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Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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Today's picks from founders and investors: Collison on Works in Progress, two from Gurley (an essay pushing back on AI hype and a talk on Covid origins), O'Shaughnessy's Huberman episode, Altman on Kevin Roose's book, and more.

Top pick: the new *Works in Progress* issue, recommended by Patrick Collison

Collison called the new issue of @WorksInProgMag a “remarkable assemblage” [1]. The pieces he listed include: - Robin Rivaton and @bswud on how competition between China's cities drove its “rise to techno-industrial preeminence,” and @danwwang on second-tier cities in China and the US [1] - Tyler Cowen on Brazilian food, @vpostrel on the invention of supermarkets, Charles C. Mann on the discovery of porcelain, and @salonium on “the myth of accidental scientific discovery” [1] - Stephen Kotkin on “Leninism's fatal flaw,” and @pietergaricano on Ukraine as the future of war [1]

The post he quoted says the print edition has been redesigned with a larger format and premium paper. Subscribers get copies this week, and anyone who subscribes by October 16 also gets one: worksinprogress.co/print [2].

Bill Gurley: Mustafa Suleyman’s essay on AI and jobs

Gurley called Suleyman “the statesman AI needs” and said “we all need to take the ‘hyperbole’ way down.” In his view, “doomerism is just the mirror image of the positive hyperbole,” and he dismissed claims like “We are going to cure cancer in three years!” [3].

The article Gurley linked summarizes Nobel laureate Daron Acemoglu’s piece in the first issue of *The Humanist Review*, a new magazine published by Suleyman’s MAI [4]. Acemoglu’s main points: - AI will likely add about 1.5% to GDP over 10 years [4]. - Only about 5% of what humans do should be expected to be replaced [4]. - Builders should make “pro-worker AI” that helps people do their jobs better [4].

The previous brief covered Gurley’s earlier Suleyman pick. This one is different: Gurley states his own view directly.

Bill Gurley: Matt Ridley’s conversation with NIH director Jay Bhattacharya on Covid origins

Gurley says anyone interested in current views on Covid origins should “immediately watch” @mattwridley’s conversation with Jay from last March. He calls it “an amazing summary of what we have learned over the last 6 years” and says it “should be considered ‘must watch’ ” [5]. Watch.

Patrick O’Shaughnessy: his conversation with Andrew Huberman (his own show)

O’Shaughnessy says he didn’t expect them to spend so much time on neurotechnology and “how we’ll soon be able to precisely measure and change our brain states, both awake and asleep,” and that this part was “fascinating” [6]. The episode also covers energy, falling asleep quickly, Neuralink and brain-computer interfaces, and the state of health media. One chapter is titled “AI Companies Could Become Biotech Companies” [6]. YouTube · Spotify [7]

Sam Altman: Kevin Roose’s new book

In Part One of his Vanity Fair *Fair Game* interview, Altman said AI progress is mostly “a story of... a relatively small number of brilliant scientists and engineers... much less a story about me.” He added that “Kevin Roose’s book, the new book, does a good job of bringing out some of the supporting parts” [8]. The excerpt doesn’t name the book’s title.

Shorter mentions

- **OpenAI’s post on AI progress in mathematics, from Altman (his own company).** His framing: “We are entering a new era of discovery

now” [9].

- **The Personal Agent Protocol announcement, via Sarah Guo.**

It’s an open standard that Meta and Sierra are developing with Shopify, Stripe, Walmart and others. It sets out how personal agents interact with businesses, and anyone can implement it [10]. Guo framed it as an answer to “how will businesses talk to their customer’s personal agents?” and called it “relentless innovation” from Sierra [11]. This follows Andrew Chen’s question in the last brief about whether agent network effects will end up in open protocols.

- ***The Battle of Polytopia*, made by @midjiwan, via Brian Armstrong** [12].

Armstrong calls it “one of the most underrated strategy games” and “being a founder, compressed into 20 minutes.” The business parallels he sees: harvesting resources, investing in technology, balancing offense and defense, and finding a way through “even when it looks to be over” [13]. He disclosed that Coinbase is sponsoring this year’s Polytopia World Championship [13].

Sources

1. X post by @patrickc
2. X post by @s8mb
3. X post by @bgurley
4. X article by @mustafasuleyman
5. X post by @bgurley
6. X post by @patrick_oshag
7. X post by @patrick_oshag
8. Sam Altman on Elon Musk, ‘Artificial,’ and the Future of Humanity (Part One)
9. X post by @sama
10. X post by @btaylor
11. X post by @saranormous
12. X article by @coinbase
13. X post by @brian_armstrong