

Fundamentals

Main concepts of the AIML language are:

AIML Tags

Following are the important tags which are commonly used in AIML documents.

- `<aiml>` : Defines the beginning and end of a AIML document.
- `<category>` : Defines the unit of knowledge in Alicebot's knowledge base.
- `<pattern>` : Defines the pattern to match what a user may input to an Alicebot.
- `<template>` : Defines the response of an Alicebot to user's input.

Following are some of the other widely used aiml tags. We'll be discussing each tag in details in coming chapters.

- `<star>` : Used to match wild card * character(s) in the `<pattern>` Tag.
- `<srai>` : Multipurpose tag, used to call/match the other categories.
- `<random>` : Used `<random>` to get random responses.
- `` : Used to represent multiple responses.
- `<set>` : Used to set value in an AIML variable.
- `<get>` : Used to get value stored in an AIML variable.
- `<that>` : Used in AIML to respond based on the context.
- `<topic>` : Used in AIML to store a context so that later conversation can be done based on that context.
- `<think>` : Used in AIML to store a variable without notifying the user.
- `<condition>` : Similar to switch statements in programming language. It helps ALICE to respond to matching input.

AIML Vocabulary

AIML vocabulary uses words, space and two special characters * and _ as wild cards. AIML interpreter gives preference to pattern having _ than pattern having *. AIML tags are XML compliant and patterns are case-insensitive.

Example

```
<aiml version = "1.0.1" encoding = "UTF-8"?>
  <category>
    <pattern> HELLO ALICE </pattern>
    <template>
      Hello User!
    </template>
  </category>
</aiml>
```

Following are the important points to be considered –

- `<aiml>` tag signifies start of the AIML document.
- `<category>` tag defines the knowledge unit.

- <pattern> tag defines the pattern user is going to type.
- <template> tag defines the response to the user if user types Hello Alice.

Result :

```
User: Hello Alice
Bot: Hello User
```

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