IBM Launches New Innovative Capabilities for Watson; Leading Global Brands including EY and Regions Bank use Watson to Infuse Intelligence into Workflows

- IBM Research innovations in natural language processing, automation and building trust to be commercialized in Watson products

NEW YORK, Dec. 9, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- IBM (NYSE: IBM) today announced innovative new capabilities planned for IBM Watson designed to help scale the use of AI by businesses.

Developed by IBM Research, the new capabilities are designed to improve the automation of AI, provide a higher degree of precision in natural language processing, and foster greater trust in outcomes derived from AI predictions. They include:

- Reading Comprehension is based on an innovative question-answering (QA) system from IBM Research. Currently in beta in IBM Watson Discovery, it is planned as a new feature that can help identify more precise answers in response to natural language queries from vast troves of complex enterprise documents. It also provides scores that indicate how confident the system is in each answer.

- FAQ Extraction uses a novel NLP technique from IBM Research to automate the extraction of Q&A pairs from FAQ documents. Currently in beta in IBM Watson Assistant's search skill, it is planned as a new feature to help businesses keep virtual assistants up-to date with the latest answers and reduce the time-consuming process of manual updates.

- A new intent classification model is now available in IBM Watson Assistant. It is designed to more accurately understand an end-user's goal or intent when engaging with a virtual assistant and to enable administrators to train the system faster. The model provides more accurate results from less data versus compared commercial systems[1]. This can help businesses go live with virtual assistants in a few days while achieving high accuracy.

- IBM Watson Discovery now includes support for 10 new languages including Bosnian, Croatian, Danish, Finnish, Hebrew, Hindi, Norwegian (Bokmål), Norwegian (Nynorsk), Serbian and Swedish. IBM has continued to add support for additional languages to help businesses build global, enterprise-grade NLP solutions.

Read more about the natural language processing updates here.

"This past year has shown us that the real power of AI is in helping companies take action and respond to changing conditions in real time. That means in minutes and hours -- not weeks or months," said Daniel Hernandez, General Manager of Data and AI, IBM. "Today's new AI capabilities are yet another example of how cutting-edge AI advancements coming out of IBM Research help us to deliver innovations for language, automation and building trust in IBM Watson that are changing the game for businesses of all sizes and across all industries."

Advancing AI Governance Capabilities to Help Build Trust and Transparency in Business Outcomes

IBM also announced plans to commercialize IBM Research-developed 'AI Factsheets' in Watson Studio in Cloud Pak for Data throughout the next year. Like nutrition labels for foods or information sheets for appliances, AI

Factsheets are designed to provide information about a product's important characteristics. Standardizing and publicizing this information will help build trust in AI services across the industry.

To complement this, IBM Services for AI at Scale, a new consulting offering, provides businesses with a framework, methodology, and underlying technology to guide organizations on their journey to trustworthy and ethical AI. IBM Cloud Pak for Data also has new capabilities to provide a complete foundation for AI that can run on any cloud. Read more about the AI Governance updates here.

Leading global brands are using IBM Watson to infuse intelligence into their workflows. For instance, a global leader in assurance, tax, strategy and transactions and consulting services, **EY** is transforming the M&A due diligence process using IBM Watson Discovery. Following the expansion of its global alliance with IBM earlier this summer, EY launched Diligence Edge, which includes a custom NLP model trained on EY proprietary M&A language, to help deal makers identify and leverage valuable insights throughout the transaction's lifecycle, as well as make informed decisions on deal value opportunities to gain an advantage in competitive deal processes.

Regions Bank has worked with IBM to complete a model monitoring use case that leverages IBM Cloud Pak for Data and Watson OpenScale. Regions was able to have a continuous read on model accuracy in production and achieved a higher confidence in the quality of predictions. IBM provides a standardized and disciplined approach to tracking model performance and will further Regions' end-to end model lifecycle management program. The company is also using IBM Watson to enhance customer service and reports having decreased call wait times by 40 percent since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic using Watson Assistant.

EY and Regions Bank join a growing list of companies using IBM Watson, including Japan Airlines, NatWest, Maricopa County and many more.

Today's news is another step from IBM to advance its AI for business strategy: from commercializing advanced NLP capabilities from Project Debater; expanding its AI-powered automation capabilities with the launch of IBM Watson AIOps, acquisitions of WDG Automation and Instana[2] and expanded ecosystem partnerships including ServiceNow; and helping businesses, healthcare organizations, governments and academic institutions use IBM Watson Assistant to get information they deem trustworthy on the pandemic to stakeholders.

For more information on today's announcement, please visit: https://newsroom.ibm.com/new-innovative-capabilities-for-watson

[1] Qi et. al, 2020: Benchmarking Intent Detection for Task-Oriented Dialog Systems
https://arxiv.org/pdf/2012.03929.pdf

[2] Expected to close within several weeks.

About IBM Watson

Watson is IBM's AI technology for business, helping organizations to better predict and shape future outcomes, automate complex processes, and optimize employees' time. Watson has evolved from an IBM Research project, to experimentation, to a scaled, open set of products that run anywhere. With more than 30,000 client

engagements, Watson is being applied by leading global brands across a variety of industries to transform how people work. To learn more, visit: https://www.ibm.com/watson.

Forward-Looking and Cautionary Statements

IBM's statements regarding its plans, directions, and intent are subject to change or withdrawal without notice at IBM's sole discretion.   Information regarding potential future products is intended to outline our general product direction and it should not be relied on in making a purchasing decision. The information mentioned regarding potential future products is not a commitment, promise, or legal obligation to deliver any material, code or functionality. Information about potential future products may not be incorporated into any contract. The development, release, and timing of any future features or functionality described for our products remains at our sole discretion.

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