



Customer Service NEWSLETTER

The authority on managing the customer contact center

May 2011

Technology

New software tracks the emotional state of customers

eGain provides multichannel customer service software that allows companies to track the emotional content of incoming customer messages as a way to direct those customers to agents who are best equipped to handle them.

The company offers products for call center, Web, and social media channels.

Directing tough calls to capable agents

The functionality arose out of the interest of customers “who wanted to set service levels for emails, and route them based on a number of emotional factors — among them the level of negative emotion in the email,” says Ashu Roy, CEO of eGain Corporation.

In addition to email, eGain found that it could use the same capacity in its call center and social media software.

One benefit in contact centers is that “it allows you to prioritize who is going to handle that incoming call or message,” Roy says. “And in contact centers you tend to have some agents — and usually not too many of them — who are really good at handling irate customers.” The software enables companies to match the call or email or Web chat with the right talent in the organization.

In its social media application, the capability is called “sentiment analysis,” and it looks at different social media streams for mentions

of the company or its products. It then analyzes and ranks these mentions based on the positive or negative sentiment attached to the message or request.

Accentuating the positive

The benefit to the company using the software is twofold, says Roy. “On the negative side, clearly an irate customer has the potential — especially in the socially connected world we all live in now — to talk their problem up across their social network to the point

where it becomes a huge PR problem for the company,” he says. “Our product allows one to quickly identify those emotional

customer issues, take the issue offline, handle it in a private transaction, resolve the issue, then bring it back into the public channel with the issue resolved. And that can be really important in some cases.”

Roy notes that the software also has a knowledge base available that allows companies to build templates for responding to certain types of customer situations — sort of a pre-prepared approach to dealing with different varieties of customer dissatisfaction — that agents can choose to use or not.

On the positive side, understanding the emotional state of a customer or the emotional content of an email or a social media message can help you to identify your


brand ambassadors as well as opportunities for cross-selling and up-selling. In fact, says Roy, “We are also seeing that companies really want customers to talk up products and positive experiences that they have with the company, and this can be a way to encourage that.”

Connecting the dots

While the software can help in all channels, Roy sees the social media applications as being the most interesting. For firms that want to begin exploring what customers are saying about them on social media, “we can sort through mentions of the company to begin with, and monitor those mentions for a few weeks to see what kind of issues and sentiments are arising,” he says.

Then a company can connect that stream to one or two agents in its customer care group who have training in social media communications and etiquette. “And with the eGain system,” Roy says, “the agent who responds to that Twitter complaint is also going to see the history of that customer with the company or with the product along with that comment or complaint. That way they can identify whether the customer is a good one who needs to be responded to quickly and effectively — or if it’s someone who is engaged in some ‘social bullying’ by complaining a little more than they need to, or looking for service that is disproportionate to their true requirement.”

So in the end, “it is as much about connecting the dots to the customer’s history as it is about the emotional content of their communication.”

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Emotionally intelligent software can:

- Redirect irate callers
- Identify brand ambassadors
- Put complaints into context