Sebastian Thrun

Innovator who's mission in life is to revolutionise transport, education and mobile devices

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Sebastian's biography

Sebastian Thrun's background

Sebastian Thrun is CEO of Udacity, an online private educational organization. He was a Vice President and Fellow at Google, and a Research Professor at Stanford University. He has published over 370 scientific papers and 11 books, and he is a member of the National Academy of Engineering in the US. Fast Company named Thrun the fifth most creative person in business, and Foreign Policy touted him Global Thinker #4. Thrun works on revolutionizing all of transportation, education, and mobile devices. At Google, he founded Google X, which is home to projects like the Google self-driving car and the Google Glass. He and his team are trying to radically innovate, innovate, innovate.

Thrun led the development of the Google self-driving car. Thrun is also known for his work on probabilistic programming techniques in robotics, with applications including robotic mapping. In recognition of his contributions, and at age 39, Thrun was elected into the National Academy of Engineering and also into the German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina in 2007.

Thrun led development of the robotic vehicle Stanley which won the 2005 DARPA Grand Challenge, and which has since been placed on exhibit in the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History. His team also developed a vehicle called Junior, which placed second at the DARPA Urban Challenge in 2007. Their singular aim is to significantly help society through artificial intelligence technologies, and are constantly on the lookout for high-impact projects. The focus is on three main areas: AI for healthcare, AI for people-prediction, and smart-homes

He says: "I am on a mission to learn from Google's amazing founders, Sergey and Larry". "At Udacity,

we are trying to democratize higher education. Udacity stands for "we are audacious, for you, the student". This is an audacious step, and it has been a thrill ride." He is an educator, programmer, robotics developer and computer scientist from Germany.

Thrun founded Google X, to create a factory for moonshots. Google X is Google's hardware innovation shop. It generated Google self-driving cars, Google Glass, the Loon project, medical contact lenses, indoor localization, and it was also the original home to the Google Brain Project which leverages the best in AI and machine learning to understand the world.

In 2011, Thrun received the Max-Planck-Research Award and the inaugural AAAI Ed Feigenbaum Prize. Fast Company selected Thrun as the fifth most creative person in business in the world.