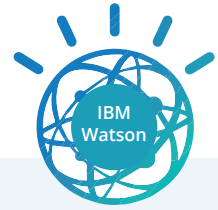




## Azure Bot vs IBM Watson: comparing the two bot framework titans

Amongst their vast suite of technology offerings, Microsoft and IBM are two of the best and biggest bot service providers available. Their respective services - Azure Bot and IBM Watson - lead the way in an increasingly saturated bot market. But how do they stack up?





	Azure Bot	IBM Watson
<p><b>FAQ handling</b></p> <p>How will the bot handle the weight of your easy, routine questions?</p>	<p>Azure offers a service called QnA Maker. This allows you to create a simple FAQ bot using existing data.</p>	<p>IBM Watson offers “Watson Assistant.” This is an end-to-end bot designer service capable of handling simple FAQ and complex conversations alike.</p>
<p><b>Advanced query handling</b></p> <p>How will the bot handle more intricate, challenging queries?</p>	<p>As well as its simpler QnA Maker service, Microsoft also offers the Azure Bot Framework. This is a code-based platform that’s custom-built for building bots.</p> <p>Here, your developers can code high-quality bots to handle complex flows.</p>	<p>You don’t need to write code to access Watson’s cognitive capabilities. AI is rolled into the service natively.</p> <p>So, you can build out complex conversational flows using a web-based interface.</p>
<p><b>Natural language processing</b></p> <p>How good is your bot at understanding and reproducing natural conversations?</p>	<p>As standard, QnA Maker offers a “chit-chat personality” feature. This enables you to define a persona to bring your bot’s voice to life.</p> <p>If you’re using the broader Azure Bot Service, you can also take advantage of Microsoft AI services such as LUIS machine learning intelligence.</p> <p>So, your bot would then be able to understand natural language to predict overall meaning, and respond appropriately.</p>	<p>Watson has natural language understanding inbuilt as part of its core offering. Machine learning runs behind the bot building interface to understand the meaning behind messages.</p> <p>And, as standard, the service provides training recommendations to build, run, and improve your assistant.</p>





## Ease of use

How quickly and easily can you create your bot?

If you just need QnA Maker to build a basic FAQ bot, you'll find the bot building interface intuitive and straightforward.

If it's an enterprise bot you're after using the Azure Bot Framework, you'll need to have programming knowledge to design and deploy. There's no UI-based tool here.

Watson Assistant has an easy building interface. You'll use a workflow-based designer with branching, trees and variables to map out conversation flows.

This allows anyone of any technical ability to build their bot assistant quickly.

## Integrations

How can your bot connect into your existing tech ecosystem?

Using Azure means smooth integrations with Microsoft's vast portfolio of products and services.

Beyond the Microsoft suite, the Azure Bot Service helps you manage, connect, and deploy your bot across multiple devices and popular channels.

This includes web chat, email, Facebook, Kik, Slack, Telegram, Twilio, Skype, web chat, and many more.

Your Watson Assistant will have a few less out-of-the-box integrations than Azure.

However, you can easily connect it with the main systems and channels you need, including Messenger, Slack, Voice Agent (telephony), WordPress plug-in, and web chat.

Plus any custom applications through APIs.



<b>Hosting</b>  How can you host your bot?	QnA Maker cannot be hosted in an internal, on-premises environment.  An on-premises version of the Azure Bot Framework is available for enterprises.	Watson Assistant runs in any cloud and on-premises environment.
<b>Resources</b>  How good are the help documents / resources available to you?	Azure comes with a host of documentation for deploying your bot. This spans Software Development Kits for several programming languages, GitHub repositories, video tutorials, and more.	Watson resources are extensive. Again, this includes Software Development Kits for several programming languages, GitHub repositories, video tutorials, and more.
<b>Cost</b>  How much will your chatbot cost you?	Azure Bot has a free tier as well as a paid tier charging \$0.50 per 1000 messages on premium channels. (I.e. non-standard channels such as your mobile app or website.)  Please check the vendor website for any price adjustments.	IBM Watson has a free "Lite" package, a Standard version that costs \$0.0025USD per message, and premium options for enterprises.  Please check the vendor website for any price adjustments.

## Accelerated by WhosOn

By plugging your bot into WhosOn, you bridge a sophisticated live chat solution with the most advanced AI bots available. So, your bot – whether Azure or IBM Watson – gains the full scope of our smart live chat features.

This means you can manage and monitor your bot like an agent. You can assign it working hours, give it "skills" for chat routing, coach it via "whisper" messages, and direct it via typed commands. All while taking advantage of WhosOn

functionality like sentiment analysis, omnichannel calling and extensive reporting and analytics.

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