

# Akinator brings its inquisitive Genie to the Google Assistant

## Challenges

Elokence, a French company founded in 2007, designs information and communications technology (ICT) solutions in their own research and development lab. Their [Akinator Action](#), based on the Twenty Questions game, has become an international web and mobile hit. In the Action, Akinator, a genie, tries to guess which real or fictional character a user has in mind by asking a few simple questions. Friends can challenge each other on the Akinator leaderboards to compete on who's best at the game.

The company became interested in conversational end points because they felt the Akinator concept would be well-adapted to an exchange of questions between a human and a machine. Jérôme Soreau, chief marketing officer, shares: "We did a market survey to get an overview of both the trends and the potential market. The results looked promising, and even though we didn't have a lot of experience in this space, we dove right in."

## Solution

Elokence began developing an Action for the Google Assistant in October 2016. The project was "very easy to start," Soreau says, and Elokence had an initial version ready within a month.

"The Twenty Questions approach made conversations easy to construct. That said, we still made sure to map out our user dialogues on paper before we started development work, which ended up being very helpful," Soreau says. "Our philosophy was to create a natural conversation that would eliminate unnecessary dialogue while keeping the user engaged and entertained."

## Result

Before launching their Google Assistant-powered Action in the US, the Akinator Genie quizzed a few hundred users a day in English. Afterward, the number increased rapidly so Elokence now plans to expand the Action to as many as 15 additional languages.

## Best practices

Soreau offers these tips for developing for the Google Assistant:

- Look at similar Actions in the [Google Assistant directory](#) to be inspired by approaches others have taken.

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**Jérôme Soreau**  
Chief Marketing Officer  
Elokence

- You can't simply copy and paste your mobile app and have it work with the Assistant. While there are many lessons that transfer over, conversational UI is very different and requires fresh thinking.
- Think “conversational-first,” not “mobile-first”. This means you need to focus on optimizing your user interactions across multiple input and output modes vs. improving the experience on a single device type.
- Test your Action to keep learning through the analytics tools offered by Actions on Google and Dialogflow. These can provide valuable insights on how users are engaging with your Action.
- [Consult Google's documentation](#). It contains great advice and troubleshooting guides for designers and developers alike.

Overall, Soreau acknowledges “We are still in the early days of conversational computing. However, there’s so much potential for it—we can’t wait to continue growing with the Google Assistant.”

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