

IBM and SK Holdings C&C Alliance Brings Watson and the Cognitive Era to South Korea

Korean represents 8th new language for Watson, strengthens system's conversational capabilities

SEOUL AND NEW YORK CITY - 08 May 2016: IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) and SK Holdings C&C Ltd., a leading South Korean IT services company, today announced plans to bring IBM's [Watson](#) cognitive services to South Korea. The strategic alliance, which includes training Watson to understand Korean, is designed to dramatically accelerate the adoption of [cognitive computing](#) throughout the region, giving South Korea-based developers a set of localized APIs and services they can use to help create their own applications and build new businesses.

IBM Research Manager Abe Ittycheriah demonstrates how IBM Watson parses a sentence in English and "tokenizes" it to learn Korean, at IBM's T. J. Watson Research Center in Yorktown Heights, NY. Teaching Watson to communicate as a native speaker in multiple languages is a key element of IBM's work to bring cognitive computing to a global audience. (Credit: IBM)

Making Watson available in South Korea strengthens SK Holdings C&C's commitment to foster the growth of cognitive and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies throughout the region. SK Holdings C&C will run Watson and IBM Bluemix from its Pangyo Cloud Center, in support of universities, developers, and local businesses, across diverse industries including banking, telecommunications, health and government.

With the addition of Korean, IBM will increase the system's conversational languages to eight including:

English, French, Italian, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Japanese, and Arabic. Watson's ability to understand Korean builds upon nearly five years of research and development driven by leading scientists at IBM Research – Tokyo. Due to a complex sentence structure, syntax and verb conjugation, Korean is widely considered one of the most challenging languages for native English speakers to learn. Like any major language, there are many unique idioms that must be fully understood for human interaction.

“Watson remains at the forefront of cognitive computing: advanced systems that learn at scale, understand with meaning, reason with purpose and interact with humans in natural ways,” said David Kenny, general manager, IBM Watson. “The South Korean marketplace is moving quickly to embrace the disruptive opportunities from next generation technology. Our strategic alliance with SK Holdings C&C will put cognitive services in the hands of more businesses and developers, allowing them to apply Watson within their organizations to help transform entire industries and professions.”

South Korea's economy – named the world's most innovative economy by the 2016 Bloomberg Innovation index* – is poised for transformation by this type of technology.

“This alliance highlights SK's dedication to growing our artificial intelligence-based data services business, strengthening our Ai leadership position, as well as spurring innovation and Ai adoption across Korea,” said Park Jung-ho, CEO, SK Holdings C&C.

The two companies are establishing new programs to fast track access to IBM's cognitive services, working closely with local and regional businesses to encourage development of new enterprise and consumer use cases for a variety of industries.

IBM and SK Holdings C&C will help developers work with Watson's advanced conversational capabilities

to help improve the mobile device experience; and improve consumers' call center interactions. SK Holdings C&C will also explore ways to embed cognitive into new form factors such as robotics.

With this deal as momentum, SK Holdings C&C plans to actively invest in fostering talents in the artificial intelligence (Ai) field through industrial-academic collaboration under a long-term investment plan.

Additionally, the two companies will foster a strong developer community that is already eager to integrate cognitive computing into its business ideas. IBM and SK Holdings C&C intend to jointly nurture the growth of cognitive computing in the region by establishing a multi-million dollar fund to support education- and developer-focused initiatives.

Ongoing work by IBM Research has advanced the science powering the Watson platform, and enabled IBM to strengthen Watson's speech, vision and text capabilities. The Watson platform is already being used by tens of thousands of developers globally, who are tapping cognitive computing to help address business and society's most significant challenges. Moving into new markets – through landmark collaborations with organizations such as [SoftBank](#) in Japan, [Mubadala](#) in the Middle East (dba Cognit) and [GBM](#) in Latin American (dba Cognitiva) – is a critical component of scaling the technology and bringing Watson to all parts of the world. Each of these initiatives includes fostering a community of local developers and equipping them with simple, self-service tools needed to build, explore and create new applications in their native languages.

SK Holdings C&C will be IBM's preferred distributor for cognitive solutions in South Korea, where the technology could be embedded into various form factors such as tablets, smartphones and smart devices, as well as robots, giving both organizations an opportunity to reach a broader audience of users. Korean language Watson services are expected to become available early next year.

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 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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**Bloomberg Innovation Index 2016, January 19, 2016 (<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2016-01-19/these-are-the-world-s-most-innovative-economies>)*

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