

Amazon adds Andrew Ng, a leading voice in artificial intelligence, to its board of directors

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In this Friday, July 14, 2017, file photo, computer scientist Andrew Ng poses at his office in Palo Alto, Calif. Amazon announced Thursday, April 11, 2024, that it added artificial intelligence visionary Andrew Ng to its board of directors amid intense AI competition among startups and big technology companies. Credit: AP Photo/Eric Risberg, File

Amazon is adding artificial intelligence visionary Andrew Ng to its board of directors, a move that comes amid intense AI competition among startups and big technology companies.

The Seattle company said Thursday that Ng, a managing director at the Palo Alto, California-based AI Fund, will replace a seat vacated by Judy McGrath, a former CEO of MTV who told Amazon she won't run for reelection.

Ng's AI Fund, which he founded in 2017, invests in entrepreneurs building artificial intelligence companies. Previously, he led AI teams at the Chinese tech company Baidu and Google, where the team he oversaw taught a computer system to recognize cats in YouTube videos without ever being taught what a cat was.

Ng's addition to the board comes as Amazon, like other [tech companies](#), makes massive investments in generative artificial intelligence. The company has invested [\\$4 billion in the San Francisco-based startup Anthropic](#), which is partnering with Amazon to develop so-called foundation models that underpin generative AI technologies. In the past year, Amazon also rolled out a chatbot for businesses called Q and a generative-AI powered shopping assistant named Rufus.

In an annual shareholder letter released Thursday, Amazon CEO Andy Jassy suggested generative AI could be the next big pillar of Amazon's business, joining the company's prominent online marketplace, Prime subscription program and its cloud computing unit, AWS. Jassy wrote that generative AI may be the largest technological transformation since cloud computing, and "perhaps since the internet."

Meanwhile, other Amazon innovations have encountered some hiccups. The company said last week it was [pulling its Just Walk Out technology](#) from Amazon Fresh stores in the U.S. after receiving some customer

feedback. Amazon said it was replacing the technology, which allows customers to skip the checkout line, with smart carts that would allow them still to do that but also see their spending in real time.

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