**Amazon.com, Inc.** is an American multinational [technology company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technology_company) focusing on [e-commerce](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-commerce), [cloud computing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_computing), [online advertising](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_advertising), [digital streaming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_streaming), and [artificial intelligence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artificial_intelligence). It has been often referred to as "one of the most influential economic and cultural forces in the world",[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-5) and is often regarded as one of the [world's most valuable brands](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most_valuable_brands).[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-6) It is considered to be one of the [Big Five](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_Tech) American [technology](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Information_technology) companies, alongside [Alphabet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alphabet_Inc.) (parent company of [Google](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google)), [Apple](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple_Inc.), [Meta](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Meta_Platforms) and [Microsoft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft).

Amazon was founded by [Jeff Bezos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff_Bezos) from his garage in [Bellevue](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bellevue,_Washington), Washington,[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-7) on July 5, 1994. Initially an online marketplace for books, it has expanded into a multitude of product categories, a strategy that has earned it the moniker *The Everything Store*.[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-8) It has multiple [subsidiaries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Subsidiary) including [Amazon Web Services](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Web_Services) (cloud computing), [Zoox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoox_(company)" \o "Zoox (company)) ([autonomous vehicles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-driving_car)), [Kuiper Systems](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kuiper_Systems) (satellite Internet), and [Amazon Lab126](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Lab126) (computer hardware [R&D](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Research_and_development)). Its other subsidiaries include [Ring](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ring_(company)), [Twitch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitch_(service)), [IMDb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IMDb), and [Whole Foods Market](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whole_Foods_Market). Its acquisition of Whole Foods in August 2017 for US$13.4 billion substantially increased its footprint as a [physical retailer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_retailer).[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-wf-9)

Amazon has earned a reputation as a disruptor of well-established industries through technological innovation and "aggressive" reinvestment of profits into capital expenditures.[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-10)[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-11)[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-12)[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-13) As of 2023, it is the world's largest [online retailer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_shopping) and [marketplace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_marketplace), [smart speaker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Smart_speaker) provider, cloud computing service through AWS,[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-14) [live-streaming](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Live_streaming) service through Twitch, and [Internet company](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Largest_Internet_company_by_revenue) as measured by [revenue](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revenue) and [market share](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Market_share).[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-15) In 2021, it surpassed [Walmart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walmart) as the world's largest retailer outside of China, driven in large part by its paid subscription plan, [Amazon Prime](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Prime), which has close to 200 million subscribers worldwide.[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-16)[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-17) It is the [second-largest private employer in the United States](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_employers_in_the_United_States).[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-18)

As of October 2023 Amazon is [the 12th most visited website in the world](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most-visited_websites) with 82% of its primary domains traffic coming from the United States.[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-19)[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-20)

Amazon also distributes a variety of downloadable and streaming content through its [Amazon Prime Video](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Prime_Video), [MGM+](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/MGM%2B), [Amazon Music](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Music), [Twitch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twitch_(service)), and [Audible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Audible_(store)) units. It publishes books through its publishing arm, [Amazon Publishing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Publishing), film and television content through [Amazon MGM Studios](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_MGM_Studios), including the [Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer) studio which acquired in March 2022. It also produces [consumer electronics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumer_electronics)—most notably, [Kindle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Kindle) [e-readers](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E-reader), [Echo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Echo) devices, [Fire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kindle_Fire) [tablets](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tablet_computer), and [Fire TVs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fire_TV).

Amazon [has been criticized](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_Amazon) for customer data collection practices,[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-21) a toxic work culture,[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-22) censorship,[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-23)[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-24)[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-25)[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-26)[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-27) [tax avoidance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tax_avoidance),[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-fortune-28)[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-29) and [anti-competitive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anti-competitive_practices) behavior.[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-:6-30)[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-baum-31)

History

*Main article:*[*History of Amazon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Amazon)

**1994–2009: early years**

Amazon was founded on July 5, 1994, by [Jeff Bezos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeff_Bezos), who chose the [Seattle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seattle) area for its abundance of technical talent, as [Microsoft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft) was in the area.[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-32)

Amazon went [public](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_company) in May 1997. It began selling music and videos in 1998, and began international operations by acquiring online sellers of books in the United Kingdom and Germany. In the subsequent year, it initiated the sale of a diverse range of products, including music, video games, consumer electronics, home improvement items, software, games, and toys..[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-33)[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-34)

In 2002, it launched [Amazon Web Services](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Web_Services) (AWS), which initially focused on providing APIs for web developers to build [web applications](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_application) on top of Amazon's ecommerce platform.[[35]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-35)[[36]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-36) In 2004, AWS was expanded to provide website popularity statistics and web crawler data from the Alexa Web Information Service.[[37]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-37) AWS later shifted toward providing enterprise services with [Simple Storage Service](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simple_Storage_Service) (S3) in 2006,[[38]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-38) and [Elastic Compute Cloud](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_Elastic_Compute_Cloud) (EC2) in 2008,[[39]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-39) allowing companies to rent data storage and computing power from Amazon. In 2006, Amazon also launched the*Fulfillment by Amazon*program, which allowed individuals and small companies (called "third-party sellers") to sell products through Amazon's warehouses and fulfillment infrastructure.[[40]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-amazon-fulfill-press-40)

**2010–present: growth**

Amazon purchased the [Whole Foods Market](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whole_Foods_Market) supermarket chain in 2017.[[41]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-41) It is the leading e-retailer in the United States with approximately US$178 billion [net sales](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Net_sales) in 2017. It has over 300 million active customer accounts globally.[[42]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-42)

Amazon saw large growth during the [COVID-19 pandemic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic), hiring more than 100,000 staff in the United States and Canada.[[43]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-43) Some Amazon workers in the US, France, and Italy protested the company's decision to "run normal shifts" due to COVID-19's ease of spread in warehouses.[[44]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-auto-44)[[45]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-FTMarch19-45) In Spain, the company faced legal complaints over its policies,[[46]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-BBCMarch31-46) while a group of US Senators wrote an open letter to Bezos expressing concerns about workplace safety.[[47]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-TheVergeMarch31-47)

On February 2, 2021, Bezos announced that he would step down as CEO to become executive chair of Amazon's board. The transition officially took place on July 5, 2021, with former CEO of AWS [Andy Jassy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andy_Jassy) replacing him as CEO.[[48]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-48)[[49]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-49) In January 2023, Amazon cut over 18,000 jobs, primarily in consumer retail and its human resources division in an attempt to cut costs.[[50]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-50)

Products and services

*Main article:*[*List of Amazon products and services*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Amazon_products_and_services)

**Amazon.com**

Amazon.com is an e-commerce platform that sells many product lines, including media ([books](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book), movies, music, and software), apparel, baby products, [consumer electronics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Consumer_electronics), [beauty products](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cosmetics), gourmet food, groceries, health and personal care products, industrial & scientific supplies, kitchen items, [jewelry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewelry" \o "Jewelry), watches, lawn and garden items, musical instruments, [sporting goods](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sports_equipment), tools, automotive items, toys and games, and farm [supplies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agrochemical)[[52]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-52) and [consulting services](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agronomy).[[53]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-Rai-53) Amazon websites are country-specific (for example, amazon.com for the US and amazon.fr for France), though some offer international shipping.[[54]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-54)

Visits to *amazon.com* grew from 615 million annual visitors in 2008,[[55]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-55) to more than 2 billion per month in 2022.[[56]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-56) The e-commerce platform is the 14th most visited website in the world.[[57]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon_(company)#cite_note-57)