Singapore Unveils Second National AI Strategy (NAIS 2.0)
25 December, 2023
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Singapore has been steadily striving to improve in Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities since the first National AI Strategy was set up back in 2019. As one of the first countries in the region to establish a national strategy, Singapore's efforts have led to significant progress towards becoming a hub for AI advancements. For instance, Singapore was ranked 2nd in the world in the most recent Oxford Insights Government AI Index published on 6th December, which is based on various indicators across the government, technology sector, data, and infrastructure of the country. On 4th December, a second National AI Strategy (NAIS 2.0) was announced by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance Lawrence Wong at the inaugural Singapore Conference on AI, building upon the first strategy from 2019, once again marking the Singapore government's commitment to harnessing the benefits of AI.

The newly unveiled strategy features three main differences from the first strategy from 2019. The first is a shift in focus from projects to systems, in terms of infrastructure, resources and capabilities. Instead of focusing on national AI projects targeting specific challenges such as freight planning and municipal services, the new strategy aims to empower the people and bring about widespread and positive impact, comprising 15 actions across the whole spectrum of the economy and society.

The second difference is that Singapore now sees AI as a necessity for progress rather than just a technology that is good to have, with plans to strengthen efforts in both nurturing the AI talent pool as well as boosting the adoption of AI technology in enterprises. According to one of the action plans in the strategy, Singapore will be scaling up AI training programs to increase the rate at which AI practitioners can be trained, with the goal of boosting the number of AI practitioners in Singapore to 15,000. In addition to increasing the number of AI practitioners, the government will also organize workforce upskilling or reskilling training and support enterprises in improving their in-house digital capabilities so that more enterprises can transform their business with AI technology.

Lastly, Singapore will be shifting from a local to a global approach in NAIS 2.0. Rather than focusing on only issues with high socioeconomic impact for Singapore, the government believes that there is a need to be well connected to world-class innovation networks and contribute to complex global challenges such as energy, data, and ethics. To this end, there

are plans to intensify local AI development activities to attract tech talents from around the world, as well as set up a dedicated team for identifying and engaging top AI developers.

All in all, the purpose of NAIS 2.0 is ultimately to drive the development and implementation of AI solutions to impact society positively, and the specific action plans outlined signifies the Singapore government's continued commitment towards scaling up efforts in AI technology. With the existing AI infrastructure developed over the last few years, Singapore is well set to maintain its spot as one of the leading countries for AI technology and develop as a hub of AI research.

Singapore's OneService AI Chatbot

One example of deploying AI technology in Singapore that was highlighted in NAIS 2.0 is the OneService Chatbot launched by the government back in July 2021, more than a year before the release of ChatGPT. The AI-powered chatbot is a one-stop solution with the ability to analyze messages to classify complaints into the correct category while extracting relevant details of each case, before informing the appropriate government agency for action to be taken. Over 160,000 actual cases of feedback from citizens were used to train the AI chatbot, resulting in a high accuracy in categorizing and identifying key information such as the location and time where the incident took place. This was implemented through commonly used chatting applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram so that it can be easily accessed. With the AI chatbot, citizens no longer have to spend time figuring out which government agency to contact for their issue, and government agencies can attend to complaints much more efficiently.