Microsoft

Microsoft to invest US$2.9 billion in AI and cloud infrastructure in Japan while boosting the nation's skills, research and cybersecurity

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Picture left to right: Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister of Japan; Brad Smith, Vice Chair and President, Microsoft; Suzanne P. Clark, President and CEO, US Chamber of Commerce; Rahm Emanuel, US Ambassador to Japan; Miki Tsusaka, President, Microsoft Japan.

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Washington D.C., April 9 ET, 2024 – Today, Microsoft announced it will invest US$2.9 billion over the next two years to increase its hyperscale cloud computing and AI infrastructure in Japan. It will also expand its digital skilling programs with the goal of providing AI skilling to more than 3 million people over the next three years, open its first Microsoft Research Asia lab in Japan, and deepen its cybersecurity collaboration with the Government of Japan.

These investments aim to support Japan's key pillar to tackle deflation and stimulate the economy by expanding the infrastructure, skilled talent, and security required to accelerate Japan's digital transformation and adoption of AI. The announcement coincides with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's state visit to the United States, where he was joined by Microsoft Vice Chair and President Brad Smith, and Microsoft Japan President Miki Tsusaka.

Expanding Japan's AI and cloud infrastructure capacity

The US$2.9 billion commitment is Microsoft's single largest investment in its 46-year history in Japan, also the site of its first international office. It effectively doubles the company's existing financial commitment to expand its AI and cloud infrastructure across Japan.

This significant enhancement in digital capacity will enable Microsoft to provide more advanced computing resources in Japan, including the latest graphics processing units (GPUs), which are crucial for speeding up AI workloads. It builds on Microsoft's support for the [Generative AI Accelerator Challenge (GENIAC) (https://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2024/0202_001.html)](https://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2024/0202_001.html), a program led by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry which helps innovative startups and established enterprises develop foundation models as a core technology of generative AI in Japan.

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Microsoft will also invest in training 3 million full-time and part-time workers across Japan over the next three years, giving them the skills they need to build and work with AI technologies. This investment will be delivered through programs focused on assisting organizations and society at large, including women in general and also with a focus on developers and students.

Microsoft will expand its Code; Without Barriers program to Japan and provide dedicated training for women looking to participate in AI-enabled work. It will also provide free and widely accessible content on AI, cybersecurity, and digital skills in partnership with the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR).

Nurturing advanced AI professionals who can drive further AI integration, Microsoft will offer courses and reference architectures for AI developers and technology companies in Japan. These will be augmented by Microsoft's AI coding assistant, GitHub Copilot. The company will also support startups with resources through the Microsoft for Startups Founders Hub and help implement AI-centric programs in vocational high schools.

To advance the societal benefits offered by AI through companies of all sizes, governments, and public entities – including the Tokyo Metropolitan Government – Microsoft will continue with established programs that support the widespread adoption and application of AI tools. Furthermore, Microsoft provides support in developing customers' internal AI policies, including data management and security to ensure its responsible and safe use.

Opening Japan's first Microsoft Research Asia lab in Tokyo

Microsoft Research Asia is extending its research leadership in the Asia-Pacific region with the opening of a lab in Tokyo.

The new lab will have a unique focus on areas including embodied AI and robotics, societal AI and wellbeing, and scientific discovery that align with Japan's socioeconomic priorities. Its establishment reflects Microsoft's long-term commitment to Japan and its belief in the nation's potential to lead the world in innovation.

Microsoft Research is a division of Microsoft that pursues bold ideas and technical breakthroughs in AI, while building on a legacy of foundational computer science advances. As its fundamental research arm in the Asia-Pacific region, Microsoft Research Asia has collaborated with Japanese academia for more than two decades which have been instrumental in propelling cross-disciplinary research and fostering talent.

To foster enhanced research collaboration, Microsoft will provide US$10 million resource grants over the next five years to both The University of Tokyo and to the Partnership on Artificial Intelligence Research between Keio University and Carnegie Mellon University.

Partnering to strengthen Japan's cybersecurity defenses

Microsoft will collaborate with Japan's Cabinet Secretariat to strengthen cybersecurity resilience for the government, business, and society, as the nation enhances its cybersecurity approach under the government's [updated National Security Strategy (https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page1we_000081.html)](https://www.mofa.go.jp/fp/nsp/page1we_000081.html).

The collaboration will build on the services Microsoft provides to protect thousands of Japanese organizations every day. It will focus on areas such as information sharing, talent development, and technology solutions, with Microsoft to provide its expertise and advanced cloud and AI-driven security services as part of joint efforts to tackle cybersecurity threats.

Leadership statements

Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister of Japan

"As economic activities in the digital space increase, it is important for the Japanese industry as a whole to work with global companies like Microsoft that are equipped with a set of digital infrastructure. We appreciate Microsoft's announcement of its new investment in Japan. Microsoft has made significant contributions to the social implementation of generative AI in Japan through various initiatives, and we look forward to further collaboration. We also look forward to deepening our cooperation in the field of cybersecurity."

Brad Smith, Vice Chair and President, Microsoft

"Today's announcement represents Microsoft's most significant investment in Japan since we set roots here in 1978. These investments in digital infrastructure, AI skills, cybersecurity, and AI research are essential ingredients for Japan to build a robust AI Economy."

Ken Saito, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry

"As digital investments increase around the world, we welcome Microsoft's announcement of new investment in Japan and look forward to its future contribution to promoting Japan's digital industries, including AI. Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry will continue to work with Microsoft, a world leader in the digital field, to create both innovation and discipline."

Takuya Hirai, Chairperson, Headquarters for the Promotion of a Digital Society, Policy Research Council, Member of the House of the Representatives

"The adoption of digital tools is essential for addressing Japan's societal challenges of an aging population and the pursuit of economic growth and regional revitalization. Microsoft's investment contributes significantly in advancing Japan's AI capabilities, particularly in infrastructure and talent development. I wholeheartedly welcome this initiative and look forward to the leadership role Microsoft can play in promoting collaboration between Japan and the United States, as well as across public and private sectors."

Miki Tsusaka, President, Microsoft Japan

"We are honored to contribute to Japan and its future with our largest investment to date, technology and knowledge. In collaboration with our partners, Microsoft Japan is fully committed to supporting the people and organizations of Japan to solve social problems and achieve more."

Yuriko Koike, Governor of Tokyo Metropolitan

"The Tokyo Metropolitan Government and Microsoft entered into a partnership last year and have been empowering Japan's workforce with digital skills. Today's announcement by Microsoft, which includes programs to encourage women to embrace AI and provide AI skilling to three million people, is a significant step for Japan to lead in the age of digitalization. The Tokyo Metropolitan Government pioneered the use of generative AI to make our offices more efficient and improve the quality of services provided to our citizens. We will continue to embrace cutting-edge technology and lead Japan's digital transformation with unwavering dedication."

Chisa Mikami, Head of Hiroshima Office, UNITAR

"Through the collaboration between UNITAR and Microsoft, we will strive to democratize access to AI education, ensuring that knowledge is freely available to all. Together, we pave the way for advanced AI professionals, foster innovation in startups, and promote responsible AI practices across industries and sectors. With collective effort, we harness the transformative power of AI for the betterment of society."

Kevin Scott, Chief Technology Officer and Executive Vice President of AI, Microsoft

"The impact that AI is poised to create over the coming years has the potential to generate unprecedented societal benefit for the entire world. The steps we are taking today to empower Japanese citizens through AI technologies and programs—whether job training and skilling, improvements to infrastructure capacity, or new research investments—will in the aggregate help accelerate this process of beneficial innovation. We're particularly excited for Microsoft Research's global footprint to further expand into Japan, extending the ability for our world-class research efforts to both contribute to and benefit from local diversity of thought and talent."

Teruo Fujii, President, The University of Tokyo

"The University of Tokyo is committed to contributing to the realization of a better society through research and education focused on cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence. To maximize the benefits of those technologies and promote innovation while minimizing risks, it is essential to collaborate with partners who share our objectives. With the establishment of Microsoft Research Asia's new lab in Tokyo, we enter an exciting new phase in our more than two decades of partnership with Microsoft. We look forward to working together to further advance our research community and spearhead the development of outstanding human resources as we continue our journey together."

Tags: AI (https://news.microsoft.com/apac/tag/ai/), Japan (https://news.microsoft.com/apac/tag/japan/)