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Intel India Eyes AI Opportunities, Plans to Develop Ecosystem

At Intel AI Day, the company deep dived into its global AI strategy, and highlighted how it is working with the ecosystem in India to improve solution performances on Intel's AI platforms.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the cutting edge in technology. It is fast getting mainstream and coming out of the confines of science fiction. The onset of AI-based technology in India is evident in the sectors of e-commerce and research, where entities that are already using data analytics, are now looking to explore AI.

I got great perspectives on the potential of AI at Intel's AI Day at Bangalore recently. I also got to know the various parts that make up AI and why it is so complex.

The company deep dived into its global AI strategy, and highlighted how it is working with the ecosystem in India to improve solution performances on Intel's AI platforms.

Prakash Mallya, Managing Director, Intel South Asia, said, "As India undergoes rapid digital transformation, the data center and the intelligence behind the data collected will enable the government and industry to make effective decisions based on algorithms. This means increasing opportunities for using AI in the country, and to make this happen, Intel India is collaborating with Hewlett Packard Enterprise, Wipro, Julia Computing, and Calligo Technologies, by enabling them with AI solutions based Intel architecture."

Intel in AI

AI is the fastest growing workload in the data center, growing at two times the overall computing market. By 2020, the industry expects more servers running data analytics than any other workload,



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Prakash Mallya, Managing Director, Intel South Asia

and analytics predictors will be built into every application. Staying ahead of this curve, Intel announced its AI strategy last year to drive breakthrough performance, democratize access and maximize societal benefits.

Today, Intel powers 97 percent of data center servers running AI workloads and offers the most flexible, yet performance-optimized portfolio of solutions. Backed by its unified approach to AI, Intel is leading the AI Computing era through its end-to-end hardware and software that is designed for building AI applications across virtually any industry.

Intel's collaboration with companies such as Google, and the company's acquisition, including Saffron, Movidius, Nervana Systems and Mobileye, further Intel's AI capabilities, giving the company an edge, especially at a time when embedded computer vision is becoming increasingly important the world over.

Last month, the company also announced a cross-Intel organization – the Artificial Intelligence Products Group (AIPG), which will align Intel's AI efforts, and rally the industry around a set of

standards for AI that ultimately brings down costs and makes AI more accessible to more people – not only institutions, governments and large companies, as it is today. Intel also aims to set up an applied AI research lab dedicated to pushing the forefronts of computing to explore architectural and algorithmic approaches to inform future generations of AI. This includes a range of solutions from the data center to edge devices, and from training to inference – all designed to enable Intel and its customers to innovate faster.

AI at Work

AI is the combination of various fields such as machine learning, natural language processing, computer vision, reasoning systems, neural networks, deep learning, depth sensing, programmable systems, parallel computing and more.

AI is nothing newly invented, it has been around for decades. But it is only now that it is ready to take off. Krishnendu Chaudhury, Principal Scientist and Head-Imaging Services, Flipkart put it well thus: “Till the mid-nineties, AI was like ‘marriage’— everybody’s excited but promises are not fulfilled. But now, it is like ‘visiting France’— it is still exciting and it lives up to its promise and there much more that can be done.”

Krishnendu points out to two reasons that got AI into the reckoning: the big one is a massive set of complex models and techniques in information processing with a simple-sounding name called deep learning and the lesser one is the set of technology developments like advances in hardware, big data and storage, and the opensource culture that help deep learning get off from concept to real world applications.

Deep learning is complex, but it solves the very important problem of extracting abstract information using complex pattern matching with neural network analysis on huge datasets. Its applications are myriad.

For example, Flipkart uses deep learning to give accurate search results to buyers who are looking at buying a T-shirt like the one they have in mind such as a white T-shirt with the figure of a ghostlike character or one with green and blue stripes of a particular width. The description of the T-shirt the shopper wants to buy is not concrete, it is abstract, hence it takes a lot of processing to get the required results. Flipkart is similarly working on deep learning projects for click prediction and sales prediction which have direct business impact.

D N Narasimha Raju, Chief Executive Officer, National Institute for Smart Government, who was a panelist at the AI Day, said, “Digital transformation is at the heart of government’s endeavor to connect and develop India. As high speed networks get established, a number of disruptive changes can happen. These changes will impact productivity. Data analytics and machine learning can automate processes across e-Governance, research and the private sector. It is recognized that the potential of Artificial Intelligence is high in sectors such as healthcare, disaster mitigation, and financial services. In order to realize this potential, there is a need to impart and develop the required skill sets in a major way. As I understand, Intel India is engaged in this effort and it’s proactive approach in skill imparting and solution development in the area of AI by utilizing local talent and collaboration will contribute significantly towards adoption of AI.”

The use cases for AI are limited only by imagination. AI applications range from accelerating large scale solutions, unleashing scientific discovery, augmenting human capability, and automating risky and tedious tasks. The AI wave is coming on faster than expected. AI’s impact will be bigger than even the wave of digital transformation.

Intel’s AI Ecosystem Initiatives

Additionally, to engage students, researchers and developers, Intel India announced a comprehensive developer community initiative – the AI Developer Education Program, targeted at educating 15,000 scientists, developers, analysts, and engineers on key AI technologies, including Deep Learning and Machine Learning. Through 60 programs across the year, ranging from workshops, roadshows, user

group and senior technology leader roundtables, the initiative aims at empowering this community with the knowhow for adoption of AI via technical sessions involving the use of ready-to-deploy platforms and tools for solution development.

“Our collaboration with the industry and the academia will help democratize AI, by reducing entry barriers for developers, data scientists and students. In India, we are targeting the BFSI, telecom, and e-commerce sectors, across High Performance Computing (HPC), big data, and Internet of Things, all of which are complementary to AI”, he added.

According to Professor Pushpak Bhattacharya, Director, IIT Patna, “Research and academia are great platforms to initiate AI into the society. IIT Patna has been doing cutting edge research and development in Artificial Intelligence, distributed computing, network security, social networks, and beyond, using data driven machine learning, as well as knowledge and deep learning based methods. Our research groups are currently working on implementation of evolutionary algorithms in parallel environments, and using Intel® based platforms and software tools to deploy, parallelize and optimize systems. Intel India has provided IIT Patna with the necessary know-how to best optimize Intel® based AI platforms and technologies, making this collaboration extremely fruitful and promising.”



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