

BEYOND THE CLOUDS NAVIGATING AVIATION'S FUTURE WITH CONVERSATIONAL AI



Abstract

Conversational AI is poised to revolutionize the aviation industry. This paper explores its potential, from simplifying passenger experiences and streamlining operations to enhancing safety and communication. We dive into applications like customer service bots, intelligent air traffic control systems, and AI-powered pilot training simulations. We also navigate the challenges of data privacy, integration, and adoption, before envisioning a future where AI pilots the way to a seamless and efficient aviation landscape. Real-world case studies showcase the power of AI in action, culminating in a conclusive exploration of Conversational AI's impact and its promise to reshape the skies.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction to Conversational AI in Aviation.....	3
2. Applications of Conversational AI in Aviation.....	4
3. Challenges and Considerations.....	5
4. Future Outlook.....	7
5. Case Studies.....	8
6. Conclusion.....	9
7. References and Sources.....	10





After the pandemic subsided, nations reopened their borders to facilitate travel and tourism, leading to a resurgence in the airline industry. In this post-pandemic landscape, there has been a notable 40% surge in activity across social media platforms. Consumers are now favoring asynchronous communication avenues like Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, and SMS to engage with Flight Booking Systems, surpassing the conventional channels of web and mobile platforms. Consequently, the airline industry has begun incorporating these social media platforms into their service offerings. Nevertheless, deploying human resources to manage these social media channels and engage with customers proves to be financially impractical. This digital transformation has introduced fresh benchmarks for outperforming competitors and capturing a larger market share.

Generative AI and foundation models are being used to develop chatbots that can provide customer service support to airline passengers. These chatbots can answer questions about flights, baggage, and

other travel-related matters. They can also help passengers with tasks such as booking tickets and managing reservations. They are being used to develop pilot assistants that can provide pilots with real-time information and support during flights. These assistants can monitor aircraft systems, provide weather updates, and assist with navigation.

As Generative AI and foundation models continue to evolve, we can expect to see even more innovative and transformative Conversational AI applications emerge in the aviation space.

The application of Conversational AI within the context of the airline business facilitates more direct and efficient customer interactions across various communication channels.

By transcending the limitations of conventional web and mobile platforms, integrating a chatbot as a pivotal element within an omnichannel approach empowers airlines to establish a more comprehensive and expansive user engagement network. Generative AI-powered chatbots can provide wayfinding

and navigation assistance to passengers in airports. They can help passengers find their way to gates, baggage-claim areas, lounges, restaurants, and other facilities. Generative AI can also be used to develop pilot assistants that can provide pilots with real-time information and support during flights. These assistants can monitor aircraft systems, provide weather updates, and assist with navigation.

In addition to the above, Generative AI can also be used to develop new Conversational AI applications for the aviation industry. For example, some companies are developing Conversational AI systems that can help passengers with tasks such as finding the best deals on flights, planning their travel itineraries, and getting through airport security. Other companies are developing Conversational AI systems that can help airlines with tasks such as managing customer data and optimizing flight schedules.

Conversational AI holds significant importance in the aviation industry, revolutionizing various aspects of

operations, services, and customer experiences.

- **Enhanced Customer Experience:** Conversational AI technologies, such as chatbots and virtual assistants, enable airlines to provide personalized and real-time assistance to passengers. This leads to improved customer satisfaction, as travelers can obtain quick responses to queries, receive travel updates, and access relevant information throughout their journey.
- **Efficient Communication:** In a post-pandemic scenario, there's been a surge in asynchronous communication preferences. Asynchronous communication allows customers to interact with airlines on their own schedules. They can send inquiries or requests at any time, and chatbots can respond when airline resources are available. It allows airlines to efficiently engage with customers across various channels, meeting diverse preferences while improving customer satisfaction

and operational efficiency. Social media channels are a key part of this landscape, as they enable airlines to connect with customers where they already spend their time online.

- **24/7 Availability:** Conversational AI operates round-the-clock, ensuring continuous support and information dissemination. This is particularly crucial for global airlines serving customers from different time zones, ensuring seamless interactions at any time of the day.
- **Streamlined Operations:** It can assist in optimizing various operational aspects, such as crew scheduling, maintenance coordination, and supply chain management. This streamlines processes and contributes to overall operational efficiency.
- **Safety and Crisis Management:** This technology can aid in real-time data analysis for predicting and managing potential safety issues and crises. By

rapidly analyzing data from various sources, AI can support timely decision-making, ensuring passenger safety.

- **Emergency Response:** In the event of an emergency or crisis, chatbots can disseminate information to passengers, provide reassurance, and offer guidance on safety protocols. AI-driven emergency response systems can monitor real-time data, such as weather conditions, air traffic, and security threats, to provide airlines and authorities with early warnings and recommendations for crisis management.
- **Predictive Maintenance:** Chatbots can assist customers with flight-related queries, including delays or cancellations due to maintenance issues. Predictive maintenance AI systems can use sensor data from aircraft components to anticipate maintenance needs and schedule inspections or repairs before safety issues arise.

Applications of Conversational AI in Aviation

Embrace the synergy of Conversational AI's control and reliability with Generative AI's unmatched flexibility for exceptional self-service solutions.

Passenger Services and Support

Conversational AI is used to provide passengers with real-time assistance, answer inquiries, and offer personalized travel recommendations. Chatbots can handle booking and reservation queries, flight status updates, baggage information, and more, enhancing the overall passenger experience.

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines utilizes a chatbot named "BlueBot" on Facebook Messenger to provide passengers with booking confirmations, flight status updates, and assistance during delays.

Personalization

This technology can be used to personalize the customer experience by providing tailored recommendations and assistance based on the individual passenger's needs and preferences. For example, a chatbot could recommend flights or destinations based on the passenger's past travel history or assist with special needs such as wheelchair accessibility or dietary restrictions.

Wayfinding and navigation

It can help passengers navigate airports and find their way to gates, baggage-claim areas, lounges, restaurants, and other facilities. This can be especially helpful for passengers in large or unfamiliar airports.

Lufthansa: Lufthansa uses a chatbot that helps it provide wayfinding and navigation assistance to passengers in its airports. Their Chatbot can help passengers find their way to gates, baggage-claim areas, lounges, restaurants, and other facilities.

Cabin Crew Assistance

Conversational AI supports cabin crews by providing quick access to passenger information, special requests, and safety procedures. It enhances communication between cabin crew members and helps manage in-flight services effectively.

Emirates Airlines uses AI-powered tools to equip cabin crews with passenger profiles and preferences, enabling personalized service delivery.

Language Translation and Communication

It enables real-time language translation, breaking down language barriers between passengers and airline staff. It facilitates effective communication and enhances passenger engagement.

Japan Airlines introduced a chat translation feature in their mobile

app, allowing passengers and crew to communicate seamlessly in multiple languages.

Pilot support

Conversational AI develops pilot assistants that can provide pilots with real-time information and support during flights. These assistants can monitor aircraft systems, provide weather updates, and assist with

navigation.

Airbus: Airbus is using this technology to develop a pilot assistant called the Airbus Pilot Assistant. The Airbus Pilot Assistant can provide pilots with real-time information and support during flights, such as monitoring aircraft systems, providing weather updates, and assisting with navigation.



Challenges and Considerations

Data Privacy in Conversational AI

Airlines collect and process a substantial amount of customer data through Conversational AI applications, such as chatbots and virtual assistants, for tasks like booking, providing flight information, and handling inquiries.

Challenge: Ensuring the privacy of this sensitive customer data is a critical concern. Data breaches within Conversational AI systems can expose passenger information, leading to trust issues and potential regulatory fines.

Mitigation measures: Implement strong data encryption and access controls within Conversational AI systems to protect sensitive customer data. Use secure communication

protocols to ensure data privacy during interactions.

Ransomware Attacks

Airlines rely heavily on digital systems, including Conversational AI, for their operations. Ransomware attacks targeting these systems can disrupt critical functions, including customer communication and flight management.

Challenge: Such attacks can lead to operational disruption, financial losses due to flight cancellations, and even safety risks if flight control systems are compromised.

Mitigation measures: Regularly update and patch Conversational AI systems to address vulnerabilities. Implement robust

backup and disaster recovery plans to quickly restore services in case of a ransomware attack.

Insider Threats

Insider threats can involve airline employees or contractors who have access to Conversational AI systems. They may intentionally or inadvertently misuse data or introduce vulnerabilities.

Challenge: Insider threats can compromise the confidentiality and integrity of customer data processed by this AI technology, leading to data breaches and potential safety concerns if critical systems are tampered with.

Mitigation measures: Implement user authentication and authorization

mechanisms in Conversational AI systems to restrict access based on roles and responsibilities. Monitor and audit user activities to detect and respond to suspicious behavior.

Supply Chain Attacks

Airlines rely on various suppliers and third-party vendors for software and hardware components, including those related to Conversational AI.

Challenge: Supply chain attacks targeting these components can introduce vulnerabilities or malicious code into Conversational AI systems, posing data security and operational risks.

Mitigation measures: Vet and establish security requirements for third-party vendors providing components for Conversational AI. Regularly assess the security of the supply chain to identify and mitigate potential risks.

Spear Phishing Attacks

Phishing attacks may target airline employees who manage or have access to Conversational AI systems, aiming to steal login credentials or sensitive information.

Challenge: Successful spear phishing attacks can lead to unauthorized access to these systems, enabling attackers to compromise data privacy and potentially disrupt operations.

Mitigation measures: Provide cybersecurity training and awareness programs for airline employees who use or have access to such systems. Teach them to recognize phishing attempts and report suspicious emails.

National Security Implications

Airlines are considered critical infrastructure with implications for national security. Cyber-attacks on Conversational AI systems could disrupt not only airline operations but also broader transportation networks.

Challenge: Ensuring the security of these systems is not just a business concern but a national security imperative.

Mitigation measures: Collaborate with government agencies and industry partners to establish cybersecurity standards and best practices for the aviation sector. Conduct regular security assessments and penetration testing of such systems to identify vulnerabilities.

Additionally, Conversational AI can enhance security through the following measures:

- **Multi-Factor Authentication:** Implement multi-factor authentication for accessing Conversational AI systems, adding an extra layer of security to prevent unauthorized access.
- **Anomaly Detection:** Utilize machine learning algorithms within Conversational AI to monitor for unusual patterns of behavior or data access, helping to detect and respond to potential threats in real time.
- **Security Alerts:** Configure Conversational AI systems to generate alerts and notifications for any suspicious activities, ensuring that security incidents are promptly addressed.
- **Regular Updates and Security Patches:** Keep such platforms and underlying software up to date with the latest security patches to address known vulnerabilities.
- **Incident Response Plans:** Develop and regularly update incident response plans that include specific procedures for addressing cybersecurity incidents related to Conversational AI.



Future Outlook

1

Gartner predicts that by 2023, 70% of customer interactions will involve emerging technologies such as chatbots and artificial intelligence (AI).

2

Forrester predicts that by 2025, 50% of global airline customer interactions will be automated using AI-powered chatbots.

3

PWC predicts that by 2025, conversational AI will be used by 80% of airlines to automate customer service tasks.

4

NOKIA predicts that by 2027, conversational AI will be used by 90% of airlines to personalize the customer experience. NOKIA also predicts that conversational AI will help airlines to increase customer satisfaction by 20%.

5

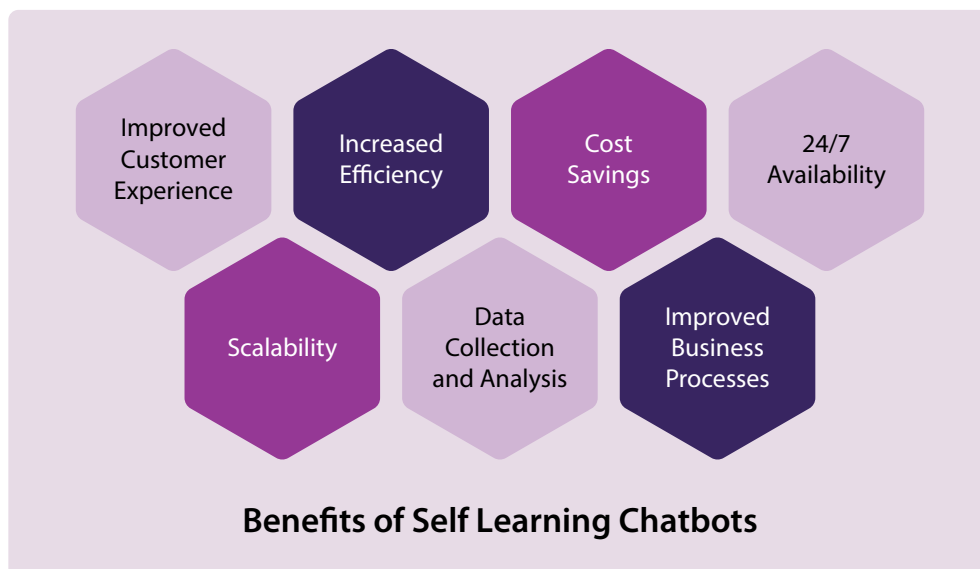
Ericsson predicts that by 2030, conversational AI will be used by 100% of airlines to generate new revenue streams. Ericsson also predicts that conversational AI will help airlines to increase revenue by 10%.

Self-learning Conversational AI

With the integration of cutting-edge technologies such as natural language processing, machine learning, and others, the aviation industry can take their chatbots to the next level. A self-learning chatbot could be more capable than

conventional chatbots. The self-learning chatbots can learn from user interactions and other sources to enhance their replies. Using machine learning algorithms, the input patterns can be examined and understood. Therefore, they can provide quick and reliable information as a result. Self-learning chatbots learn autonomously

and can improve its performance without human intervention. The algorithms of these chatbots are modified on their own using feedback mechanisms, including user ratings, sentiment analysis, and other areas. Autonomous learning chatbots can be adopted as per changing user needs and preferences.



Case Studies

Infosys evaluates answers for relevancy and authenticity, which is critical for aviation safety and regulatory compliance

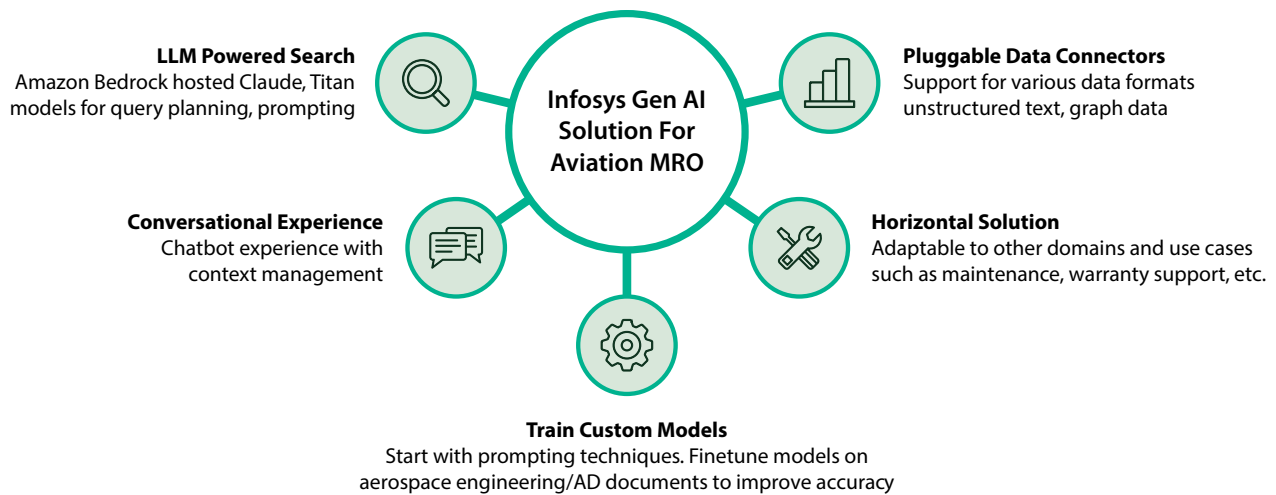
Challenge: The aviation industry is heavily regulated, and civil aviation authorities issue airworthiness directives to address safety deficiencies. Compliance with these directives is essential, and finding and interpreting relevant documents

is time-consuming. The current process for searching, accessing, and analyzing can take several days and ends up being costlier and increasing human errors. This makes it more challenging for new users.

Solution: Infosys offers Generative AI solutions for addressing such challenges. The solutions combine Generative AI, knowledge engineering techniques, and a framework for supporting aircraft repair processes. Also, Large Language Models

(LLMs) and knowledge graphs with domain-specific ontologies and the Amazon Bedrock platform are utilized. The Infosys Generative AI solution for aviation maintenance and repair uses AI to help engineers find and interpret relevant documents faster and more accurately. It also evaluates answers for relevancy and authenticity, which is critical for aviation safety and regulatory compliance.

Infosys Generative AI Solution Features



Indigo boosts customer satisfaction to 87% with AI automation

Challenge: Indigo was looking for a solution that could help them deliver efficient customer support and handle high query volume 24/7. The airline was also looking to reduce support costs with

limited agent bandwidth.

Solutions: To overcome this challenge, Indigo leveraged Dynamic AI agent Dottie from Yellow.ai. The bot helped the airline accelerate AI automation using DynamicNL, using which Indigo was able to design Conversational AI flows within a very short time and reduced costs and

efforts. The bot can resolve 500K+ users every quarter and provides a quick and hassle-free experience to the customers. The bot helps in solving queries related to multiple services like web check-in, booking management, flight information, and more, on their preferred digital channels.

High Customer Satisfaction 87%
Average CSAT Scores

High Adoption 400K+
opt-ins for WhatsApp Campaigns

Volume Handling 42M+
messages exchanged in a quarter

How a Norwegian Airline improved response time using chatbot

Challenge: Norway's low-cost and fifth-largest airline was receiving inquiries increasingly through chat. Using chatbots, the Norwegian Airline took care of their

customers rising queries.

Solution: The airline used a chatbot from Kindly, where the chatbot was equipped with ready-made content for the airline industry and tailored to fit the airline's purpose. This saved time

during chatbot development. Also, the chatbot was offered in multiple languages, which helped airlines maintain quality in delivering responses to inquiries, managing response times, and delivering overall customer satisfaction.

30% Reduction
in Live Chats

5% Reduction in
Incoming Phone Calls

20% Reduction in Live
Enquiring handled
by Agents

Conclusion

In conclusion, Conversational AI, powered by cutting-edge Generative AI models, is proving to be a game-changer in the aviation industry. It's revolutionizing how passengers and aviation professionals interact, ushering in a new era of personalized and efficient experiences. These advanced systems, driven by sophisticated algorithms, machine learning, and natural language processing, exhibit an impressive capacity to understand, analyze, and respond to human queries and requests with remarkable accuracy and efficiency.

As Conversational AI technology continues to evolve, we can anticipate even more profound transformations. Future systems will seamlessly integrate with existing aviation infrastructure, creating a harmonious blend of human and AI capabilities. The aviation landscape of tomorrow will undeniably be shaped by Conversational AI, offering not only seamless and personalized interactions but also significantly improving efficiency. Ultimately, it will transform air travel into a more convenient and enjoyable experience for all stakeholders involved.

Moreover, the implementation of this technology, enriched by Generative AI capabilities, has the potential to optimize operational efficiency. By automating intricate tasks like booking confirmations, itinerary changes, and baggage tracking, airlines can allocate resources more effectively. This alleviates the burden on customer service agents, allowing them to focus on intricate inquiries requiring human expertise. Consequently, this not only expedites processes but also minimizes errors, resulting in elevated levels of customer satisfaction and vastly improved overall operational performance.

While Conversational AI is still a relatively new technology, its impact on the aviation industry is already substantial. As technology continues to advance, we can anticipate witnessing even more innovative and transformative applications in this sector. These developments will continue to redefine the aviation experience, making air travel more efficient, enjoyable, and accessible than ever before.

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About the Authors

Vidya Anandrao Jadhav

Consultant

Shrey Saini

Senior Associate Consultant

Co-Author

Guruprasad NV

Senior Principal Technology Architect



For more information, contact askus@infosys.com



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