

Artificial Intelligence pioneer John McCarthy dies

25 October 2011

John McCarthy, a pioneer of artificial intelligence, has died at the age of 84, the Stanford School of Engineering announced.

McCarthy, who died on Sunday, was a professor emeritus in the Department of Computer Science at the Palo Alto, California-based university, where he taught for nearly four decades.

McCarthy is credited with coining the term "[artificial intelligence](#)," or AI, in a 1955 research proposal he submitted with several other scientists while at Dartmouth College.

The research proposal called for a study into "how to make machines use language, form abstractions and concepts, solve kinds of problems now reserved for humans, and improve themselves."

McCarthy was the creator of the LISP programming language widely used by AI researchers.

He joined the faculty of Stanford in 1962 and founded the Stanford Artificial Intelligence Lab (SAIL), which has been credited with a number of advances in the field of making "[intelligent machines](#)."

According to the Stanford University website, the first challenge undertaken by SAIL scientists was to "design robots able to successfully interact with the physical world."

In an online profile of McCarthy, Stanford quoted him as saying in a 2003 presentation that computers eventually will achieve "human-level" intelligence.

"Understanding intelligence is a difficult scientific problem, but lots of difficult scientific problems have been solved," he said. "There's nothing humans can do that humans can't make computers do."

McCarthy, who retired from Stanford in 2000, was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the National Academy of Engineering and the [National Academy of Sciences](#).

(c) 2011 AFP

APA citation: Artificial Intelligence pioneer John McCarthy dies (2011, October 25) retrieved 2 December 2020 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-10-artificial-intelligence-john-mccarthy-dies.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.