DeepSeek Makes Vision a Low-Cost Agent Primitive

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DeepSeek's experimental V4 Flash Vision release makes multimodal agent capability available through a low-cost API, while conflicting Ox Alpha tests, OpenAI's price cut, and new work on persistent agents sharpen the competitive picture.

Top Stories

Why it matters: Cheap multimodality and credible evaluation now matter as much as headline capability.

DeepSeek put vision inside the agent stack. DeepSeek says its experimental V4-Flash-Vision-Exp matches V4-Flash on agents, reasoning, and world knowledge, while bringing multimodal-agent benchmark performance close to Opus 4.8. The API supports mixed text/image input across Chat Completions, Messages, and Responses; images cost up to 384 billing tokens each at V4-Flash pricing, and a free Files API supports upload-once, reuse-by-`file_id` workflows. [1, 2, 3]

Ox Alpha is a market signal, not a settled leaderboard result. OpenCode advertises its stealth model with 1M context, multimodality, zero data retention, near-unlimited use, and claimed capacity for 100T tokens per day; it was available through OpenRouter and OpenCode. A 10-task DeepSWE subset gave it 80%, ahead of Fable at 65% and GPT-5.6 Sol at 52%, but a separate private benchmark found it underperformed substantially. A commentator calls it GLM-5.3 Flash; both the identity and performance claims remain provisional. [4, 5, 6, 7, 8]

Research & Innovation

Why it matters: Progress is shifting toward persistent control loops, richer sensor feedback, and evaluations that measure real task completion.

NVIDIA's AVO result comes with a benchmark caveat. NVIDIA says its coding agent completed all 183 levels across 25 public ARC-AGI-3 environments without instructions, rules, or stated goals. A monitored account says it learns through trial, observation, and correction while retaining progress across context resets; François Chollet cautions that clearing the public demonstration set is not the same as scoring 100% on the full benchmark. [9, 10, 11]

T-Rex makes touch a first-class control loop. NVIDIA–Berkeley's method pairs a slow visuomotor planner with a fast tactile expert that corrects motion at four touch ticks per vision tick; its release includes a synchronized 50-hour, roughly 5,500-episode robot-play corpus and tactile-grounded mid-training. [12]

Speech Agent Arena separates sounding good from doing the task. Artificial Analysis compares models with humans across 15 tool-using and 20 non-agentic scenarios. Gemini 3.1 Flash Live Minimal leads preference at 1,046 Elo but has 74.6% task success, while Grok Voice Think Fast 2.0 High leads task success at 94.7%. [13]

Products & Launches

Why it matters: Usable AI is spreading down the hardware stack and into collaborative development workflows.

FreeToken pushes frontier-style local inference onto consumer hardware. UC Berkeley reports GLM-5.2 753B at 14.9 tok/s on one RTX PRO 6000 and Qwen3.6-35B at 39.3 tok/s on an 8GB RTX 4060, with 2–4× Ollama speeds. [14]

Google AI Studio becomes a collaborative repository workflow. Its two-way GitHub sync pushes prompted changes, pulls local or teammate edits, and generates Conventional Commit messages; Google says teams can pull changes and redeploy in under a minute. [15]

Industry Moves

Why it matters: Price, training transparency, and physical capacity are becoming strategic levers.

OpenAI cut GPT-5.6 Sol API and credit pricing by more than 20% for three months, citing capability gains and efficiency improvements. The move makes unit economics an explicit frontier battleground. [16]

Marin opens the training run itself. Percy Liang's Marin 535B-A23B started on 18.75T tokens, with 80% pretraining and 20% midtraining across 11 GB200 NVL72 systems for about three months, followed by post-training;

a four-rung scaling ladder preceded the main run. The project says observers can inspect domain mixtures, sampled documents, live loss, configs, and scaling laws. [17, 18]

Lambda says it deployed 10,368 GB300 GPUs across nine pods and 144 racks. [19]

Policy & Regulation

Why it matters: Provenance requirements are moving from detection experiments into model-provider compliance.

The monitored analysis says the EU Code of Practice requires future models to watermark AI text; Anthropic is rolling out Claude watermarking to everyone, while Google has used the approach since 2024. It says the mark is not human-distinguishable and near-zero-cost, though rewriting can remove it; Anthropic's FAQ says the detector cannot identify which user generated the text. [20]

Quick Takes

Why it matters: Adoption and embedded workflows continue to broaden beyond standalone chat.

- Codex reached 20M active users; OpenAI credited Codex and ChatGPT Work users with a banked reset while investigating reports of faster limit depletion. [21]
- Runway Ruby converts SDR video to 16-bit HDR in ProRes and EXR for uploaded or generated clips up to 30 seconds. [22]
- Google added Gemini voice controls for Waymo cabin temperature, seating, and route assistance. [23]

Sources

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