EVALUESERVE

● Industry Insight

Impact of Generative AI on Smart Buildings

July 2023

Introduction

Generative AI, a subfield of AI, encompasses a range of technologies that leverage deep learning algorithms (generative adversarial networks) and vast datasets to identify and learn patterns, generate novel ideas, and produce output that exceeds human creativity. It is revolutionizing and transforming various segments, including the smart buildings space. As generative AI continues to advance, its convergence with smart buildings is paving the way for a more 'intelligent' and 'efficient' built environment.

Generative AI is expected to revolutionize smart buildings by analyzing vast amounts of data from various sources (IoT devices, sensors, components, cameras, etc.) to identify patterns and trends that humans cannot detect easily. The analysis / output is used to enhance building **design and construction, energy consumption, and security, as well as to optimize their predictive maintenance schedules, among others.**

Buildings account for a third of the global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and there is a critical need to significantly reduce emissions from buildings. Generative AI can play a key role in optimizing the design, construction, and operations of buildings to improve energy efficiency.

Generative AI Use Cases

The use of generative AI is expected to help construction companies understand the limitations of projects and create solutions in real-time to reduce the overall time taken to design buildings.

Design and Construction

Existing scenario

- The existing design processes of buildings and structures are one of the major inefficiencies as they are long, error-prone, and often lead to cost and performance-related uncertainties.

How generative AI can help

- Generative AI can utilize video footages to create heat maps of spaces, undertake other planning-related activities, and compare models with varying architectural features to enable the selection of the most optimal design within a short timeframe.

- It can also be used to gain clarity about project cost, schedule, and building performance from the initial stages of a project.
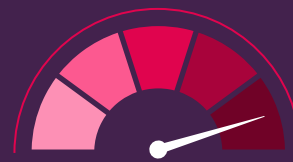
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Building Automation Systems (BAS)

Existing scenario

- Designing BAS architecture, which controls and monitors mechanical and electronic systems in buildings to ensure energy efficiency and safety, can be complex and time-consuming. It often requires multiple specialists and software, making it difficult to explore a wide range of options and limiting diversity in the final design.

How generative AI can help

- Generative AI algorithms can explore a vast design space and generate multiple design alternatives for BAS components, such as sensors, actuators, and control algorithms. The technology can be used to increase design diversity and create more inclusive and accessible spaces.
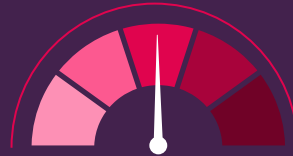
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Energy Management / Optimization

Existing scenario

- Traditional AI-based solutions are based on pre-programmed logic, can only make a limited number of modifications in real time, and cannot foresee conditions that are not pre-defined.

How generative AI can help

- Generative AI-based software can analyze large amounts of data related to energy consumption, weather, occupancy, and other relevant factors to generate predictive models that can help in energy management and optimization.

- These predictive models can be used to forecast future energy demand and dynamically adjust building systems (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC), lighting, and appliances) to minimize energy consumption while maintaining optimum occupant comfort.
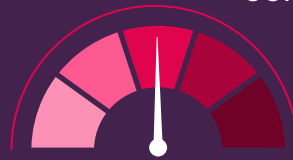
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Security, Surveillance, and Computer Vision

Existing scenario

- Computer vision already uses AI with neural networks to detect and distinguish between threats and safe objects / people. However, the limited availability of training data makes collecting and annotating large datasets time-consuming and expensive.

How generative AI can help

- Generative AI can generate synthetic data that can be used to create models with existing security footage to generate realistic scenarios of potential breaches. These scenarios can be used to test the effectiveness of security measures in a building.

- The technology can also be used to enhance facial-recognition and motion-detection systems by creating realistic models of human behavior, which can be used to improve the accuracy of building security systems.

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Digital Twins

Existing scenario

- A digital twin is the virtual representation of a physical asset, system, or process that allows for simulation, analysis, and optimization in a virtual environment. It relies on vast amounts of data to simulate and analyze the behavior of physical assets or systems.

- However, obtaining real-world data can be challenging due to privacy concerns, data unavailability, and cost factors, among others.

How generative AI can help

- Generative AI can generate synthetic data that resembles real-world data, which can be used to augment or modify data required to train and test digital twins. This can help in overcoming data limitations and improving the accuracy and reliability of digital twin simulations required to create digital assets.

- Generative AI can develop a wide range of design and prototype options from physical assets, which engineers and designers can explore and evaluate. The use of this technology can accelerate product development, optimize designs, and reduce the need for physical prototypes.

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Integrated Workplace Management Systems

Existing scenario

- Processes that require IWMS often include repetitive tasks such as data entry, scheduling, and reporting that can improve workspace utilization, maintenance schedules, and resource allocation. The manual execution of these tasks can be challenging, inefficient, and error-prone.

How generative AI can help

- Generative AI-powered data extraction and processing can enable IWMS to automatically capture and interpret data from various sources (invoices, work orders, sensor data, etc.), thereby reducing the need for manual data entry and analysis. The technology can help improve data accuracy, leading to more efficient and effective decision-making.

- It can be used to analyze data on space utilization, employee preferences, and other factors to optimize workplace design and space allocation. This in turn can help organizations to make informed decisions on leasing or acquiring new spaces.
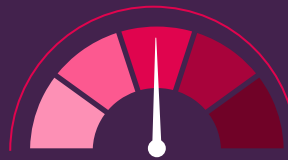
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Predictive Maintenance

Existing scenario

- The existing solutions analyze data from various sensors in different sub-systems (HVAC, lighting systems, air-quality monitoring systems, and security systems) to detect abnormal patterns and identify potential issues, allowing users to make timely interventions and take corrective measures.

How generative AI can help

- Generative AI can further enhance the existing solutions by developing synthetic fault data-based models that can help maintenance teams simulate various strategies, optimize maintenance schedules, and identify the most effective maintenance actions to minimize downtime and costs.

- The technology can also be used to generate future scenarios of equipment performance based on historical data, which can aid in predicting the remaining useful life of the equipment.

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How Evalueserve is Helping Companies

As generative AI continues to evolve, companies in the smart buildings space are likely to face challenges in integrating the technology with their existing products, developing generative AI-based products / solutions, understanding its impact on their organizations, etc. The technology has already disrupted several industries and is expected to play a large role in the smart buildings space as well.

Here is a list of solutions that Evalueserve is already providing to multiple companies in this space.

White-space identification: Evalueserve assesses the existing technological landscape and evaluates companies' readiness for adopting generative AI for smart building solutions. Our assessment helps clients identify the existing gaps and develop suitable roadmaps for the implementation of generative AI.

Competitive intelligence: Evalueserve conducts in-depth analyses of competitors' generative AI initiatives / plans related to potential products / services, R&D, investments, and acquisitions. We also monitor news / updates related to generative AI and identify any new developments related to algorithms, models, and applications. This enables our clients to be up-to-date on emerging trends, research papers, patents, etc.

M&A support: Evalueserve helps clients in evaluating target companies that use generative AI. We also identify potential companies for partnering / acquisition and recommend ways of enhancing clients' core products / solutions.

To know more about our solutions, write to
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Conclusion

In conclusion, generative AI is poised to revolutionize the smart buildings space, offering unprecedented capabilities and opportunities for optimization and efficiency. With its ability to generate and analyze vast amounts of data, generative AI empowers smart buildings to adapt and respond intelligently to changing conditions, enhancing comfort, sustainability, and overall performance.

By harnessing generative AI, smart buildings can optimize energy consumption, streamline operations, and proactively address maintenance needs. Machine learning algorithms can continuously learn from data patterns, enabling predictive maintenance to identify potential issues before they escalate, reducing downtime and costs.

Additionally, generative AI can contribute to safety and security by identifying anomalies in data patterns, detecting potential risks, and alerting building operators or occupants in real-time.

Furthermore, generative AI also opens avenues for innovative design and construction practices. Designers and architects can leverage AI algorithms to generate optimized building layouts, considering factors such as natural lighting, airflow, and energy efficiency. These algorithms can also aid in material selection, optimizing durability, sustainability, and cost-effectiveness.

However, as generative AI becomes more prevalent in the smart buildings space, it is essential to address potential challenges and concerns. Data privacy and security must be prioritized to protect sensitive information collected by smart building systems. Ethical considerations, such as bias in algorithms, need to be streamlined by effectively training the model from early stages to avoid such situations.

Overall, generative AI is expected to have limitless opportunities in this space, and all the entities involved in the value chain should monitor its growth closely to keep up with possible advancements to existing products and solutions.

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