

OPPORTUNITIES AND LIMITATIONS OF AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ASSISTANT IN PROVIDING INFORMATION SERVICES TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS (THE CASE OF THE STUDY IN UZBEKISTAN PLATFORM)

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Abstract. The article analyses the opportunities and limitations of an artificial intelligence assistant in providing information services to international students on the example of the studyin-uzbekistan.uz platform. It is established that, since the cost of an erroneous answer in admission exceeds the cost of no answer, such a tool must rely on the verified data of the institution itself.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, digital assistant, international students, information services, institutional image, trust.

The information needs of an international applicant differ qualitatively from those of a local one: the applicant deals with an unfamiliar system and is often unable to formulate even the question precisely. To this is added the difference in time zones — the institution's working hours do not coincide with the hours when the applicant is active.

Traditional information services — e-mail and the telephone — cannot overcome these limitations: they are confined to working hours and require a formal mode of address. A psychological barrier is also present: an applicant hesitates to write an official letter with a question they consider “too simple”, so the question either remains unanswered or is redirected to forums and intermediaries. It is this gap that institutions are filling by introducing digital assistants; an analysis of eight universities has confirmed their effectiveness [3].

The material of the study is the artificial intelligence assistant integrated into the studyin-uzbekistan.uz platform; functional description was applied. The analysis made it possible to distinguish three functions performed by the assistant. First, availability at any hour: obtaining an answer ceases to depend on the institution's working hours. Second, lowering the barrier of first contact: an informal chat window is accepted more readily than a formal letter. Third, filtering routine enquiries: automating repetitive questions lets staff concentrate on non-standard cases, which corresponds to the timeliness criterion [2].

At the same time, the requirements placed on such a tool in the field of admission are higher than usual. The cost of error is asymmetric: an incorrect answer concerning a visa or a deadline causes the applicant real loss, whereas the absence of an answer merely redirects them elsewhere — an incorrect answer thus does more harm than none at all. A practical requirement follows: the assistant must rely not on general knowledge but on the verified data of the institution; otherwise it destroys trust instead of building it.

This matters for institutional image as well: a functioning assistant demonstrates technological maturity [1:245], whereas one that gives erroneous answers harms the image more severely than its complete absence would. It is therefore a high-return but high-risk instrument.

In conclusion, an artificial intelligence assistant simultaneously resolves three structural limitations of information services — time zones, the barrier of first contact and routine questions — yet its effectiveness is determined not by the technology as such, but by the grounding of its

answers in institutional data [4:197]. A quantitative assessment of their accuracy is the task of further research.

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