Inside how Opera pioneered our AI-based browsing future

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Long an abstraction or a concept for the future, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has suddenly come to dominate global discourse regarding both the current state of technology and its future. Its benefits are already redefining how we live and work, and new applications are constantly discovered and integrated into our daily routines. With the global AI market size projected to reach $733.7 billion by 2027, this ongoing technological revolution is upending many industries. Governments and organizations worldwide have recognized AI's potential and are investing heavily in research and development.

Ever-attuned to consumer habits and trends, Opera has been at the forefront of the AI movement since its inception. Unifying the efforts of our teams across countries and continents, Opera worked together with the foremost experts in the field to develop unique and cutting-edge solutions. The result has been industry-leading innovation in AI-based web browsing.

Bringing AI to Opera's user base

Opera has a track record of innovating and bringing the newest technology to its users ahead of the competition, which is why users choose it over their default browser. Opera announced its intentions to enter the generative AI space in February 2023, becoming an early pioneer among those focused on harnessing its potential within web browsers. ChatGPT had recently surpassed 100 million users in record time, and it was clear that users were hungry for AI-powered capabilities. With its long history of giving users direct access to the internet's most in-demand platforms, Opera set forth its plans to expand its existing AI program into AI-generated content (AIGC) for its browser, news, and gaming products – both through its own solutions as well as new and existing partnerships.

To make sure our users got the best technologies and solutions available, we decided to partner with industry leader OpenAI – maker of the popular ChatGPT. Opera set the bar high, aiming to reimagine the user experience with a sidebar integration and new native features. Our close collaboration has yielded some impressive results.

Opera followed that up in short order by shipping the first stage of its AI-based browser augmentations. The AIGC service ChatGPT was integrated into the browser's sidebar, in addition to launching AI Prompts. Opera's first native, proprietary AI feature, AI Prompts allows users to quickly initiate conversations with AIGC services to shorten or explain articles, generate tweets, or request relevant content based on highlighted text.

An AI-based browsing experience with Opera One and Aria

Having realized early on that the potential of AI-based browsing is only starting to be explored, Opera decided to go back to the drawing board and redesign its flagship desktop browser, reshaping the UX and UI to both improve the users' experience and

prepare the platform for AI features of tomorrow. With Opera One, we managed to create a powerful, feature-rich browser that promises to dynamically adapt to the user's needs. Designed to embed all the current AI technologies and leave considerable room for more, Opera One augurs the future of AI-based web browsing. The redesigned browser was met with an overwhelmingly positive reception from the press.

Opera One was the first of Opera's browsers to include the browser AI, Aria. A leading generative AI service offered entirely for free, Aria marks the beginning of a new kind of browsing experience for Opera users. Functioning as a web and a browser expert, Aria allows users to collaborate with AI while looking for information on the web, generating text or code, or getting their product queries answered. Suddenly, the power of AI was democratized, as any Opera user could call upon Aria to help with a wide range of tasks, thereby saving time and simplifying challenging tasks.

Offered for free to Opera users, Aria is based on Opera's own "Composer" infrastructure and connected to OpenAI's GPT technology, Aria is further enhanced by additional capabilities such as adding live results from the web. The Composer infrastructure is also easily scalable: it allows Aria to connect to multiple AI models, and, in the future, will expand by integrating further capacities, such as search services powered by Opera's key partners.

Aria is also available in Opera for Android, the company's powerful and secure flagship mobile browser, allowing them to enjoy AI-powered browsing on the go.

Aria has proven to be a hit with users, with over 1 million on board already. And they're clearly enjoying the experience, as is evidenced by the lift in total time spent, as well as increased search queries and pageviews per session.

Opera is looking forward to developing more cutting edge AI solutions. The next step is bringing Aria to all our major platforms – with Opera for iOS and Opera GX on the immediate horizon – but the bar continues to be set high as the company strives to be in the vanguard of technological innovation – reimagining, with the help of AI, what it means to harness the power of the internet.