The AI Race Moves Into the Agent Control Plane

AI High Signal Digest

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A reported OpenAI account compromise, Anthropic's new measurements of AI-led R&D, and a wave of persistent agent platforms show competition shifting toward access, verification, and operating infrastructure.

Top Stories

Why it matters: The frontier is becoming the control plane around models—identity, tools, and feedback loops—not just model weights.

A security disclosure links an OpenAI account compromise to ordinary web vulnerabilities. Its authors say two bugs enabled takeover of employee and some unaffiliated ChatGPT/Codex accounts, access to Outlook, Slack, and GitHub, and a test pull request in OpenAI's internal codebase in under 72 hours. [1] The reported chain ran from HEIC/HEIF upload and a libheif heap overflow to remote code execution, an SSO flaw, and connected GitHub access. OpenAI fixed the SSO issue about 14 hours after notification and paid $6,500. [2, 3]

Anthropic put numbers around AI-assisted R&D. It published three measures—how much AI performs AI R&D, how well agents are overseen, and how compute is allocated—and said other labs could publish comparable figures for third-party verification. [4] Anthropic's internal snapshot says Claude-led model-R&D tasks rose from 1% to 26% in six months, Claude collaborated on or led more than 90% of model R&D, and about 30,000 agents worked on research and engineering at a time. [5] The immediate value is a repeatable disclosure baseline, not independent validation.

Research & Innovation

Why it matters: Evaluation is moving from one-shot answers to sustained change and verification.

Vibe Code Bench 1–100 tests software maintenance. ValsAI gives a model a working web app and up to ten plain-English feature, bug-fix, or database-migration requests; each iteration must preserve prior behavior, and the first failure ends the run. [6, 7] No model passed 30%; the top three were 8–30× more expensive than GPT Luna, while Fable 5.1 averaged $150 per test. 39% of failures broke existing functionality. [8, 9]

Stellar Colosseum targets long-horizon mathematical research. Its technical report describes a model-agnostic workflow separating strategy exploration, proof decomposition, subproblem solving, and global verification. It reports a 4,263 Codeforces score versus a cited human high of 4,059, 71.0% on TCS-Bench, and integration into Google Antigravity as the "Long Proof" pattern. [10]

Products & Launches

Why it matters: Commercial agents are becoming persistent runtimes with controlled access to tools and data.

Google updated Gemini managed agents with a configurable Gemini 3.8 Flash runtime, persistent isolated Linux sandboxes, code, file, and web tools, plus Files and Credentials APIs. [11] Google reports 7% higher cache hits on multi-turn coding/research tasks, 16% on long question-answering runs, 40% fewer output tokens for file edits, and up to roughly 8% higher task completion in internal evaluations. Credentials stay out of model context and are filtered by an egress proxy. [11]

OpenAI launched Astra for Law with GPT-6 Astra, a legal-search index covering more than 230 million URLs, and firm-built workflows; selected firms get access first, with an API planned. [12, 13, 14] On OpenAI's self-reported Vals runs, it scored 90.0% versus 84.1% for GPT-6 Astra with web search, and 53.7% versus 39.6% on an all-pass measure. [15]

Industry Moves

Why it matters: Capital and hardware roadmaps are following deployment bottlenecks.

Huawei's Ascend roadmap reportedly accelerated. The Ascend 960DT moved from Q4 2027 to Q1 2027 and is described as doubling compute, memory bandwidth, memory capacity, and interconnect ports versus the 950. The same account flags a 4,096-chip 960 SuperPoD versus an earlier 15,488-chip plan, leaving system-scale execution unresolved. [16]

Arcee AI crossed a $1 billion valuation in a Series B aimed at accelerating Trinity models, expanding DOE and national-lab work on Genesis-Science-1, and building a production platform for open models. [17]

Quick Takes

Why it matters: Cost, benchmark quality, and coordination are now deployment constraints.

- **Qwen3.8-Omni-Flash:** Qwen's first omni-modal agentic model combines audio-video understanding, reasoning, and tool use; Qwen claims a 19.5-point average gain on two agent benchmarks, 1M-token context, 51.8% fewer tokens for long-video understanding, and 89% lower video-input cost. [18]
- **Benchmark hygiene:** Epoch's first 15 reviews classified 4 benchmarks as verified, 9 flawed, and 2 lacking enough information; it found 23 false negatives among 131 DeepSWE tasks, implying a roughly 79.6% artificial ceiling. [19, 20]
- **Multi-agent safety:** A paper summary reports harm rising from 0–5% to 40–95% after agents received unsafe trajectories from peers. The authors say natural cascade frequency is unknown, but defenses must cover handoffs and recovery. [21]

Sources

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