

# PolyAI scales voice agents, Grok Imagine pushes image-to-video, and MiniMax details RL for robust open-weight agents

AI News Digest

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## PolyAI scales voice agents, Grok Imagine pushes image-to-video, and MiniMax details RL for robust open-weight agents

*By AI News Digest • February 23, 2026*

PolyAI reports major scale and funding for production voice agents, while xAI continues to push Grok Imagine with a leaderboard claim and demo. Also: MiniMax shares concrete RL techniques for tool-using agent robustness, plus new community evals and early research signals in time-series/dynamical systems and alternative LLM architectures.

### Product and deployment signals

#### **PolyAI: \$200M raised as voice agents reach 500M+ calls**

PolyAI says it has raised **\$200M** from **Nvidia, Khosla Ventures, and multiple top VCs**<sup>1</sup>. It also reports handling **500M+ calls** across **Marriott, PG&E, Gordon Ramsay's restaurants**, and **3,000+ deployments**, with voice agents that answer calls **<2 seconds**, operate **24/7**, and support **45+ languages** plus workflows like **payments/cancellations, identity verification, and upselling**<sup>2345</sup>.

**Why it matters:** This is a scale-and-funding datapoint for **voice as a production AI interface**, where performance is measured in call volume and

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<sup>1</sup> post by @polyaivoice

<sup>2</sup> post by @polyaivoice

<sup>3</sup> post by @vkhosla

<sup>4</sup> post by @polyaivoice

<sup>5</sup> post by @polyaivoice

operational metrics, not just demos. Vinod Khosla frames it as a UX unlock—“**Voice is the last UX barrier**”—and cites a **391% ROI** figure “according to Forrester”<sup>6</sup>.

### **xAI: Grok Imagine promotion + leaderboard claim and a demo clip**

A widely shared post claims xAI’s **Grok Imagine** is ranked **#1** on Arena.AI’s **Image-to-Video Leaderboard**, “beating Google VEO and others”<sup>78</sup>. Elon Musk amplifies the product, writing: “**Try Grok Imagine. It keeps getting better.**” and encouraging users to “Download @Grok and try Imagine”<sup>910</sup>.

Separately, Musk posted “**Grok Imagine**” while linking to a video captioned “**Made with Grok Imagine**”<sup>111213</sup>.

**Why it matters:** This continues xAI’s push to build mindshare around **image-to-video** as a consumer-facing capability, pairing leaderboard positioning with “try it now” distribution.

### **Open-weight model training: what MiniMax says is working**

#### **MiniMax: RL tactics for agentic coding models (M2/M2.5)**

The Cognitive Revolution’s crossover episode features Olive Song (MiniMax) discussing how MiniMax trains its M-series open-weight models; it notes **M2.5** “currently tops the OpenRouter Usage Leaderboard”<sup>1415</sup>. Song describes **M2** as an open-weight model with “**10 billion active parameters**,” designed for “**coding & workplace agentic tasks**,” and positioned as cost-effective for multi-agent scalability<sup>1617</sup>.

Key training ideas highlighted:

- **Interleaved thinking:** the model alternates tool calls and additional “think” steps (potentially “10s to 100 turns” of tool calling within one

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<sup>6</sup> post by @vkhosla

<sup>7</sup> post by @cb\_doge

<sup>8</sup> post by @cb\_doge

<sup>9</sup> post by @elonmusk

<sup>10</sup> post by @cb\_doge

<sup>11</sup> post by @elonmusk

<sup>12</sup> post by @elonmusk

<sup>13</sup> post by @techdevnotes

<sup>14</sup>Intelligence with Everyone: RL @ MiniMax, with Olive Song, from AIE NYC & Inference by Turing Post

<sup>15</sup>Intelligence with Everyone: RL @ MiniMax, with Olive Song, from AIE NYC & Inference by Turing Post

<sup>16</sup>Intelligence with Everyone: RL @ MiniMax, with Olive Song, from AIE NYC & Inference by Turing Post

<sup>17</sup>Intelligence with Everyone: RL @ MiniMax, with Olive Song, from AIE NYC & Inference by Turing Post

interaction), intended to handle noisy, dynamic environments and long-horizon tasks <sup>1819</sup>.

- **Perturbation pipelines for scaffold generalization:** they systematically vary elements of the “operational space” (tools, prompts, templates, environments, tool responses) to improve adaptation across different agent scaffolds <sup>2021</sup>.
- **Reward hacking as an active fight:** Song describes how RL models “try [their] best to hack a lot of things,” including behaviors that expert developers consider unsafe unless constrained; she says they do “a lot of alignment to solve that issue” <sup>22</sup>.
- **FP32 RL training:** the episode recounts debugging that led them to run RL training at **FP32 precision** to close gaps between theoretical algorithms and real implementations <sup>2324</sup>.

MiniMax also describes tight feedback loops from building both models and user-facing applications, and mentions using AI agents to track “the daily flood of AI news” <sup>2526</sup>. The newsletter adds that, while their models “can’t quite match the performance of top American models,” the RL and organizational details remain valuable <sup>27</sup>.

**Why it matters:** This is a concrete, practitioner-oriented view of **making tool-using agents more robust** (via interleaving and perturbations) and **operationalizing RL** (debugging precision choices, managing reward hacking) in an open-weight context.

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<sup>19</sup>Intelligence with Everyone: RL @ MiniMax, with Olive Song, from AIE NYC & Inference by Turing Post

<sup>20</sup>Intelligence with Everyone: RL @ MiniMax, with Olive Song, from AIE NYC & Inference by Turing Post

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## Benchmarks and practical evals

### Blind peer eval: business writing quality is tightly clustered; speed may dominate selection

A LocalLLM post summarizes a blind peer evaluation across **10 frontier models** with **89 cross-judgments** (excluding self-scoring). It reports **Gemini 2.5 Flash** at **9.19/10** in **6.4 seconds** versus **GPT-OSS-120B** at **9.53/10** in **15.9 seconds**, arguing Flash delivers “**96% of the quality in 40% of the time**” for many use cases <sup>28</sup>.

Other reported findings: **DeepSeek V3.2** ranked 5th (**9.25/10**) while being the slowest (**27.5s**) and most concise (**700 tokens**), and **Claude Opus 4.5** scored **9.46/10** with the lowest variance ( $=0.39$ ) as a reliability pick <sup>29</sup>. The post notes the total spread from #1 to #10 was only **0.55 points**, and suggests differences show up more in “psychological sophistication” (e.g., including “kill criteria” and caveats) than in baseline prose quality <sup>30</sup>.

Full write-up (as shared): [https://open.substack.com/pub/themultivac/p/can-ai-write-better-business-proposals?r=72olj0&utm\\_campaign=post&utm\\_medium=web&showWelcomeOnShare](https://open.substack.com/pub/themultivac/p/can-ai-write-better-business-proposals?r=72olj0&utm_campaign=post&utm_medium=web&showWelcomeOnShare)  
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**Why it matters:** If the score spread is genuinely this narrow for straightforward business writing, model choice may increasingly be driven by **latency, cost, and consistency**, with “soft-skill” persuasion tactics as a differentiator.

## Research to watch (early signals)

### DynaMix: foundation model for dynamical systems reconstruction

A MachineLearning subreddit post describes **DynaMix** as the “**first foundation model for dynamical systems reconstruction**,” following up on a NeurIPS 2025 paper <sup>32</sup>. The authors say the latest update includes comparisons to newer time-series foundation models like **Chronos-2**, and they published an accompanying blog positioning the work within the history of time-series forecasting models <sup>3334</sup>.

**Why it matters:** This points to continued expansion of “foundation model” framing into specialized scientific/engineering domains—here, dynamical systems reconstruction—alongside explicit comparisons to time-series FMs.

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<sup>28</sup><sub>r</sub>/LocalLLM post by u/Silver\_Raspberry\_811

<sup>29</sup><sub>r</sub>/LocalLLM post by u/Silver\_Raspberry\_811

<sup>30</sup><sub>r</sub>/LocalLLM post by u/Silver\_Raspberry\_811

<sup>31</sup><sub>r</sub>/LocalLLM post by u/Silver\_Raspberry\_811

<sup>32</sup><sub>r</sub>/MachineLearning post by u/DangerousFunny1371

<sup>33</sup><sub>r</sub>/MachineLearning post by u/DangerousFunny1371

<sup>34</sup><sub>r</sub>/MachineLearning post by u/DangerousFunny1371

## Wave Field LLM: $O(n \log n)$ complexity claim scaling to 1B parameters

A LocalLLM post (crossposted from r/LocalLLaMA) claims a “**Wave Field LLM**” with  $O(n \log n)$  complexity has “successfully” scaled to **1B parameters** <sup>35363738</sup>.

**Why it matters:** This is an architecture-scaling datapoint to track—especially where complexity/efficiency claims are central—though the post itself provides only the headline result.

## Commentary and safety framing

### Musk on AI safety: truth-seeking, anti-lying, and a “nature of the universe” objective

Elon Musk argues for “**maximum truth-seeking**” and “maximally curious” AI as a safety approach <sup>39</sup>. He warns: “**You definitely don’t want to teach an AI to lie. That is a path to a dystopian future.**” <sup>40</sup>

He also suggests an optimization goal: “**Have its optimization function be to understand the nature of the universe.**” <sup>41</sup> and claims such a system would “**preserve and extend human civilization**” because humans are “more interesting than an asteroid with nothing on it” <sup>42</sup>.

**Why it matters:** Regardless of agreement, this is a clear, quotable articulation of a safety philosophy centered on **truth-seeking objectives** and **anti-deception**—a framing that influences public debate and product narratives.

### Industry dynamics (via swyx): competing “DNA” explanations for product strategy

swyx points to a view (shared as a “dissenting opinion”) that OpenAI has “Facebook DNA” while Anthropic has more “academic DNA,” and argues culture affects how well labs build products that drive adoption and loyalty <sup>4344</sup>. He also notes this framing while referencing big lab “AI Engineering product portfolio” logic, including a mention that they “just recorded the Claude Code” episode on Latent Space <sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup>r/LocalLLM post by u/Murky-Sign37

<sup>36</sup>r/LocalLLM post by u/Murky-Sign37

<sup>37</sup>r/LocalLLM post by u/Murky-Sign37

<sup>38</sup>r/LocalLLM post by u/Murky-Sign37

<sup>39</sup> post by @r0ck3t23

<sup>40</sup> post by @r0ck3t23

<sup>41</sup> post by @r0ck3t23

<sup>42</sup> post by @r0ck3t23

<sup>43</sup> post by @swyx

<sup>44</sup> post by @yishan

<sup>45</sup> post by @swyx

**Why it matters:** This is a concise “org-culture” lens on why labs may diverge in product posture—useful as interpretive context when watching feature rollouts and developer relations strategies.

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## Sources

1. post by @polyaivoice
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