AI chipmaker Graphcore raises £114M Series D

Bristol-based AI chipmaker Graphcore raises another $150M (£114M) Series D investment at a $1.95B (£1.5B) valuation to accelerate R&D in the hardware powering and processing AI.

Bristol-based Graphcore, which builds processors to power accelerated machine learning and AI have raised a $150M Series D round which brings the company's valuation to $1.95B. This investment was led by Baillie Gifford, Mayfair Equity Partners and M&G Investments as well as existing investors including Merian Chrysalis.

Graphcore had previously received investments from leading figures in machine learning including DeepMind, Cambridge University, Uber, UC Berkeley, and OpenAI. The money raised will help the company to continue their commitment to investment and R&D as well as the global expansion of the business.

"The major investments that we have made during 2018 and 2019 will help us to meet this strong demand by extending the capabilities of our technology and ecosystem, and will support long-term revenue growth and returns for our investors,"

– Nigel Toon, CEO of Graphcore

Nigel Toon said 2019 was a transformative year for the firm as it moved from development to a fully commercial business. Last year, the firm opened a sales and support centre in Beijing, an engineering centre in Cambridge and an operations facility in Taiwan.

Additionally, Graphcore launched an SDK for developers to run AI models and secured big names including Microsoft, Citadel Securities, Carmot Capital and Qwant as its major clients.

"During 2019 we were able to attract the very best software, silicon and hardware engineers to join our team, which has more than doubled in size. We have expanded all of our facilities and opened in new geographies as we build a leading technology company delivering IPU products which we believe will be the industry standard for AI compute." – Nigel Toon, CEO of Graphcore

#AI

Graphcore
£114M

Baillie Gifford, Mayfair Equity Partners and M&G Investments

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An extension of the Bristol firm's <u>$200m Series D round, which closed in December 2018</u>, this new round brings the total investment in Graphcore to over $450m at a valuation of $1.95bn.

The investment comes from Baillie Gifford, Mayfair Equity Partners and M&G Investments alongside existing investors such as Merian Chrysalis.

The capital will be used to support the company's continuing research and development investment and its global expansion.

Graphcore's CEO Nigel Toon said demand for the firm's Intelligence Processor Unit (IPU) products was increasing and its outlook for 2020 was "extremely positive".

"The major investments that we have made during 2018 and 2019 will help us to meet this strong demand by extending the capabilities of our technology and ecosystem, and will support long-term revenue growth and returns for our investors," he said.

Toon called 2019 a transformative year for the firm as it moved from development to a full commercial business.

The firm opened a sales and support centre in Beijing, engineering centre in Cambridge and an operations facility in Taiwan last year.

It also launched an SDK for developers to run AI models s, and announced headline customers including Microsoft, Citadel Securities, Carmot Capital and Qwant.

"During 2019 we were able to attract the very best software, silicon and hardware engineers to join our team, which has more than doubled in size," said Toon.

"We have expanded all of our facilities and opened in new geographies as we build a leading technology company delivering IPU products which we believe will be the industry standard for AI compute."

The firm has previously attracted investments from leading figures in machine intelligence including Demis Hassabis, co-founder of DeepMind; Zoubin Ghahramani of Cambridge University and chief scientist at Uber, Pieter Abbeel from UC Berkeley, and Greg Brockman, Scott Grey and Ilya Sutskever, from OpenAI.