

IBM and SoftBank Introduce Japanese Language Watson APIs

Tokyo, Japan - 18 Feb 2016: IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) and SoftBank Corp. (hereinafter “SoftBank”) today announced the general availability of six cognitive services in the Japanese language that can be used to create IBM [Watson](#)-powered apps in the region. This new set of language and speech services in Japanese will enable local partners, entrepreneurs and app developers to apply Watson to their businesses in innovative ways.

The Watson Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) now available in Japanese include:

Language: IBM is advancing services that enable cognitive applications to understand the nuances of Japanese language in context. For example:

Natural Language Classifier allows developers to create products and applications that understand intent and meaning, uncovering answers for users even when questions are asked in different ways; **Dialog** makes app interactions more natural by creating conversations tailored to the individual style a person uses to ask a question; **Retrieve and Rank** improves information retrieval using machine learning to detect “signals” in data and helps users uncover even the most hard-to-find information; and **Document Conversion** transforms content in different formats like PDF, Word, HTML into formats that can be used by other Watson services, such as Retrieve and Rank.

Speech: An innovator in speech technologies, IBM is introducing dramatic advances to speech technology, enabling developers to build applications in Japanese, powered by the **Speech to Text** and **Text to Speech** services.

“Since the launch of the Watson platform, thousands of developers in other parts of the world have used these technologies in new and exciting ways,” said David Kenny, General Manager, IBM Watson. “We’re thrilled to now offer the Japanese market the power of cognitive computing and excited to witness the creativity of this community as they apply Watson in new ways.”

“I am delighted that we are now unveiling IBM Watson in Japanese, which was jointly developed through our strategic alliance with IBM,” said Ken Miyauchi, President and CEO of SoftBank. “Since forging this strategic alliance, we launched the local IBM Watson ecosystem program in October 2015, formally selecting over a dozen ecosystem partners. We are also looking to introduce Watson internally, so we can propose various solutions and use cases to customers based on our own experience. Together with IBM – and our ecosystem partners – we will work to forge a new market, offering our customers innovative solutions with unparalleled value.”

“Clients around the world are transforming their businesses with Watson technology, and the newly available language capabilities now bring the power of cognitive to Japan,” said Paul Yonamine, General Manager, IBM

Japan. "Cognitive systems understand like humans do, whether that's through natural language, the written word, or a visual cue. They reason - understanding not only information but also the underlying ideas and concepts - and this reasoning ability can become more advanced over time. Cognitive systems also never stop learning, increasing in expertise and becoming more valuable with each interaction - making them unique in today's world. By putting cognitive technologies into the hands of developers and businesses across Japan, we can continue to drive innovation in the region. The expansion of IBM's Japanese language and speech skills will empower partners to design and deliver an entirely new class of cognitive computing apps."

These developments mark a milestone in IBM and SoftBank's alliance to push forward the adoption and application of [cognitive computing](#) in Japan. Over the past year, in addition to enhancing Watson's Japanese language proficiency and localizing the technology platform, IBM and SoftBank Robotics Holdings Corp. also announced plans to develop a version of Watson for Pepper robots.

IBM Watson: Pioneering a New Era of Computing

Watson continuously learns, gaining in value and knowledge over time, from previous interactions. With the help of Watson, organizations are harnessing the power of cognitive computing to transform industries, help professionals do their jobs better, and solve important challenges.

To advance Watson, IBM has three dedicated business units: [Watson](#), established for the development of cloud-delivered cognitive computing technologies that represent the commercialization of "artificial intelligence" or "AI" across a variety of industries; [Watson Health](#), dedicated to improving the ability of doctors, researchers and insurers and other related health organizations to surface new insights from data to deliver personalized healthcare; and [Watson IoT](#), focused on making sense of data embedded in for more than 9 billion connected devices operating in the world today, which generate 2.5 quintillion bytes of new data daily.

For more information on IBM Watson, visit: ibm.com/Watson and ibm.com/press/watson. Join the conversation at [#ibmwatson](#).

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