

Why Businesses Should Start Using AI Today

By Janet Wagner

According to Gartner, AI and advanced machine learning are among the top strategic [technology trends](#) for 2017. AI and machine learning are already used by numerous companies, and not just major technology companies like Amazon, Google, and Microsoft. The number of businesses using AI and machine learning is rapidly increasing thanks in part to the rising number of AI and machine learning startups and the availability of easy to use AI APIs.

AI research is quickly advancing in leaps and bounds, making AI poised to be the single most disruptive technology in history. AI is advancing so fast even companies already using AI technologies must start thinking about new AI capabilities and applications. Companies that don't pay attention to technology trends and fail to adopt new technologies, when appropriate, will be left behind.

Take Blockbuster and Netflix, for example. Blockbuster did not see the potential value of video streaming technology until it was too late.

The Decline of Blockbuster

Blockbuster is an [example](#) of a company that was slow to adapt to new technologies and business models. Blockbuster originally started as a video rental company; VHS tapes then later moving to DVDs. The advent of streaming video technology has allowed consumers to buy or rent videos without having to leave the comfort of their home.

Unlike Netflix, which also began as a video rental company (DVD by mail service), Blockbuster was slow to adopt streaming video technology. By the time Blockbuster began offering video streaming services, Netflix already dominated the video streaming market. At the time of this writing, there is only one Blockbuster [remaining](#) in the entire world.

The Success of Netflix

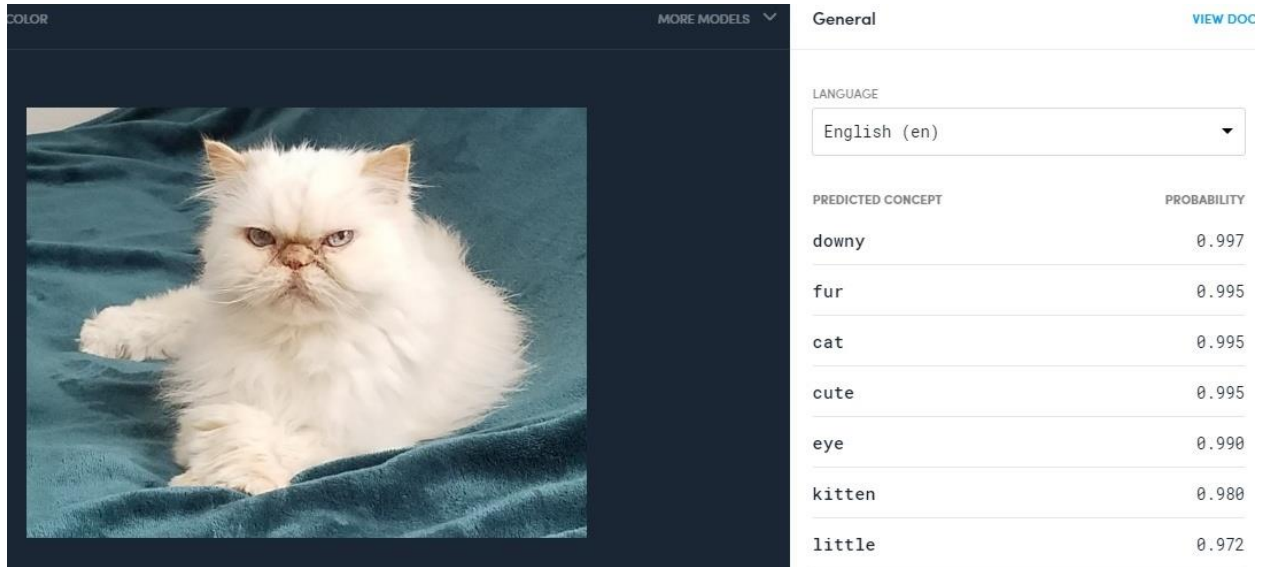
Netflix started as a DVD rental by mail service back in 1997. Video streaming technology has been around since the late 1990s, but it wasn't available for consumer use until the mid-2000s. Netflix saw the business possibilities of video streaming technology, and the company introduced its video streaming service in 2007.

Netflix is known for not only adopting new technologies but also pioneering new cloud architectures and technologies. Netflix is one of the first companies to move its platform entirely to the cloud (AWS) and move from a monolithic to microservices architecture. Today, Netflix uses many new and advanced technologies such as AI and machine learning, which is used to power its recommendation system.

Netflix is one of the leading technology companies today, and a video streaming juggernaut; it's estimated that Netflix [revenue](#) for Q4 2018 was \$4.19 billion.

Businesses Should Use AI Today

AI is quickly becoming an essential business tool, and companies shouldn't wait to use AI technologies. Numerous companies are already using AI to enhance applications and websites, automate business processes, and make better decisions.



The screenshot shows a user interface for an AI image classification service. On the left, there is a dark panel with a 'COLOR' label and a 'MORE MODELS' dropdown menu. Below this is a photograph of a white, fluffy cat sitting on a blue fabric. On the right, there is a 'General' tab and a 'VIEW DOC' link. Below the tab is a 'LANGUAGE' dropdown menu set to 'English (en)'. A table displays the predicted concepts and their probabilities:

PREDICTED CONCEPT	PROBABILITY
downy	0.997
fur	0.995
cat	0.995
cute	0.995
eye	0.990
kitten	0.980
little	0.972

Many third-party APIs are available for machine learning-powered features. For example, the Clarifai API provides automatic [image classification and tagging](#) and [visual search](#) capabilities. - Check out the [live demo](#).

Enhance Applications and Websites

Companies are using AI to enhance applications and websites with appealing features such as automatic image/video classification and tagging, visual search, chatbots, and intelligent virtual assistants. Most consumers these days are tech-savvy, and many expect companies to keep up with the latest technologies, especially when it comes to smartphone applications. For example, if you're an online retailer, it won't matter how great your products are if your online store provides visitors a bland shopping experience. Or worse, visitors are unable to find the products they're looking for quickly.

Automate Business Processes

AI can help businesses save time and money by automating and streamlining business processes. For example, AI can be used by companies to automate information gathering processes so that [knowledge workers](#) can concentrate on core tasks. AI can also be used by platforms to moderate and filter unwanted content automatically; for example, illegal product listings from auction sites. These are just a few of the ways AI can be used to automate business processes, which can help companies save time and money.

Make Better Business Decisions

Most companies are sitting on stockpiles of unused information, information that could provide valuable business insights. There's also an enormous amount of information generated by social media sites, news sites, and other online sources. Companies can use AI and machine learning to extract and analyze

information from multiple sources, gaining valuable insights that can be used to make better business decisions. For example, a retail company could use AI technology to monitor market trends and analyze sales to predict product popularity and plan inventory.

Stay Ahead of the Competition

Advanced technologies like AI and machine learning are leading to the disruption of many industries and changing how people live and work. Many AI researchers believe that AI will eventually become ingrained in nearly every aspect of people's lives. Andrew Ng, chief scientist at Baidu, [says](#) that "AI is the new electricity! Electricity transformed countless industries; AI will now do the same."

Companies must keep on top of emerging new technologies and track trends that may disrupt their industry. AI is one of those technology trends that companies shouldn't ignore. AI has come a long way in recent years, and businesses can benefit from using AI technology today.