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coming weeks."

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By Davey Alba and Julia Love, Bloomberg News (TNS)

Alphabet Inc.'s Google is getting its ChatGPT competitor ready for prime time.

The company said on Monday that its new conversational AI service, called Bard, would be opening up to trusted testers, and that it is readying the service for the public "in the coming weeks." The technology aims to generate detailed answers

when given simple prompts, such as what to make for lunch or how to plan a friend's

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search business, which drives most of its revenue. Last week, Alphabet reported sales that missed expectations amid a digital ad slowdown and investor anxiety that wildly popular AI rivals, like Open AI's ChatGPT, could upend search. Last year, the company declared a "code red" in response to ChatGPT's release—a move akin to pulling a fire alarm internally, which sent the company's AI engineers scrambling for a response.

Bard will be powered by LaMDA, a large language model developed by Google that stirred controversy in May when a Google software engineer publicly asserted that the AI was "sentient"—a claim that has since come under scrutiny. The testers Google selected for early access are a geographically diverse group of people outside of the company who will help it improve and understand how regular users will encounter the AI service in real life, a Google spokesperson said.

Pichai has sought to emphasize the company's progress in artificial intelligence amid heightened competitive pressure from other big tech peers. Microsoft Corp., which announced it is investing \$10 billion into OpenAI, announced it is holding an event on Tuesday at its company headquarters after Google made its announcement Monday. The software maker has been working on integrating ChatGPT into its Bing search engine to challenge Google's search dominance, a person familiar with the matter said last month.

In addition to the release of Bard, Google will allow developers to tap into its language models to create their own applications. The company will begin opening up its Generative Language API to companies, developers and creators next month, Pichai said.

"Beyond our own products, we think it's important to make it easy, safe, and scalable for others to benefit from these advances by building on top of our best models," Pichai wrote in the blog post.

Pichai touted the release of the company's large language models in an earnings call

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