Google Cloud acquires Kaggle in bid to boost machine learning and AI

Anthony Goldbloom, co-founder and CEO of Kaggle, along the Embarcadero water front against the backdrop of the San Francisco — Oakland Bay bridge. (Peter DaSilva/The Australian)

Google has moved to bolster its work in machine learning and artificial intelligence by acquiring the data science company Kaggle, which was founded in Melbourne by former University of Melbourne student Anthony Goldbloom.

Kaggle uses the internet and social media to operate data analysis competitions for tens of thousands of scientists worldwide to solve problems and more than 800,000 data experts use Kaggle to analyse the latest updates in machine learning and data analytics.

Mr Goldbloom relocated to San Francisco six years ago and has since worked with a host of Fortune 500 companies, including GE, MasterCard, Pfizer, Allstate, Ford and Facebook, as well as NASA.

More recently, Kaggle has moved into the booming field of artificial intelligence research, a year ago hosting a trial with the American National Institute of Health and consulting giant Booz Allen Hamilton to help doctors to diagnose heart failure.

Last month, Google and Kaggle announced a new machine learning challenge that asked developers to find the best way to automatically tag videos.

"We must lower the barriers of entry to AI and make it available to the largest

community of developers, users and enterprises, so they can apply it to their own unique needs. With Kaggle joining the Google Cloud team, we can accelerate this mission," Google Cloud AI and Machine Learning Chief Scientist Fei-Fei Li revealed the deal in her keynote address to [Google Cloud Next](#) overnight. The purchase price and terms were not disclosed.

"Kaggle and Google Cloud will continue to support machine learning training and deployment services, while offering the community the ability to store and query large datasets."

Before coming up with the Kaggle concept in his Bondi Beach apartment in Sydney in 2010, Goldbloom — who holds a degree in economics and econometrics from the University of Melbourne — built macroeconomic models for the Reserve Bank of Australia and Treasury.

His frustration with a lack of Australian backing for his concept, developed with fellow entrepreneur Jeremy Howard — founder of email provider FastMail — and economist Nicholas Gruen, led him to [move to San Francisco](#) in 2011.

There Kaggle secured $US11m in funding from some of the world's top technology investors, including Index Ventures, Khosla Ventures, SV Angel and the Stanford Management Company.

PayPal founder Max Levshin also joined the company as an investor and chairman.

"The Kaggle team will remain together and will continue Kaggle as a distinct brand within Google Cloud. We will continue to grow our competitions and open data platforms, and we will remain open to all data scientists, companies, techniques and technologies,'' Mr Goldbloom said [on a blog](#) overnight.

"Making Google Cloud technology available to our community will allow us to offer access to powerful infrastructure, scalable training and deployment services and the ability to store and query large data sets."