

## **Life Without A Face**

*The Future of life-like interactions in typical process-driven customer-facing applications*

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Around the world, customer-centric organisations increasingly view the role of customer communication as one of the strategic pillars in their customer relationship management strategy.

The evolution of business communication is certainly following the path of media, which has transformed human interaction, from a text-only interface, to text and graphics, to the latest multimedia user interfaces enabled by audio and video. And what we are seeing today is a far a richer customer experience, as a result of this transition.

Multimedia capabilities provide an additional dimension to typical user interactions: time. For example, on the web, when the text on a single page has been viewed, perhaps the interaction ends. However, with rich content on the page, such as audio or video, we can provide infinitely more detailed information, potentially engaging customers for a far longer period. And the more dynamic the multimedia feature is, the more value it may add to the interaction.



A time-extending feature can support various forms of communication during a typical customer's web journey: from promotional videos, to music, from static audio content, to dynamic audio and video production.

The human voice has traditionally been the most natural form of communication: we start understanding voice-based communication long before we start reading, and yet today very few automated interactions use the voice to engage audiences. Recent breakthroughs in synthesized voices look to reverse this trend and it will soon become accepted that a far broader range of applications use computer generated speech to enrich a user's experience.

As voice-enabled applications evolve, we may ask what might be the next level of engagement. Think about when you are on a conference call with a stranger, with a large telephone on the table: whilst listening to the voice, most people paint a picture of the character at the end of the line.

People usually look at what they are listening to, and in this case people have become accustomed to look at the plastic object, yet have a stronger desire to see the face behind it.

When people are being informed about products and services, or marketing and promotions, or when they need post-sales assistance, they look for trusted sources. Trusted sources are generally people who possess both a face and a voice.

Many recent studies have indicated that as we adopt more and more forms of electronic interaction, we prefer to interact with objects that are more human-like than not, and hence we are currently seeing people adopting avatars to increase the social nature of their online interactions. The first evolution of end-user generated digital characters, though, consists of simple cartoon-like faces, without a voice.

For corporate communication, however, we believe that these avatars should have a human-like voice, and just as importantly should have a human-like face which represents the brand of the organisation. We use the term 'Digital Personas'.

Digital personas are human-like virtual operators, being able to speak and interact in real-time on different channels, bringing customer interaction to the next level of transparency.

This great improvement in customer relationship management has been made possible by combining Loquendo's high-quality and emotional text-to-speech technology, with the Human Digital Assistant™ (HDA) platform by H-care. And the result is a realistic digital face able to manage typical CRM processes in a highly personalized manner. The HDA platform features patent-pending 3D real-time rendering technology, business processes design, management and data integration to deliver a life-like experience through every channel.

Companies are looking to promote new products and services, enter new markets, increase the market share, and evolve levels of customer experience: it would be a challenge to do this without a face.

The Human Digital Assistant provides a multimodal solution, which allows each customer to receive "personalized" guidance. Logical rules built into the Human Digital Assistant allow information, from a variety of corporate information sources, to be efficiently communicated to customers, on all electronic channels such as the Web, Mobile Phones, and Kiosks, providing information, personalized customer care, improved guidance, or delivering unique advertising campaigns.

Life-like audio and video combine to form the response of the Human Digital Assistant, following the analysis to determine what would be appropriate for a given customer in a given situation. When applied to typical online self-service processes it creates an informative yet easy-to-use interface, to allow end-users to easily complete processes that would normally be managed by human customer service or sales staff.

Would there be life without a face?

For more information about H-care: [www.h-care.it](http://www.h-care.it)