**After Laying of 27,000 employees, Amazon plans to hire future staff for training in advanced AI skills. Two million new positions are planned through 2025.**

First, we give you the bad news, then we give you the good news. It’s good news if you can be trained in advanced AI skills, because there are plenty of jobs if you are capable of advanced AI skills – whatever that means.

If you have children, more likely grandchildren, and they want a job, make sure they are trained in AI technology.

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**SOURCES:**

**Amazon cuts hundreds of jobs in its Alexa unit as it doubles down on layoffs that already total more than 27,000 over the past year**

**BY THE *ASSOCIATED PRESS*, November 17, 2023**

Amazon is cutting hundreds of jobs in the unit that handles its popular voice assistant Alexa as it plows more resources into artificial intelligence.

In a note to employees on Friday, Daniel Rausch, Amazon’s vice president of Alexa and Fire TV, wrote that the company is eliminating certain roles because it is ditching some initiatives.

“As we continue to invent, we’re shifting some of our efforts to better align with our business priorities, and what we know matters most to customers — which includes maximizing our resources and efforts focused on generative AI,” Rausch wrote.

He said “several hundred” positions would be cut but did not give a more precise figure.

Seattle-based Amazon is in fierce competition with other tech companies rushing to capitalize on the generative AI craze. The company has been implementing a host of AI initiatives in the past few months, from infusing the technology into customer reviews to providing services that allow developers to build their own AI tools on its AWS cloud infrastructure.

In September, Amazon unveiled an update to Alexa that infuses it with more generative AI features.

The job cuts announced on Friday will impact employees in the U.S., Canada and India.

It follows more **recent layoffs in Amazon’s gaming and music teams, and also adds to the 27,000 employees the company laid off during the later parts of last year and earlier this year**. Amazon’s Alexa unit was also impacted by those cuts.

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**Amazon Offers Free Training To Recruit AI Talent**

**Sebastian Herrera and Chip Cutter, *The Wall Street Journal* | Page B001, 21 November 2023**

**Amazon.com** is launching a program to train millions of workers in artificial-intelligence skills as the tech giant seeks to gain an edge in a pitched battle for talent with **Microsoft , Alphabet’s** Google and other companies.

Named “AI Ready,” Amazon’s new program plans to train at least two million people by 2025 on basic to advanced AI skills, including how to make use of the generative AI technology that has powered language-based models such as ChatGPT. Amazon aims to fill a gap in AI talent as it has sought to generate interest in its generative AI efforts after falling behind rivals. In launching its program, Amazon is adding to a effort by the corporate world to get workers in various fields trained in AI.

The training is centered on eight online courses that focus on generative AI and target people with both tech and tech-adjacent roles. The classes are catered to both beginners and those with more experience, and the company said it can form the foundation for professionals to prepare for the jobs and skills now needed in the industry. The courses are free to access online through an Amazon learning website and are available for non-Amazon employees.

AI “is going to be the most transformative technology we encounter in our generation, but it won’t reach its full potential unless we really have the workforce ready to embrace it and turbocharge it in a big way,” said Swami Sivasubramanian, Amazon’s vice president of data and AI.

Amazon’s effort reflects a growing awareness across the corporate sphere that AI could change how millions of people do their jobs. Companies in industries ranging from real estate to retail are experimenting in using generative AI to help in everything from crafting marketing materials to writing software code and answering human-resources questions.

Corporate retraining initiatives still generally remain in the early stages, as executives

try to make sense of which roles AI will eliminate and which ones will be augmented by the technology. The changes brought by AI are expected to require workers to learn new skills or undergo additional training.

Plenty of workers have the capacity to change and learn new skills, said Jane Oates, a former Labor Department official and now president of WorkingNation, a nonprofit focused on workforce development. A bigger question is what they should learn, given the fast-changing nature of generative AI, and when they should undertake the training.

“It’s going to be complicated,” Oates said. “I definitely would not use the word easy.”

Employers as varied as real-estate company Jones Lang LaSalle to tech giant Salesforce have launched AI training programs or initiatives to help employees navigate the change. Many other leaders are beginning to think about how they can equip their employees to work with AI, said Allison Horn, managing director of Accenture’s talent-consulting services.

Some of the greatest needs, even at tech companies, aren’t highly technical skills but training to help employees learn how to work alongside AI in basic ways, said Spencer Kimball, chief executive of database startup Cockroach Labs.

“Most people right now, this is all new to them,” Kimball said. “And given how quickly things can change, it’s not just new employees that come, it’s something that is a constant training process for all of your employees.”

Amazon said there appears to be a shortage of AI specialists. A survey by the company and consulting firm Access Partnership of thousands of employees and organizations found that nearly three-fourths of employers surveyed said they can’t find the AI talent they need, despite most saying they plan to deploy AI in the next five years.

Sivasubramanian, the Amazon executive, said the company’s primary goal is to “democratize” generative AI education. Sivasubramanian said the reskilling of workers wouldn’t only benefit Amazon but also its enterprise customers who seek more AI-educated employees with skills such as prompt engineering, the practice of knowing which commands to give generative AI for useful results.

Sivasubramanian said the new program is a starting point to reskill workers in AI and that Amazon will seek feedback on how to improve the training.

Amazon has previously offered some AI training, but it says its new program is a wide expansion of those efforts, with a focus on generative AI.

Several of the courses are also about Amazon’s own platforms, including for use of Amazon’s Bedrock AI platform that helps build generative AI applications. Another one teaches on Amazon’s Code-Whisperer, a tool that automatically produces lines of code. Other courses include material related to Amazon business customers and AI partner companies such as Anthropic and Stability AI.

Amazon is also funding scholarships for student AI courses and said it joined with educational nonprofit Code.org to offer an “Hour of Code” for students to learn about generative AI.

As generative AI has become tech’s newest obsession, Amazon has been perceived to be behind its rivals. Microsoft and Google made large investments in the field, and the next generation of online chatbots.

Amazon, which has concentrated its AI efforts in its cloud-computing business, Amazon Web Services, was late to join the AI race, though executives have argued that the company has worked on the technology for years.

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