

# Tech giants rush to put chatbot to work

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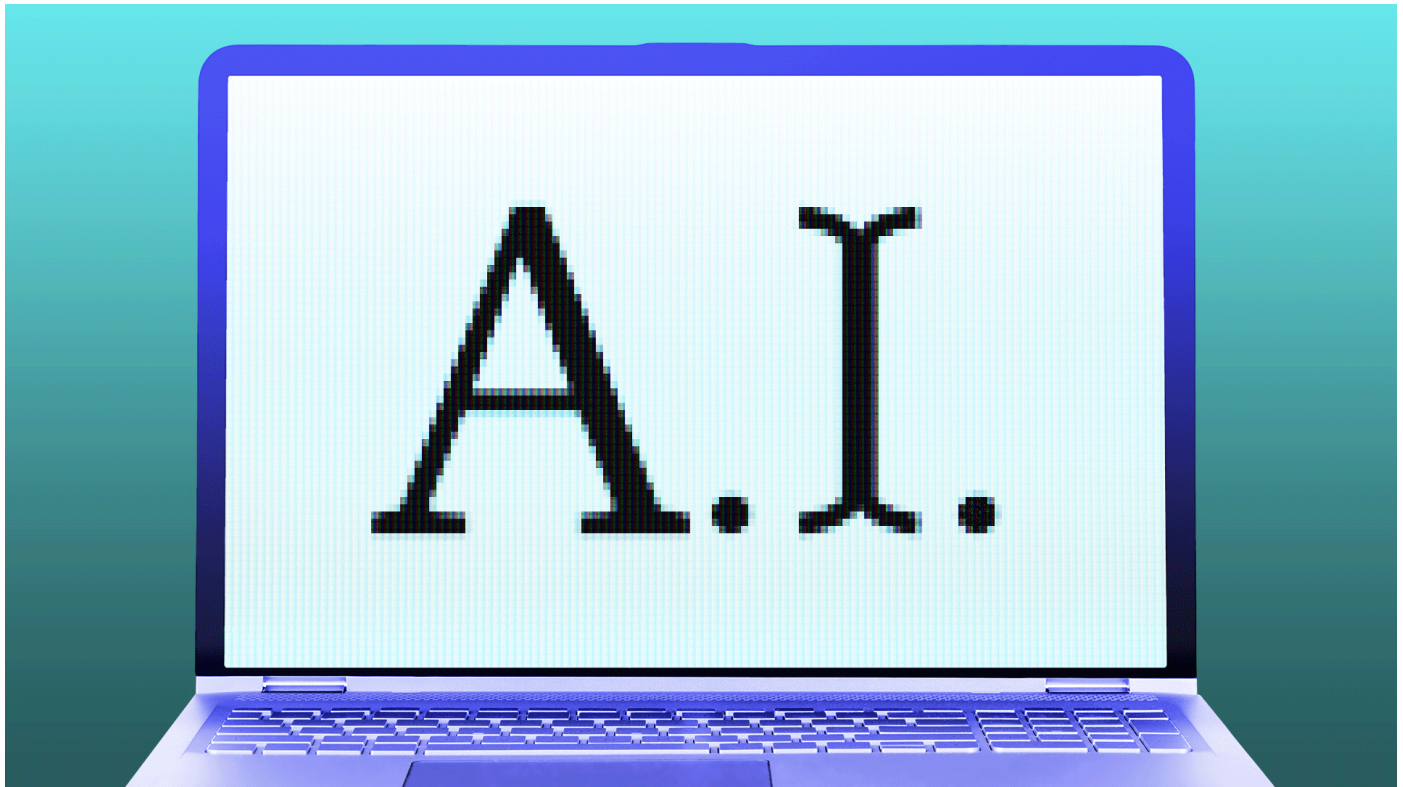


Illustration: Sarah Grillo/Axios

The explosion of interest in ChatGPT and generative AI has tech giants scrambling to rethink and rewrite their product plans to capitalize on the trend.

**What's happening:** Every major tech company has been investing in AI for years, but the overnight ChatGPT craze that kicked off at the end of 2022 has given the industry a ravenous appetite for one specific flavor of AI — generative programs that produce text, images and other content in response to user prompts.

**Driving the news:** ChatGPT went from zero to millions of users on a trajectory that left observers agape. Estimates have suggested ChatGPT has [topped 100 million monthly active users](#) and is seeing roughly 5 million users a day, [per the New York Times](#).

## Microsoft

Microsoft's close relationship with and longstanding investments in ChatGPT creator OpenAI insured that the business-software giant would take a lead in deploying generative AI-based services.

- Last week Microsoft rolled out a [premium version](#) of its Teams groupware integrating ChatGPT-based tools for summarizing meeting notes, organizing personal tasks and translating texts.
- "We're bringing the power of large language models, including OpenAI's GPT, to Teams Premium, as we make meetings more intelligent, personalized, and protected," Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella [tweeted](#).
- The company is also widely expected to use ChatGPT-style AI to reshape its Bing search engine in an attempt to outflank Google. Many observers also assume the company intends to find ways to integrate ChatGPT with Word, email and other programs.

## Google

Google has been working for years on the same kind of large language model-based generative AI that powers ChatGPT, and the company pioneered [a key element](#) of the technology. One of its projects, LaMDA, even inspired a Google engineer to claim that [the program had achieved sentience](#).

- But Google moved cautiously to open up its research out of concerns over applications' accuracy, trustworthiness and potential for bias —

problems that ChatGPT and every similar program share.

- The advent of ChatGPT reportedly led Google CEO Sundar Pichai to [declare a "code red,"](#) consult with [company founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin](#), and fast-track a number of generative-AI-related projects.
- In late January Google showed off demos of a [new generative AI project](#) that can generate a wide range of music from a user's text prompt.

## Meta

Facebook parent Meta has sunk fortunes into AI, using it to rank News Feed items, moderate content, translate text and perform many other tasks.

- It has detailed a number of efforts in the generative space, including text-to-image and [text-to-video](#).
- But two recent public demos by Meta of generative-AI projects went awry, with the ChatGPT-like [Blenderbot](#) drawing [criticism](#) for its low-quality output and ready embrace of conspiracy theories, and the academic research-focused Galactica getting panned for its [inaccuracies](#).
- AI and generative AI were mentioned many more times on the company's earnings call last week than "metaverse," the emerging technology CEO Mark Zuckerberg has bet the company on.
- "The two major technological waves driving our roadmap are AI today, and over the longer term, the metaverse," Zuckerberg said.
- Experts see potential for Meta to use AI to generate and populate the virtual worlds it aims to build — but first it has to provide reasons for users to want to visit them.

## Amazon

Amazon uses AI for Alexa's voice recognition, to optimize its warehouse operations, and for other purposes, but it has not yet raced to hop on the

generative AI bandwagon.

- Reports that some software developers inside Amazon were using ChatGPT as a coding aid led a lawyer to order employees not to share corporate information with the bot over fears that company secrets could leak, per [Business Insider](#).
- ChatGPT "is not concerned about the truth, but just about putting words together convincingly," Amazon CTO Werner Vogels [tweeted](#) last week.

## Apple

CEO Tim Cook spoke during Apple's earnings call last week about the potential of AI to change just about everything that the company does. However, the examples he offered — detecting heart rhythms and car crashes — don't appear to be tied to the generative AI trend.

- **Yes, but:** Apple remains a profoundly secretive company. If it has a product that makes use of generative AI in the works, we aren't likely to hear about it until it is ready to launch.

**Be smart:** AI is already deeply integrated into much of the tech we use every day, from Google Search to Facebook's News Feed to your email spam filters to your phone's voice-to-text function. ChatGPT has shown the industry there's a public hunger for the specific capabilities of generative AI to simulate human conversation and creativity.

**Our thought bubble:** Tech's chase-the-hotness herd mentality almost always overshoots the mark, and that's likely to be the case with ChatGPT mania. AI has a huge future — but we still don't know what creative and economic uses generative AI will serve, what harms it will cause and what failures it may encounter.

