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Artificial intelligence (AI) and language services (such as translation services) are converging around the needs of a global on-demand economy. Businesses and people increasingly need products and services delivered with lightning speed across borders. Traditional impediments to being responsive, such as language barriers, are disappearing. Consider the example of global shipments. To deliver packages from the United States to Asia, global shipment companies can employ artificial intelligence to read labels written in English, translate them to Chinese, and digitize them. Human beings are needed to train machine learning solutions how to read and understand English and the language of the target market. People are also needed to review and post-edit machine translations and provide a feedback loop, making the machines smarter. This is what the convergence of AI and language services looks like.

We're seeing a fast increasing demand for language services and AI for a number of reasons, including:

The Globalization and Digitalization of Communication

Our economies have already evolved through decades of forces bringing about globalization. Now globalization through ecommerce is accelerating. According to **a joint report** by Business of Fashion and McKinsey & Company, by 2020, consumers will spend $1 trillion on cross-border e-commerce. How we engage with each other globally, and with companies as consumers, has changed drastically. Communication is hyperfast, digital, and global. Our ability to communicate rapidly across

borders has spilled into the world of online commerce. Companies active in this arena need to translate, localize and personalize their products for multiple markets.

An Insatiable Appetite for Data

AI and machine learning have been part of language services for years, in the form of machine translation and, somewhat more recently, text-to-speech and related technologies. But the current growth spurt of AI, combined with a seemingly insatiable appetite for global data to train the AI, is shaping a global demand for offerings that combine AI and language services. As the Business of Fashion/McKinsey report notes, “[W]e are entering a new phase of globalization, driven by digital connectivity and the flow of data, and this will lead to much greater global connectedness, not less.” The global connectedness creates a need for global efficiency, which is where language services and AI together play a role.

The Gig Economy

The gig economy continues to grow. By **2027**, more than half the U.S. workforce will do some form of freelance work. The rise of the gig economy opens possibilities for a specialized and vast pool of experts. For example, an AI-based mapping software might require a company to contract freelancers (or gig workers) to study street routes and train machines to read those routes in multiple markets. The ability to contract specialty skills has made it more economically feasible for businesses to build specialized AI implementations.

The Past and the Future of Convergence

About 10 years ago, at Centific, we saw the first sprouts of how a traditional language services provider could transform by catering to the emerging hunger for data to fuel AI/machine learning models. Over the past decade, that trend was amplified and created cross-pollination between traditional language services and AI-related data services. Over the past year, the two service lines finally converged, driven by similarities in the delivery framework, but enhanced by learning from

different best practices.

Today and in the future we can leverage the skills of new talents, next generation AI, and a foundation of many years of experience refining a global program and quality management framework. Contact us to learn more about how we can help you.

About the Author

Jonas is Head of Centific Digital Globalization Services. He and his team provide AI-infused language services, global data curation for AI/ML and global marketing services. Jonas has 20 years of experience from the Language Services industry in various roles, from solutioning and linguistics to sales and management, both as executive and as company founder.

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