Andy Rubin, best known for his work on Android at Google, is leaving the company. According to The Wall Street Journal, Rubin will build an incubator for what it describes as companies working with “technology-hardware” products.

Google confirmed the departure to us with a prepared statement from Google CEO Larry Page: “I want to wish Andy all the best with what’s next. With Android he created something truly remarkable—with a billion plus happy users. Thank you.”

It’s not clear whether Google will be involved in any way with this new incubator, either financially or operationally, or what it is called. The company declined to comment on this.

James Kuffner, who worked under Rubin in the robotics division, is stepping up to
take over Rubin’s role running it.

Rubin’s fortunes at Google rose with the rise of the Android operating system, which is now the most widely used mobile platform in the world. But while Android has only gone from big to bigger, the person to run it. In 2013, Android fell under the purview of Sundar Pichai, who had formerly managed the company’s work with Chrome, the browser and operating system.

Less than a week ago, Pichai picked up a host of new responsibilities, solidifying his position within Google leadership.

After Rubin left his work on Android, he retreated into Google’s more experimental arm, helping run the company’s robotics efforts — a focus that lines up with his new direction with hardware startups.

Rubin’s background originally was in hardware. Before Google, Rubin worked at Apple, and then co-founded the device maker Danger, but he left a half decade before it was acquired by Microsoft. He then went on to co-found Android with Rich Miner in 2003. Google acquired Android in 2005.

Rubin is not the first high-profile departure from one of Google’s more cutting-edge projects. Sebastian Thrun formally left his role at Google as a VP and Fellow heading up moonshot projects at Google X earlier this year in order to focus more on his education startup Udacity.

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