

# Intelligence for Sale

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The most talked-about topic online among tech circles in recent days has been Meta's aggressive poaching of artificial intelligence (AI) talents. In a high-profile move, Meta recruited 28-year-old MIT dropout Alexandr Wang, founder of Scale AI, as its new Chief AI Officer to lead the newly formed Super-intelligence organization. According to a report by *Wired* magazine,<sup>1</sup> Meta has been offering astronomical compensation packages—reported around \$100 million annually—to lure those top talents behind large language models and reasoning models from OpenAI, Google DeepMind, and Apple. The *Wall Street Journal*<sup>2</sup> recently reported that Meta even extended a jaw-dropping \$1 billion package to a distinguished machine learning researcher, a former Meta employee and later a cofounder of the Thinking Machines Lab, who allegedly declined with a polite “thank you, but no thank you.” For most people living paycheck to paycheck, such offers would probably be once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that very few sane minds could resist. Media outlets have started to liken today's AI talents to superstar athletes in professional sports leagues like the NBA or MLB. Even those who bravely turned down these surreal offers admitted they went through Meta's interview process simply to test their own market value in the flourishing AI industry. But Meta is not alone. Microsoft has recently poached more than 20 AI experts from Google DeepMind, including Amar Subramanya, the former Head of Engineering of Google's Gemini chatbot to be their Corporate Vice President of AI. Much earlier, Microsoft's \$650 million “reverse acqui-hire” of AI startup Inflection brought in their cofounder Mustafa Suleyman to be the CEO of Microsoft AI.

From Meta's strategy, it appears the company is aiming to reclaim the AI crown by 1) restricting

competitors' access to high-quality training data through its co-ownership of Scale AI, and 2) assembling an “AI dream team” while simultaneously preventing rivals from acquiring top AI talent. For those of us working in related fields such as computer architecture—the intersection of hardware design, semiconductor technology, and software enablement—these headlines stir a bittersweet sentiment. As CPU, GPU, or AI accelerator architects, we help push the boundaries of chip performance, energy efficiency, and scalability, laying the physical foundation that makes AI breakthroughs possible. Such work requires a deep, solid science background and years of postgraduate training to develop the capability and master the skillset for such roles. Yet, our talents rarely command the same celebrity status, nor are they compensated anywhere close to the headline-grabbing packages received by these young AI talents. One can't help but wonder what if innovation in devices, circuits, and system architecture were also equally valued and rewarded on the same scale? What if architects behind silicon were celebrated like these stars in the AI major leagues?

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Meanwhile, the Trump administration just unveiled an ambitious “AI action plan,” shifting the U.S. strategy from cautious regulation to bold expansion. The plan stimulates the exports of AI (hardware) technologies developed by the United States. The White House just brokered a controversial “deal” with AMD and Nvidia, allowing the export of AMD's MI308 and Nvidia's H20

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## APPENDIX: RELATED ARTICLES

A1. J. Yang and X. Tang, "Special Issue on Top Picks From the 2024 Computer Architecture Conferences," *IEEE Micro*, vol. 45, no. 4, pp. 6–10, Jul./Aug. 2025, doi: [10.1109/MM.2025.3599323](https://doi.org/10.1109/MM.2025.3599323).

A2. J. J. Yi, "A review of *Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation v. Apple—Part V*," *IEEE Micro*, vol. 45, no. 4, pp. 104–109, Jul./Aug. 2025, doi: [10.1109/MM.2025.3599331](https://doi.org/10.1109/MM.2025.3599331).

A3. S. Greenstein, "Prototype competition and breakthroughs," *IEEE Micro*, vol. 45, no. 4, pp. 110–112, Jul./Aug. 2025, doi: [10.1109/MM.2025.3580075](https://doi.org/10.1109/MM.2025.3580075).

GPUs to China. In exchange, the U.S. government would collect 15% of the revenues generated from these sales. This arrangement is unprecedented, and arguably unconstitutional, given that *Article I, Section 9, Clause 5 of the U.S. Constitution* states, "No Tax or Duty shall be laid on Articles exported from any State." Many conservatives have also raised alarms regarding whether this sets a precedent and opens the door to similar deals for other top U.S. technologies to be exported to rival states so long as the companies are willing to pay the government a cut of their profits? Looking ahead, these historical events regarding computing power exports could have profound implications on national security, governmental policies, geopolitics, and long-term U.S. global competitiveness.

As a long tradition of the Special Issue on "Top Picks," this issue is dedicated to the best of the best papers, a highly selective collection from works published in the premium computer architecture conferences in 2024. First, I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to our Guest Editor and Program Chair of IEEE Micro Top Picks from the 2024 Computer Architecture Conferences, Prof. Jun Yang, and her Co-Editor and Vice Program Chair, Prof. Xulong Tang, both from the University of Pittsburgh. This is one of the toughest jobs in our community—first, to organize an elite team of cross-disciplinary experts across computer architectures, operating systems, compilers, AI/machine learning, semiconductor technologies, from academia and industry, and then to review, debate, and finalize the best of the best works from more than one hundred submissions which were already published in extremely competitive, top-tier conferences such as ISCA, ASPLOS, MICRO, and so on. At the end, 11 papers were selected as the Top Picks and another 12 papers received Honorable Mentions. For further details, please read the guest co-editor's message for the review and selection process, and the introduction of these papers.<sup>A1</sup>

In Part V of the *Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) v. Apple* series for the Micro Law column,<sup>A2</sup> Joshua Yi examines the legal dispute between WARF and Apple over Apple's refusal to provide

a complete, executable version of its simulator for the A6, A7, and A8 processors. Apple argued that producing the simulator would be burdensome and raised concerns about security and the creation of speculative data. WARF, on the other hand, maintained that it was essential for an accurate assessment for damage calculation. Yi argues the Magistrate Judge's decision, questioning the fairness and emphasizing the simulator's potential value in this case. In the Micro Economics column,<sup>A3</sup> Prof. Shane Greenstein explores how Wi-Fi became a commercial breakthrough through a mix of technological innovation, strategic corporate actions, and favorable public policy. It highlights its evolution from narrow early application to today's widespread consumer applications, business products, and online services such as social network and video sharing and streaming.

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*THE WHITE HOUSE JUST BROKERED A CONTROVERSIAL "DEAL" WITH AMD AND NVIDIA, ALLOWING THE EXPORT OF AMD'S MI308 AND NVIDIA'S H20 GPUS TO CHINA.*

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I hope you enjoy this special issue and the articles we selected for you.

## REFERENCES

1. Z. Schiffer, "OpenAI leadership responds to meta offers: Someone has broken into our home," *Wired*, Jun. 29, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://www.wired.com/story/openai-meta-leadership-talent-rivalry/>
2. B. Jin and K. Hagey, "Thanks for your \$1 billion job offer, Mark Zuckerberg. I'm gonna pass," *Wall Street J.*, Aug. 1, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://www.wsj.com/tech/ai/meta-zuckerberg-ai-recruiting-fail-e6107555>

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