

Artificial Intelligence can lift and expand quality work

Along with growing digitization, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is opening up new possibilities and challenges for businesses and organisations. This will affect quality and improvement work. According to a leading expert in the area, *Elmer Corbin* at IBM Watson Health, the opportunities and roles of quality professionals will expand.

THE DEVELOPMENT is now moving fast. The Internet of Things makes more and more products connected. We are facing the breakthrough of AI. In the production of services, we will probably see a great deal of automation, much higher productivity and better possibilities of following up.

Strong connection between digitization and quality

Digitization and the use of advanced cognitive systems that collect and analyse all available information will produce an enormous amount of information that we need to handle and understand. This knowledge can be used in quality and improvement work, including product development. The quality functions in an organisation will have the possibility of seeing when problems occur in real time, or at least much more quickly than before. Therefore, quality professionals need to develop their ability to analyse these huge amounts of information, even though the systems will be helping them with that.

The connection between digitization and quality can be looked upon from two perspectives: The first is digitization to proactively design for quality, and the second perspective is quality work to assure the quality of new technologies. What we invest in has to work the way it is supposed to, for instance the systems in self-driving cars. Faults in digitization can lead to new and serious risks. Therefore it is important to include risk management. It is also important to design digitization in a way that really supports quality and improvement work, for instance by focusing on root causes of problems and not only by trying to solve problems by investing in new technology on a system level.

Better decisions through analysing great amounts of data

One of the most advanced cognitive systems today is IBM Watson. It is a cloud-based AI-platform that allows businesses to extract deep insights and knowledge from massive amounts of structured and

unstructured data in order to help those businesses accelerate the achievement of their strategic objectives. It is capable of analysing data collected from a variety of internet and intranet data sources available to users. Today Watson is used in a variety of industries, including Healthcare, Education, Customer Engagement, Financial Services, IoT, Media & Entertainment, Talent Management, and Business Workflow Optimization.

– The Watson Quality Advisor solution is being used to provide quality professionals and manufacturing managers with proactive, decision-making recommendations in order to address possible disruptions in the supply chain based on the analysis of data collected from process and instrumentation at various points along the manufacturing lifecycle, says Elmer Corbin, who is Global Delivery Excellence Executive at IBM Watson Health. In this role, he is the executive responsible for collaborating globally within IBM and with industry partners.

New possibilities for quality professionals

In cognitive systems Elmer Corbin can see new interesting possibilities opening up for quality professionals.

– Watson technology is being used in many different industries to help inform business professionals on overall business workflow optimization in not only development and manufacturing, but in every aspect of the business operations. This technology will open up new opportunities for quality professionals to apply their skills and training to improve the performance of every aspect of a business, from HR to legal to marketing & sales.

– This will expand the roles and open new opportunities for quality professionals beyond development and manufacturing to become the business transformation and optimization leaders for their companies, Elmer Corbin says.

Corbin also points out that this technology could be used to help quality leaders figure out the distinguishing aspects that

make companies in similar industries more successful than others.

Enhanced intelligence that provides higher quality

Since this is a cloud-based technology, it is available through browser interface at every level within a company and to end-user consumers and suppliers as well.

– Users and consumers of this technology will continue to create new innovative ways to use the deep analytics capabilities to discover even more insights from their data. This will create new ways of making decisions, allow for more well-informed decisions on new market opportunities, and offer new approaches to collaboration on data sources across industries, Elmer Corbin says.

– The AI characteristics of IBM Watson provide the perfect solution to help enhance, scale, and accelerate the expertise of the quality professional, ultimately expanding their roles across the entire enterprise. This augmented intelligence will allow companies to make better decisions, leading to higher quality products, services, and customer experiences across every industry.

Elmer Corbin is one of the keynote speakers at the Excellence Summit in Gothenburg on September 11–12, 2018. In addition to his position at IBM Watson Health, he is also Chairman of the Board of the American Society for Quality, ASQ.



Elmer Corbin