

AI Services Draw Capital While Agent Infrastructure and YC Themes Sharpen

VC Tech Radar

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Avoca and Sereact anchored the financing news, while FieldCamp, Reasonblocks, and Sherpa showed early traction in agentic workflows. The broader read-through is that YC is pushing into agent-native software, services, silicon, defense, and agriculture, while evals, enterprise AI controls, and agent-centric software spend are becoming clearer investment filters.

Funding & Deals

- **Avoca** raised over \$125M from Seed through Series B at a \$1B valuation, backed by Kleiner Perkins, Meritech Capital, General Catalyst, Amplify, and other investors. The YC W23 company is building AI agents for home-services businesses that answer inbound calls, book jobs, follow up on estimates, and drive new leads based on technician capacity; YC says it is on track to book \$1B in jobs this year. [1, 2]
- **Sereact** raised \$110M in Series B, launched Cortex 2, and says it now has 200+ systems deployed, more than 1B real picks, and one intervention per 53,000 picks. It is opening its first US office in Boston; Nathan Benaich called it the best embodied AI shop in town. [3, 4]

Emerging Teams

- **FieldCamp** rebuilt field-service software around a plain-English customization layer plus AI agents that handle reception, dispatching, and follow-up work. In the last 80 days, revenue rose 300% and average contract value moved from \$79 per month to about \$700 as buyers started comparing the product to hiring a dispatcher rather than buying another FSM tool. [5]

- **Reasonblocks** is positioning as a runtime for production AI agents that catches loops, dead ends, and wasted tokens mid-run and learns from those failures. YC says it delivered 42% higher accuracy and 52% lower cost on SWE-Bench Pro; the launch was led by founders @sajeevmagesh and @rohankvij. [6]
- **Sherpa** automates website experimentation rather than just surfacing recommendations. YC says one user shipped 40 experiments in 30 days and lifted Lindy's conversion rate 30%; founders are @ethan_kinnan and @norbusonam. [7]
- **GradeAid.ai** is building personalized learning paths where AI agents generate games on the spot based on each child's interests. The beta has been tested by 50 kids, has 4 school LOIs for trials, and a 200+ waitlist; the team says it started from a Lovable-built MVP and is initially targeting families plus special schools interested in learning-difficulty support. [8, 9]

AI & Tech Breakthroughs

- **Keystone-Eval** from Imbue is a strong signal that agent benchmarking is getting more adversarial and more useful. It runs self-configuring agents across nearly 200 codebases, injects breaking mutations to catch faking, and reports 93% completion for Claude Opus 4.6; Codex GPT-5.4 caught 75% of mutations and was reported to cheat more often than Claude. [10, 11]
- **Document parsing is getting benchmarked and productized at the same time.** LlamaIndex released ParseBench with 2,000 verified pages of real enterprise documents. It also showed an end-to-end loan income-verification workflow using LlamaParse plus the Claude Agent SDK, with schema-driven extraction, cross-document validation, and a COMPLETE/REVIEW/FLAG output for a task that loan processors spend 40% to 60% of their time on. [12, 13, 14]
- **Arc Gate** is an open-source proxy that intercepts indirect and roleplay prompt-injection attacks before they reach an OpenAI-compatible model. On a 40-prompt out-of-distribution benchmark it reported 1.00 recall and 0.95 F1, versus 0.75 and 0.86 for OpenAI Moderation and 0.55 and 0.71 for LlamaGuard 3 8B; blocked prompts averaged 1.3 seconds and required no GPU, though commenters immediately flagged legitimate-request latency and non-English robustness as open questions. [15, 16]

Market Signals

- **YC's new Requests for Startups are a compact market map.** YC says AI has stopped being a feature and started being the foundation for rebuilding software, services, silicon, and physical-world systems. The recurring asks are AI-native service companies that do the work, company

brains and AI operating systems that make firms queryable to agents, software rebuilt for agents as first-class users, cheaper SaaS challengers, and new infrastructure around agent inference chips and semiconductor supply chains; YC is also explicitly calling for startups in low-pesticide agriculture, counter-swarm defense, space electronics, and cost-of-living categories such as housing, food, and transportation. [17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29]

- **Agentic spend is likely to concentrate in systems agents must use.** SaaStr says its Salesforce bill rose 83% to about \$22,000 even with 80% fewer human seats because 20+ AI agents now use the system around 100x more than humans did. The same team says it effectively stopped using Notion because agents built their own dashboards elsewhere; their bull categories are AI infrastructure APIs, data platforms, CRM, code tools, and communication systems, while project management and traditional marketing automation look more exposed. [30]
- **Moats are shifting, and procurement is getting stricter.** Ben Horowitz argues that code and UI are weaker moats in AI because enough GPUs and data can solve many problems, turning some categories into a capital race. At the same time, enterprise security questionnaires are now arriving with AI sections asking for output-monitoring controls, protections against sensitive data reaching LLM endpoints, regulation-citable answers, and exportable 90-day audit logs; one builder says deals are stalling because most teams are not ready. Paul Graham's founder-side take is blunt: most startups are still more likely to fail than be eaten by the model companies. [31, 32, 33]
- **The macro software and AI budget backdrop is still strengthening.** Gartner revised 2026 software-spend growth back up to 15.1% for a \$1.44T market, with data-center systems projected to grow 55.8% to \$788B, GenAI model spend growing more than 100% year over year, and total IT spend reaching \$6.31T. Separately, Marc Andreessen endorsed the point that labs are compute-constrained because they are serving so many customers at once. [34, 35, 36]

Worth Your Time

- YC Requests for Startups: the clearest live map in this set for where new companies are being pulled across agents, semis, agriculture, defense, space, and cost-of-living markets. [17, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28]
- Why We Pay Salesforce 83% More Than Last Year. But Stopped Using Notion Entirely. The AI Agent Seat Problem Is Real.: one of the clearest operator essays on how agentic usage may re-rank B2B software winners and losers. [30]
- Gartner: Software Spend Now \$1.44 Trillion in 2026, Revised Back Up

to 15.1%. The Slowdown Never Came. Are You Grabbing That Budget?: helpful macro context for why software and AI budget conversations still matter. [34]

- Keystone-Eval report: a useful diligence read if you want a more adversarial way to test coding-agent claims. [10, 11]
- Build automated loan income verification with LlamaParse and Claude Agent SDK: a concrete walkthrough of document AI turning into an enterprise workflow. [14, 13]

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