

Eri-Chat: Offline AI App



By :- Sabrina Solomon

Our guest today, Naod Goitom Isaac, is a 25-year-old computer science genius who has attracted many followers through his creations of local artificial intelligence mobile applications that aim to inform Eritreans at home and in the diaspora. Born and raised in Asmara, Naod enrolled at the College of Science and Technology, where he studied computer applications. He is now working at the Ministry of Information as a software developer. With the intent to provide detailed information on any topic or subject one wishes to learn, Naod has developed an offline AI application that has received tremendous appreciation.

- *Tell us a bit more about the offline software that you have developed.*

It has been around four years since we, the software developers, started using AI as a tool to access information. However, not many people in our local communities know about or use it. The main reason I developed this new software app is to help our society use an open-source AI that runs offline. It took a lot of time and effort to make it practical, especially to switch it to work offline, but it finally launched around six months ago.

Eri-chat is a software with so much data, just like the standard offline software we use, such as Kiwix or Wikipedia. The difference is that Eri-chat provides much more detailed information and allows users to communicate with it just like we do with other human beings. It's a software that engages in a conversation with

the user as well. Depending on the mobile phone you own —i.e., its RAM— people can get as much detailed data as possible.

- ***In the continuously evolving technology of AI, most people's concerns are the security and confidentiality of the AI software they use. Should people have the same concerns with this local AI software as well?***

This is a critical issue to address. Collecting personal data has both advantages and disadvantages, as users don't know what developers are using their data for. Any conversation you have with an AI app is very sensitive these days, as developers have access to the data and information you give the software. Evolving AI software like Google, ChatGPT, or Gemini has such issues, and it is not advisable to provide so much personal information.

One of the most essential advantages of Eri-chat is that it stores your data locally, so only you and your phone can access it. Not only in our community, here, but also abroad, people need a private AI that is confidential and secure. Therefore, your data is saved on your phone and won't be accessed by me or anyone else. The data will be saved for as long as the user wants, unless they decide to delete it.

- ***What disadvantages do you think users might encounter while using the AI app?***

Like any other technology, AI tools can have both positive and negative effects. For instance, we all own a mobile phone, and we decide whether we'll use it to our advantage or disadvantage based on how and what we're using it for. And it's the same with AI. A student can ask the app anything and get instant answers, but it depends on you and your goals. Do you want AI to help you be better, or do you want it to do all your work and make you dormant? How we use AI tools is exceptionally crucial.

AI might also have biased information, based on the data it gathered. The Eri-chat app has restrictions on specific topics and sensitive subjects. There may be some sensitive questions, such as those on how to break into someone's phone, or

obscene questions, that are restricted. The restrictions were put in place to help users as much as possible.

- ***How would you advise users to use this AI software?***

I believe that depending totally on AI isn't fair to you, as it takes away all your creativity. We all know that there's endless data out there right now, but having a limit is crucial to our future.

- ***Understandably, you might have faced challenges leading up to the app's launch. What were your biggest challenges?***

True. The biggest one was resources. It was hard for me to find seniors to consult while developing the software. Of course, there's AI to consult, but not seeing people made it much more challenging. Another challenge was the coding part. Coming up with something new, like an offline AI software, needed C++, Python, Java, XML, and Kotlin. This was a bit tough, too. After so much trial and error, however, it became practical and was launched in April 2025.

- ***What was people's experience with this AI tool like?***

The reason I never stopped working on its development is that I received great feedback and many encouraging messages from society. I am incredibly grateful for that. Many people I initially didn't think would use AI started giving me opinions and encouraged me to continue doing more. I didn't imagine that people, especially the older generation, would be so interested in the offline AI app. I am glad and grateful.



- ***You got an opportunity to showcase your work at the UN Day event at Hotel Asmara Palace on the 24th of October. What was that like?***

The National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students organized the event. I presented the offline AI app there. Many ambassadors, UN officials, diplomats, and guests were interested, and they loved it beyond my expectations. That also gave me hope and a push to continue making it better and better. It was actually amazing to see such significant figures admire these works, even though they might have seen better ones. Their words of admiration and support were priceless.

- ***Since it is a local app aimed at helping local and diaspora communities, why wasn't it designed to function in some of our languages, Tigrigna, Tigre, etc.?***

The problem is we don't have much data yet. The way a language works in AI is through the data that you feed it. When it comes to our language, however, the available data is minimal and cannot be used effectively. We are trying to collect as much data as possible from national newspapers, and we are hopeful we'll be able to use some local languages in OpenAI soon.

- ***Does Eri-chat offer features that can help people with disabilities as well?***

Yes. Voice-to-voice speech is a feature that can help blind people. It is also a feature that can help you learn new languages, such as English, Dutch, French,

and more. It can teach users, just like a teacher would, through a voice-to voice or written feature. Eri-chat is developing photo generation to be integrated into the new version, which will be released soon. Photo generation includes features where a user takes a photo of a physical matter and asks the AI to explain what the image is, or can ask the AI to generate pictures. So far, the available features are beneficial, but many upgraded features will be integrated for future versions.

- ***This is not your first app, right?***

Right. By targeting specific audiences for each app, I have created a range of mobile software applications. For instance, I built an app called “GPA calculator” when I was in college. It is software that helps students calculate their GPA from the first semester of sophomore year through the end of sophomore year. Another software is “DMK+,” an informative app for mothers on how to feed their children aged 6 to 12 months; it came accompanied with videos, planners, and books of recipes and reminders. It was made in collaboration with the Ministries of Health and Agriculture and UNICEF. “Lesson Up” is an app that is currently evolving, but so far, it helps high school students with their studies by combining data from different books and notes. “Daero” is an app that works as an offline map guide. Users can access locations to restaurants, barbershops, and more with detailed routes and images. Or “Selam gym app”, an app that has workout schedules and helps track your BMI and progress, giving diet advice based on AI. These are a few of those I have prepared so far.

- ***Where can people find Eri-chat now?***

It’s currently available in Asmara at different focal points, such as Polytech Insight, Shida Stationery around Crystal Hotel, where people can come, meet, and ask me questions; Keren; Gash Barka; and more. It’s a one-time payment for usage found in the places mentioned. I’m trying to make it available in every region and subzone, including many locations in Asmara.

- ***What’s next in your plan?***

I actually have so many plans, especially on apps like “Lesson Up,” where we can help students succeed in school. Or “kids Venue,” an app that helps kids have a

smooth journey in learning languages and having education through entertainment. Hopefully, I will keep developing and creating more software applications to help address societal issues and provide the information they need.

I am grateful to all the government and private sectors that have helped me achieve my goals.

- *Thank you, Naod. I wish you all the best!*
- On Nov 1, 2025

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