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Artificial Intelligence in Higher Education

HIGHER EDUCATION, RISK ADVISORY/INTERNAL AUDIT
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Before you finish typing a key word in the search bar, it may appear as if your thoughts have been predicted. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are used to optimize search queries and search results. Every day, Google handles billions of search queries and its RankBrain AI algorithm analyzes which queries yield the best results. This allows the underlying AI to learn. By learning from these search queries, the RankBrain AI can predict future search queries with greater accuracy. AI and machine learning are being used in more industries and sectors, including higher education.

The use of predictive data and AI is providing students an enhanced collegiate experience and helping universities hit KPIs. Universities seek to maintain high marks in the key performance indicators of student retention and graduation rates. Using predictive data and AI, universities can recognize early indicators that a student is "at risk."

Identifying students who are "at-risk" for retention and intervention. Early "at risk" indicators might be when a student receives a bad grade or does not register for a class which his or her major requires. Identifying "at risk" students earlier leads to better undergraduate retention rates. Advisors are alerted and can intervene and mentor the student before the problem compounds. This improves retention rates which leads to higher graduation rates and keeps tuition revenue in the door.

Supplementing courses with AI can help deliver an improved learning experience. As part of language courses at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, students speak to an AI character in a virtual environment. Upon entering the virtual reality classroom, the student is greeted by the AI character and verbal interaction ensues. Immediate feedback is provided to the students who are instructed on correct pronunciations without the fear of being judged in a real world situation. Instructors have said this allows for learners to be less embarrassed by mistakes and promotes greater learning.

AI is not only improving students' college experience but also lowering the burden on faculty and staff. Human jobs, in higher education, are not being eliminated by AI, but rather improved. Chatbots can respond to phone calls and can answer simple inquiries that prospective students ask. In some cases, professors can rely on robo-grading to score exams. These AI and machine learning tools can allow for a reduced staff burden and more instructor time to focus on students.

While the presence of a human instructor cannot be duplicated, AI proves its worth. AI's integration into higher education will continue to improve and enhance the

college experience for future generations.

Visit Schneider Downs Risk Advisory Services webpage
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References:

https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2018/09/26/academics-push-expand-use-ai-higher-ed-teaching-and-learning

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