

# China's Baidu makes AI chatbot Ernie Bot publicly available

August 31 2023, by Zen Soo



A visitor checks out the AI chatbot Ernie Bot via a laptop computer at a booth promoting the AI chatbot during the Wave Summit in Beijing on Aug. 16, 2023. Chinese search engine and artificial intelligence firm Baidu on Thursday made its ChatGPT-equivalent language model available to the public, in a sign of a green light from Beijing which has in recent months taken steps to regulate the industry. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong

Chinese search engine and artificial intelligence firm Baidu made its ChatGPT-equivalent language model fully available to the public Thursday, raising the company's stock price by over 3% following the announcement.

Beijing sees artificial intelligence as a key industry to rival the United States and aims to become a global leader by 2030. Chinese technology firms have also raced to unveil their generative AI models—in which algorithms allow the technology to produce and create new content—after U.S. firm [OpenAI launched the widely popular ChatGPT](#).

Baidu said Thursday that Ernie Bot, which generates text and images in response to questions and prompts provided by users, was fully open to the general public via the official website and an app that was only available in China's app stores. By Thursday afternoon, the Ernie Bot app had topped the charts on Apple's iOS store in China for free apps.

By releasing the model publicly, Baidu will be able to collect massive real-world human feedback, according to Baidu CEO Robin Li, who said this would in turn help improve Ernie and Baidu's foundation models.

Like Europe, China has made efforts in recent months [to regulate the generative AI industry](#).

China issued AI regulations Aug. 15 requiring companies to carry out a security review and obtain approvals before their product can be publicly launched. Beijing also requires companies providing such generative AI services to comply with government requests for technology and data.



Visitors using their laptop computers try out the AI chatbot Ernie Bot during the Wave Summit in Beijing on Aug. 16, 2023. Chinese search engine and artificial intelligence firm Baidu made its ChatGPT-equivalent language model fully available to the public Thursday, Aug. 31, raising the company's stock price by over 3% following the announcement. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong





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Visitors try out the AI chatbot Ernie Bot on the laptop computers at a booth promoting the AI chatbot during the Wave Summit in Beijing on Aug. 16, 2023. Chinese search engine and artificial intelligence firm Baidu on Thursday made its ChatGPT-equivalent language model available to the public, in a sign of a green light from Beijing which has in recent months taken steps to regulate the industry. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong



Staff members chat each other at a booth promoting the AI chatbot Ernie Bot during the Wave Summit in Beijing on Aug. 16, 2023. Chinese search engine and artificial intelligence firm Baidu on Thursday made its ChatGPT-equivalent language model available to the public, in a sign of a green light from Beijing which has in recent months taken steps to regulate the industry. Credit: AP Photo/Andy Wong





FIEL - Robin Li, CEO of search giant Baidu, talks about AI during the Baidu Create 2018 held in Beijing, China, on July 4, 2018. Chinese search engine and artificial intelligence firm Baidu made its ChatGPT-equivalent language model fully available to the public Thursday, Aug. 31, 2023, raising the company's stock price by over 3% following the announcement. Credit: AP Photo/Ng Han Guan, File

The U.S. does not currently have regulations in place.

Baidu CEO Li said he was optimistic and described the AI regulations as "more pro-innovation than regulation" in the company's earnings call earlier in August.

Two other AI companies in China, Baichuan and Zhipu AI, also

launched their AI language models Thursday.

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Citation: China's Baidu makes AI chatbot Ernie Bot publicly available (2023, August 31)  
retrieved 10 May 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2023-08-china-baidu-ai-chatbot-ernie.html>

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