

Customer engagement, Digital & messaging

The DIY revolution and why it matters

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As machine learning technologies become ubiquitous, they also become more accessible though publicly facing DIY tools and intellectual property. Organisations that are investing in building up their AI teams are now looking to become more self-sufficient and take control over the customer engagement experience.

It has been a challenging few months for customer engagement leaders. They have seen customer traffic spike across numerous engagement channels. They have been forced to adapt to new customer expectations and demands. And they have had to completely rethink their engagement strategies.

But there is one thing that's stood out: our customers are becoming more self-sufficient.

Their in-house AI skillset is often created for analytics purposes to process and extract intelligence out of massive volumes of unstructured data collected on the cloud. However, the use of general-purpose machine learning tools and open source (e.g. Tensorflow, PyTorch) has made that skillset transferable to customer engagement.

More organisations—whether they are banks or retail stores—are building in-house expert AI teams, and it's creating a big DIY trend across the industry.

Developer experience to customer experience

Taking the route of "build" over "buy" used to be a privilege for a select few enterprises that had the necessary in-house skills—but now it is open to everyone. And with that change comes a new focus on the developer experience.

Simply put, a platform which provides good experience to developers facilitate solutions which provide good experience to end customers.

Brands are starting to realise the opportunities that can be unlocked when their developers have the freedom and tools to experiment. They can expand the limits of their channels and create customer experiences that stand out in the industry. That is one of the key drivers behind Nuance Mix, our omnichannel conversational AI tooling and API platform. We wanted to offer developers a space to test

new ideas—all while considering the entire customer journey across channels on a single platform.

The Mix platform is abstracting omnichannel complexity, allowing developers to reuse code across channels as well as specific channel specific behaviour, all in a single project.

And this creative freedom is helping brands truly express themselves in the customer experiences they offer. Whether it's making simple changes like customising the design of their web chat, or developing exciting new applications for smart home appliances, ideas are no longer constrained to individual channels.

Facing the challenges

Organisations that go down the DIY path quickly find out that building an application prototype is relatively easy but creating a good customer experience as validated in production with real users and real data is a formidable challenge.

One challenge is the need for contributions for many different roles, including developers, testers, business analysts, user experience designers and speech scientists. That is why we designed collaboration directly into the Mix platform. Allowing contributors from different companies and different backgrounds to advance the same projects.

Another challenge is the technology itself. New innovation projects are announced every few weeks, from academia or big tech; but they typically fall short when applied to everyday problems, either because of poor performance on production data (as opposed to clean academic data), lack of robustness, or lack of cost effectiveness

The Nuance Mix platform leverages the latest market-leading conversational AI technologies, advanced in production over 10 times per average day, and highly optimised for virtual agent tasks.

Building a new future for customer engagement

As more enterprises continue to go down the DIY route and gain greater control over their customer experiences, we are going to see some big changes, and we've only just scratched the surface.

DIY development is both exciting and challenging. That is why we decided to make it the key focus in the new issue of *Nuance Innovation Quarterly*, our digital magazine.

Tags: [Customer experience](#), [Nuance Mix](#)



About David Ardman

David Ardman is Senior Vice President of R&D and Conversational AI at Nuance. A technical leader who grounds his approach to innovation in real problem solving, Ardman brings with him two decades of experience running integrated product, research and development and engineering teams. He received his Bachelor of Engineering from McGill University and resides in the Montreal, Canada area.

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