# Nvidia urges UK to boost AI hardware as Starmer pledges £1bn for computing capacity



Nvidia’s recent call for enhanced hardware investment highlights a pivotal moment in the United Kingdom's aspiration to become a leader in artificial intelligence. While the UK boasts a formidable third-largest venture capital backing for AI globally, behind the United States and China, there remains a significant gap in infrastructure that could hinder its competitive edge.

During a high-profile appearance at London Tech Week, Jensen Huang, co-founder and CEO of Nvidia, emphasised the UK’s robust AI research community and academic pedigree, asserting that the country possesses the potential to evolve into the world's third-largest AI ecosystem. Huang lauded the UK’s rich human capital, stating, “You’re rich with great computer scientists. It’s a fantastic place for venture capital to invest.” Yet, he pointed out a critical flaw: a lack of adequate hardware capabilities crucial for AI development. “If you’re in the world of AI, you can’t do machine learning without a machine,” he stated, underscoring the necessity of solid infrastructure to transform potential into tangible advancements.

In a response that underlines the UK government’s commitment to AI, Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer declared a £1 billion investment aimed at multiplying the nation’s AI computing capacity by twenty. This funding initiative is designed not merely to boost hardware but to establish a comprehensive framework for the adoption of AI across various sectors, including training for civil servants to adapt to emerging technologies. Starmer also highlighted a broader £185 million plan that seeks to equip 7.5 million individuals—one-fifth of the UK’s workforce—with essential AI skills by 2030.

However, while the funding announcements represent significant steps towards bolstering AI capabilities, some experts argue that the priority should not only be on hardware but also on addressing funding gaps for scaling existing startups. A report from Tech Nation noted that while the UK houses over 17,000 venture capital-backed startups, many founders express concerns about the prospects for scaling and exiting their businesses within the UK. Nearly half of those surveyed indicated plans to relocate their headquarters to the US, citing better funding opportunities and a larger market.

Contrastingly, the approach taken by other nations reveals a stark dichotomy in AI investment strategies. For example, China has poured immense resources into its AI ecosystem, reportedly investing around $912 billion in various tech startups since 2013, albeit with mixed results. Many of China's AI firms, having initially thrived on government funding, have faced substantial challenges, turning many of their data centres into distressed assets due to project failures. This leveraging of funding without corresponding expertise raises questions about sustainability and effectiveness in developing a robust AI landscape.

Amid these discussions, success stories from within the UK highlight the potential for innovation. Companies like Synthesia, which recently raised $180 million to enhance its capabilities in generative AI, exemplify the growing interest and investment in the sector. Similarly, Wayve, a startup focused on self-driving technology, secured a significant $1.05 billion capital infusion, signalling that the UK remains an appealing destination for AI investment.

As debates continue over how best to equip the UK for success, the dichotomy of opinions between hardware needs and funding strategies remains. A key challenge for the Starmer administration will be to harness both aspects, ensuring that while hardware infrastructures are developed, vibrant ecosystems are also nurtured through adequate financial support and exit strategies for tech entrepreneurs. In this complex landscape, the UK's aspirations to carve its niche in the global AI race will undoubtedly hinge on the balance struck between these competing priorities.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://asiatimes.com/2025/06/nvidia-pushes-hardware-but-experts-say-uk-ai-needs-something-else/), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/cc04adfb-81b2-477f-b85c-ce042e8f83a8)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://asiatimes.com/2025/06/nvidia-pushes-hardware-but-experts-say-uk-ai-needs-something-else/), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/cc04adfb-81b2-477f-b85c-ce042e8f83a8)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://asiatimes.com/2025/06/nvidia-pushes-hardware-but-experts-say-uk-ai-needs-something-else/), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/aug/20/uk-global-race-produce-ai-chips), [[4]](https://www.ft.com/content/3a35f3ba-7273-41ea-a0a5-77fe46965e63), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/softbank-leads-1-billion-funding-uk-self-driving-startup-wayve-2024-05-06/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://asiatimes.com/2025/06/nvidia-pushes-hardware-but-experts-say-uk-ai-needs-something-else/), [[6]](https://media.londonandpartners.com/news/london-hits-all-time-high-for-venture-capital-investment-into-ai-in-2024)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://asiatimes.com/2025/06/nvidia-pushes-hardware-but-experts-say-uk-ai-needs-something-else/), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/cc04adfb-81b2-477f-b85c-ce042e8f83a8), [[3]](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/aug/20/uk-global-race-produce-ai-chips)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://asiatimes.com/2025/06/nvidia-pushes-hardware-but-experts-say-uk-ai-needs-something-else/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/cc04adfb-81b2-477f-b85c-ce042e8f83a8> - At the London Tech Week, Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang highlighted the UK's lack of sufficient digital infrastructure despite its strong AI research talent and significant private investment, ranking third globally behind the US and China. In response, UK Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer announced a £1 billion investment to expand the nation’s AI computing capabilities, aiming to increase compute power twentyfold and transition the country into an AI leader. The funding will bolster the UK AI Research Resource launched in 2023 and support wider adoption of AI, including training for all civil servants. ([ft.com](https://www.ft.com/content/cc04adfb-81b2-477f-b85c-ce042e8f83a8?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/aug/20/uk-global-race-produce-ai-chips> - The UK government is investing £100 million to secure a foothold in the global AI chip production race. The funds are intended to order key components from major chipmakers Nvidia, AMD, and Intel, aiming to build a national AI resource similar to those in the US and elsewhere. However, concerns have been raised that this investment is insufficient compared to the substantial funding from the EU, US, and China. ([theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com/business/2023/aug/20/uk-global-race-produce-ai-chips?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.ft.com/content/3a35f3ba-7273-41ea-a0a5-77fe46965e63> - UK artificial intelligence start-up Synthesia has achieved a valuation of $2.1 billion following a $180 million funding round led by NEA, with participation from Google Ventures and Accel Partners. Founded in 2017, Synthesia focuses on creating realistic video avatars using generative AI. The company, which operates globally, reported a turnover of £25.7 million last year but also post-tax losses of £23.6 million. Synthesia aims to challenge global AI rivals and plans to use the new funds to enhance avatar realism for corporate communications. The UK government, under Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, recently announced policies to support AI sector growth, aiming to position the UK as a leading AI hub. However, UK and European AI start-ups face competition from better-funded US and Chinese counterparts and stricter regulations. Synthesia's clients include significant corporations like Zoom, Xerox, and Microsoft. ([ft.com](https://www.ft.com/content/3a35f3ba-7273-41ea-a0a5-77fe46965e63?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/softbank-leads-1-billion-funding-uk-self-driving-startup-wayve-2024-05-06/> - Wayve, a British self-driving technology startup, has secured $1.05 billion in funding led by SoftBank Group, with contributions from Nvidia and Microsoft. This Series C funding round, the largest for a UK AI-focused startup, brings Wayve's total funds raised to over $1.3 billion. The investment aims to accelerate the development of Wayve's Embodied AI technology, which adapts to human driving behavior and can handle unpredictable situations. Wayve's CEO, Alex Kendall, mentioned that their technology is integrated into various vehicle platforms, including electric cars like the Jaguar I-PACE and Ford Mustang MachE, and will advance through over-the-air updates. Despite the challenges in developing truly autonomous vehicles, including the difficulty in predicting and handling unexpected incidents, the significant investment highlights confidence in Wayve's approach. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak praised the funding as evidence of the UK's leadership in the AI industry. ([reuters.com](https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/softbank-leads-1-billion-funding-uk-self-driving-startup-wayve-2024-05-06/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://media.londonandpartners.com/news/london-hits-all-time-high-for-venture-capital-investment-into-ai-in-2024> - London-based AI startups raised a record $3.5 billion in venture capital in 2024, marking a 52% increase from 2023 and a 21% rise from the previous record set in 2022. This growth positions London as a leading hub for AI investment in Europe, trailing only New York and the Bay Area globally. The health sector within AI also saw significant investment, with London health AI startups raising $556 million in 2024, the second-highest year on record. ([media.londonandpartners.com](https://media.londonandpartners.com/news/london-hits-all-time-high-for-venture-capital-investment-into-ai-in-2024?utm_source=openai))