Trudeau looks to make Canada 'world leader' in AI research

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Canadian PM Justin Trudeau said the government would spend $30 million on a new artificial intelligence research center in Toronto, Ontario

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced his hopes Thursday of making Canada a "world leader" in artificial intelligence and so-called "deep learning" research and development.

The government, he said, would spend Can$40 million (US$30 million) on a new artificial intelligence research center in Toronto, Ontario.

The Ontario provincial government will also contribute Can$50 million to the new Vector Institute, which will be led by Geoffrey Hinton—a British-born Canadian cognitive psychologist and computer scientist at the University of Toronto, who also works for Google.

In its recent budget, Ottawa had also earmarked Can$125 million over five years to bolster clusters of scientists in Edmonton, Montreal and Toronto devoted to the "futuristic-sounding" research that hopes to create machines that learn like humans.

It is hoped these will lead to collaborations and breakthroughs in [artificial neural networks](#) and algorithms that seek to mimic human brain functions.

As well, the government aimed to broaden education in the field and create new AI research chairs at universities across the country.

"In the same way that electricity revolutionized manufacturing and the microprocessor reinvented how we gather, analyze and communicate information, artificial intelligence will cut across nearly every industry," Trudeau said.

"It will shape the world that our kids and our grandkids grow up in," he said.

The field of artificial [intelligence](#) dates back to the mid-20th century when a group of scientists held the first conference devoted to the subject at Dartmouth College in the US state of New Hampshire.

Interest and investment in AI accelerated in the last decade alongside advancements in robotics and automation.

A 2013 University of Oxford study concluded that of the 700 trades in

the United States, 47 percent of them were likely to become automated.

"In the years to come, we will see this leadership pay dividends in everything from manufacturing improvements to health-care breakthroughs, to stronger and more sustained economic and job growth," Trudeau said.

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