ChatGPT developer OpenAI to locate first non-US office in London

OpenAI, the developer of ChatGPT, has chosen London as the location for its first international office in a boost to the UK's attempts to stay competitive in the artificial intelligence race. The San Francisco-based company behind the popular chatbot said on Wednesday that it would start its expansion outside the US in the UK capital. OpenAI said the UK office would reinforce efforts to create "safe AGI". AGI refers to artificial general intelligence, or a highly intelligent AI system that OpenAI's chief executive, Sam Altman, has described as "generally smarter than humans". "We are thrilled to extend our research and development footprint into London, a city globally renowned for its rich culture and exceptional talent pool," said Diane Yoon, OpenAI's head of human resources. OpenAI, which has received multibillion-dollar backing from Microsoft, said the London office would focus on research and engineering. The company did not say when the office would open or how many people it would employ, but it has already advertised four roles for the new office, including a security engineer and a head of UK policy. "We see this expansion as an opportunity to attract world-class talent and drive innovation in AGI development and policy," said Altman in an OpenAI blog post. "We're excited about what the future holds, and to see the contributions our London office will make towards building and deploying safe AI." Chloe Smith, the secretary of state for science, innovation and technology, said the OpenAI announcement was "another vote of confidence for Britain as an AI powerhouse". Russ Shaw, the founder of Tech London Advocates, an industry body, said: "This opening is a vote of confidence in the strength of the AI ecosystem for both London and the UK and will further attract more investors and talent [to London]." Rishi Sunak said this month he wanted the UK to take advantage of a boom in AI development. "If our goal is to make this country the best place in the world for tech, AI is surely one of the greatest opportunities before us." The prime minister is also attempting to put the UK at the forefront of AI regulation and has announced plans for a global AI safety summit in the autumn. Google's DeepMind business, one of the world's leading AI companies, is based in London, while the UK is generally recognised for the strength of its academic work in AI, as well as other AI companies including the cybersecurity firm Darktrace and the image generation startup Stability AI.