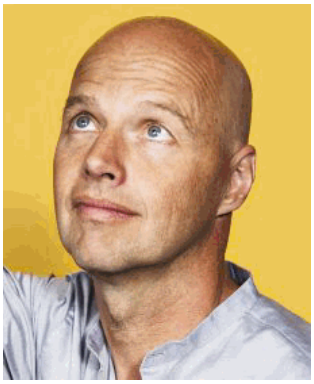
Prof. Dr. Dr. H.c. SEBASTIAN THRUN



World Leading Robotics Developer, Engineer & Entrepreneur
AI Pioneer
World-Leading Authority on Autonomous Systems

Sebastian Thrun is an innovator, serial entrepreneur, academic, educator and computer scientist who has been at the forefront of some of the world's most transformative technologies for more than three decades. A pioneer in computer science, robotics, automation, education and artificial intelligence, he is widely regarded as the Godfather of the Self-Driving Car Industry and the Godfather of the MOOC (Massive Open Online Course).

Born in Germany, Thrun studied computer science, medicine and economics before completing his doctorate in computer science and statistics. He taught at Carnegie Mellon University and later at Stanford University, where he directed the Stanford Artificial Intelligence Laboratory. He is now an Adjunct Professor at Stanford.

At Google, Thrun served as a Vice President and Fellow and founded the research division Google X. His work there extended from autonomous driving to Google Glass. He also co-founded Google Brain and contributed to projects including Street View. Across these initiatives, he brought researchers and engineers together to develop ideas that could work at scale.

Education became another focus of his work. In 2011, Thrun and Peter Norvig offered an online course in artificial intelligence that attracted more than 160,000 students. Thrun subsequently co-founded Udacity, which expanded access to courses in technology and introduced its Nanodegree programmes. In 2024, Accenture acquired the company.

Thrun continues to explore how artificial intelligence can be applied to practical challenges. His more recent ventures include work on electric aircraft and Dulo, a new robotics company.

He has published over 370 scientific papers and 11 books, and Google Scholar ranks his publication h-index among the top researchers worldwide in all of computer science. He was elected to the National Academy of Engineering and the German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina at the age of 39.

Sebastian Thrun is in demand globally as a speaker on artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, innovation, education and the future of technology.

Topics (Selection):

- What AI is - and isn't
- Autonomous Driving
- Inventing the Future in Silicon Valley