took a lot of time filling in the blanks of the database. The advantage of having such a huge database from which the chatbot can compose his sentences is, that the user will experience the conversation with the chatbot, as if it's a real conversation with an actual human being.



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Successful development

Ecreation implemented an application that supports commercial actions. Take for example the question "Which track is playing now?". The chatbot will then respond with the correct track and he will also tell the user who sings it. On top of this basic information, the chatbot adds a link in the conversation to a web page where the user can download the track. The chatbot can also provide different kind of information like traffic jams and train departure times. With all these useful features, the chatbot became a success. Within four weeks, over 20.000 users added the chatbot to their buddylist.

"In order to keep the chatbot interesting for us and its users for a longer period of time, we wanted to add other, more relative features to the chatbot. Currently the chatbot only gives the user basic information. The chatbot had to be informative and funny in its responses in order to guarantee that the user would approach it multiple times"

- Thomas van de Weerd

A second chatbot

Because the first chatbot was such a success, Radio 538 started to think of new ways on how to improve the chatbot.

"Although the chatbot was a niche product, we figured it had a lot of potential for marketing purposes"

- Thomas van de Weerd

Soon after the development of the first chatbot, Radio 538 started to think of a second chatbot. The second chatbot became reality and was based on DJ Barry Paf. His audience is considered the largest group of users who use the Live Messenger service. The Barry-chatbot was, just like the Ruud-chatbot, a great success. Currently about 90.000 users have added the Barry-chatbot to their messenger buddylist.

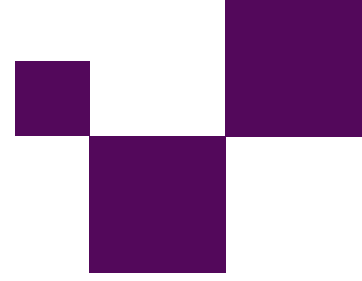


Barry Paf - Radio 538 DJ

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Marco Borsato goes digital

With the introduction of the Marco Borsato bot, Radio 538 approached a new target group. The Marco-bot was launched during the 2006 Symphonica in Rosso Concert. Radio 538, who is one of the concert's media partners, was looking for an effective way of getting in contact with the attendees.

"Thanks to the chatbot we were able to do so"

- Michael Guntenaar, product manager Radio 538

In the first month after we have launched the first bot, there have been sent over 1,6 million messages. After the concert, a lot of people either wanted to chat with Marco, or watch his music videos. All of the answers are pure and truthful, mainly because Marco cooperated with Radio 538 in order to create the artificial intelligence.

"This, itself, has a positive influence on the users perception because they get the feeling they are actually chatting with Marco"

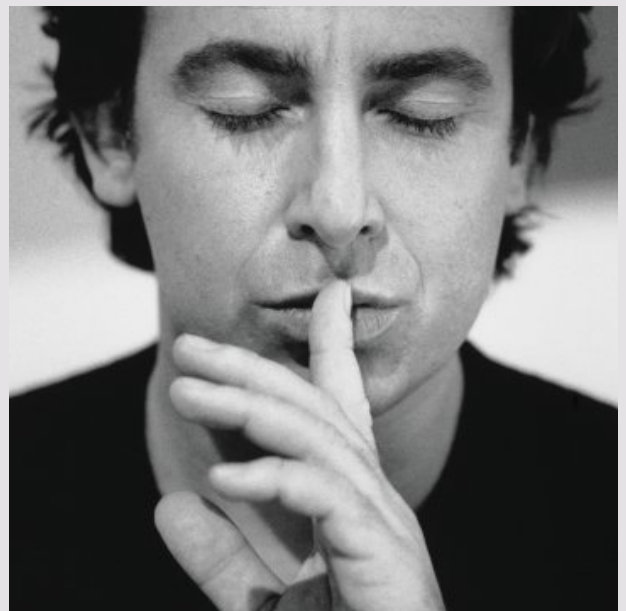
- Michael Guntenaar

Nowadays there are more than 160.000 people chatting with the Marco Borsato chatbot. One year after the Symphonica in Rosso concert, the chatbot remained successful. Within a week, the broadcasting station had received over 4.000 orders for one of the DVD box sets. The chatbot was used to promote this merchandise.

"Thanks to the chatbots, an ultimate way of communicating with our listeners has been created. It strengthens the bond between listener and the brand Radio 538 itself. Whenever a new development is being used for the first time, we always have to figure out whether it is profitable.

The Marco-chatbot is the 'living' proof that a chatbot can be used for commercial purposes"

- Michael Guntenaar



Marco Borsato - The most successful Dutch singer of the last 40 years

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Live chatting with a 538 DJ

Ecreation took again responsibility for the technical realisation of the Marco Borsato chatbot.

"Ecreation is an excellent business partner for Radio 538, mainly because Ecreation fits within our corporate culture. It's great working with them because their motto is: what has to be done, must be done. Thanks to their proactive and flexible approach, working with Ecreation makes the whole development process a success"

- Michael Guntenaar



Froukje de Both - Radio 538 DJ

Both companies have worked together again in the year 2008. They developed a new and improved chatbot called "Studio 538". This chatbot is different compared to the previous chatbots, mainly because a new application was installed into the chatbot. The Jockchat, as it is called, functions as an intermediary between DJ and user. The DJ can see a list of all the users who are chatting on that very moment. He can decide to chose one of the users and start a conversation with him or her. The uniqueness of this feature lies within the fact that the administrator can interrupt the chatbot, so he or she can start a conversation with a real person can be started. This application has last been used for the X-Factor finalists. The program made it easy for them to chat with 'random' users.

It's not completely inconceivable that another chatbot will be launched in the near future.

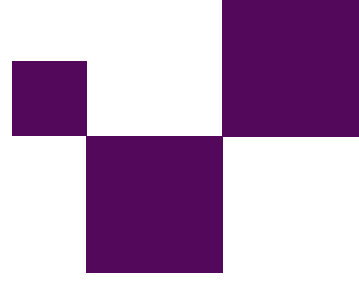
"We are aware of the fact that applications for the Live Messenger service are important for us in order to get in (close) contact with our target group. Currently there are more than enough possibilities of communicating with our target group within the chatbot. But that doesn't mean we will stop looking for new applications that support our strategy"

- Michael Guntenaar

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Unique development

By being the first company in the broadcasting industry that introduced a new yet easy way for a user to get in contact with a DJ, the company distinguished itself from its competition.

"The funny part of it all, was the fact that not every user noticed that the chatbot was not an actual human. If the chatbot responded in a way the user didn't want it to, or when the user found out he was talking to a computer program, profanity was often used"

- Thomas van De Weerd

Discover the Radio 538 chatbots

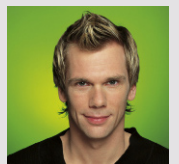
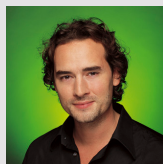
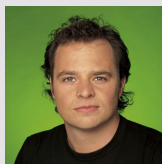
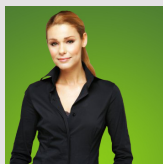
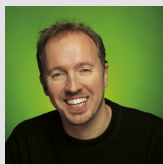
Add the following addresses to your WLM:



 barry@radio538.nl



 marco.borsato@radio538.nl



 studio@radio538.nl

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