Robotics Data Infrastructure, Search-as-Code, and New Pressure on AI Distribution

VC Tech Radar

2026-06-12

Robotics Data Infrastructure, Search-as-Code, and New Pressure on AI Distribution

By VC Tech Radar • June 12, 2026

Air Street-backed Macrodata Labs and Alta Ares' Airbus partnership lead the deal flow, while OpenCredits.ai and Hyper AI show concrete early traction. The broader read is on agent-native search, power and cooling efficiency, and a market where data layers and distribution are becoming harder to ignore.

1) Funding & Deals

Air Street is the repeat investor in this batch, showing up in both robotics data infrastructure and AI air defence [1, 2].

- **Macrodata Labs — Air Street-backed robotics data infrastructure.** Macrodata Labs launched to build infrastructure for the robotics data loop as LLMs/VLMs make robots more capable but the data layer remains underbuilt [3]. Founders @gui_penedo and @HKydlicek come from the FineWeb team that built training datasets used by many LLMs, and Air Street led the round [1]. The company also released **Refiner**, an open-source framework for turning messy demonstrations into inspectable, training-ready datasets with annotations, reward-model scoring, and local-to-cloud pipeline scaling [3].
- **Alta Ares + Airbus Defence and Space.** Two days after announcing a $60M Series A led by Air Street, Alta Ares said it partnered with Airbus Defence and Space to accelerate deployment of resilient, next-generation air defence solutions by combining Airbus integration expertise with Alta Ares' AI-powered tactical air defence [2]. Alta Ares says its counter-drone systems have been operationally deployed in Ukraine since 2024 [2].

2) Emerging Teams

- **OpenCredits.ai — embedded monetization infrastructure for AI apps.** The product lets developers embed a checkout inside their app, issue user credit keys, call OpenAI/Anthropic-compatible APIs, meter usage, and earn referral share without separately wiring Stripe or managing model-provider keys themselves [4]. The founder says the product was first deployed inside Claude Code Chat and reached **90 paying customers in under 30 days** [4].
- **Hyper AI — instant demos instead of delayed sales calls.** The founder frames the wedge around a specific B2B funnel problem: 30-60% of booked demos never happen [5]. Hyper AI serves an immediate demo at the moment of intent rather than making leads wait days, and the founder says early pilots are converting demos that otherwise would have been lost [5].
- **Science — neural interfaces and retinal implants.** YC highlighted Science cofounder and CEO @maxhodak_ as the company develops retinal implants and neural interfaces for patients with vision loss and neurological disease, aimed at advancing human + computer interaction [6].

3) AI & Tech Breakthroughs

- **Perplexity Deep Research in Computer — "Search as Code."** Perplexity says the model writes code that assembles search itself, running thousands of retrieval steps in parallel and tailoring the search plan to each question [7]. The company says this version outperforms its legacy Deep Research on every benchmark, and Deep Research is now a native skill inside Perplexity Computer rather than a separate mode [7, 8].
- **Ferveret — nuclear-reactor-inspired cooling for AI data centers.** YC highlighted Ferveret's claim that its cooling system outperforms state-of-the-art liquid cooling by 15%, delivers 35% more tokens from the same power, and uses zero water [9].
- **Abacus AI demo — one-shot 3D games and complex mobile apps.** Bindu Reddy said AI agents can now one-shot extremely complex mobile apps and 3D games, including interactive 3D experiences, auth/database support, multi-user play, and one-click Android/iOS deployment [10]. The cited demo was a game built on Abacus AI's agent using Claude Fable and GPT 5.5x High [10].

4) Market Signals

- **The data layer is becoming the product surface for agents.** SaaStr's summary of Firebolt CEO Benjamin Wagner argues that

customers and their agents increasingly judge the data layer directly, rather than treating it as invisible backend plumbing [11].

> "The data layer is moving to the center of the product, the deal, and the buying decision." [11]

The practical implications in the source material are specific: regulated buyers want bring-your-own-cloud, air-gapped, and on-prem deployments [11]; fragmented backends across laptop, cloud, and customer environments create migration and experience tax [11]; open source and common SQL matter more when coding agents can read code and write queries directly [11]; and exposing SQL-like access to customer agents turns resource isolation, autoscaling, and 24/7 reliability into first-order requirements [11].

- **UK spinout terms are moving founder-friendlier.** Average non-cash equity stakes taken by UK universities fell from 25% to 16% in 2025, with the median now 11% [12]. The cited benefits are better founder incentives, cleaner cap tables for investors, and faster lab-to-market execution [12]. The broader framing is that tech transfer remains an obvious lever given Europe's scientific strength and weaker entrepreneurial output [12].
- **AI outbound is crowding traditional verticals.** One founder selling into distribution and manufacturing said prospects are already hearing from three, four, and in some cases up to 11 AI vendors pitching similar solutions [13]. In the same discussion, the founder pointed to preseed and seed-stage AI companies hiring BDRs and SDRs to push more outbound into that noise [13].
- **AI accessibility is being framed as a market-expansion thesis.** In YC's Meesho interview, the company said it recently launched a voice agent called **Vani** and views AI as a way to serve rural users who struggle with reading, typing, clicking, and other standard app concepts [14]. Its longer-term vision is a voice-and-image-driven experience so users can transact without the app flows that currently feel overwhelming [14].

5) Worth Your Time

- **How Meesho Became India's Biggest Shopping App** — useful for the AI accessibility thesis, especially the shift toward voice-agent commerce for users who find standard app UX overwhelming [14].



How Meesho Became India's Biggest Shopping App (27:13)

- **Your Data Layer Used to Hide Behind Your Product. Now It Is the Product. With Firebolt's CEO** — worth reading if you are diligencing agent-facing infrastructure, deployment flexibility, or open-source database strategy [11].
- **Perplexity's Deep Research in Computer post** — useful if you are evaluating agentic search architectures; it lays out the "Search as Code" claim and the benchmark framing against legacy Deep Research [7].
- **MIT News on Ferveret's cooling system** — useful follow-up if you are tracking infrastructure wedges around AI power and cooling; the linked summary claims 15% better performance than state-of-the-art liquid cooling, 35% more tokens from the same power, and zero water consumption [9].
- **Macrodata Labs launch thread** — concise read on the robotics data-loop bottleneck and the open-source **Refiner** framework for turning messy demonstrations into training-ready datasets [3].

Sources

1. X post by @nathanbenaich
2. X post by @nathanbenaich

3. X post by @macrodata_labs
4. r/SaaS post by u/andrepimentaa7
5. r/SaaS post by u/CaramelEmbarrassed64
6. X post by @ycombinator
7. X post by @perplexity_ai
8. X post by @AravSrinivas
9. X post by @ycombinator
10. X post by @bindureddy
11. Your Data Layer Used to Hide Behind Your Product. Now It Is the Product. With Firebolt's CEO
12. X post by @yoramdw
13. r/startups post by u/Lopsided-Lock4208
14. How Meesho Became India's Biggest Shopping App