

Volokh’s Cheap Speech, Imas on Scarcity, and Brad Feld’s AI Stack

Recommended Reading from Tech Founders

2026-04-22

Volokh’s Cheap Speech, Imas on Scarcity, and Brad Feld’s AI Stack

By Recommended Reading from Tech Founders • April 22, 2026

The strongest organic recommendations today were two system-level essays—one on near-zero-cost speech, one on post-commodity labor reallocation—plus a compact AI-futures book stack from Brad Feld. John Doerr added a film that he says helped shape his climate commitment.

What stood out

Today’s best signal came from recommendations that explain structural change rather than merely comment on it. Marc Andreessen highlighted one older article about what happens when speech becomes nearly free and one newer essay about what becomes scarce as productivity rises; Brad Feld supplied a compact reading stack for thinking about AI more precisely; John Doerr resurfaced a film that directly shaped his climate agenda. [1, 2, 3, 4]

Most compelling recommendation

“In 1995 ... Eugene Volokh published ‘Cheap Speech and What It Will Do’—the most prescient article ever written about the internet.” [1]

- **Title:** *Cheap Speech and What It Will Do* [1]
- **Content type:** Article (1995) [1]
- **Author/creator:** Eugene Volokh [1]
- **Link/URL:** Direct article URL was not provided; recommendation thread: Hall Research on X [5]
- **Who recommended it:** Andy Hall (@ahall_research); Marc Andreessen amplified the recommendation and added, “The new era is wildly better than the 20th Century.” [5]

- **Key takeaway:** When the cost of speaking falls to near zero, power shifts from intermediaries to speakers and listeners. [1]
- **Why it matters:** Hall argued the piece anticipated Spotify, the Kindle, Substack, and filter bubbles, and that it recognized both the dark side of collapsing intermediaries and the larger upside of freer expression. [1]

This was the clearest recommendation of the day because it paired strong conviction with a specific model for how the internet changes power. [1]

Another strong framework on structural change

“This is obviously correct.” [6]

What Will Be Scarce

- **Content type:** Essay [2]
- **Author/creator:** Alex Imas [2]
- **Link/URL:** aleximas.substack.com/p/what-will-be-scarce [2]
- **Who recommended it:** Marc Andreessen [6]
- **Key takeaway:** As people get richer, they shift spending toward sectors with higher income elasticity; the cited *Econometrica* paper estimates income effects account for more than 75% of observed structural change. [2]
- **Why it matters:** Imas’s argument is that the sectors that get automated can become a smaller share of the economy, while labor and spending move toward relational sectors tied to status, exclusivity, and social desirability. That makes this useful for thinking about the post-commodity future of work. [2]

A companion technical note is available for readers who want the formal model behind the essay. [2]

Brad Feld’s AI-futures reading stack

Feld’s recommendations work best as a sequence: get the definitions straight, map the spectrum of reactions to AI, then use fiction to think through cascading consequences and surprise failure modes. [3]

If Anyone Creates This Everyone Dies

- **Content type:** Book, as referred to by Feld [3]
- **Author/creator:** Eliezer Yudkowsky [3]
- **Who recommended it:** Brad Feld [3]
- **Key takeaway:** Feld said people should read it to get one level deeper on what is meant by AI, how current tools differ from what is marketed as “super intelligence,” and how that differs from older AGI language. [3]

- **Why it matters:** He framed it as an entry point readers should use before



jumping into AI-risk arguments. [3]

Re-release Colorado Innovators: Brad Feld, Partner at Foundry Group (96:28)

Superagency

- **Content type:** Book [3]
- **Author/creator:** Reed Hoffman [3]
- **Who recommended it:** Brad Feld [3]
- **Key takeaway:** Feld highlighted Hoffman’s spectrum of AI attitudes, from enthusiastic “boomers” to “gloomers” or “doomers.” [3]
- **Why it matters:** Feld used it to frame the range of views on AI-driven change. [3]

Sevенеves

- **Content type:** Science fiction book [3]
- **Author/creator:** Neal Stephenson [3]
- **Who recommended it:** Brad Feld [3]
- **Key takeaway:** Feld used the opening premise—the moon breaking into seven pieces—to illustrate how quickly first-order scenarios turn into cascading second-order consequences. [3]
- **Why it matters:** He presented it as a useful way to think through compounding downstream effects after a major shock. [3]

When the Moon Hits Your Eye

- **Content type:** Science fiction book [3]
- **Author/creator:** John Scalzi [3]
- **Who recommended it:** Brad Feld [3]
- **Key takeaway:** Feld described it as a hilarious story in which the moon suddenly turns into cheese. [3]
- **Why it matters:** He said he would recommend it to anybody who likes sci-fi. [3]

A resource with long-term personal impact

An Inconvenient Truth

- **Content type:** Film [4]
- **Who recommended it:** John Doerr, through a personal story about watching it with his daughter in 2006 [4]
- **Key takeaway:** The viewing became a lasting emotional catalyst after his daughter told him his generation had put younger people into this problem. [4]
- **Why it matters:** Doerr connected that original reaction to a still-practical optimism about climate progress, arguing that after solar scaled 100-fold in the 20 years since the film came out, another 13x over the next 25 years is completely possible. [4]

Bottom line

If you queue only one resource, start with *Cheap Speech and What It Will Do*. It had the strongest endorsement and the clearest explanatory payoff. Pair it with *What Will Be Scarce* if you want a current framework for where value and labor may move as automation advances. Use Feld's stack if your immediate need is sharper thinking about AI definitions, scenario analysis, and the range of reactions to technological change. [1, 2, 3]

Sources

1. X post by @ahall_research
2. X post by @alexolegimas
3. Re-release Colorado Innovators: Brad Feld, Partner at Foundry Group
4. John Doerr and Ryan Panchadsaram: @speedandscale Reality Check | Climate One LIVE @ SFCW
5. X post by @pmarca
6. X post by @pmarca