



2023 NATIONAL INVENTORS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

Born: Aug. 19, 1978

Primary Connections:

- Duolingo: CEO and co-founder, 2011-present
- Carnegie Mellon University: Associate Professor, 2011-12; Assistant Professor, 2006-11; Postdoctoral Fellow, 2005-06
- Google: Staff Research Scientist, 2009-11
- reCAPTCHA Inc.: Founder and CEO, 2008-09
- The ESP Game/Games With A Purpose: Creator

Education:

- Duke University: B.S., Mathematics, 2000
- Carnegie Mellon University: M.S., Computer Science, 2003; Ph.D., Computer Science, 2005

Key Memberships/Awards:

- Lemelson-MIT Prize, 2018
- MacArthur Fellowship, 2006

10 Things You Need to Know About

Luis von Ahn

reCAPTCHA

U.S. PATENT NO. 8,555,353

1. Luis von Ahn was born in 1978 in Guatemala City, Guatemala.
2. He is the son of two doctors, and he grew up exploring the candy factory owned by his mother's family. He says the hands-on experience of trying to understand how the factory's machinery worked fostered his curiosity.
3. Receiving a Commodore 64 personal computer at age 8 set him on his career path.
4. Speaking on the creation of the online language-learning platform Duolingo, he says he is very proud of the fact that 93% of users have not paid the company a cent to use the service.
5. He is the founder of the Luis von Ahn Foundation, which seeks to support local community leaders and nonprofit organizations working on improving the lives of individuals, especially women and girls, in Guatemala.
6. A recipient of the Packard Fellowship, MacArthur Fellowship, Sloan Fellowship and Microsoft Research Faculty Fellowship, von Ahn was named a Henry Crown Fellow in 2022.
7. In 2011 von Ahn was awarded the Grace Murray Hopper Award from the Association of Computer Machinery.
8. He lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.
9. Discussing what drives his work, von Ahn says: "Early on, what motivated me was surprising, non-obvious, clever ideas. These days, I'm a lot more motivated by large-scale impact. I think that is significantly more motivating."
10. He has 13 U.S. patents.