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A DIGITAL
COMPANION
FOR PEOPLE
WITH
DISABILITIES

FRASIL



\$15



COVER STORY

A DIGITAL COMPANION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

By Annie Johnson

FRASIL



The merits of a particular technology can be best described by the number of lives it touches. This proposition has stood the test of time, showcasing numerous innovative strides that not only enhance the quality of life but also make day-to-day activities easier for people. One such initiative by Sydney-based Frasil enriches the lives of people with disabilities. The company brings a portfolio of companion solutions and a comprehensive platform designed to lend a helping hand to those in need.

As a testament to its efforts, Frasil released a video that showcases the fruition of its platform that assists those with disabilities. The company handed out tablets with their AI-powered platform to support workers who interacted with people with disabilities and observed their reaction. “Our goal was to allow those with disabilities to do things that we take for granted, such as turning on the television or expressing how we feel,” begins Fran Killoway, Chairman of Frasil. Without a hint of doubt, such applications of technology bring forth a promising revolution in the enterprise landscape, thereby improving the quality of life. Upon realizing the need for companion applications in this industry, Frasil, in association with Flintwood Disability Services and Creativity Inc., was able to find different people with disabilities and motivate them to access the internet. The collaborative effort was orchestrated to empower the users with internet access through hand-held devices or computers and carry out day-to-day tasks, interact with their support workers, and express themselves

in today's interconnected world. Needless to say, this experience of engaging with people and cherishing those moments of joy when they used the Frasil platform was priceless for the company, and that is evident from Fran's enthusiasm in narrating the story. "My son, who is the product specialist, merely kept an iPad on the table and observed the reaction of the people as they fiddled around with the devices. With the assistance of support workers, those who would not talk previously could now ask their caretakers to turn on the TV, listen to music, talk to their parents, request for help or do something as stressful as sending an email, all through the companion application on an interactive device," she says. "It was an emotional moment to witness something like this."

A SIMPLISTIC TECHNOLOGICAL MARVEL

Powered by a Machine Empathy engine, the Frasil platform gives people the key to unlock the digital world and a multitude of noteworthy functionalities. It allows individuals around the world to connect to a computer and the internet effortlessly. However, what makes Frasil's offering unique is its ability to personalize user experiences progressively as an individual explores the platform.

Industry-standard applications more or less provide a similar type of user experience across their spectrum of customers. Frasil, contrarily, customizes its interface and content in accordance with every interaction with users while understanding their needs. Fran says, "If you were to look at 10 million users with completely different sets of interactions on our platform for a definite period, you would find that all of them have entirely varying types of engagement." In order to ensure this personalized engagement for users, Frasil has developed its platform with AI and machine empathy as the vital ingredient—a novel implementation of the technology that has not been seen or heard of before. Though there is an abundance of AI-powered technologies in the enterprise landscape, none are suited to people with disabilities. Therefore, Frasil individualizes AI rather than delivering it as a global concept that is a 'one-size-fits-all.'

Frasil's browser-based platform hosts a world of applications designed to engage people intuitively, with tools dedicated to carrying out numerous tasks. It provides access to Netflix, Google, YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and Spotify, along with other social networking sites in an easier manner so that users need not navigate to the desired application on devices. Likewise, it makes access to email and messages more convenient while allowing users to connect with friends

and family through a simplistic interface. The platform gives them the power to control IoT devices, windows, doors, lights and appliances around the house. It can even be used as a medium of communication, wherein people with disabilities can request assistance from the support workers. Additionally, it enables users to choose what they would like to eat or would prefer to wear on



IF YOU WERE TO LOOK AT 10 MILLION USERS WITH COMPLETELY DIFFERENT SETS OF INTERACTIONS ON OUR PLATFORM FOR A DEFINITE PERIOD, YOU WOULD FIND THAT ALL OF THEM HAVE ENTIRELY VARYING TYPES OF ENGAGEMENT

a daily basis. The intuitive nature of the product enables distributors or service providers to customize the interface of the platform based on their preferences. Such a meritorious portfolio of functionalities built into the platform makes complex tasks—which may seem simple to a normal person—easy in terms of accessibility.

"Let us say that a particular individual uses a wheelchair and cannot access the window or if the person is unwell and requires immediate assistance, our solution makes communication easy, enabling users to interact with support workers for assistance instantaneously," adds Fran. The company is extending these capabilities to parents, thereby helping them look after their children while having the necessary freedom that both need.

CHANGING LIVES ONE AT A TIME

Looking at the simplicity of the platform, all the while understanding the dexterity and the intelligence resting under the hood, it is safe to say that the Frasil platform is so much more than a revolutionary product for those in need. If a person living with a disability can make a sound then Frasil can take that sound and turn it into their own personal speaking voice. For example, one of Frasil's clients had

of individuals who struggle with their everyday routine. As a matter of fact, Fran laid the cornerstone of Frasil 10 years ago, when a dear friend of hers was diagnosed with MMD and lost the ability to speak. Though there were numerous products that could address the issue, they were either expensive or did not work the way they were supposed to. Fran took it upon herself to create a product that can help her friend interact with the people around her. But, before

a stroke three years ago, losing the ability to speak and sensitivity on the left side of her body. Upon interacting with the client, Frasil built a sound card, wherein, the client can interact with other individuals without having to use Google Assistant or Apple's Siri and take up TV interviews without any hassle. "Frasil is replacing the client's voice, enabling her to talk like she used to, just that this time around, she'll be using Frasil instead of speaking herself. And, it is these kinds of achievements that we take pride in because we are able to make a difference in the lives of people through a complete solution," narrates Fran.

Such success stories not only serve as exemplary testaments to the capabilities of the Frasil platform but also highlight how a piece of technology can redefine the lives

the product could be built entirely, Fran's friend passed away. Since then, Fran has been on a mission to help those in need and develop a humanoid companion, which could be there for them all the time. Additionally, the company plans to support up to 65 languages that are aesthetically driven with the pipelines built around individualism.

"Our goal is to enrich the lives of as many people as possible, and we have designed our artificial intelligence engine to do just that," adds Fran. The company has simplified the dexterity associated with AI and delivered something so simplistic, yet so novel. It epitomizes Fran's goal of making a difference in society by empowering the disabled to take part in their day-to-day activities seamlessly. **ACO**