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Top computer scientists form European lab devoted to AI

By JEREMY KAHN Bloomberg
Thu., Dec. 6, 2018

A group of prominent computer scientists has come together to form a new Pan-European laboratory devoted to artificial intelligence.

The European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems, or ELLIS, will run physical laboratories and create an education program for doctoral students studying a type of AI called machine learning, while building bridges between universities and companies in the region.



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A group of top computer scientists has come together to create European Laboratory for Learning and Intelligent Systems, which will run a physical lab and learning experiences for doctoral students in the field. (GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO)

Siemens AG, Bayer AG and DeepMind, the London-based AI company owned by Google parent Alphabet Inc., are among companies that have pledged to support the group.

“We need this because we have faced this development with huge investments in artificial intelligence in China and also from America from large corporations,” Bernhard Schölkopf, director of the Max Planck Institute for Intelligent Systems, said Thursday, announcing the initiative.

While many AI researchers are European, they often end up working for U.S. tech companies or universities. “Europe will fall behind if they don’t up their game and invest much more heavily,” he said.

In a pointed reference to China’s rapid development of AI, he said ELLIS will develop AI “in a beneficial way and that the highest level of AI research is done in open societies.”

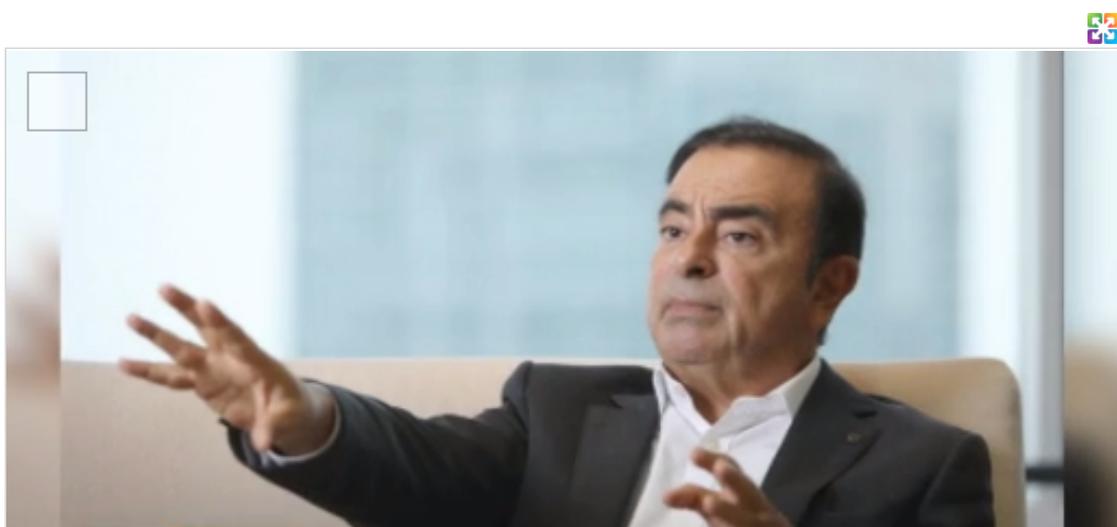
Besides Schölkopf, scientists backing the project include Nicolo Cesa-Bianchi from the University of Milan, and Neil Lawrence, a researcher at the University of Sheffield who also works at Amazon.com Inc.

Schölkopf announced ELLIS in Montreal, which is hosting the Neural Information Processing Systems conference, an important annual gathering of AI researchers, and a Group of Seven conference on AI.

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