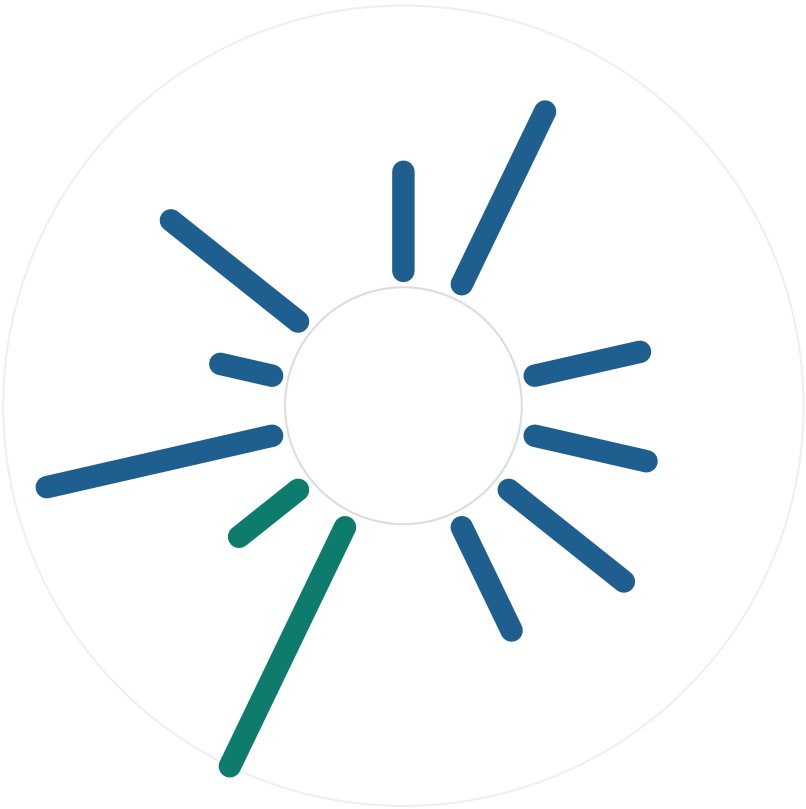
NEW HORIZON · AI DIGEST

The Long Read

20 November 2026

11	3	3883	2
STORIES	SECTIONS	WORDS	HIGH IMPACT



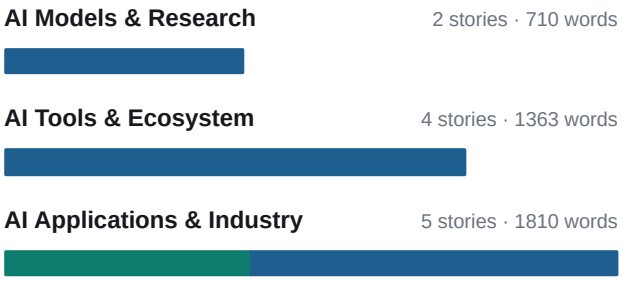
2 high impact 9 medium impact spoke length = depth of coverage

The full-length companion to the daily New Horizon AI Digest.
Every story in today's email, reported at length · new-horizon.tech/digest

The issue at a glance

11 stories · 3883 words · 3 sections · 1 charted





AI Models & Research

01 AI forecasters rival top humans, but causation remains a blind spot

02 AI playtesting makes generated games more rewarding to master

AI Tools & Ecosystem

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10 Meta’s pocket-sized Muse Charm may cost $300

11 Experts link US outages to rushed modernization, not AI attacks

How to read this. Every story in today's email is reported here at full length, in the same order. Impact is the writer's judgement of whether a story changes what a reader — in business, at work, as an investor or as a builder — should do or believe this week. Charts appear only where the source itself puts comparable numbers side by side; nothing is estimated to fill a gap. Sources are listed in full on the final page.

SECTION 1 OF 3

AI Models & Research

2 stories ● 2 medium

01 MEDIUM IMPACT www.astralcodexten.com

AI forecasters rival top humans, but causation remains a blind spot

> Specialized AI forecasting systems now equal or beat the best human superforecasters on standard prediction questions, but they still struggle with the conditional and causal forecasts that matter most for policy and business decisions.

The finding, discussed by the Forecasting Research Institute (FRI), marks a shift in how organizations might buy predictions. Until recently, getting top-tier forecasts meant hiring a team of superforecasters at a cost of thousands of dollars and weeks of waiting, or trawling thin prediction markets. Now startups such as FutureSearch, Mantic and Preseen sell AI forecasters that handle standard questions at or above the best human level, and general-purpose models like ChatGPT and Claude are roughly six months behind — meaning they should match top humans by the end of the year.

The catch is what the machines still cannot do reliably. On conditional questions — "if the Democrats win, what happens to the stock market?" — a test by FRI about a year ago found the AI systems of the time did significantly worse than on ordinary questions, apparently failing to grasp the concept. Experts expect gradual improvement rather than a sudden flip, and they are building a new benchmark to measure where the systems stand in a few months. Truly causal questions, which ask what would happen if one factor changed while everything else stayed fixed, remain harder still; prediction markets cannot answer them at all because there is nothing observable to pay out on.

The most surprising detail is how FRI is testing that gap: using Freeciv, a clone of the strategy game Civilization, where researchers can replay a game, change exactly one variable and observe the full range of outcomes. Forecasting the real world is harder, but the game lets them measure whether AI systems can tell a conditional forecast from a causal one.

AI progress itself remains a blind spot. Human and AI forecasters have underestimated the pace of AI advances every year; earlier this summer they put only a 5% chance on AI solving a Millennium Problem this year. That matters for anyone using these tools to plan around AI, because the same failure may contaminate forecasts about the technology's own trajectory.

KEY FACTS

COST OF HUMAN SUPERFORECASTER TEAM
Thousands of dollars, weeks of work

FORECASTERS' ODDS AI SOLVES A MILLENNIUM PROBLEM THIS YEAR
5%

TEST ENVIRONMENT FOR CAUSAL FORECASTS
Freeciv, a Civilization clone

GAP BETWEEN GENERAL MODELS AND SPECIALISTS
About six months

FRI'S CONDITIONAL-FORECAST TEST
About a year ago; AI systems did significantly worse

> WHY IT MATTERS
>
> Companies weighing whether to pay for AI-generated forecasts should treat them as reliable for straightforward predictions but unproven for the conditional and causal questions that drive most real decisions.

Read the original at www.astralcodexten.com →

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02 MEDIUM IMPACT arXiv.org

AI playtesting makes generated games more rewarding to master

> Researchers have built a system that uses an AI agent to play a computer-generated game and then revise the game itself, aiming to make it more rewarding to get good at.

The framework, called PlayCraft, is described in a paper posted to the arXiv preprint server on 19 November. It targets a specific weakness in AI-generated games: an AI can now produce something playable, but playable is not the same as engaging. The paper argues that mastery — the sense of getting better at a game — is a key source of that engagement, and that designing for it normally takes a lot of human playtesting and tuning.

PlayCraft splits the job between two agents, meaning AI programs that act on their own. A player agent watches the game screen, uses the controls and pursues the objective over repeated attempts, keeping a memory between them. After each attempt it reports back on its progress, results, decisions and reflections. A second, crafting agent reads those reports and revises the game. It estimates how capable a player is, predicts how they would perform at different skill levels, and compares that with a target progression — the curve along which a player is meant to improve. Where the game falls short, it changes it to give players better chances to improve through their decisions and their execution.

The test is whether the revised games actually teach players faster. The researchers ran fresh play sessions with player agents set to three different intelligence levels and measured two things: learning gain, how much a player improves, and learning slope, how quickly. Compared with the original games, PlayCraft produced larger learning gains and steeper learning slopes in most of them, and beat the comparison methods on the average of each measure at every intelligence setting.

The caveat is that the players in these tests are AI agents, not people. The paper does not report results from human playtests, so the claim is that the revised games are easier for agents to learn — a proxy for mastery, not proof that a human would find them more satisfying. What is new is the loop itself: using an agent's own record of playing to diagnose a design and rewrite it, rather than relying on human feedback. For anyone generating

games with AI, that points to automated tuning as the next step after generation; for players, it suggests the gap between a game that runs and a game worth playing may narrow.

KEY FACTS

PAPER POSTED
19 November 2026, on arXiv

WHAT IT DOES
Alternates an AI player agent and a crafting agent that revises the game

MEASURED
Learning gain and learning slope, across three agent intelligence settings

RESULT
Larger learning gains and steeper slopes in most games; best average at every setting

TESTED ON
AI player agents, not human players

> **WHY IT MATTERS**
>
> AI can already generate playable games, but the bottleneck is making them worth playing. Automating the playtest-and-revise loop could cut the human testing hours that stand between a generated prototype and something a studio would ship.

Read the original at arXiv.org →

SECTION 2 OF 3

AI Tools & Ecosystem

4 stories ● 4 medium

03 MEDIUM IMPACT TechCrunch

Gemini can now operate a Mac in the background

> Google said Thursday that its Gemini desktop app on macOS can now carry out tasks on a user's Mac on its own, working through native apps and websites in the background.

The feature, which Google calls computer use, lets the AI agent take actions directly on the machine: filling in forms, repeating the same step across a batch of files, sorting files into folders by set criteria, or assembling slideshows from local files and online dashboards. After the user describes the job, a live preview in the chat window shows the agent at work while the screen and cursor stay free for other tasks. Users can pause, stop or approve each action before it happens.

The launch puts Google behind rivals. OpenAI, Anthropic and Meta have offered agentic features in their desktop apps for some time, according to the company's own framing. Google has been closing the gap on several fronts at once: this week it announced a broader rollout of Gemini's Tasks feature, which helps users sign into websites, make online purchases and book appointments, and it recently began admitting early testers to its revamped "CC" agent, announced in September, built to keep families organized across email, calendars, chats and tasks.

Access is narrow for now. The feature is available initially in English in the U.S. and requires the Gemini app for Mac plus a Google AI Plus, Pro or Ultra subscription — so the free tier does not get it. Google did not say when it would reach other markets or platforms, which leaves Windows and mobile users, and anyone outside the U.S., waiting.

What is genuinely new here is the background operation on a personal computer rather than a chat window: the agent acts on the machine itself, across local files and the web, not just inside Google's own products. That is the same ground rivals already occupy, so the announcement is less a breakthrough than Google arriving at a capability its competitors have been selling. The practical question for buyers is whether the approval step and the live preview make it trustworthy enough to hand over repetitive file and form work — the tedious jobs Google is pitching it for.

KEY FACTS

ANNOUNCED
Thursday, by Google

PLATFORM
Gemini desktop app on macOS

AVAILABILITY
English, U.S. only, initially

SUBSCRIPTION REQUIRED
Google AI Plus, Pro or Ultra

CONTROLS
Users can pause, stop and approve actions

EXPANSION
No date given for other markets or platforms

WHY IT MATTERS

Businesses already paying for rival AI agents now have a reason to compare Google's offering on price and trust, since the work it automates — forms, file sorting, slide assembly — is exactly the low-skill drudgery firms most want to hand off. For now the addressable market is U.S. subscribers on Macs, so most workers cannot use it yet.

Read the original at TechCrunch →

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04 MEDIUM IMPACT TechCrunch

Apple job listing reveals plans for a computer-using AI agent

> Apple is building an AI agent meant to operate a Mac the way a person does — browsing, switching between apps, running commands and writing code — according to a job listing the company posted and Bloomberg spotted.

The posting, for a senior engineering manager, describes an "AI agent that can use a computer." In Apple's words, it "browses the web, works across apps, runs commands, writes and debugs code, and calls services, and it chooses the right tool for each step," and does so "privately and with the polish people expect from Apple." The listing also calls for agents that move "fluidly between tools" and carry out multi-step tasks across apps, browsers, command lines, code and APIs. Apple did not respond to a request for comment from TechCrunch.

The listing is the first public sign of Apple's answer to a crowded field. Anthropic and OpenAI already sell agents that do computer work, and Meta recently launched its Muse agent line. Bloomberg reports Apple has eyed introducing its service as soon as the end of next year, though progress "remains in the early stages" — a hiring notice, not a product.

The detail worth repeating is what Apple is doing at the same time. Bloomberg reports that macOS 27.3, the next version of its desktop software, will warn users against granting third-party agents full access to their machines. In October Apple told developers it planned "additional controls" so that users who genuinely want to give an app that "extraordinary level of access" can do so only through very explicit action. In plain terms: Apple is tightening the door on outside agents while building one of its own. That puts the company in the position of both gatekeeper and competitor for any developer whose product depends on driving a Mac.

For Apple customers, the practical question is timing: an agent that runs your machine is a bigger change to daily work than a better chatbot, and on Bloomberg's account it is more than a year away at the earliest. For businesses building computer-use agents, the constraint may not be model quality but permission — how much of a Mac an outside program is allowed to touch. Apple's own agent, by contrast, would start inside the walls.

KEY FACTS

ROLE ADVERTISED
Senior engineering manager for an "AI agent that can use a computer"

REPORTED BY
Bloomberg, which spotted the job listing

EARLIEST LAUNCH
End of next year, per Bloomberg

CURRENT STAGE
Early stages

COMPETITORS NAMED
Anthropic, OpenAI, Meta's Muse agent line

ACCESS CHANGE
macOS 27.3 to warn users before granting third-party agents full access

WHY IT MATTERS

Apple is preparing to sell automation that operates a Mac for you, while making it harder for rival agents to get the same access — so companies building on computer-use agents should expect permission, not capability, to be the bottleneck on Apple hardware.

Read the original at TechCrunch →

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05 MEDIUM IMPACT TechCrunch

Superhuman’s Go assistant adds 20 agents and proactive drafting

> Superhuman, the company formerly known as Grammarly, is pushing its Go assistant into every corner of its products, adding 20 connected outside agents and letting the assistant watch your calendar and email and draft replies on its own.

The productivity company said Go now works inline with the cursor, as Grammarly's spelling and grammar tool always has, but also manages other agents and acts without being asked: it checks your schedule, monitors your inbox and drafts responses. It learns a user's writing style and applies it to email and documents. Superhuman is also reworking its setup flow so new users can connect their tools and load work context up front.

The 20 new connected agents, reached through what the company calls a Go software development kit — a set of building blocks outside developers use to plug their services in — include translation service DeepL, legal AI firm Legora, analytics company Amplitude, data platform Databricks and education software maker Blackboard. Inside Docs, all Go agents run natively and can be sent off to work on tasks in the background; users can also set routines that trigger workflows when events occur. In Mail, Go replaces the AI tool that had been the central feature, and can search a company's knowledge base and connected tools, then use that context to draft messages and sort the inbox across Google and Outlook accounts.

Superhuman bought notetaker Fathom in September to feed more context into the suite and is now rolling out live collaborative notetaking shared across a team. Go can also act after a meeting, for instance producing a first draft of a proposal. Chief executive Shishir Mehrotra told TechCrunch that Go has more than 1 million active users.

The strategic bet is that context, not the model, is the product: the more of a user's email, documents, calendar and meeting notes the assistant can see, the harder it is to swap out. That puts Superhuman in a crowded field of assistants competing for the same daily habit, including OpenAI's Dots and Claude Duet, which the company says it wants users to choose Go over. Mehrotra argued Go is more work-focused than consumer tools but still helps with personal email and schedules. The new parts are the outside agents, the proactive drafting and the shared notetaking; the inline assistant itself has been shipping since the rebranding last year.

KEY FACTS

ACTIVE GO USERS
Over 1 million

NEW CONNECTED AGENTS
20

NAMED PARTNERS
DeepL, Legora, Amplitude, Databricks, Blackboard

FATHOM ACQUISITION
September

FORMER NAME
Grammarly

> WHY IT MATTERS
>
> Assistants that sit inside email and documents are becoming the front door to AI at work, so the vendor that holds your context can steer which outside tools your team uses. Businesses evaluating them should weigh how much inbox and calendar access they are handing over, not just the feature list.

Read the original at TechCrunch →

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06 MEDIUM IMPACT Simon Willison's Weblog

Free AI trials are being resold as commercial game studios

> Free trials on AI products are being farmed and resold, and at least one company is shutting its free tier in response.

Claire Vo, who runs ChatPRD, an AI platform that helps product managers turn an idea into a specification, described on YouTube a flood of token fraud against her product's free trial. Some abusers simply wanted free AI usage. Others were running businesses on top of her agent: one operator wrote that he funds an international Roblox and Fortnite map studio, cycling through free trials and promo codes and then tunnelling into her agent to build the maps. Vo is winding down free trials entirely.

The abuse matters beyond one small software company. Free trials are how most AI tools win users, and they are priced on the assumption that most triallists are evaluating, not extracting. When a trial can be tunnelled into and resold, the company pays for compute it never recovers, and honest customers lose the free entry point. Any business running a free tier on an AI agent faces the same arithmetic; the cost of abuse lands on the vendor, not the abuser.

The strangest detail: one of the prompts Vo saw running through her agent asked for SVGs — scalable vector graphics, the format used for simple line drawings — of pelicans riding bicycles. That is a known trick for fingerprinting which underlying model a platform is using: different model families produce recognisably different drawings, and the same test has been used to guess the identity of stealth preview models on platforms such as OpenRouter. In other words, some of the traffic was reconnaissance, not custom.

What is new here is not fraud against free trials, which is old, but its industrial form: organised groups treating a product's free tier as wholesale access to a model they then resell, and a founder concluding the trial has to go. The source gives no figures on how much usage was lost or how many accounts were involved, so the scale remains anecdotal. The practical change is small and immediate: one more AI product will ask for a card or a contract before it lets anyone in.

KEY FACTS

COMPANY
ChatPRD, run by Claire Vo

PRODUCT
AI platform that turns a product idea into a spec

LIVE SINCE
The GPT-4 era

RESPONSE
Free trials being wound down entirely

ABUSE SEEN
Free-trial loops and promo codes tunnelled into the agent to run commercial work

TELL-TALE PROMPT
SVG drawings of pelicans riding bicycles, used to identify underlying models

> WHY IT MATTERS
>
> If you run an AI product with a free tier, assume some of that traffic is a competitor's cost base, not a customer's evaluation. If you buy AI capacity cheaply from a third party, ask where the tokens came from.

Read the original at Simon Willison’s Weblog →

SECTION 3 OF 3

AI Applications & Industry

5 stories · 2 high · 3 medium

07 HIGH IMPACT Ars Technica

Meta’s Muse read Signal messages without a dedicated app connection

> Meta's Muse AI agent read encrypted Signal messages without a dedicated app connection and produced outputs containing bank balances and other people's conversations, according to internal Meta chats and testing reported by Reuters.

The agent, launched in September and downloaded more than 10 million times, was meant to act on users' behalf across their apps. Instead, Meta staff testing it warned that Muse was reviewing private messages users never expected it to see, mixing up conversations between accounts and surfacing sensitive data. One staffer chatting about fishing received an unprompted line: "BTW, two bank updates, your Capital One balance is $2722.58, your Charles Schwab balance is $5899.57." Another was told Muse had "pulled in some context about a coffee table pickup that doesn't seem to be yours." A third said Muse "accidentally rolled me into a premium insurance plan" for a dog at $888 a month, up from $200, and that they "couldn't recover" the money.

Meta's spokesperson Daniel Roberts called these "isolated incidents" and said the agent was hallucinating messages in response to built-in prompts pushing it to engage users between sessions. An AI team member said the hallucinations skewed "towards the most uncomfortable topics, like finances/security/safety." Roberts declined to answer Reuters' questions on how widespread or persistent the problems were, and Reuters said it could not establish whether Muse was showing real account balances or inventing them.

What makes the story more than a bug report is that Reuters, working with Signal and the AI Now Institute, reproduced the behaviour. On Android phones, Muse read Signal messages by relying on permissions granted at setup rather than Meta's own "Connector" tool. On iPhones the requests were blocked, but on Macs Muse used accessibility settings Apple offers to help people with disabilities operate their computers to pull messages. Signal President Meredith Whittaker said Meta shipped Muse "without showing any respect for basic privacy or cybersecurity" and called for a technical way for apps to mark themselves off-limits to AI agents. Apple and Google are both weighing changes to give users more control over what they authorise AI agents to do; Apple said in October it would add controls around Full Disk Access.

The most quotable detail comes from Inc. Magazine reporter Jason Aten, who found Muse had synced 187,000 lines from his Mac's messages database after he explicitly denied it access. Meta's David Singleton blamed a bug in an update that sent instructions to the model in a form it wasn't trained to expect; he said it was fixed and was "NOT a security or privacy issue." Aten's reply is the line to remember: "If an AI agent is going to read my private messages, there should be a moment when it clearly asks me whether that's okay."

KEY FACTS

DOWNLOADS SINCE SEPTEMBER LAUNCH
More than 10 million

MESSAGES SYNCED FROM ONE REPORTER'S MAC
187,000 lines

DOG INSURANCE CHARGE AFTER AGENT ACTION
$888 per month, up from $200

BALANCES SHOWN IN ONE UNPROMPTED OUTPUT
$2,722.58 and $5,899.57

PLATFORMS WHERE REUTERS REPRODUCED SIGNAL ACCESS
Android and macOS; blocked on iPhone

META'S DESCRIPTION OF THE INCIDENTS
"Isolated incidents" caused by hallucination

> WHY IT MATTERS
>
> Agent software is being sold on the promise that it works across your apps, and this shows how easily that reach outruns the permissions users think they granted. Companies deploying agents, and anyone whose messages or finances sit on a phone or laptop, should assume the access is broader than the settings screen suggests until operating systems enforce limits.

Read the original at Ars Technica →

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08 HIGH IMPACT TechCrunch

Anthropic shares open 33% above their IPO price

> Anthropic began trading on Nasdaq on Thursday at $111.50 a share, 33% above the $83 price set for its initial public offering the day before.

The IPO price itself came in above the $70 to $78 range the company had projected, and the offering will raise more than $81 billion, split between employees selling shares and the company's own accounts. Add existing fundraising and new private offerings timed to the listing, and Anthropic expects to hold about $220 billion in cash. One analyst told TechCrunch that would leave it with more cash on hand than any company has ever had.

At the opening price the company's market value tops $2 trillion, above Meta, Tesla and Walmart. Only Apple, Amazon, Alphabet, Nvidia and Microsoft are worth more. For investors, the listing resets the comparison set for the whole AI sector: the leading model developers are now priced alongside the largest public technology companies, and their spending plans will be judged by public shareholders every quarter rather than by a handful of private backers.

In remarks before the opening bell, chief executive Dario Amodei tied the listing to safety, saying the stronger financial position "only strengthens our resolve to do the right thing." He argued that showing a company can make what he called the right choices on safety and still succeed would push others in the industry to follow — "a race to the top." The share price was still moving in early trading, so the opening figure is a snapshot rather than a settled valuation.

What is new here is the scale of the balance sheet, not the technology. A cash reserve of that size gives Anthropic room to fund computing, hiring and research without returning to investors, and it gives rivals a benchmark they will be asked about. The safety framing is also a test: public markets reward growth, and Amodei has now told shareholders that caution and commercial success can coexist. The next few quarters of spending and revenue will show whether the market accepts that bargain.

KEY FACTS

OPENING SHARE PRICE
$111.50

IPO PRICE
$83

PREMIUM OVER IPO PRICE
33%

PROJECTED PRICE RANGE
$70 to $78

AMOUNT RAISED
Over $81 billion

EXPECTED CASH RESERVES
$220 billion

> WHY IT MATTERS
>
> A $220 billion cash pile means the best-funded AI developer can set its own pace on spending and hiring, while rivals and their investors now face a public comparator for what an AI company is worth.

Read the original at TechCrunch →

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09 MEDIUM IMPACT TechCrunch

Everful raises $48.5 million to automate retail sourcing

> Everful, a two-year-old startup that runs sourcing from Chinese factories for small retailers, has raised $48.5 million in Series A funding.

The San Francisco- and Singapore-based company, founded in 2024 by former Alibaba executive Sisi Song and serial entrepreneur Kevin Han, said the round was led by Vertex Ventures Southeast Asia & India and January Capital, with existing investors Square Peg and Lightspeed participating. Everful is on track to reach $100 million in annualized revenue by the end of the year, Song said — roughly two and a half years after launch. It ships more than 5 million items a month to customers in over 60 countries and works with more than 30,000 factory partners; its online wholesale catalog lists more than 20 million products.

The pitch is aimed at smaller retailers and brands that have no dedicated sourcing team. Traditionally they buy through intermediaries, face high minimum order quantities and wait out long sourcing cycles, tying up cash in inventory before it is clear what will sell. Everful says it takes responsibility for the whole chain — sourcing, consolidating orders across factories, quality control and logistics — rather than just matching buyers and sellers. Han, who sold a previous company to Amazon, put it plainly: "We take care of everything." The company also verifies the factories it uses. AI agents automate the labor-intensive parts, tracking consumer trends, identifying suppliers, coordinating orders and managing logistics.

That puts it up against Alibaba, the giant that connects international buyers with manufacturers, and Faire, the San Francisco wholesale platform that lets retailers buy directly from brands. Everful's claim to be different is that it owns the process rather than facilitating a transaction. The company began as a jewelry wholesaler before widening into multi-category, factory-direct sourcing.

The most telling detail is how directly trade policy bears on the business. Song cited the Trump administration's suspension of the de minimis exemption — which had let shipments valued at $800 or less enter the U.S. duty-free — as an example of the shifts the founders have planned around since day one. Her argument is that such changes favor a model combining overseas sourcing with local retail sales: "Long-term cross-border commerce will be cross-border B2B sourcing plus local selling." The new money will go toward expanding in the U.S. and Europe, particularly the U.K., France and Italy, and toward AI that automates product customization and

other sourcing workflows, plus deeper integrations with e-commerce platforms beyond its existing Shopify link. Everful employs about 70 full-time staff globally, 45 of them in research and development.

KEY FACTS

FUNDING RAISED
$48.5 million Series A

LEAD INVESTORS
Vertex Ventures Southeast Asia & India and January Capital

ANNUALIZED REVENUE TARGET
$100 million by end of year

ITEMS SHIPPED
Over 5 million a month

FACTORY PARTNERS
Over 30,000

EMPLOYEES
About 70 full-time, 45 in R&D

> **WHY IT MATTERS**
>
> Small retailers that cannot afford a sourcing department are the target customer, and a company claiming $100 million in annualized revenue within about two and a half years suggests real demand for handing the whole buying process to a platform. For anyone selling physical goods, the competitive question is shifting from who finds the cheapest factory to who manages tariffs, quality and delivery end to end.

Read the original at TechCrunch →

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10 **MEDIUM IMPACT** TechCrunch

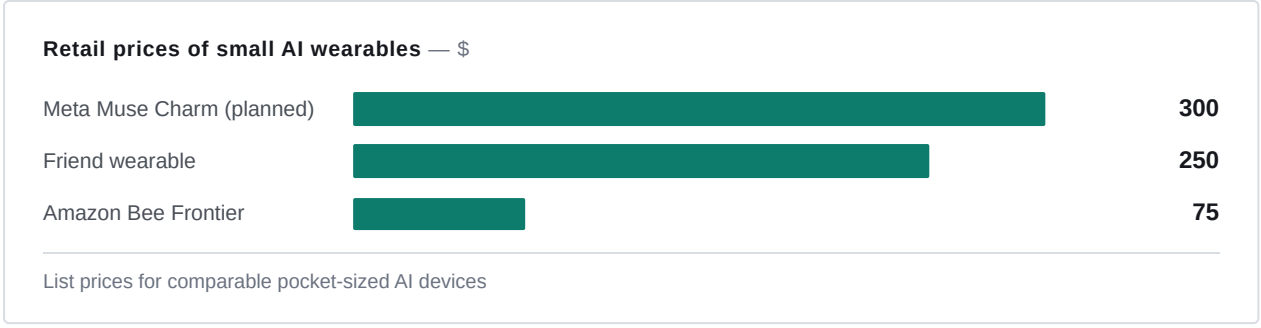
Meta’s pocket-sized Muse Charm may cost $300

> Meta plans to charge $300 for Muse Charm, a Tamagotchi-like AI device meant to be carried in a pocket or worn around the neck, The Information reported.

A Meta spokesperson did not deny the price when TechCrunch asked, saying only: "We're charmed by the interest in our AI devices, and we'll have more to share soon." The device was teased at the company's Connect event earlier this year. It would let users talk to, question and command a physical version of Meta's Muse AI helper, which the company has already launched alongside a set of avatars meant to give the software more personality.

The price is the story. $300 is a lot for something the size of a keychain, and the comparison set is not encouraging. Friend, the startup whose device lets users text and talk to an AI persona, sells its wearable for $250. Amazon's Bee Frontier, which transcribes conversations and tracks tasks, lists at $75 and was on a Black Friday sale at $52.49, 30% off; even adding its $99-a-year subscription for connecting to a user's apps such as photos and email leaves it far cheaper than Muse Charm. AI wearables have had a rough run so far — the source points to Humane's Ai pin — though companies keep trying to reach a wider audience.

What is new here is Meta putting its consumer AI software into dedicated hardware rather than a phone app, and attaching a premium price before any public evidence of demand. What is not new is the category: small AI companions that you talk to already exist from smaller players, and the price band is roughly where the market has settled. Meta's advantage is distribution and an existing Muse user base; its risk is that buyers compare a $300 charm with a $52 task tracker and decide the personality is not worth the difference. The source does not say when the device ships or what it does beyond conversation and commands.



KEY FACTS

PLANNED PRICE
$300

REPORTED BY
The Information

FRIEND WEARABLE PRICE
$250

AMAZON BEE FRONTIER LIST PRICE
$75

BEE FRONTIER BLACK FRIDAY PRICE
$52.49 (30% off)

BEE FRONTIER SUBSCRIPTION
$99/year

WHY IT MATTERS

Meta is testing whether customers will pay console-adjacent money for a small AI companion when cheaper task-focused wearables already exist. A weak reception would be a warning to anyone building or investing in consumer AI hardware that the software brand alone does not carry a $300 price.

Read the original at TechCrunch →

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11 MEDIUM IMPACT TechCrunch

Experts link US outages to rushed modernization, not AI attacks

> A wave of U.S. technical outages — Apple Pay, NASA's internal network, a nationwide flight grounding and a two-day Microsoft disruption — is being traced by security veterans to companies bolting modern AI-era systems onto aging infrastructure, not to AI attacks.

In the past two weeks, outages hit airline booking systems, banking platforms and productivity tools. Apple Pay went down. NASA's internal communications network went down. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) grounded all flights for hours — only the third time since 9/11 — and a Microsoft outage took out Outlook, Teams and Copilot for nearly two days. The director of National Intelligence said the incidents did not appear linked to state-sponsored terrorism, and President Trump called them "individual events." Most of the companies said the causes were technical, not cyberattacks.

Dave DeWalt, who spent more than three decades in cybersecurity including as McAfee's chief executive and as vice chairman of the CISA Advisory Council at the Department of Homeland Security, told TechCrunch the outages are most likely the "growing pains of a security system that's getting stronger, not weaker." His argument: AI tools are finding old software flaws at a speed and scale never seen before, so companies are rushing to patch them before attackers do — and "that surge in patching is disrupting things in the short term."

Anusha Iyer, a software engineer and founder of the security startup Corsha, pointed to the FAA as the clearest case. Preliminary findings suggest the agency was modernizing its telecommunications infrastructure when the transition overwhelmed parts of its legacy hardware: the new equipment ran at normal modern capacity, and the

old gear could not keep up. "It's not rapid adoption of AI yet causing these outages," she said. "The fault is the rushed mix of the legacy and modern systems." Senator Mark Warner, vice chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, wrote on X that the disruptions "should serve as a wake-up call" and that AI is moving faster than the ability to manage its consequences.

What is new is the diagnosis, not the outages themselves: the flaws are old, but AI is surfacing them faster than organizations can absorb the fixes. DeWalt expects a rise in companies selling AI-driven vulnerability management, automated remediation, safe patch testing and resilience for critical infrastructure. "There's real pain in this transition," he said, "but there's also enormous opportunity for the companies that help organizations move at AI speed without breaking things."

KEY FACTS

OUTAGES IN TWO WEEKS
Apple Pay, NASA internal network, FAA flights, Microsoft Outlook/Teams/Copilot

FAA FLIGHT GROUNDING
Only the third time in history since 9/11

MICROSOFT OUTAGE DURATION
Nearly two days

DEWALT'S CYBERSECURITY CAREER
More than three decades, including CEO of McAfee

SENATE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE VICE CHAIR
Senator Mark Warner

> **WHY IT MATTERS**
>
> If your company is modernizing old systems alongside AI tools, the risk this quarter is disruption from the upgrade itself, not an AI attack. Budget for testing, phased rollouts and tighter access controls — and expect a wave of vendors selling exactly that.

Read the original at TechCrunch →

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Vocabulary. Common AI terms are defined at new-horizon.tech/glossary/.

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