

Google chatbot blunders as AI battle with Microsoft heats up

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Google plans to release a conversational chatbot named Bard in an AI showdown with Microsoft and ChatGPT.

Google on Wednesday announced a slew of features powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI), but a mistake in an ad caused its share price

to tank.

The search engine giant is rushing into the space after the bot ChatGPT caught the imagination of web users around the world with its ability to generate essays, speeches and even exam papers in seconds.

Microsoft has announced a multibillion-dollar partnership with ChatGPT maker OpenAI and unveiled new products on Tuesday, while Google tried to steal the march a day earlier by announcing its "Bard" alternative.

The bots are quickly being integrated into search engines and Google is battling to preserve its two-decade dominance of the web search industry.

But astronomers on Twitter quickly noticed that Google's Bard had given out an error in an ad on Twitter touting its new technology.

In the ad, the bot was asked about what to tell a nine-year-old about discoveries from the James Webb Space Telescope.

It incorrectly offered the response that the telescope was the first to take pictures of a planet outside Earth's solar system, when that honor actually belongs to the European Very Large Telescope.

The mess-up sent the [share price](#) spiraling down by more than seven percent on Wednesday with investors also underwhelmed by the latest announcements.

Before the problem emerged, Google Vice President Prabhakar Raghavan told an event in Paris that Bard was now being used by "trusted testers" but did not give a timeline for a public release, which is expected within weeks.

Analysts have suggested Google rushed its announcement under pressure from Microsoft, but Raghavan denied the claim.

"This has been a multiyear journey," he said, adding that no single event had "dramatically changed the course" of Google's plans.

Google executives announced on Wednesday several AI-induced improvements across products including maps, translation and its image recognition tool Lens.

Microsoft has similarly said it will incorporate AI into its Office suite and Teams messaging app.

But its promise to soup up its much-maligned Bing search engine put it on a [collision course](#) with Google, which has dominated the field for two decades.

AI chatbots like ChatGPT hold the promise of supplying users with ready-made answers from multiple sources, replacing the familiar list of links and ads that have been Google's bread and butter for two decades.

Media reports said the overnight success of ChatGPT was designated a "code red" threat at Google with founders Sergey Brin and Larry Page—who left several years ago—brought back to brainstorm ideas and fast-track a response.

The pressure to act was heightened last week when Google parent Alphabet posted disappointing results and announced it was laying off 12,000 employees.

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