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## This Week's Stories

### Amazon's New Artificial Intelligence Features Are A Challenge To Silicon Valley

December 01, 2017

Amazon.com this week announced a flurry of new machine learning features for its Amazon Web Services cloud computing business, raising its challenge to Silicon Valley's biggest tech firms for the lead in artificial intelligence.

The new offerings will enable AWS customers to develop and quickly "train" their own artificial intelligence algorithms, build software applications capable of translating language on the fly, analyze video, and scan text for trends or key phrases.

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to machines carrying out tasks that are normally associated with human intelligence. Machine learning (ML) is a subset of AI in which sophisticated computer algorithms are developed to recognize patterns in large volumes of data to solve problems on their own.

For example, with two of the new AWS features a company could quickly transcribe customer phone calls and then analyze the text for customer sentiment.

Already Apple, Facebook Inc, Amazon and other top tech companies are developing and using AI for their own products, but the new offerings from AWS could make it easier and more affordable for startups and less tech-savvy enterprises to implement AI technology.

The product announcements, made at AWS's annual conference in Las Vegas, cap off a year in which Amazon released 1,300 new AWS features, up from a little more than 1,000 in 2016.

"As always, Amazon is making it easier for companies to get started using new technologies," said Mikhail Naumov, co-founder of DigitalGenius, a London-based customer service startup that uses AI. "Now they are making it easier for companies of all sizes to leverage powerful ML tools in their business." Despite being the pioneer and dominant player in the cloud computing market, AWS is playing catch-up to chief rivals Microsoft Corp and Alphabet Inc's Google when it comes to new AI offerings, several of which will not be generally available until sometime in 2018.

[fortune.com](#)

### Apple's MacOS High Sierra Security Bug: Do This Now

November 30, 2017

Apple pushed out a fix for a serious security bug in computers running its most recent operating system on Wednesday morning, less than a day after it was first widely reported.

The bug in the Apple operating system allowed anyone with physical access to a Mac running the latest version of Apple's operating system to easily infiltrate the computer and gain full access to everything on it.

It only affected Macs that run the latest version of Apple's operating system software, MacOS High Sierra.

Apple users need to install the latest update to their operating system to correct the problem. To do so:

- Open the App Store app on the Mac.
- Click Updates in the App Store toolbar
- Use the Update buttons to download and install any updates listed.
- Updates installed in the last 30 days appear below this list.

The bug requires the would-be hacker to actually type on the Mac in question's keyboard, so the easiest fix is to keep vulnerable machines under lock and key. There were also reports that in some cases if a user has allowed screen sharing on their computer it's possible to exploit the bug remotely.

The bug only affects Macs that run the latest version of Apple's operating system software, MacOS High Sierra.

The bug, made public on Twitter Tuesday by Turkish software developer Lemi Orhan Ergin, revealed that anyone can log into a Mac running that operating system, or adjust settings on the computer, by entering the login name "root" (without quotations) and clicking enter, no password needed. The person would need physical access to the computer as the login can't be done remotely.

### To Check For The Vulnerability

It appears that the bug only affects Apple machines running the High Sierra 10.13 or 10.13.1 operating systems. To see which operating system a computer is running, click the apple icon in the upper left hand corner of the screen and then click "About this Mac." That will give the version number of the operating system.

To see if a Mac is vulnerable to the bug, follow these steps:

- Open System Preferences
- Choose Users & Groups
- Click the lock to make changes
- Type "root" in the username field
- Put the cursor in the Password field and click there, but don't type anything
- Click unlock. If the system allows you in, you would be able to add a new administrator-level account with full privileges on the system — all without a password to the computer.

USA TODAY confirmed the vulnerability on a late 2013 MacBook Pro running MacOS 10.13.1 and a late 2015 iMac running the same software. The bug unlocked the safeguards that prevent changes in "System Preferences" on the machine as well as letting someone log into the Mac from the lock screen by simply going to the "other user" tab.

[usatoday.com](http://usatoday.com)

## AT&T Extends The Deadline For Its Time Warner Merger To April

November 28, 2017

When AT&T announced that it was going to buy Time Warner for \$85.4 billion back in 2016, the deal was expected to close by the end of 2017. Now, it's clear that won't happen, and as a result, AT&T has extended the deadline for the merger to April 22nd, according to a document filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Last week, the Department of Justice brought an antitrust suit against AT&T in order to block the acquisition. It's not really surprising, considering that the merger would give the telecommunications company access to Time Warner's vast media properties, including HBO and Warner Brothers.

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*"AT&T has extended the deadline for the merger to April 22nd."*

Rumors swirled that the DOJ had not been able to come to terms with AT&T, and that the Justice Department was demanding that the company sell off significant assets to make the deal happen. President Trump also mentioned blocking the deal back on the campaign trail, so it's possible there is a political element to the DOJ's actions as well.

The deadline extension (which is the second that AT&T has filed for; the deal was originally supposed to close by October 22nd) gives the merger a little room to maneuver, and extra time for the parties involved to figure out how to make all of this work. It remains to be seen what will happen with the lawsuit, but it's worth noting that Comcast did purchase the majority of NBC Universal in a similar deal back in 2011. AT&T is "confident that the court would reject the government's claims and permit this merger under longstanding legal precedent."

[engadget.com](http://engadget.com)

## Products & Services

### Fire TV Owners Can Now Control Hulu, NBC, CBS And Other Video Apps Via Their Voice

November 30, 2017

Amazon Fire TV owners will now be able to control more video apps using Alexa and their voice, the company announced today. This feature lets you ask Alexa to "watch," "play," "pause," "rewind," "fast forward," and more. It can also take you to an individual show, network, or specific genre of programming.

Before, Alexa could control Amazon's own video content in this fashion. But now the same voice commands work with third-party apps like Hulu, NBC, Bravo, and others that quietly launched voice support last week, including Showtime, Sony PlayStation Vue, and CBS All Access.

Showtime Anytime will add the functionality soon, Amazon says.

Amazon had originally teased the expanded in-app video skills when it launched the new Fire TV with 4K Ultra HD in September, saying that Alexa would be able to pull up results from select video apps, like Netflix, Hulu, Showtime, Amazon Video and others.

To use the feature, you can say something like "Alexa, watch *The Handmaid's Tale*", "Alexa, play *The Good Place*" or "Alexa, show me comedies on Showtime," for example.

With the Alexa voice remote, users can navigate through content with commands like "play," "next episode," "last episode," "start over," "play from the beginning," and more, or even change the channel using their voice (if supported).

Additionally, Echo owners can pair their Fire TV with their smart speaker to allow Alexa to control the video apps without the need for the voice remote.

The company has been working to make Alexa-powered apps more accessible to video providers for many months now. In June, Amazon announced a tool for developers of cable TV apps, streaming services, and other content providers that would let them add voice control to their apps.

Amazon says this set of partners is the first to debut the functionality, but others are expected to launch their own updated apps in the coming weeks and months.

[techcrunch.com](http://techcrunch.com)

## Alibaba-Backed Augmented Reality Start-Up Makes Driving Look Like A Video Game

November 28, 2017

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*“WayRay makes a small device called Navion, which projects a virtual dashboard onto a driver's windshield.”*

WayRay's augmented reality driving system makes a car's windshield look like a video game. The Swiss-based company that makes augmented reality for cars won the grand prize in a start-up competition at the Los Angeles Auto Show on Tuesday.

WayRay makes a small device called Navion, which projects a virtual dashboard onto a driver's windshield. The software can display information on speed, time of day, or even arrows and other graphics that can help the driver navigate, avoid hazards, and warn of dangers ahead, such as pedestrians.

WayRay says that by displaying information directly on the windshield, the system allows drivers to stay better focused on the road.

The display might appear similar to what a player would see on a screen in many video games. But the system also notifies the driver of potential points of interest along a route such as restaurants or other businesses.

On Tuesday, the start-up took the top honor in the 2017 Top Ten Automotive Startups Competition on at the Los Angeles Auto Show's AutoMobility LA trade show.

WayRay beat nine other contestants drawn from a pool of 300 applications. The panel judges included AutoMobility executives from the LA Auto Show executive team, Microsoft, Nvidia, Porsche Consulting, Sansea Consulting, and Time Inc.'s The Drive.

The company edged out the other two finalists for the prize: Ohio-based GhostWave, which makes radar for advanced driver assistance systems, and Israel-based Innoviz Technologies, which makes lidar, a technology thought to be crucial to self-driving cars that uses lasers to create images of environments and objects.

The award included \$15,000 in prize money and several other perks. Microsoft offered \$40,000 worth of cloud storage on their Azure cloud and consulting services. Nvidia gave the company one of its new Nvidia Drive PX 2 AI car computing platforms, which the company has said holds enough computing power to enable full self-driving capability.

WayRay also received an onstage mentoring session from several of the judges, including venture capitalist Bill Tai; Norman Firchau, president and CEO of Porsche Consulting North America, and Jeff Henshaw, Microsoft program manager of Quantum Computing.

WayRay will also receive consulting services from Elektrobit and access to the company's EB robinos network, a software network for automated driving. Porsche Consulting will also offer WayRay consulting services.

WayRay secured an \$18 million investment from Alibaba in March. In early 2017, the company entered into a strategic partnership with audio and connected car equipment maker, and Samsung subsidiary, Harman.

[cnbc.com](http://cnbc.com)

## Moleskine's Smart Notebook Will Work With Microsoft Office

November 27, 2017

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*“The new app is a little special, however, because it will convert your charts, ramblings and doodles into a Word document.”*

Microsoft has long sold its Surface devices on the idea that they can double as digital notebooks; laptops one minute, journals the next thanks to their detachable displays and styli. (Heck, the Surface Book has a "Clipboard" mode.) With today's Moleskine partnership, however, the company seems ready to admit that some people still prefer paper and pen. The pair have announced a Windows 10 app for Moleskine's 'Smart Writing System,' a quill (based on the Kickstarter-funded Neo smartpen) with a tiny camera that tracks your scribbles on specially marked paper. A digital version of the note is then transferred over Bluetooth for easy reference and sharing.

The new app is a little special, however, because it will convert your charts, ramblings and doodles into a Word document. For Office fiends, that should make it easier to actually use your notes as part of larger projects.

Moleskine's digital writing set was unveiled back in June 2016. It followed a number of co-branded Adobe, Livescribe and Evernote digitizing tools. Conceptually, it made a lot of sense for people who love paper but increasingly rely on a computer for work and collaboration. But at \$200 (and an extra \$30 every time you run out of paper), it was an expensive convenience. That's still the case, though the new Windows 10 app — which joins iCloud, Google Drive, Evernote and Adobe sharing through the Moleskine iOS and Android app — does increase the value somewhat.

But by how much? If you have a Surface, the companion pen costs \$100. You're writing on glass, but the trade-off is a never-ending supply of ink. It's also possible to digitize notes with a traditional Moleskine book, a cheap Biro and a decent camera smartphone (though the process isn't quite as seamless). The Smart Writing system does have its advantages, however — you can translate notes into 15 languages and have them appear live on a screen or TV during meetings. Moleskine is also touting 'Collaborative Ideation,' a feature that lets seven people write or draw at the same time.

Is that worth the extra cash though? We'll let you decide.

[engadget.com](http://engadget.com)

## Emerging Technology

### FDA Clears First Medical Accessory For The Apple Watch—An EKG Sensor

November 30, 2017

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*“Currently, Apple's wearable can alert you when your heart rate spikes, but SmartRhythm uses AliveCor's deep neural network and your history of heart rate data to determine a healthy and normal heart rate range for you in relation to your activity levels.”*

Plenty of studies boast about the medical possibilities of the Apple Watch, but Apple's wearable is a consumer device, not a medical one. However, the FDA just announced the clearing of the first medical Apple Watch accessory, AliveCor's KardiaBand, which uses the wearable's heart rate technology and an attached sensor to provide EKG readings on the fly. An Apple Watch paired with a KardiaBand could provide users with an EKG reading in 30 seconds, detecting abnormal heart rhythm and atrial fibrillation and sending that information to a doctor for further analysis.

The \$199 device is an unassuming black band that attaches to the Apple Watch like other band accessories. On the band right below the Apple Watch module is the KardiaBand's silver sensor where users place their finger to take a reading. The Apple Watch's display shows the reading's data using a line graph that's similar to how the Apple Watch shows other heart rate data and informs the user if their heart rate is normal or abnormal.

AliveCor's new SmartRhythm technology takes a more personalized approach to the prevention technology the Apple Watch already has. Currently, Apple's wearable can alert you when your heart rate spikes, but SmartRhythm uses AliveCor's deep neural network and your history of heart rate data to determine a healthy and normal heart rate range for you in relation to your activity levels. If an abnormality is detected during the Apple Watch's continuous measurement of your heart rate, AliveCor and KardiaBand's app will prompt you to take an EKG reading. The Watch's display will then show the normal heart rate range that KardiaBand's technology estimated for you, the abnormal heart rate detected, and where the EKG reading falls in relation to that data.

The KardiaBand isn't AliveCor's first medical device—the company already sells KardiaMobile, a small, rectangular EKG reader that pairs with a mobile app that allows users to take quick EKG readings by laying two fingers on their sensor on the device. The KardiaBand makes this technology more discrete by making it into a tiny sensor that snaps into an Apple Watch band, making it accessible anywhere, anytime. EKG readers similar to KardiaMobile have been around for some time, but the KardiaBand is the first medical accessory cleared by the FDA for use with an Apple Watch.

The KardiaBand is relatively accessible at \$199, and users can email and print EKG recordings for no extra cost. However, users must pay \$99 per year for AliveCor's premium program if they want access to unlimited cloud storage and history, customized monthly reports shared with their doctor, and other perks.

The FDA has made an effort to collaborate with tech companies that want to make it easier to produce devices and software that consumers can use to monitor their health. Recently, Apple, Fitbit, Samsung, and Johnson & Johnson were announced as just a few of the companies participating in the FDA's precertification pilot program under its Digital Health Innovation Action Plan. All of the companies involved with this program will help the FDA set guidelines for approving health and medical software that devices can use. Instead of approving and further monitoring individual devices, the FDA appears to be more interested in the software that these devices run. The FDA will likely continue to monitor AliveCor's software for KardiaBand and any other consumer wearables it makes in the future.

[arstechnica.com](http://arstechnica.com)

## Meet The MIT Graduate Working On A Cheaper, Decentralized Option To Cloud Computing And Blockchain

November 30, 2017

Cloud computing is a \$247 billion dollar market that is dominated by the likes of Amazon, Google, and Microsoft. These major players offer centralized computing for a variety of uses ranging from backing up your company's data to producing big data analytics remotely. However, there has been an interest in decentralized cloud computing as a cheaper option for businesses that cannot afford the prices set by incumbent providers. In addition, the potential for decentralized cloud computing can open up the doors to cryptocurrency mining for those who do not have the expensive computing infrastructure needed to 'mine' for these digital currencies such as Bitcoin. Ryan Robinson, a recent graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has built a startup named Conduit to address these emerging needs in the cloud computing and blockchain markets, respectively.

At first glance, it would not seem that Ryan Robinson would be interested in cloud computing, let alone technology. The Miami-Dade County native always viewed himself as an artsy kid. His main interests were poetry, music, and writing. You were more likely to find him reciting the works of Keats and Yeats than immersing himself in code. But Robinson never viewed the arts as separate from technology. He saw technology as a form of art, as expression resonating with you and fulfilling a need at the same time. Robinson's held technology in its purest form as bettering mankind. His

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*“Robinson’s goal for Conduit was to demonstrate the power of collective action by sharing computational power from hundreds of thousands of devices and loaning that resource out to companies and the cryptocurrency community who both need large amounts of computational resources for data storage or Bitcoin mining.”*

unfettered belief in technology driving positive change drove him to apply to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

During his time at MIT, he indulged in his two passions, physics and literature. Robinson found inspiration in the legendary physicist, Richard Feynman. He read his biography, *Quantum Man: Richard Feynman's Life in Science* the summer before coming to the Institute. Feynman's last major contribution to science was postulating the fundamentals of quantum computing, an area that Robinson was only beginning to take interest in. The idea of quantum computing was planted in his head, and would continue to grow as he nurtured his mind with knowledge of the topic through his studies. His pursuit of quantum computing was solidified after he aced an advanced physics class focused on the subject. Robinson went to go on to take graduate level physics courses as an undergraduate, further cementing his understanding of quantum physics and computing. He wanted to put his knowledge to practical use by figuring out a way to bring quantum computing to the masses through his startup, Conduit.

Surprisingly, his idea for Conduit came from an introductory biology class he took in part to satisfy his General Institute Requirements. The professor of that biology class talked about how computers played an integral role in advancing the field, such as the Human Genome Project. One of the issues preventing us from improving our understanding of biological systems was the computation power necessary for these discoveries.

Centralized cloud computing was one of the main ways that research labs were able to obtain the necessary computing power to drive their work, but the immense costs of cloud computing were prohibitive. Another source of inspiration for Conduit was the MIT Bitcoin Project. Started by Jeremy Rubin and Dan Elitzer at MIT, the project offered \$100 in Bitcoin to every undergraduate student with the firm belief that "giving students access to cryptocurrencies is analogous to providing them with internet access at the dawn of the internet era." Robinson wondered whether quantum computing could help drive down the costs of cloud computing, and help democratize resources needed for cryptocurrency mining. He wanted to make computation useful and accessible. His startup, Conduit, aimed make affordable, distributed computation a reality.

Conduit aims to gather underused or unused computational capacity from your device, say a smartphone or personal laptop, and share it others who need it to perform computationally intensive calculations, such as crunching through large data sets.

Robinson's goal for Conduit was to demonstrate the power of collective action by sharing computational power from hundreds of thousands of devices and loaning that resource out to companies and the cryptocurrency community who both need large amounts of computational resources for data storage or Bitcoin mining. Robinson had a grand idea for a pressing problem, but faced difficulty building Conduit as an undergrad at MIT.

Working on Conduit as an undergrad at MIT was challenging for Robinson. He found it grueling trying to build his startup while staying on top of his classes as well. The largest challenge he faced was recruitment. Essentially, he was competing with the established career narrative of MIT graduates being pipelined from school to a big name tech firm. He struggled to convince others at first that making an impact through building Conduit would be better than just earning a paycheck at an established tech firm. The prior teams he built beforehand didn't take the startup seriously, and they also lacked the skills to bring their idea into reality. Robinson learned that he had to make better choices in picking a core team to build the product. His struggles in the beginning taught him critical lessons and made him aware of his own deficiencies. He know going forward, he would have to build a team to cover for his own weakness and combine together for their collective strength.

Now that Robinson has graduated from MIT, he is free from the constraints that academics placed on his time. Conduit is making progress in its goals as he's managed to build a great team around him. He finds that his MIT experience has toughened him mentally and has taught him how to work as

efficiently as a machine. The problem solving skills he's honed over four years at the Institute has helped him in solving immediate issues in bringing quantum computing to the masses.

One day, Robinson will be able to help companies afford cheap, distributed computational power via quantum computing, and allow individuals to make money by loaning out their spare processing power and mining for cryptocurrency. With this kind of technology in everyone's hands, everyone can be a conduit to power a better future.

[forbes.com](http://forbes.com)

## Mergers and Acquisitions

### Microsoft And SAP Join Forces To Give Customers A Trusted Path To Digital Transformation In The Cloud

November 30, 2017

*“Both companies will document the internal projects to provide customers with guidance and enterprise architecture for deployment of SAP applications on Azure.”*

Microsoft Corp. and SAP SE have announced integrated offerings to provide enterprise customers with a clear roadmap to confidently drive more business innovation in the cloud. In a bold show of commitment, the two companies also announced they will be deploying each other's cloud solutions internally. Through their unique partnership, the companies will co-engineer, go to market together with premier solutions and provide joint support services to ensure the best cloud experience for customers.

SAP HANA Enterprise Cloud — SAP's private managed cloud service — on Microsoft Azure will allow customers to run SAP S/4HANA in a secure, managed cloud. Additionally, Microsoft will deploy SAP S/4HANA® on Azure to help run its own internal finance processes, and SAP will move its key internal business-critical systems to Azure. Finally, SAP Ariba is currently utilizing Azure and is exploring further use within its procurement applications. Together, SAP and Microsoft will help companies make the most of running SAP applications in the cloud.

“As technology transforms every business and every industry, organizations are looking for the right platforms and trusted partners to help accelerate their digital transformation. Building on our longtime partnership, Microsoft and SAP are harnessing each other's products to not only power our own organizations, but to empower our enterprise customers to run their most mission-critical applications and workloads with SAP S/4HANA on Azure,” said Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft. Enterprise companies are increasingly moving business-critical systems to the cloud for the benefits digital transformation provides: better customer relationships, more empowered employees, streamlined operations, new business models, and new products and services. According to research firm Gartner Inc., two-thirds of all business leaders believe that their companies must pick up the pace of digitalization to remain competitive.\* As leaders in enterprise software, SAP and Microsoft are aligning closely to provide customers with the safe and trusted path to digital transformation. SAP CEO Bill McDermott added, “We are taking our partnership to the next level with this new capability to run SAP S/4HANA in the Microsoft Azure environment. The world's significant businesses trust Microsoft and SAP. Together, we will help companies win the customer-driven growth revolution.”

SAP and Microsoft both will run SAP S/4HANA on Azure for their internal operations. Microsoft is transforming its internal systems — which include legacy SAP finance applications — and will implement the SAP S/4HANA Finance solution running on Azure. Microsoft also plans to connect SAP S/4HANA to Azure AI and analytics services for more efficient financial reporting and more powerful decision-making. SAP is migrating more than a dozen business-critical systems to Azure for the optimal efficiencies, flexibility and innovation the platform offers. This includes the SAP S/4HANA software supporting Concur, an SAP company.

Both companies will document the internal projects to provide customers with guidance and enterprise architecture for deployment of SAP applications on Azure.

### What Customers Have To Say About The Partnership

With SAP HANA Enterprise Cloud on Azure, customers get the best of both worlds: application management and product expertise from SAP and a global, trusted and intelligent cloud from Microsoft Azure, including the range of Microsoft cloud services.

Enterprise customers of all types, such as The Coca-Cola Company, Columbia Sportswear Company, Coats and Costco Wholesale Corp., count on SAP and Azure today for their businesses.

Barry Simpson, senior vice president and chief information officer at The Coca-Cola Company, said, “The strategic partnership announced between Microsoft and SAP is an extremely important development for the Coca-Cola System. The value of aligned engineering, sales and delivery between these two strategic partners will allow our system to accelerate our digital agenda. This is a very positive and exciting development for us.”

“SAP and Microsoft are key partners with Costco, and this alliance will help drive our cloud strategy and digital business forward,” said Jim Rutherford, senior vice president of Information Systems at Costco Wholesale.

Mike Hirt, vice president and chief information officer at Columbia Sportswear Company, said, “Microsoft and SAP are strategic partners helping us grow our wholesale and direct-to-consumer businesses. Their close alignment is an integral part of advancing our technical architecture and cloud strategy to better serve our customers around the world. We produce innovative products that allow our customers to pursue and enjoy their outdoor passions. Our partnership with Microsoft and SAP is essential to us continuing to deliver on that commitment.”

“With SAP HANA on Azure, we have the data intelligence to operate more efficiently across all aspects of our business and accelerate the delivery of finished goods to our customers. The Microsoft and SAP alliance provides us with the assurance we need for our innovation in the cloud,” said Hizmy Hassen, chief digital and technology officer, Coats.

[martechseries.com](http://martechseries.com)

## GE Healthcare Expands AI, Computing Partnerships With Intel And Others

November 28, 2017

GE Healthcare this week expanded a pair of existing technology partnerships with the aim of improving medical imaging and making the valuable patient data locked away in such images more easily available to doctors.

GE Healthcare — a unit of Boston-based General Electric Co. that is headquartered in Chicago — announced both partnerships at the annual meeting of the Radiological Society of North America in Chicago.

In one deal, GE Healthcare will increase its use of Intel Corp.'s Xeon processors to build both on-premise and off-site data storage arrays for customers. The goal, according to the companies, is to lower the cost of ownership of medical imaging devices by 25 percent by optimizing the way hospitals store their images.

Intel employs around 20,000 workers in Hillsboro. In the other deal, GE Healthcare unveiled a new CT scanner, the Revolution Frontier CT, which promises to work twice as fast as its predecessor due to its reliance on NVIDIA's artificial intelligence technology. The graphics-processing chips made by California-based NVIDIA Corp. have been at the center of recent advances in AI, especially when it comes to analyzing large numbers of images.

The two companies are also partnering to create the GE Healthcare Applied Intelligence Platform to "to accelerate the creation, deployment and consumption of deep learning algorithms in new healthcare analytic applications." GE estimates that the average hospital produces 50 petabytes of data every year, but that only about 3 percent of that data is able to be properly analyzed.

It's not GE's first foray into artificial intelligence and healthcare. In May, GE Healthcare announced a 10-year partnership with Partners HealthCare to develop AI applications for every part of a patient's interaction with a hospital, starting with a focus on diagnostic imaging.

At the same radiology conference, NVIDIA on Monday announced another partnership with Nuance Communications Inc., a Burlington-based company focused on speech and voice software, including products that allow doctors to transcribe their note or update patient records by speaking.

The two firms have cooperated to create an "AI Marketplace for Diagnostic Imaging," where researchers, doctors and software engineers will be able to create and use AI-powered applications related to medical imaging. GE Healthcare has also worked with OHSU in the recent past.

[bizjournals.com](http://bizjournals.com)

## Industry Reports

### Uber Admits 2.7 Million UK Users Affected By Data Breach

November 30, 2017

Uber has confirmed that data for about 2.7 million customers in the United Kingdom was stolen in the 2016 breach that affected at least 57 million people worldwide. Reports revealed last week that Uber tried to keep the hack secret for more than a year, and even paid the hackers \$100,000 to delete the information and stay mum about the whole mess.

The new revelation about UK victims of the breach comes via the nation's Information Commissioner's Office, a data protection agency. In a report released today, ICO deputy commissioner James Dipple-Johnstone wrote that, "Uber has said the breach involved names, mobile phone numbers and email addresses."

But the agency is still trying to confirm the scope of the breach. "As part of our investigation we are still waiting for technical reports which should give full confirmation of the figures and the type of personal data that has been compromised," Johnstone wrote.

Uber did not respond to a Gizmodo request for comment. A section about the 2016 breach on Uber's help page states that the company's "outside forensics experts have not seen any indication that trip location history, credit card numbers, bank account numbers, Social Security numbers or dates of birth were downloaded."

Responding to the report, London mayor Sadiq Khan told The Telegraph "Uber needs to urgently confirm which of their customers are affected, what is being done to ensure these customers don't suffer adversely, and what action is being taken to prevent this happening again in the future."

Stateside, Uber is also just beginning to face government scrutiny over the hack. On Monday, Republicans and Democrats in Congress began pressuring Uber to disclose more information about its handling the breach. And the company is already facing about a dozen federal lawsuits related to the incident.

[msn.com](#)

## Cyber Monday Showdown - Walmart Closes In On Amazon In Online Price War

November 27, 2017

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*"In the popular wearables category, which includes fitness trackers and smart watches, Walmart's prices are 6.4 percent lower than Amazon this year compared to 12.6 percent higher in the same period a year ago."*

Walmart has aggressively invested in making its prices more competitive against brick-and-mortar rivals since the start of the year.

Now, the shrinking gap is also becoming noticeable across a broad range of product categories online, according to a price study conducted for Reuters, as well as interviews with pricing experts, retail consultants, vendors and company sources.

Prices at Walmart.com are now only 0.3 percent more expensive than Amazon on average, according to the study by retail data analytics firm Market Track, which analyzed prices of 213 products in 11 categories over a period of 700 days ending November 7, 2017.

By comparison, Walmart's online prices were 3 percent higher than Amazon's on average in the first 350 days ending November 7, 2016, according to the study.

In the popular wearables category, which includes fitness trackers and smart watches, Walmart's prices are 6.4 percent lower than Amazon this year compared to 12.6 percent higher in the same period a year ago. For sports and outdoor products, Walmart is now 1.3 percent lower versus 3.5 percent higher a year ago.

These findings indicate that Walmart has managed to slash prices online across several product categories consistently, rather than with just temporary discounts.

Consistent lower pricing is key to boosting sales throughout the year. On Cyber Monday, the busiest day of the year for internet shopping, online deals and temporary promotions will overshadow pricing for both retail giants.

"We are committed to having online prices that meet or beat prices at other top sites," said Walmart spokesman Dan Toporek. He said for some items the retailer now displays two prices online to show shoppers when they can get a lower price by picking up their order in a store, but declined to comment further on the company's pricing strategy.

Amazon spokeswoman Kate Scarpa said nothing has changed in the retailer's approach to delivering low prices to customers.

"Amazon's prices are as low or lower than any other retailer and we work hard for customers to ensure that's true every day," she said, declining to comment further on the retailer's pricing strategy. The consistent price cuts are one of several steps Walmart is taking to boost its e-commerce business, including expanding its online offerings, acquiring smaller online retailers such as Jet.com, and offering free-two day shipping.

Burt Flickinger, managing director of retail consultancy Strategic Resources Group, conducted his own internal pricing study for clients in Texas last month. His data shows Walmart is closing the gap with

Amazon this year compared with a year ago when prices for a range of goods were between 5-12 percent higher at Walmart.

"What we have started seeing recently is Walmart lowering the gap with Amazon to a point where it is a photo finish," said Flickinger. "Consumers can't tell the difference anymore." Walmart invested over a \$1 billion last year to make its pricing more competitive, taking a hit on profits in order to offer lower prices online, analysts said.

So far the strategy is paying off. Online sales at the world's largest retailer grew 50 percent year-over-year in the most recent quarter, helping it post its strongest quarterly U.S. revenue growth in nearly a decade. It now accounts for 3.6 percent of total U.S. online sales in the 12 months to October 2017, up from a 2.8 percent share a year ago, according to digital research firm eMarketer.

Even with this progress, Walmart has a long way to go. Amazon's share of the U.S. e-commerce market stands at 43.5 percent. About half of U.S. households are estimated to have Amazon Prime subscriptions, Cowen and Co has predicted, making them less likely to comparison-shop.

But Walmart is also vying for the online business of other brick-and-mortar rivals, from Target to WayFair, which have been targeting shoppers who compare prices on search engines such as Google. Walmart could gain more market share at their expense through its price cuts, analysts say. "Walmart's objective here may not be to unseat Amazon as much as it is to convince (Walmart's) loyal store shoppers it is also a low-price leader online," said Keith Anderson, senior vice-president of strategy and insights at e-commerce analytics firm Profitero.

Analysts and consultants estimate the retailer will have to fork out around \$6 billion over several years to maintain price parity with Amazon online and take on the rest of the retail pack. These investments have already started to erode Walmart's profitability. Operating margins fell for four straight quarters to 2.8 percent in the three months to Oct. 31.

However, Walmart has a \$6.9 billion cash pile to tap in order to invest in online prices. Investors have so far shown no concern that the cost of online price cuts could weigh on Walmart's announced \$20 billion share buyback program; the company's shares are up 1.5 percent since it reported stronger online sales on Nov 16. What is more, the retailer said last year and again this October month that it would slow down the rollout of new stores and divert that capital expenditure towards becoming more competitive online.

"Right now the better use of cash is to compete with Amazon and invest that in the business, because if anyone has a fighting chance to stand up to Amazon, it is Walmart," said Charles Sizemore, the chief investment officer at Sizemore Capital Management, which owns Walmart shares.

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