

OpenAI stands by decision to fire Sam Altman despite pressure: US media

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OpenAI shocked the tech world when it fired former CEO and co-founder Sam Altman.

The board of ChatGPT creator OpenAI on Sunday rejected pressure

from Microsoft and other major investors to reverse its stunning decision to fire CEO Sam Altman, US media reported.

OpenAI and Altman rocketed to fame with the launch of ChatGPT last year, showcasing advances in generative artificial intelligence that set off a gold rush in the sector.

But the company's board shocked the industry on Friday by removing co-founder Altman, prompting other high-profile departures as well as a reported push by major investors to bring the 38-year-old back.

The board stood by its decision in a memo sent to employees on Sunday night, saying it was "the only path to advance and defend the mission of OpenAI," The New York Times reported.

"Put simply, Sam's behavior and lack of transparency in his interactions with the board undermined the board's ability to effectively supervise the company in the manner it was mandated to do," the board said in the memo, according to the Times.

The OpenAI board also appointed Emmett Shear, a former chief executive of Amazon's Twitch streaming service, as the interim CEO, it added.

When the OpenAI board announced Altman's exit last week, it said chief technology officer Mira Murati would become the interim CEO.

The developments on Sunday were also reported by Bloomberg and tech industry news site The Information.

AFP has reached out to OpenAI for comment.

The board had grown increasingly concerned that Altman was

underestimating the dangers of its tech and leading the company away from its stated mission, US media reported.

The Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday that high-profile OpenAI investors including global tech titan Microsoft and venture firm Thrive Capital were trying to restore Altman as CEO.

Microsoft has invested more than \$10 billion in OpenAI and has rolled out the AI pioneer's tech in its own products.

Generative AI platforms such as ChatGPT are trained on vast amounts of data to enable them to answer questions, even complex ones, in human-like language.

They are also used to generate and manipulate imagery.

The ballooning of investment in AI R&D by companies around the world has led to warnings about the dangers of its misuse—from blackmailing people with "deepfake" images to the manipulation of images and harmful disinformation.

US media reported that the announcement from OpenAI's board on Sunday was signed by its directors, including co-founder and respected AI expert Ilya Sutskever.

Sutskever had reportedly aired his concerns with OpenAI's business directions as well as the threats posed by the technology.

He has told OpenAI staff that Altman would not return, according to Bloomberg.

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