

Chinese search engine company Baidu unveils Ernie 4.0 AI model, claims that it rivals GPT-4

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An attendee walks past a display at the Baidu World conference in Beijing, on Nov. 1, 2018. Chinese search engine and artificial intelligence firm Baidu on Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2023, unveiled the latest version of its artificial intelligence model Ernie 4.0, claiming that it rivals models such as GPT-4 in the U.S Credit: AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein, File

Chinese search engine and artificial intelligence firm Baidu on Tuesday unveiled a new version of its artificial intelligence model, Ernie 4.0, claiming that it rivals models such as GPT-4 in the U.S.

Baidu's CEO Robin Li demonstrated Ernie 4.0 at the company's annual Baidu World conference in Beijing. He said the [model](#) has achieved comprehension, reasoning, memory and generation, which uses algorithms to produce and create new content.

Li said that Ernie 4.0 was able to understand complex questions and instructions and apply reasoning and logic to generate answers to questions.

"It is not inferior in any aspect to GPT-4," Li said, stating that the latest model was "significantly improved" compared to its original Ernie Bot model.

In a live demonstration, Li prompted Ernie 4.0 to generate advertising materials including advertising posters and a marketing video. He also asked Ernie 4.0 to come up with a martial arts novel complete with characters with various personalities.

Baidu is a frontrunner among a slew of Chinese companies racing to come up with [artificial intelligence](#) models, after OpenAI's ChatGPT took the world by storm last year. Beijing sees artificial intelligence as a key industry to rival the United States and aims to become a global leader by 2030.

Beijing-based Baidu started off as a search engine firm and over the past decade has invested heavily in artificial intelligence technology such as autonomous driving and more recently, generative AI to stay competitive.

The company's Hong Kong-listed shares fell 1.7% Tuesday following the announcement.

Baidu introduced its Ernie Bot in March. In August, it made the model available to the public.

Ernie 4.0 is not yet available to the [general public](#) but some people have been invited to try it.

Li said Baidu plans to incorporate artificial intelligence technology into its search engine, maps and cloud drive services, and its business [intelligence](#) offerings for enterprise customers. He did not give a timetable for that.

The technology can transform how certain products work. Baidu's [search engine](#) might generate a customized answer to a query instead of just providing a list of results and links.

China has recently sought to regulate the generative AI industry, requiring companies to carry out security reviews and obtain approvals before publicly launching their products. Companies that provide such AI services must also comply with government requests for technology and data.

The U.S. does not have such regulations.

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