



How bots can help you get hired in a pandemic

Although the use of AI in recruitment is not new, experts say it will play a bigger role in the jobs market heats up after dealing with COVID-19.

Natasha Boddy | *Work & Careers reporter*



Aug 18, 2020 - 9.14am



How did you deal with a change in your life?

What motivates you?

What is a valuable lesson you've learnt from a prior colleague?

They sound like the questions you'd ordinarily get asked in a job interview – except this particular interview is being conducted by a hiring bot.

Welcome to the new world of job interviews, where robots are the ones doing the hiring.

Although artificial intelligence being used in recruitment is not new, experts predict [it will continue to rise in popularity](#) as competition in the jobs market heats up due to COVID-19.

On average, job seekers are having to apply for 20 to 25 jobs before securing employment, said Trini Nixon, regional director of talent management at recruiter Hudson.

She said AI was growing in popularity as a recruitment tool, being a much faster and more efficient way to screen applicants.

"That in itself creates a much more positive and engaging experience for applicants when they're able to get responses at each of the milestones," she said.

AI can also help candidates put their best foot forward, according to [Sam Zheng, chief executive and co-founder of conversational AI start-up Curious Thing.](#)

Interview by text message

"This is because a recruiter may not have time to talk to everybody but an AI does," he said.

AI can be used to discover many things about applicants, such as their fit for the role, their personality, their communication skills and their tendency to move around jobs, said [Barb Hyman, chief executive of PredictiveHire, a Melbourne-based tech firm that uses AI to filter job applicants.](#)

In the wake of COVID-19, PredictiveHire has launched a new function that lets job seekers be interviewed by text message.

Candidates answer a series of questions by text, with their responses analysed by AI, and then get personalised feedback.

"I know it's hard to believe, but what we can learn from 200 words is a hell of a lot and that's because it's about the questions you ask. You have to ask questions which really get to you and your experience – what we call behavioural questions," Ms Hyman said.



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PredictiveHire co-founder and chief executive Barb Hyman. **Manda Ford**

Ms Hyman said chat-based interviews addressed some of the big failures of current assessments of young people: ghosting (not hearing back about job applications), bias and trust.

"In all of these roles ... it doesn't matter what you look like, what matters is your traits or your behaviours, are you someone I can rely on, do you get on with people," she said.

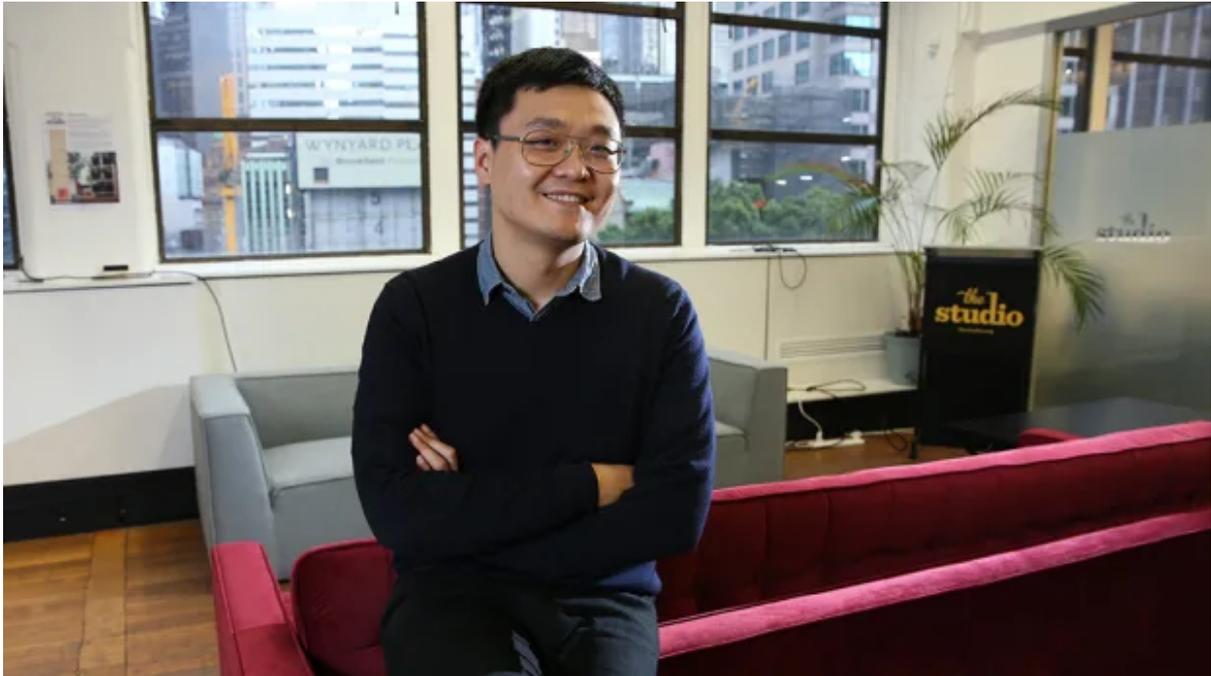
Ms Nixon said although AI did reduce bias, it was important to remember it was

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interviews much more comfortable than other styles of interviews, such as video.



Sam Zheng from Curious Thing recommends applicants block out a time period where they won't be disturbed or distracted.

Tips for dealing with hiring bots

When applying for a job where AI is involved, Ms Hyman gives the same advice as she would for an in-person interview.

"Be yourself," she said. "If you try and game the system, the system will find you out.

"In our case, we can identify when someone has plagiarised, we can identify profanity, we know the top sites graduates use to source answers and we can reveal that to our customers."

Mr Zheng agreed applicants should not try to game the system.

"Every AI runs with different algorithms and a method like this might ultimately penalise you," he said.

"For example, at Curious Thing, our AI will notice if a candidate is piling on

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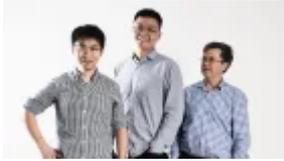
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"When preparing for an interview with an AI, try to focus on the information you will provide, [so] think of your own goals, motivations, strengths and past work experience," he said.

It was also important to get the basics right, such as any access codes or technology that might be needed to conduct the interview and, importantly, set aside a period of time free of disturbances or distractions.

"If you're interviewing via phone or video, a quiet room is essential. If possible, choose a time of day when your mind is at its sharpest," Mr Zheng said.

Expert advice for getting ahead in the new world of work left by COVID-19

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Natasha Boddv is Work & Careers reporter with The Australian Financial Review. She was

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