

# PII, AN ADVANCED AI SERVICE BOT,

helps students at  
Laurea's IT ServiceDesk  
in fluent Finnish

CASE STUDY - Laurea



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# Laurea's new Service Bot assisting students with IT-related questions in the School's ServiceDesk around the clock

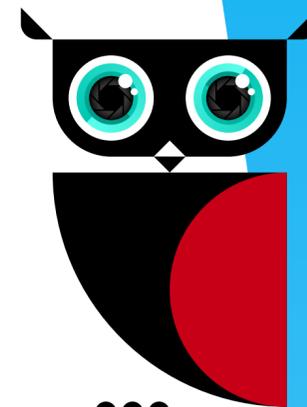
**The need for a chatbot** was identified at Laurea a few years ago as part of the definition of the school's digitalisation strategy. However, finding a suitable solution was not easy: providing service in the Finnish language, in particular, caused headaches. A solution was found in late 2019 and the selected service bot Pii, delivered by Front AI, started working at Laurea's ServiceDesk in January 2020. In the future, Pii will handle the majority of requests received by the IT ServiceDesk, by now the bot's scope of work has been expanded to other areas, e.g. student and applicant services.

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# LAU REA

Laurea University of Applied Sciences operates in Finland's capital region. The school's community consists of about 7,400 students, 550 staff members and more than 26,000 alumni. Laurea offers six different Bachelor's Programmes and three Master's Programmes, as well as open education and further vocational training for adults. The school's ServiceDesk provides a support service helping students and staff members with all IT-related problems and questions.

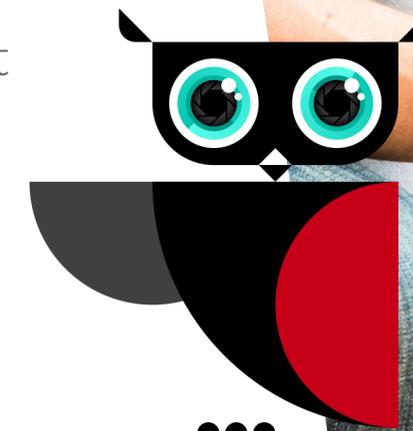
[www.laurea.fi](http://www.laurea.fi)



# Conversational AI in Laurea's digitalisation strategy – from idea to execution

The need for a chatbot was originally identified as part of the definition of Laurea's digitalisation strategy in 2017. The organisation set a goal to find a suitable bot, test it and start using it the following year. However, finding a suitable solution turned out to be more difficult than expected. Surveys, workshops and studies produced no result, and it soon became apparent there was no ready-made solution available in the market. The requirement for the bot to be able to operate in Finnish, notably, posed a significant problem.

The Finnish language is exceptionally difficult for bots to learn due to its use of case suffixes. Additionally, service providers were unable to offer support in Finnish and many suggested solutions were extremely difficult to set up. The possibility of using an AI-based service bot provided by Front AI emerged as an option in the summer of 2019, and the co-operation started already in the autumn. Chatbots appeared to be a timely topic, also discussed across Laurea's many internal work-development forums at the same time.



# AI training from certified bot whisperers

Front AI's work began with the definition of the intention hierarchy together with the client. In addition to the IT department, Laurea's Student Affairs office and Admission Services took part in the planning. The intention hierarchy is typically defined based on the customer's automation needs and the tasks that place the most burden on the service organisation. The end result is a backbone on which bot training is designed.

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After careful planning, the bot's training began. For four weeks, the AI was trained on how to handle service requests that burdened Laurea's ServiceDesk, such as managing user IDs, answering questions about the school's systems and applications, and other frequent requests. The service launch was preceded by another week of testing, during which the AI was further optimised. Pii, Laurea's Service Bot built on Conversational AI was introduced in the school's IT ServiceDesk in January 2020.

Currently, five people work together with Pii at the school's IT ServiceDesk. The team has been better able to focus on handling more complex service requests with Pii alleviating the burden of processing the most frequent queries. Laurea regards conversational AI as an area of future importance, which will bring jobs to many of its students. It also plans to grow its own IT ServiceDesk team by employing additional workers with skills to develop, and train bots based on conversational AI. All aspiring conversational AI trainers must take an online course, including multiple tests to qualify their skills and receive a personal AI Trainer certificate.

**Another, traditional chatbot solution was tested as a pilot alongside Pii. Laurea's initial concerns about difficult implementation quickly proved right and they decided to terminate the competing pilot.**

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# Service around the clock

Laurea ServiceDesk receives 8,000 service tickets per year, which were previously handled strictly during office hours.

The tickets consist of a wide range of IT-related requests from both students and staff. Most queries arrive via email, while others are handled by phone or on-site. Laurea's objective in introducing conversational AI to its organisation was to extend the ServiceDesk's service to all hours. Extended service hours are essential as more and more people study remotely and require support outside regular office hours. Besides, the organisation wanted to free up ServiceDesk employees time from responding to routine queries to perform more valuable tasks.

## **In the future, Pii can handle**

the majority of tickets received by Laurea's IT ServiceDesk and speed up service received by its customers. In addition to IT support, Laurea has already identified jobs for Pii in its other units, including the Student Affairs Office, Admission Services, library, and the school's Virtual Education Support Group dCell, etc. Expectations are high!

