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# Taco Bell boosts mobile ordering with chatbot commerce on Slack

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In the latest sign that chatbot-enabled mcommerce is quickly ramping up, Taco Bell is testing a new Slack interface, called TacoBot, that enables users to order food directly within the messaging platform.

TacoBot, which is currently in private beta with several companies, leverages artificial intelligence so that users can place an order using natural language. The news follows closely on the heels of Sephora's launch of a chatbot on Kik and KLM's Facebook Messenger integration.

“At Taco Bell, we're committed to innovating the food experience and making it fun for our fans through technology and innovation,” said Matt Prince, public relations and brand engagement manager at Taco Bell. “Messaging apps play a huge role in the lives of our fans, and experiencing Taco Bell should be matched with access and convenience.

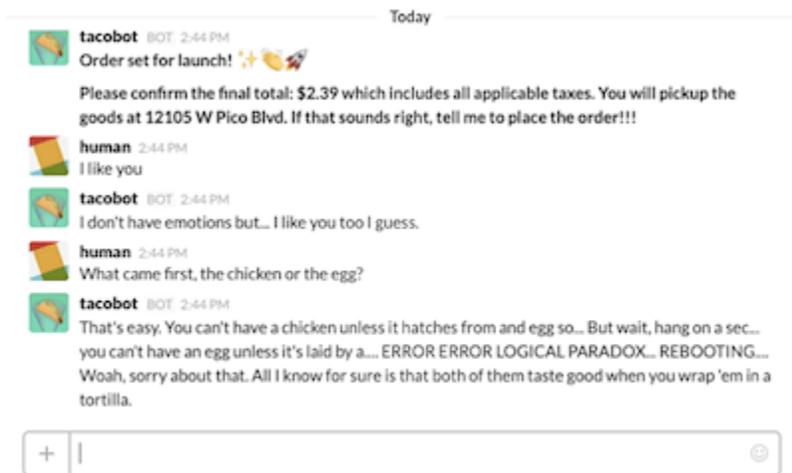
“For the past year, many of our teams at Taco Bell Headquarters have been using Slack for team communications and love it,” he said. “We noticed there weren't any food ordering integrations and saw it as a great opportunity to bring a social brand like Taco Bell to a social experience like Slack.”

## **Chatting up Slack users**

Taco Bell claims to be the first brand to enable Slack users to order food directly through the messaging platform. The ordering service is enabled through a chatbot, which is a mini software interface within the app.



With TacoBot, Slack users can order select menu items from their local Taco Bell restaurant without ever leaving the messaging platform. TacoBot leverages artificial intelligence for group and single ordering through natural language.



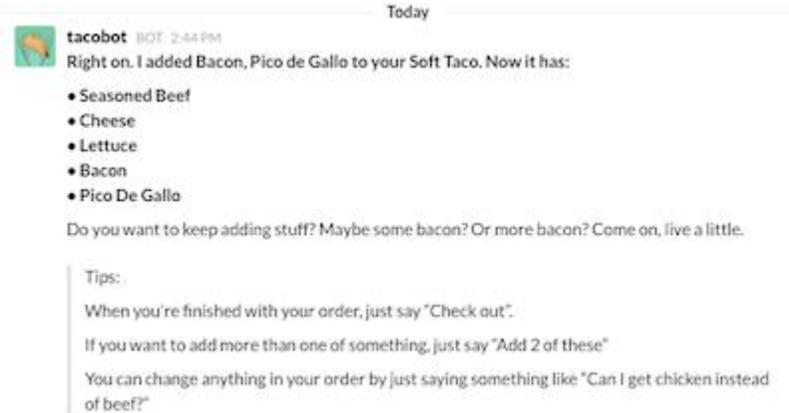
The TacoBot is currently in private beta with several companies, including: SAV Studios, Thought Catalog, Giphy, Fullscreen and FoodBeast. The service is expected to be rolled out more widely in the coming months.

TacoBot was created in partnership with Taco Bell's creative partner agency, Deutsch.

### Digital ordering

The strategy points to how Taco Bell and other fast-food chains are looking to meet consumers wherever they are and make it easy to place an online order when they are hungry. The QSR space is ramping up ordering services across a variety of channels on smartphones, smartwatches and smart home devices.

Taco Bell's digital ordering ensemble includes its mobile ordering and payment app, which released in October 2014 and boasts over 5 million downloads. More recently, the chain enabled desktop and mobile ordering through an enhanced Web site [ta.co](http://ta.co).



Chatbots are gaining popularity for several reasons. With branded apps resource-intensive to develop and maintain, not to mention having a limited audience, chatbots, in comparison, are easy to develop and can be deployed across multiple platforms.

Chatbots also take advantage of the fact that mobile users spend a lot of time in messaging platforms and are comfortable with chatting to create more organic, personalized one-to-one engagements. This is one way that marketers are addressing the ad-blocking threat and creating more organic communications to engage mobile users.

“Our restaurants have been operationalizing mobile orders since we launched the Mobile Ordering and Payment app in October of 2014,” Mr. Prince said. “That’s allowed us to grow into desktop ordering and now platform specific ventures like Slack — all while using the same ecommerce system.”