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Google CEO predicts AI-fueled future

[Jessica Guynn](#), USA TODAY 2:48 p.m. EDT April 28, 2016



Google CEO Sundar Pichai(Photo: Jeff Chiu, Associated Press)

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SAN FRANCISCO — Google CEO Sundar Pichai says the next big evolution for technology is artificial intelligence.

"Looking to the future, the next big step will be for the very concept of the 'device' to fade away," Pichai [wrote](#) in the technology giant's annual founders' letter to shareholders.

His vision: Over time, computers, whatever shape they take, a mobile device in your hand or a mini computer on your wrist, "will be an intelligent assistant helping you through your day."

Google is far from alone. Artificial intelligence in which Google was a pioneer, is an increasingly crowded field. Facebook is staking its future on machine learning and is building a

smart assistant called "M." Microsoft has thrown its hat in the ring. Even Amazon is betting big on AI with its new digital assistant Alexa that turns its Echo into indispensable digital hub in your home.

Pichai's letter touched on numerous priorities for Google, from improving search in the mobile age to the intensifying focus on cloud computing to compete with Amazon and Microsoft. But the overriding theme was the power of artificial intelligence. Essentially Google envisions a super-smart assistant who will supply information to help with everyday tasks no matter what screen you are using, be it a phone, a watch or the dashboard in your car.

"You should be able to move seamlessly across Google services in a natural way, and get assistance that understands your context, situation, and needs— all while respecting your privacy and protecting your data," Pichai wrote.

This marks the first time anyone other than founders Larry Page and Sergey Brin have penned the annual letter outlining Google's mission.

Page and Brin wrote their first founders' letter in 2004 in which they famously warned: "Google is not a conventional company. We do not intend to become one."

The hand-off comes after last summer's [sweeping reorganization](#) that formed the parent company Alphabet and put Pichai in charge of Google. The new corporate structure was created to make the technology giant more innovative by separating Google's dominant search and advertising business from ["moonshots"](#) such as driverless cars and speedy Internet access.

"Since the majority of our big bets are in Google, I wanted to give him most of the bully-pulpit to reflect on Google's accomplishments and share his vision," Page wrote in an introduction.

Pichai picked up the founders' mantle, embracing Google's longstanding mission "to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful."

"For us, technology is not about the devices or the products we build. Those aren't the end-goals," Pichai wrote in the letter posted Thursday. "Technology is a democratizing force, empowering people through information. Google is an information company. It was when it was founded, and it is today."