



HOW KOOKI'S AI POWERS A BETTER WORLD



Job Intelligence:

Kooki teamed up with an investor to form JobTech. The AI-based job search service studies job advertisements to help jobseekers streamline their search and direct them to quality, authentic jobs.



Media Intelligence:

The AI bot gleans social media data from blogs, forums and other portals, analyses them to pick out trends and reflect market sentiment. The results help companies to enhance their product or service portfolio to better meet customer needs.



Customer Intelligence:

This sales AI bot chats with customers and analyses their preferences to present various options and guide them toward making a purchase. While the sale still has to be closed by a human, it significantly shortens the sales cycle.



Market Intelligence:

Still in its infancy, the AI bot improves and builds a company's intellectual capital by capturing information from emails, documents and other channels to ensure knowledge is not lost, even if an employee leaves the organisation.



Wee Tiong with his co-founder, Ang Tee Wee.

ADVANCING THE AI WORK

ANG WEE TIONG
Founder & Chief Executive Officer,
Kooki Pte Ltd

While some may shy away from the thought of a robot-powered world, Ang Wee Tiong remains pragmatic. "Like it or not, machines are here to stay."

With a background in computer science and astrophysics, the artificial intelligence (AI) researcher spent 10 years at A*STAR's Institute for Infocomm Research (I²R) where he spearheaded AI research, development and translation. There, he witnessed first-hand commercialisation of research IP and various collaborations with multinational corporations (MNCs) and local small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Seeing his research applied to real-world problems inspired him to set up his own company in October 2015. Kooki, his brainchild, is a start-up that develops AI to boost the productivity and knowledge retention of enterprise professionals. Since then, it has made headway in four key areas, aiding job seekers (job intelligence), helping companies improve their products and services (media intelligence), driving online sales (customer intelligence) and capturing institutional knowledge (market intelligence).

"It's a whole new world. Research has a logical process, but business also involves a lot of intuition, emotion, courage and luck,"

said Wee Tiong. "It's not easy to switch mindsets and succumb to the fact that the sum total of the success of your seemingly greatest-ever invention could depend on something as 'illogical' as timing and others' perception."

"As an entrepreneur, the hours are long and you don't get a break," he added.

Despite the challenges and the steep learning curve, if he could live his life all over again, he says it would without a doubt, be a decision he would make again. "I am really inspired when people benefit from my research and when my research is later used to generate solutions to problems."





"It's a crazy idea. But I have this dream that my kids can talk to a virtual me after I'm gone and I can give them advice."

While he works on making inroads in the corporate sector, Wee Tiong continues his ties with A*STAR. Kooki is currently operating out of A*STAR Central, a co-innovation space created by A*STAR ETPL to inspire, incubate, develop, train and support technopreneurs and promote the use of A*STAR technologies in building successful start-ups and businesses, with the company tapping on A*STAR's research IPs. "We have regular meetings with A*STAR. It's a two-way conversation where we provide feedback on industry needs and A*STAR's latest research and technologies are shared with start-ups in these areas."

Even though he has a lot on his plate, Wee Tiong has carved out time for a pet project – a transcendence prototype which can transfer knowledge and consciousness into a machine, thus allowing humans to "live forever". "It's a crazy idea. But I have this dream that my kids can talk to a virtual me after I'm gone and I can give them advice and guidance."

Dreams do become reality, and Wee Tiong has this advice for fellow dreamers. "In a business, especially a start-up, you have to be someone who can take risks, be flexible and live with adversity and uncertainty. At the end of the day, you just have to do it."