# Duolingo CEO predicts AI will revolutionise education but teachers will remain essential



The impending influence of artificial intelligence in various sectors, particularly education, is a subject of intense debate. Duolingo CEO Luis von Ahn recently shared his thoughts on this evolving landscape, positing that while AI will transform the educational sector significantly, the role of human educators will remain crucial. His insights highlight the balance between technological advancement and the irreplaceable human elements that contribute to effective learning environments.

According to von Ahn, the traditional educational model is on the brink of a major overhaul, driven largely by AI's capacity for scalability. “I do think that education is going to change over the next some number of years. I can’t say one year, but it’s probably less than 20 years. Something is going to change,” he remarked. He believes that AI will be able to deliver personalised learning experiences at a scale that human instructors cannot achieve. With a single teacher often managing thirty or more students, the ability of AI to provide tailored instruction could be a game-changer. “The computer can actually know with very precise knowledge about what this one student is good at and bad at,” von Ahn explained, suggesting that AI can significantly enhance the effectiveness of teaching by delivering content based on individual needs.

Amid these changes, the essential role of teachers remains intact. Von Ahn stressed that educators are vital for nurturing students' social and emotional well-being, stating, “That doesn’t mean that teachers are going to go away. You still need people to take care of the students.” This perspective reflects a growing awareness that while AI can supplement and enhance educational content delivery, the comforting presence of a human mentor is irreplaceable in the learning process.

His vision entails a hybrid educational model where AI takes on the more routine challenges of tailored learning, thereby freeing teachers to concentrate on cultivating critical thinking and interpersonal skills among their students—areas where human empathy is key. This aligns with broader trends in educational technology, where personalised learning paths are becoming increasingly prevalent through platforms like Khan Academy and Coursera. These modern innovations, combined with the capacity of AI tools like ChatGPT to generate dynamic educational content and provide real-time feedback, showcase the potential for AI to reshape the educational paradigm.

Additionally, von Ahn addressed the pressing issue of educational inequality. He pointed out that access to quality teaching often varies significantly based on socioeconomic factors, stating that his goal with Duolingo is to democratise education. He believes AI can play a pivotal role in bridging the educational gap, especially for students in underprivileged regions who may not have access to exceptional teachers. “It’s also the case that there are extremely good teachers, but there’s not very many of them,” he noted. This commitment to accessible education reflects his own experiences growing up in Guatemala, where he witnessed first-hand the disparities in educational opportunities.

As Duolingo continues to evolve, its investment in AI has resulted in impressive growth metrics, demonstrating a robust demand for its AI-powered services. The company recently forecasted an increase in revenues for 2025 due to greater interest in its features aimed at enhancing user engagement. The implementation of generative AI has allowed Duolingo to expand its offerings significantly, introducing 148 new language courses and streamlining content generation, which has attracted millions of new users to its platform.

The implications of these advancements are profound. In an era where traditional metrics of education are being redefined by technology, the role of human teachers may transform into that of facilitators and mentors. This shift necessitates a thorough re-evaluation of teacher training programmes, ensuring that educators are equipped with the digital skills needed to thrive in this AI-enhanced environment. The ongoing evolution of educational models will depend upon a balanced integration of technology and the essential human touch, fostering a future where learning is both personalised and empathetic.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://officechai.com/ai/ai-will-be-better-than-human-teachers-but-will-still-need-them-to-take-care-of-students-duolingo-ceo/), [[2]](https://www.forbes.com/sites/annaesakismith/2024/05/28/ai-will-displace-humans-in-many-jobs-but-teachers-hard-to-replace-says-duolingos-von-ahn/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://officechai.com/ai/ai-will-be-better-than-human-teachers-but-will-still-need-them-to-take-care-of-students-duolingo-ceo/), [[2]](https://www.forbes.com/sites/annaesakismith/2024/05/28/ai-will-displace-humans-in-many-jobs-but-teachers-hard-to-replace-says-duolingos-von-ahn/), [[3]](https://www.bloomberg.com/company/stories/why-ai-help-duolingo-become-good-human-tutor/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.forbes.com/sites/annaesakismith/2024/05/28/ai-will-displace-humans-in-many-jobs-but-teachers-hard-to-replace-says-duolingos-von-ahn/), [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/58d44a1e-205a-4c33-baaa-1e66e6d4f58c)
* Paragraph 4 – [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/business/duolingo-raises-2025-forecast-ai-powered-subscription-garners-wider-appeal-2025-05-01/), [[7]](https://www.forbes.com/sites/richardnieva/2024/09/24/duolingo-luis-von-ahn-billionaire-ai-tutor/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://officechai.com/ai/ai-will-be-better-than-human-teachers-but-will-still-need-them-to-take-care-of-students-duolingo-ceo/), [[6]](https://www.bloomberg.com/company/stories/why-ai-help-duolingo-become-good-human-tutor/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[4]](https://www.reuters.com/business/duolingo-raises-2025-forecast-ai-powered-subscription-garners-wider-appeal-2025-05-01/), [[5]](https://www.ft.com/content/58d44a1e-205a-4c33-baaa-1e66e6d4f58c)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://officechai.com/ai/ai-will-be-better-than-human-teachers-but-will-still-need-them-to-take-care-of-students-duolingo-ceo/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/annaesakismith/2024/05/28/ai-will-displace-humans-in-many-jobs-but-teachers-hard-to-replace-says-duolingos-von-ahn/> - In a discussion at the NAFSA international education conference, Duolingo CEO Luis von Ahn expressed that while AI is expected to replace many human jobs, teaching is less susceptible to automation. He highlighted the disparity in educational access, noting that wealthier individuals can afford quality education, while others lack such opportunities. Von Ahn's goal with Duolingo is to make quality education accessible to all, addressing the educational gap he observed growing up in Guatemala. He emphasized the importance of providing learners with content as quickly as possible to meet their needs.
3. <https://www.bloomberg.com/company/stories/why-ai-help-duolingo-become-good-human-tutor/> - Duolingo CEO Luis von Ahn discussed the company's mission to provide accessible education globally, emphasizing that AI is central to this goal. He noted that without AI, scaling content to reach over 500 million users would take decades. The company has integrated AI into various aspects, including content creation and user engagement, to enhance the learning experience. Von Ahn believes that AI can democratize quality education, making it accessible to a broader audience, and views AI as a tool to accelerate Duolingo's mission.
4. <https://www.reuters.com/business/duolingo-raises-2025-forecast-ai-powered-subscription-garners-wider-appeal-2025-05-01/> - Duolingo has raised its 2025 revenue and profit forecasts, driven by growing subscriber demand for its AI-powered Max plan. The language-learning app now anticipates full-year revenue between $987 million and $996 million, up from previous projections of $962.5 million to $978.5 million, and well above Wall Street estimates of $977.2 million. For Q2, Duolingo expects revenue between $238.5 million and $241.5 million, surpassing analyst expectations of $233.8 million. The company also increased its adjusted core profit outlook to as much as $283.9 million. Driving the growth are the premium Max and family plans, a successful social media campaign, and a New Year promotion. The launch of 148 new language courses—enabled by generative AI and representing a significant expansion in offerings such as Japanese and Korean—has also contributed to the revenue surge. CEO Matt Skaruppa noted that the company's AI-first strategy, including replacing contract workers with AI, has helped streamline operations and improve model efficiency. Duolingo’s revenues for Q1 2025 were $230.7 million, exceeding analyst expectations of $223 million, and the company’s shares rose 13% in after-hours trading.
5. <https://www.ft.com/content/58d44a1e-205a-4c33-baaa-1e66e6d4f58c> - Duolingo, the language learning app, has defied the post-pandemic decline of the edtech sector. While many edtech companies have seen their stock values plummet since their IPO peaks in 2021, Duolingo's stock has risen by 60% this year, valuing the company at $15 billion, and more than tripling from its IPO price. Duolingo's success is attributed to its engaging, gamified approach to language learning, freemium business model, and popular mascot, Duo the owl. The company reported 113.1 million monthly active users and 8.6 million paid subscribers as of September. Revenue increased by 40% to $193 million, and net income rose significantly. Duolingo plans to leverage generative AI to enhance content creation and offer premium features like live video calls, despite the potential of AI reducing the need for language learning due to advanced translation tools. Investors are keen on Duolingo's growth potential amidst evolving AI capabilities.
6. <https://www.bloomberg.com/company/stories/why-ai-help-duolingo-become-good-human-tutor/> - Duolingo CEO Luis von Ahn discussed the company's mission to provide accessible education globally, emphasizing that AI is central to this goal. He noted that without AI, scaling content to reach over 500 million users would take decades. The company has integrated AI into various aspects, including content creation and user engagement, to enhance the learning experience. Von Ahn believes that AI can democratize quality education, making it accessible to a broader audience, and views AI as a tool to accelerate Duolingo's mission.
7. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/richardnieva/2024/09/24/duolingo-luis-von-ahn-billionaire-ai-tutor/> - Duolingo's CEO, Luis von Ahn, has been a driving force behind the company's AI initiatives, leading to significant growth in users and revenue. The company introduced features like AI-powered video calls with its mascot, Lily, allowing users to practice conversations in other languages. This innovation is part of Duolingo's $30-a-month subscription tier, Duolingo Max, which offers premium AI features. The company's AI push has resulted in a 40% year-over-year increase in monthly active users, reaching nearly 104 million, and a 41% rise in revenue, with the stock reaching an all-time high of $270, valuing the company at $11.75 billion. Von Ahn's vision for Duolingo is to create a personalized AI tutor that is replicable, scalable, and always available, transforming the language learning experience.