AI in Africa: The top 5 in-demand technologies at the moment

By Nick Bradshaw

25 Mar 2021

Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies will add trillions to global GDP in the next 20 years, making it one of the world's most powerful technology trends on par with the disruption and opportunities being created by cloud computing and blockchain. However, the Oxford Insights AI Readiness Index 2020, paints a somewhat bleak picture of Africa's readiness for AI in the global rankings.

Photo by heylagostechie on Unsplash

So is Africa getting a slice of the lucrative artificial intelligence pie and what are the current AI adoption trends in the region?

Although Africa's AI industry is still relatively small compared to the US, Europe and Asia, this has not stopped some of the continent's most innovative start-ups from developing solutions that demonstrate how promising the technology can be for the African economy.

Missing data and a bleak map

However, AI innovation in Africa is often ignored or overlooked because the number of patents applied for and the amount of research funding available is not well aligned with local contexts, data is missing, and the map still looks essentially bleak.

That said, the prospects for AI in Africa are positive, as the potential for innovation and growth in artificial intelligence adoption is increasing. This is exemplified in the African enterprise sector, via the 2020 business buyer survey conducted by The AI Media Group that identified several key adoption trends as business practitioners embrace AI and automation technologies in the Africa region.

Besides the generally accepted move to cloud-based platforms, the top five technology categories in-demand in the next two years in Africa include:

- RPA/process automation/augmentation
- Conversational AI/interfaces/chatbots/CX/UX
- IoT/big data analytics and Insights
- ML/DL point solutions that address a specific business problems
- Ethics/privacy and cloud deployment frameworks for AI powered technologies/MLOps

It was also interesting to observe that 30% of respondents expect to spend $1m-$10m+ on these technologies, 30% are seeking external help with ethics strategies and 62% stated they require more information/training and education on how 4IR technologies can positively impact their business, which is a sure sign untapped demand is present in the sector.

While the start-up and enterprise sectors race ahead, African governments must accelerate the development of coherent and strong AI strategies to ensure that their citizens can reap the benefits of AI while protecting themselves from its potentially harmful effects.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Nick Bradshaw is the CEO of the AI Media Group.

For more, visit: https://www.bizcommunity.com