

# Famed futurist to direct engineering at Google

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Futurist and inventor Raymond Kurzweil, pictured here on April 28, 2009, said on Friday that he is going to work as director of engineering at Google to help "turn the next decade's 'unrealistic' visions into reality."

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Kurzweil, an author whose books include "The Age of Spiritual

Machines" and "Fantastic Voyage: Live Long Enough to Live Forever," said that Monday would be his first day on the job at [Google](#).

"In 1999, I said that in about a decade we would see technologies such as self-driving cars and mobile phones that could answer your questions, and people criticized these predictions as unrealistic," Kurzweil said in an online newsletter.

"Fast forward a decade—Google has demonstrated self-driving cars, and people are indeed asking questions of their Android phones," he continued.

"We're really on a remarkable trajectory of quickening innovation, and Google is at the forefront of much of this development."

Kurzweil, who will turn 65 years old in February, said he has been enthralled by technology, especially machine learning, since he was in his early teens.

He designed software that enable a computer to write original music and his inventions include the first print-to-speech reading machine for the blind, according to the website [kurzweilai.net](#).

"I've always worked to create practical systems that will make a difference in people's lives, which is what excites me as an inventor," Kurzweil said.

"I'm thrilled to be teaming up with Google to work on some of the hardest problems in computer science so we can turn the next decade's 'unrealistic' visions into reality."

Google research director Peter Norvig praised Kurzweil's contributions to technology, among them an eponymous reading machine that

people—including famed musician Stevie Wonder—use to have written works read aloud.

"We appreciate his ambitious, long-term thinking, and we think his approach to problem-solving will be incredibly valuable to projects we're working on at Google," Norvig said in response to an AFP inquiry.

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