# OpenAI's deal for Jony Ive's device firm spotlights Sam Altman's growing tech power and ethical debate



This week marks a significant moment in the tech landscape as OpenAI has entered a landmark agreement to acquire former Apple design chief Jony Ive's device company, a move that underscores the expansive influence of Sam Altman. As the face of OpenAI, Altman's trajectory—from his initial rise to a temporary dismissal and subsequent reinstatement—has become a compelling narrative characterised by resilience and strategic pivots. Karen Hao, the author of a new book on Altman, argues that while his story is emblematic of the modern tech industry, it also raises critical questions about the power he now wields, especially amidst ongoing discussions on the ethics of artificial intelligence.

In her interview, Hao highlights the internal dynamics that contributed to Altman's ousting, including ideological clashes concerning the direction of AI development. His leadership style, often described as both collaborative and assertive, reflects a balancing act: fostering innovation while navigating the treacherous waters of ethical responsibility. Critics of Altman have expressed concern that his promises—often painted in grandiose terms—might be overstating the immediate capabilities of AI, calling into question the implications of his ambitious goals for artificial general intelligence.

The dramatic fluctuations of Altman’s career mirror broader shifts within the tech community. From being celebrated for guiding one of the most influential startups to facing scrutiny over potential authoritarian tendencies, Altman's journey resonates with a persistent tension between technological advancement and societal responsibility. This nuance is particularly vital as generative AI continues to permeate various sectors, reshaping interactions and expectations between technology and humanity.

Amidst these discussions, the tech industry is witnessing a renaissance of scepticism. Experts warn that the rapid pace of innovation demands stringent regulatory frameworks, urging that rhetoric should be grounded in verifiable outcomes rather than speculative promises. As observers reflect on Altman’s legacy, it becomes clear that the unfolding narrative will hinge significantly on how he and others in positions of power navigate these complexities.

Moreover, the implications of Altman’s work extend beyond the boardroom and into everyday life, illustrating how deeply intertwined technology has become with societal issues ranging from economic disparity to environmental sustainability. As OpenAI and its leadership continue to evolve, their choices will likely set precedents for future generations, shaping the ethical landscapes of technology and its impact on our world.

The multifaceted story of Sam Altman is not merely a tale of personal triumph; it encapsulates a broader conversation about the kind of future that technology can create. The potential of AI is vast, but it is imperative that those who steer its course do so with an acute awareness of the responsibilities that accompany such power. As the tech sector continues to grapple with preparing for unforeseen challenges, Altman's journey serves as a reminder of the dual imperatives for innovation and accountability in the quest for advancement.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/news/2025/may/24/six-great-reads-sam-altman-comeback-british-preppers-elon-musk-starbase-texas), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/news/2025/may/24/six-great-reads-sam-altman-comeback-british-preppers-elon-musk-starbase-texas)
* Paragraph 2 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/1721a7e3-8fd6-47e7-83ce-e9e34e1db6eb), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/a3d65804-1cf3-4d67-ac79-9b78a10b6dcc), [[5]](https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2024/10/sam-altman-mythmaking/680152/?utm_source=apple_news), [[6]](https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2023/11/sam-altman-open-ai-fallout/676046/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/1721a7e3-8fd6-47e7-83ce-e9e34e1db6eb), [[3]](https://www.ft.com/content/a3d65804-1cf3-4d67-ac79-9b78a10b6dcc), [[5]](https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2024/10/sam-altman-mythmaking/680152/?utm_source=apple_news), [[6]](https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2023/11/sam-altman-open-ai-fallout/676046/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/news/2025/may/24/six-great-reads-sam-altman-comeback-british-preppers-elon-musk-starbase-texas), [[4]](https://www.theguardian.com/news/2025/may/24/six-great-reads-sam-altman-comeback-british-preppers-elon-musk-starbase-texas)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2025/may/24/six-great-reads-sam-altman-comeback-british-preppers-elon-musk-starbase-texas> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/1721a7e3-8fd6-47e7-83ce-e9e34e1db6eb> - This article examines Sam Altman's resilience in the tech industry, highlighting his leadership at OpenAI and the challenges he faced, including his brief ousting and reinstatement. It discusses his diplomatic efforts to position OpenAI as a benevolent force in AI development and the internal conflicts that led to his temporary removal. The piece also references critiques of Altman's leadership and ethical practices, emphasizing the complexities of his role in the AI sector.
3. <https://www.ft.com/content/a3d65804-1cf3-4d67-ac79-9b78a10b6dcc> - In this profile, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman reflects on the rapid advancement of generative AI since the 2022 release of ChatGPT and his pivotal role in shaping its trajectory. The article discusses his leadership style, the challenges of balancing innovation with ethical considerations, and his vision for the future of AI, including the development of artificial general intelligence (AGI). It also touches on the controversies surrounding his tenure and the broader implications for the tech industry.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2025/may/24/six-great-reads-sam-altman-comeback-british-preppers-elon-musk-starbase-texas> - This article presents six notable reads, including a piece on Sam Altman's rise, fall, and spectacular comeback. It highlights an interview with Karen Hao, author of a book about Altman's journey, discussing the power he now wields and the implications for the tech industry. The article also features other stories, such as the art of traditional soy sauce making in South Korea and the mainstreaming of prepping in Britain.
5. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2024/10/sam-altman-mythmaking/680152/?utm_source=apple_news> - This article critiques Sam Altman's narrative of AI's potential, arguing that his promises of solving global issues through technology are exaggerated. It discusses the plateau in AI advancements and the skepticism from computer scientists regarding the feasibility of his claims. The piece emphasizes the need for responsible regulation and scrutiny of AI technologies based on tangible results rather than speculative potential.
6. <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2023/11/sam-altman-open-ai-fallout/676046/> - This article delves into the unexpected firing and reinstatement of Sam Altman as CEO of OpenAI. It explores the internal dynamics and power struggles within the company, the reactions from employees and investors, and the broader implications for the AI industry. The piece provides insights into the complexities of leadership in tech companies and the challenges of navigating rapid innovation and ethical considerations.
7. <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2025/may/24/six-great-reads-sam-altman-comeback-british-preppers-elon-musk-starbase-texas> - This article presents six notable reads, including a piece on Sam Altman's rise, fall, and spectacular comeback. It highlights an interview with Karen Hao, author of a book about Altman's journey, discussing the power he now wields and the implications for the tech industry. The article also features other stories, such as the art of traditional soy sauce making in South Korea and the mainstreaming of prepping in Britain.