

NUKE IT | MAY 10, 7:00 AM EDT by JOE WILKINS

Google is Building Three New Nuclear Plants for Its Extremely Power-Hungry AI

Google needs its juice.

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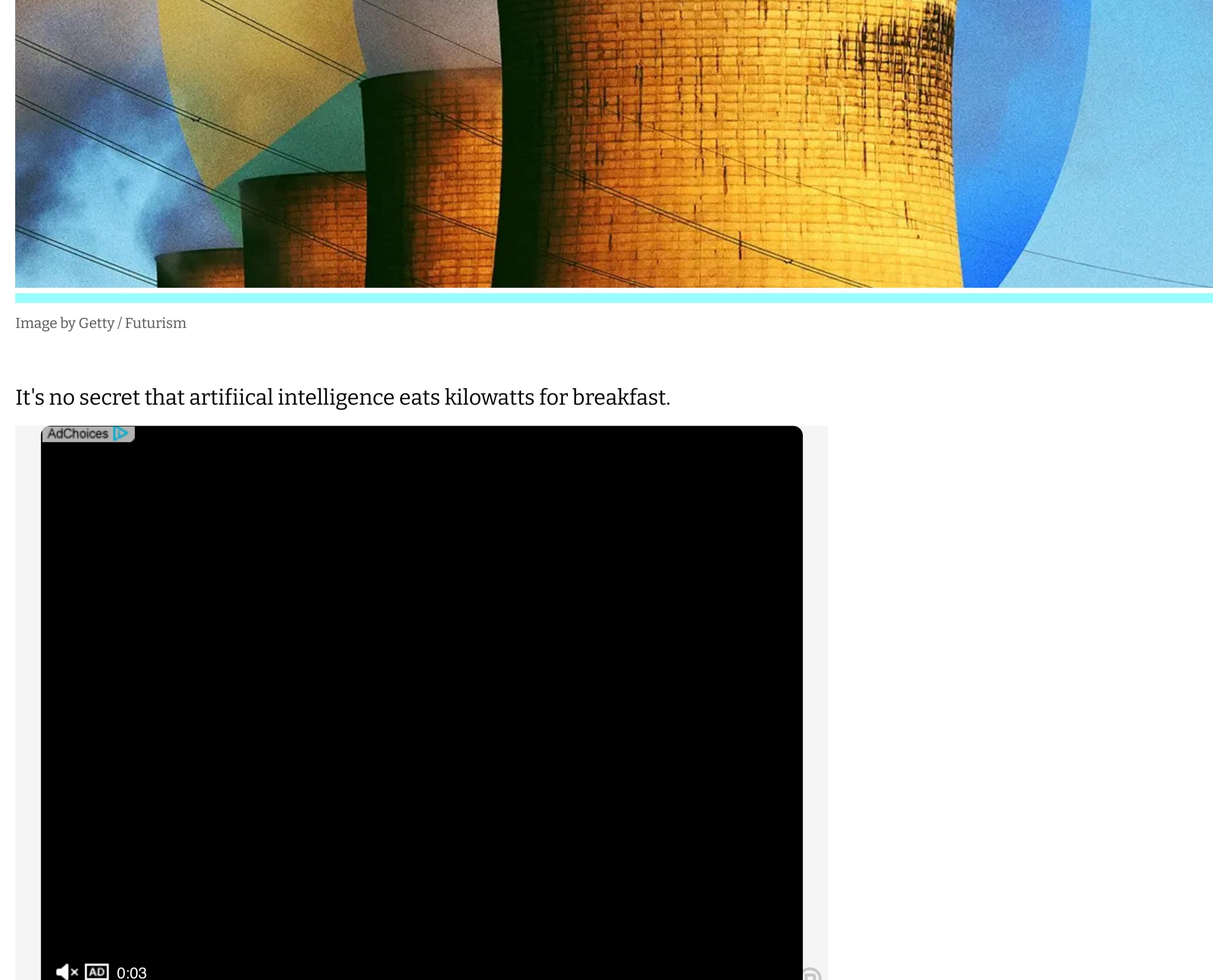
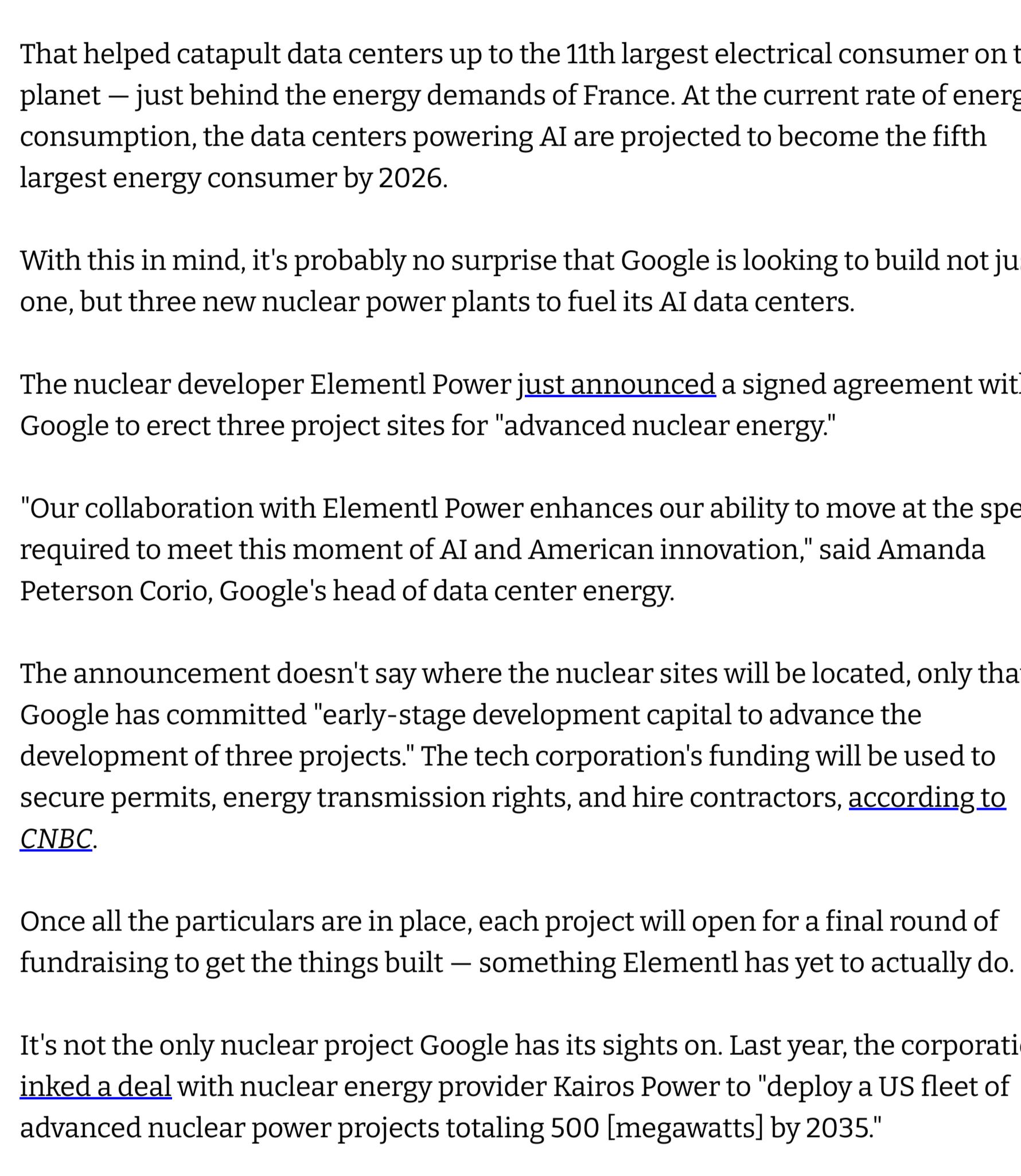


Image by Getty / Futurism

It's no secret that artificial intelligence eats kilowatts for breakfast.



Just one AI-generated image consumes as much energy as it takes to charge a smartphone. At scale, that energy demand is seriously adding up. With the mass-adoption of the energy-hungry tech, data center power usage in North America surged from 2,688 megawatts in 2022 to 5,341 by 2023, according to [MIT News](#).

That helped catapult data centers up to the 11th largest electrical consumer on the planet — just behind the energy demands of France. At the current rate of energy consumption, the data centers powering AI are projected to become the fifth largest energy consumer by 2026.

With this in mind, it's probably no surprise that Google is looking to build not just one, but three new nuclear power plants to fuel its AI data centers.

The nuclear developer Element Power just announced a signed agreement with Google to erect three project sites for "advanced nuclear energy."

"Our collaboration with Element Power enhances our ability to move at the speed required to meet this moment of AI and American innovation," said Amanda Peterson Corio, Google's head of data center energy.

The announcement doesn't say where the nuclear sites will be located, only that Google has committed "early-stage development capital to advance the development of three projects." The tech corporation's funding will be used to secure permits, energy transmission rights, and hire contractors, according to [CNBC](#).

Once all the particulars are in place, each project will open for a final round of fundraising to get the things built — something Element has yet to actually do.

It's not the only nuclear project Google has its sights on. Last year, the corporation inked a deal with nuclear energy provider Kairos Power to "deploy a US fleet of advanced nuclear power projects totaling 500 [megawatts] by 2035."

At the time, Kairos said those sites will be located "in relevant service territories to supply clean energy to Google data centers, with the first deployment by 2030."

Google could certainly use the boost. By July 2024, Google's greenhouse gas emissions had risen by 48 percent over five years, fueled by its frenzied adoption of AI. Between 2023 and 2024 alone, Google's water usage grew by 17 percent thanks to the "expansion of AI products and services [which] is leading to an increase in data center workloads and the associated water footprint required to cool them efficiently."

Whether the corporation *needs* to be using all that energy is a different question. Though Google would have us believe this is necessary to advance to the AI age, we've seen [little concrete evidence](#) that burning all this power — not to mention money — is worth the trouble.

So far, Google's AI has strangled the internet as we know it with [garbled slop images](#), threatened users with [death](#), and inundated its search engine with a [hilariously flawed AI assistant](#). Worse yet, none of this AI adoption is organic.

Google justifies its energy spend by [silently forcing](#) users of its products to use its proprietary AI, Gemini, while deliberately making its [search engine worse](#) — a cycle which reinforces the idea that the masses are on board with AI, while simultaneously destroying any alternative to it.

Whether Google will follow through with its nuclear-powered AI data centers remains to be seen.

It's probably not a good sign that Google's tech rival, Microsoft, is tearing up data center contracts en masse after striking a deal to restart the nuclear reactor at [Three Mile Island](#) — but hey, someone's gotta [stir the slop](#).

More on AI data centers: [Microsoft Backing Out of Expensive New Data Centers After Its CEO Expressed Doubt About AI Value](#)

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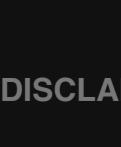
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