RSI for agents, global food data, and the sources that changed minds

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

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The period's strongest organic recommendations range from Martin Casado's agent-research pick to a USDA-backed food tracker, Patrick Collison's memoir endorsement, Sam Altman's formative AI paper, and a short film on the built environment.

The direct technical recommendation

***Latent Space* podcast with Alex Krentsel on RSI for agents**

- **Content type:** Podcast episode.
- **Author/creator:** *Latent Space*; Alex Krentsel is the guest, in conversation with swyx. [1]
- **Link:** Episode on YouTube
- **Recommended by:** Martin Casado.
- **Key takeaway:** Casado says he "really recommend[s] a listen," calls Krentsel "one of the clearer thinkers" on RSI for agents, and praises his work on the topic. [1]
- **Why it matters:** This is a focused lead for readers studying the specific question of RSI for agents, with a clear expert rationale for prioritizing it rather than a bare episode mention.

An empirical counterweight

An interactive tool to explore historical data on food production, and updated forecasts from the USDA

- **Content type:** Article with an interactive data tool.

- **Author/creator:** Hannah Ritchie's Substack. The tool covers more than 50 years of production, yield, and harvested-area data for crops and animal products. [2]
- **Link:** Substack article
- **Recommended by:** Garry Tan, who labels it a "Whitepill timeline cleanser" and points to record crop production as evidence of progress and abundance. [3]
- **Key takeaway:** Ritchie tracks the USDA's monthly World Agricultural Production releases. In the August snapshot, corn and wheat are slightly below last year but still the second-highest on record; rice is broadly similar and may set a small yield record; soybean production and yields are on track for records. [2]
- **Why it matters:** It converts an optimistic macro claim into inspectable data while keeping the important qualification: a "fine" global total can conceal a bad year in particular countries. [2]

Historical perspective

The World of Yesterday

- **Content type:** Memoir.
- **Author/creator:** Stefan Zweig, translated by Anthea Bell. [4]
- **Link:** Recommendation thread
- **Recommended by:** Patrick Collison.
- **Key takeaway:** Collison's endorsement is direct—"The World of Yesterday is amazing." The linked recommendation highlights Zweig's observations about Vienna, Germany, and the world between the two world wars as the book's particular strength. [5, 4]
- **Why it matters:** It offers a literary, firsthand lens on a society undergoing historical dislocation—useful for readers seeking how large-scale change was experienced from inside ordinary life.

A formative research source

The 2012 "Alex Net" paper

- **Content type:** Research paper.
- **Author/creator:** Not named in the interview; Sam Altman says it was done in partnership with his co-founder "Ilia."
- **Link:** No URL supplied in the interview.
- **Recommended by:** Sam Altman, as a formative endorsement rather than a conventional reading-list instruction.
- **Key takeaway:** Altman says this was the first time an AI approach seemed to him like it might work. He then watched it scale and improve, concluding that—even with a low probability of success—AI was the most important thing he could work on. [6]

- **Why it matters:** It is a rare, concrete account of a paper changing an AI leader's estimate of what was possible: from an exciting but seemingly distant idea to a plausible technical path.

A visual recommendation

A short film on another way to live and the built environment

- **Content type:** Short film.
- **Author/creator:** @culturaltutor.
- **Link:** Original short-film post
- **Recommended by:** David Perell, who calls its premise "the most important thing to accept." [7]
- **Key takeaway:** The film asks viewers to examine everyday objects and argues that modern design has become boring even though buildings and ordinary infrastructure can still be interesting and meaningful. It also argues that the aesthetics of the built environment affect how people think, feel, and behave. [8]
- **Why it matters:** It is a compact prompt to treat the physical environment as an active input into daily life rather than as neutral background.

Sources

1. X post by @martin_casado
2. Tracking global food production through a record El Niño
3. X post by @garrytan
4. X post by @EconTalker
5. X post by @patrickc
6. Sam Altman & Cleo Abram: Superintelligence and WTF the Future Looks Like [VIDEO]
7. X post by @david_perell
8. X post by @culturaltutor