Why Artificial Intelligence Giants are Heading North to Montréal

Applied Artificial Intelligence Conference 2020

Anna Soller  May 11, 2020
A few of the world leaders developing their AI expertise in Montréal

Nov. 2016
Google
opens Google Brain Montréal headed by Hugo Larochelle

April 2017
IBM
opens an AI lab

Oct. 2017
DeepMind
opens its second international AI lab in Montréal

THALES
picks Montréal for new AI global hub

Jan. 2018
Microsoft Research
expands research lab and hires Geoff Gordon to be the lab’s new research director

May 2018
HAVAS Group
creates an AI innovation centre – 60 new jobs in 3 years

Sept. 2018
facebook research
expands its lab to accommodate up to 60 researchers

Dec. 2018
QUANTUMBLACK
opens an AI office

April 2019
CORNING
opens an AI lab

Nov. 2019
NOVARTIS
estABLishes strategic alliance with Québec AI Institute Mila

Other foreign companies flourishing in Greater Montréal

Jan. 2017
Microsoft
acquires Maluuba and announces it will hire 40 AI specialists

Sept. 2017
Facebook research
opens Facebook AI Research headed by Joëlle Pineau, Associate Professor at McGill University

Nov. 2017
RBC
opens AI lab

March 2018
Techstars,
along with Real Ventures announce the opening of a new AI accelerator in Montréal

June 2018
HUawei
opens an AI lab

Oct. 2018
SAMSUNG
opens an AI Centre and expands AI research presence in North America

First VC from Silicon Valley to open an office in Montréal

May 2019
ERICSSON
launches its global AI accelerator

June 2019
UNITY
opens an AI lab

Feb. 2020
Google
announces major expansion in Montréal
Federal & provincial support to foster AI development
Major public investment

$93.5M from the First Research Excellence Fund (2016)

$100M over the next 5 years for the creation of a Québec AI cluster (2017)

$40M over the next 5 years for the creation of a Québec AI cluster (2017)

Montréal chosen as headquarters for SCALE AI, the only Canadian AI cluster

$313M for Scale AI Supercluster (2018) and for the development of AI talents (2019)

$329M over the next 5 years to accelerate the adoption of AI in Québec (2019)
Major incentives for companies

R&D tax credits
- SR&ED covers 15% from the Government of Canada, and 14%, refundable, from the Government of Québec

E-business tax credit (CDAE)
- E-business covers up to 30%, including 24% refundable, of employee salaries up to $25,000 per job per year

Financial assistance for job creation and training
- 25% of eligible costs for the implementation of a training program and 50% of costs incurred for the creation of a human resource department

Tax holiday for foreign researchers and experts
Five-year Québec income tax exemption
- 0% of provincial income tax on salary for the 1st and 2nd year
- 25% for the 3rd year
- 50% for the 4th year
- 75% for the 5th year
02
A Deep and Growing Pool of Highly Qualified Talent
Canada’s university capital

11 higher education institutions

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<th>Institution</th>
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<td>UQÀM</td>
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<td>Polytechnique Montréal Technology</td>
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<td>HEC Montréal</td>
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Montréal has one of the deepest AI talent pools in the world

- **300+** independent researchers, mainly doctoral students
- **15,000** industry experts
- **11,000+** students enrolled in AI-related programs

Montréal – voted best student city in the Americas in 2019
03
The Recent Explosion of AI Global Leaders
The best AI accelerators and incubators in the world to help develop tomorrow's breakthroughs
A booming startup ecosystem

- One of the top startup ecosystems in the world
- $861 million in VC financing in Montréal in 2018 (+29%)
- 30+ incubators/accelerators – and counting!
- 45+ coworking spaces
- Lucrative funding for Montréal’s AI companies:
  - Raised US$151 M – September 2019 – Series B
  - ElementAI
  - Raised US$102 M - June 2017 - Series A
  - Hopper
  - Raised US$100 M - October 2018 - Series D
  - Dialogue
  - Raised US$30.3 M - June 2019 - Series B
  - Mnubo
  - Raised US$13 M - January 2018 - Series B
  - Algolux
  - Raised US$10 M - May 2018 - Series A-1
  - CDPQ–AI Fund: $250 M dedicated to AI (2019)

Examples of Montréal companies using AI in various fields

**IMAGiA**: AI-driven personalized care.

**wrnchAI**: digitizing human motion and behaviour from standard video.

**Algolux**: using machine learning to empower cameras to see more clearly.

**Automat**: helping companies use AI to talk to their customers, understand them and serve them better.

**LANDR**: machine learning audio production platform, offering audio creators a suite of tools to support the lifecycle of creation.

**Via**: helping energy companies across the globe realize the value of their data through AI and blockchain.

**Diagnos**: early detection of critical health issues through the use of AI.

**Arctic Fox AI**: AI-assisted radiology for Alzheimer's and related dementias.

**Myelin**: Artificial Intelligence synthesis of ASD scientific data.

**Fluent.ai**: personalized intent recognition that learns from speech, behavior and context, for command and control interfaces.

**envision.ai**: applies the science of deep learning to the art of visual media.

**Lyrebird**: developing a new generation of speech synthesis technologies using AI.
YOSHUA BENGIO
a pioneer in deep learning

Federal & provincial support to foster AI development

Montréal, a magnet for AI talent

The recent explosion of AI leaders

World-renowned accelerators that foster AI development

A growing critical mass of innovative companies

A unique interconnected & collaborative ecosystem

A competitive place to do business
Montréal International, a single point of access to a series of personalized, free and confidential services

- Long-term strategic support
- Economic data and communication services
- Government relations facilitation
- Incentive programs assistance
- Foreign workers immigration assistance
- International recruiting missions