

Open Models Turn Cost and Harnesses Into the AI Battleground

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A concise read on GLM-5.3's cost-adjusted coding signal, the rise of harness-centric agent stacks, and the corporate moves following them.

Top Stories

Why it matters: The AI race is shifting from peak scores to cost-adjusted capability and the systems that make agents reliable.

Open models are winning a cost-and-adoption test. Together Compute reports four tries with GLM-5.3 on DeepSWE reaching 87.6% for about \$16, versus Fable 5 at 69.7% for \$21.63. A separate breakdown puts the models near parity—69.0% versus 69.7%—at \$3.99 versus \$21 per task, with GLM-5.3 using 80k versus 114k tokens. [1, 2] This is one benchmark, not a universal ranking, but Vercel AI Gateway says open-weight models supplied 62% of tokens on Aug. 22, up from 28.4% on June 24; Vercel also says enterprise adoption and model-agnostic tooling remain early. [3] Portability and unit economics are becoming first-order competitive variables.

Harnesses are becoming part of the product. A monitored analysis of Pi's development notes says Claude models sometimes invent parameters for Pi's edit tool, suggesting that post-training is increasingly coupled to Claude Code's harness and schema; it frames Claude+Claude Code, DeepSeek+DSH, and GPT+Codex as emerging whole systems. [4] Pi's "prune + spill" approach stores full tool results on disk while keeping only a slice in context; across 19 sessions it reports 26–35% lower context use and 72–88% lower uncached prefill, with information recoverable. [4]

Research & Innovation

Why it matters: New work is testing whether agents complete real state-changing work and training tool use earlier instead of assuming post-training will fix it.

Thinkingbox makes reliability an end-state test. Microsoft’s paper introduces an MCP-compatible sandbox and 507 policy-conditioned workflows spanning retail, hospitality, auto insurance, neobank IT, and consulting support. It grades executable backend state and rejects wrong, missing, or extra effects; the strongest model reached 65.36% pass@1 but only 25.25% pass@20, while many failed runs looked clean at the response or tool-call level. [5]

MidTool moves tool use into mid-training. Snowflake’s corpus combines web, PDF, and code data with API, MCP, and document-grounded supervision; it was used to mid-train Qwen3-4B and Qwen3-8B. [6] In the reported results, 4B BFCL rose from 39.51% to 54.18% after RL and ²-Bench pass@1 from 13.04% to 19.96%, but every model scored 0% on MCP-Universe’s web-search subset. [7] Tool familiarity improves function calling without automatically solving long-horizon research.

Matryoshka nests model sizes in one suite. Cornell researchers stack 500M, 1.5B, and 3B submodels in one end-to-end architecture; the paper reports parity with independently trained baselines, 36% less training compute, and 14–26% faster speculative-decoding throughput. [8, 9]

Products & Launches

Why it matters: AI interfaces are expanding from single-user generation toward controllable, collaborative workflows.

Krea’s Seedance Studio uses Seedance 2.5 and new 3D scene controls to take a project from character design to final cinematic footage in one workflow, according to a current creator demonstration. [10]

ChatGPT may be adding a social layer. Strings in the latest Android app mention “ChatGPT with Friends” for sharing responses, images, and creations, plus private side chats; the observer presents it as a possible next iteration of group chats, not a confirmed release. [11]

Industry Moves

Why it matters: Corporate strategy is increasingly framed around open ecosystems, model ownership, and repeat enterprise usage—not just model releases.

Anthropic’s IPO expectations are escalating, but the report is prospective. A current account says the company’s bankers are telling potential investors it may raise more than \$100 billion at a \$2 trillion valuation, which would make it the largest IPO ever. [12]

Poolside is being positioned as an open-model US ecosystem play. The Wall Street Journal reports a sweeping agreement intended to build an open AI ecosystem that can compete with Chinese heavyweights and American AI giants; Ollama says it collaborated with Poolside engineers on open models and points to NVIDIA's Nemotron work. [13, 14]

Runway is packaging video generation as an enterprise operating layer. Its company announcement says the business more than doubled this year and NRR exceeded 300%; its roadmap includes day-one access to third-party models, a media model router, Runway Agent, and customer-hosted model licensing. These are company-reported figures and plans. [15]

Quick Takes

Why it matters: Physical AI and agent tooling are moving from isolated demos toward repeatable systems.

- NVIDIA says its coding harness solved all 183 levels across ARC-AGI-3's 25 public games. [16]
- The 2026 World Humanoid Robot Games opened with 666 teams and more than 2,000 humanoid robots. [17]
- Jerry Liu's market framing: SaaS is not dead, but it must be repurposed and remonetized for agent consumption. [18]

Sources

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