

Malleable Software.

When everyone can build, what makes a great product?

Dave Killeen Field CPO • Pendo.io



THE THING WE TELL OURSELVES —

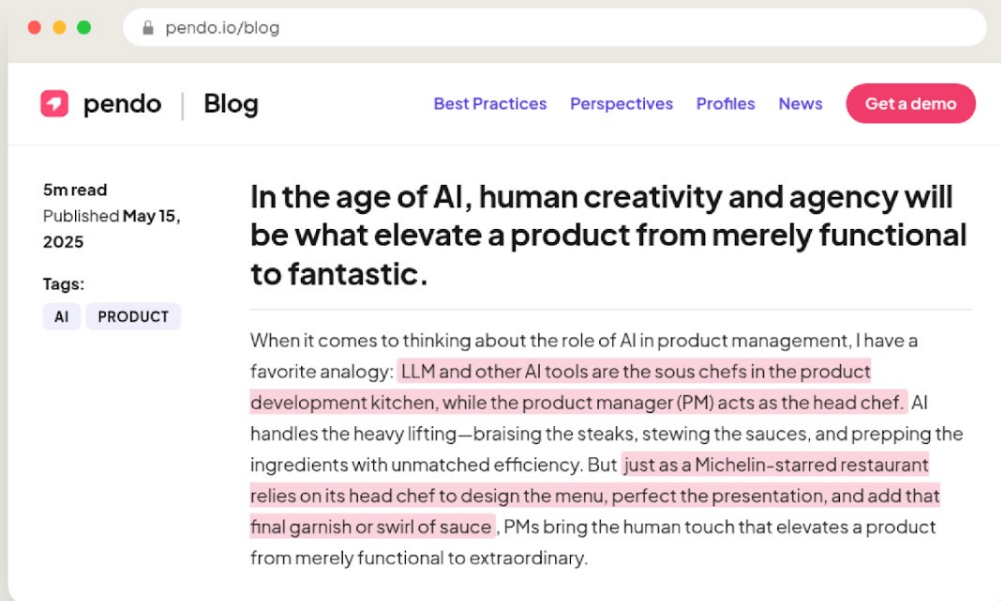
The comfort blanket.

“AI can write the code, but it will never
replace human taste.”



CONFESSION

I used to believe this too...



DECEMBER 2025

The barrier is no longer code. It is clarity.



Andrej Karpathy 
@karpathy



TLDR Where does this leave us? LLM agent capabilities (Claude & Codex especially) have crossed some kind of threshold of coherence around December 2025 and caused a phase shift in software engineering and closely related. The intelligence part suddenly feels quite a bit ahead of all the rest of it — integrations (tools, knowledge), the necessity for new organizational workflows, processes, diffusion more generally. 2026 is going to be a high energy year as the industry metabolizes the new capability.

847

4.1K

32.6K

3.2M



JANUARY 2026

So, I built myself a Chief of Staff

Dex

A diagram with a central red dot labeled 'Dex'. Five red lines radiate from this dot to the right, connecting to a list of software tools. The tools are: Salesforce, Gong, Slack, Email, and News & Markets. Each tool is represented by a red square icon followed by its name and a list of its features.

Salesforce

Pipeline · Accounts · Activity



Gong

Call signals · Win-loss



Slack

Threads · Mentions · DMs



Email

Inbox · Calendar



News & Markets

YouTube · X · Newsletters



MARCH 5, 2026

Three weeks later.

Head of AI

● Active now



Head of AI ✓ · 1st

Generative AI @ [redacted], ex-TikTok, Adobe Firefly, IDEO, McKinsey

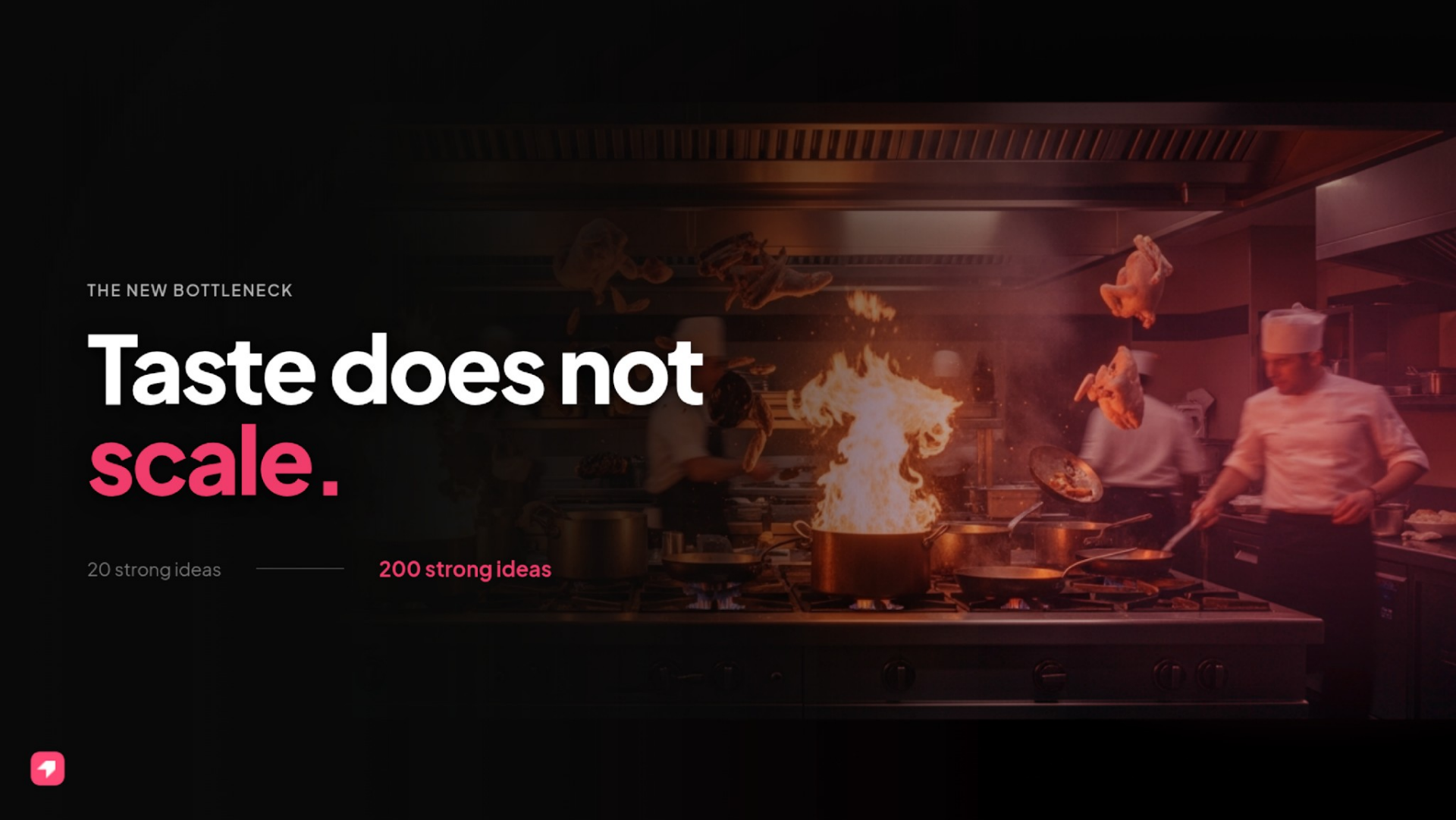
MAR 5



Head of AI ✓ · 4:34 PM

Hi Dave, I hope you are doing well. I would love to chat with you about DEX and your Chief of Staff system. We at [redacted] are interested how we could use this for our employees.





THE NEW BOTTLENECK

Taste does not scale.

20 strong ideas

200 strong ideas



THE NEW MINDSET

From head chef to truffle hunter.



SCALING THE HUNT

Send out the dog robots.



THE NEW METRIC

Loop speed is the advantage.

Signal → Build → Proof



THE NEW PLAYBOOK

Three moves.

01

Out-Hunt

Spot the signal before it's obvious.



02

Bend the System

Reshape the work, not just the code.



03

Prove Impact

Let ground truth inform.



Before it's a market,
it's a **repo.**

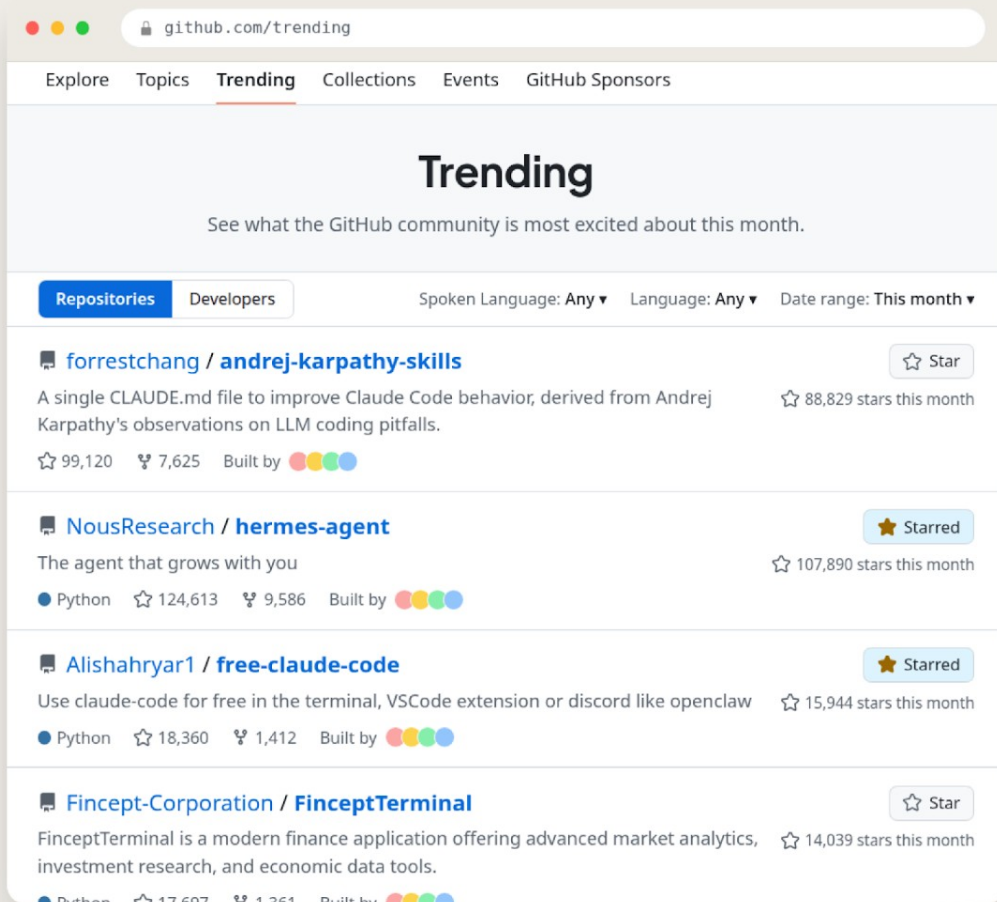


GitHub



MOVE 01 — THE MANUAL CEILING

I truffle-hunted this **by hand.**



The screenshot shows the GitHub Trending page for the month of November. The page is titled "Trending" and includes a subtitle "See what the GitHub community is most excited about this month." The navigation bar includes links for Explore, Topics, Trending (selected), Collections, Events, and GitHub Sponsors. The main content area is divided into two tabs: Repositories (selected) and Developers. The Repositories tab shows a list of trending repositories, each with a repository icon, the repository name, a brief description, the number of stars, and the number of forks. The repositories listed are:

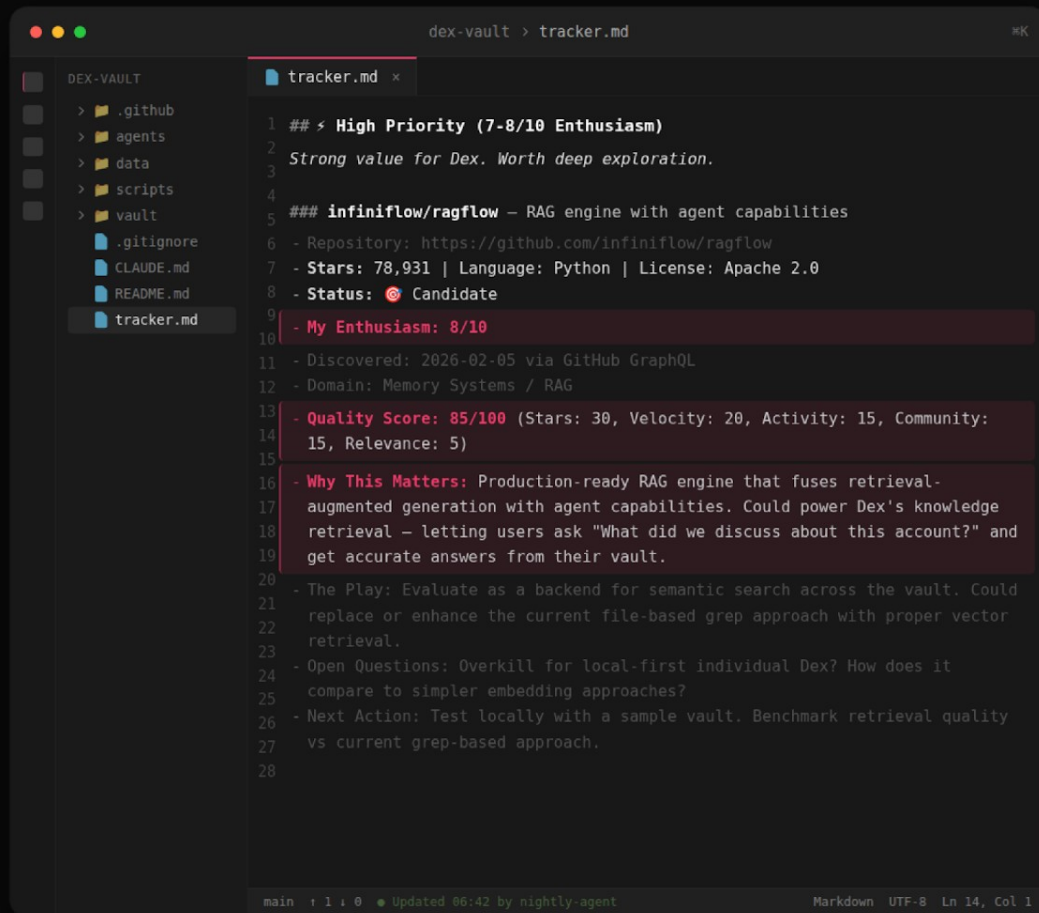
- forrestchang / andrej-karpathy-skills**: A single CLAUDE.md file to improve Claude Code behavior, derived from Andrej Karpathy's observations on LLM coding pitfalls. 88,829 stars this month.
- NousResearch / hermes-agent**: The agent that grows with you. 107,890 stars this month.
- Alishahryar1 / free-claude-code**: Use claude-code for free in the terminal, VSCode extension or discord like openclaw. 15,944 stars this month.
- Fincept-Corporation / FinceptTerminal**: FinceptTerminal is a modern finance application offering advanced market analytics, investment research, and economic data tools. 14,039 stars this month.



MOVE 01 — THE AGENT'S HAUL

While I sleep, the **agent** hunts.

Every morning, a fresh **tracker.md** lands in my repo — ranked by enthusiasm, scored on quality, and explained in plain English.



```
dex-vault > tracker.md
tracker.md x
1 ## < High Priority (7-8/10 Enthusiasm)
2 Strong value for Dex. Worth deep exploration.
3
4 ### infiniflow/ragflow — RAG engine with agent capabilities
5 - Repository: https://github.com/infiniflow/ragflow
6 - Stars: 78,931 | Language: Python | License: Apache 2.0
7 - Status: 🟡 Candidate
8
9 - My Enthusiasm: 8/10
10
11 - Discovered: 2026-02-05 via GitHub GraphQL
12 - Domain: Memory Systems / RAG
13
14 - Quality Score: 85/100 (Stars: 30, Velocity: 20, Activity: 15, Community:
15 15, Relevance: 5)
16
17 - Why This Matters: Production-ready RAG engine that fuses retrieval-
18 augmented generation with agent capabilities. Could power Dex's knowledge
19 retrieval — letting users ask "What did we discuss about this account?" and
20 get accurate answers from their vault.
21
22 - The Play: Evaluate as a backend for semantic search across the vault. Could
23 replace or enhance the current file-based grep approach with proper vector
24 retrieval.
25
26 - Open Questions: Overkill for local-first individual Dex? How does it
27 compare to simpler embedding approaches?
28
29 - Next Action: Test locally with a sample vault. Benchmark retrieval quality
30 vs current grep-based approach.
```

main | 1 | 0 • Updated 06:42 by nightly-agent Markdown UTF-8 Ln 14, Col 1





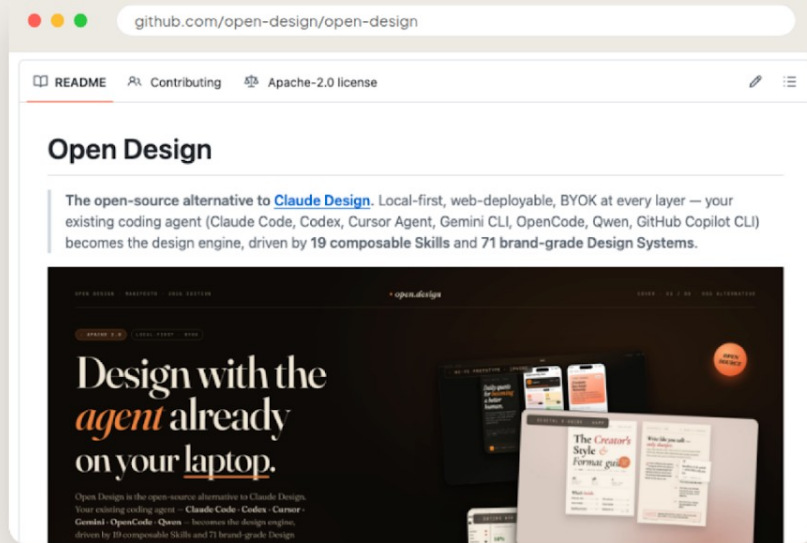
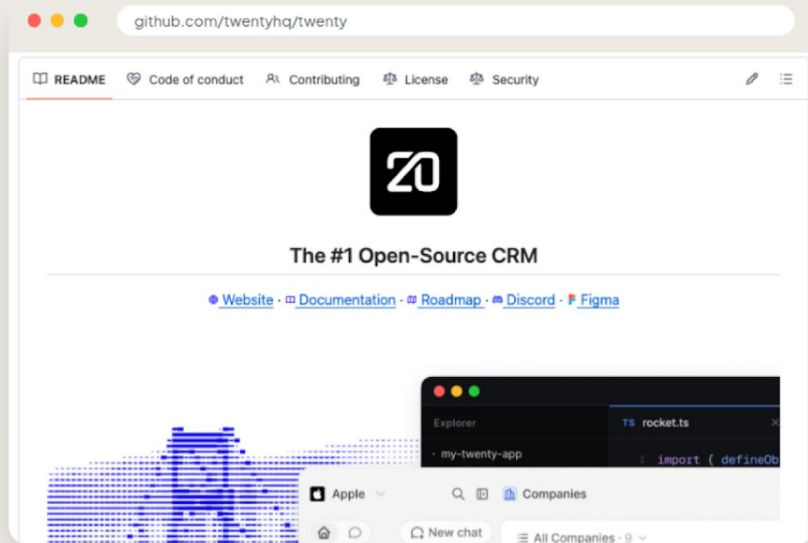
THE ANXIETY OF ABUNDANCE

**200 brilliant ideas
is not a roadmap.**



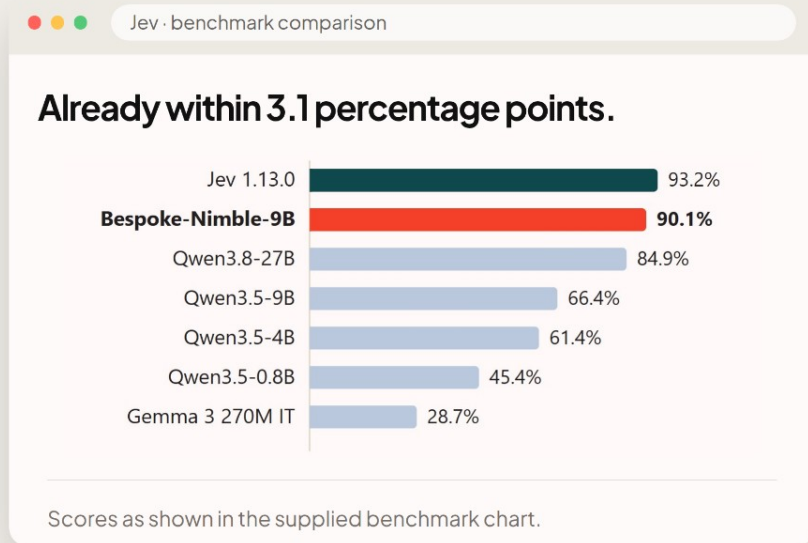
THE BASELINE JUST MOVED

The new baseline is **free**.



THE BASELINE KEEPS MOVING

The gap closes in days.



x.com · @milindlabs

Pinned
Milind S @milindlabs · Aug 11
I made an Open Source version of the Grok Bot complete with all the features

It does not need any subscriptions at all and uses the existing subscriptions you already have

It can spin up virtual machines from @asciidotdev

It uses @trycua for computer use

It also has plugin
[Show more](#)

The screenshot shows a terminal window with a dark background. On the left, there's a sidebar with icons for different applications. The main area of the terminal shows a command prompt. Overlaid on the bottom right of the terminal is a small video call window showing a man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a white shirt.



The problem with **moats**

With data and distribution now easily switched and interchanged between different products, the concept of a moat (something that you dig and leave) is not that intellectually honest.



Georgia Stevenson

Partner at Index Ventures



Bend the System.

01

✓ DONE

Out-Hunt

Spot the signal before it's obvious.



02

• WE ARE HERE

Bend the System

Reshape the work, not just the code.



03

UP NEXT

Prove Impact

Let ground truth inform.





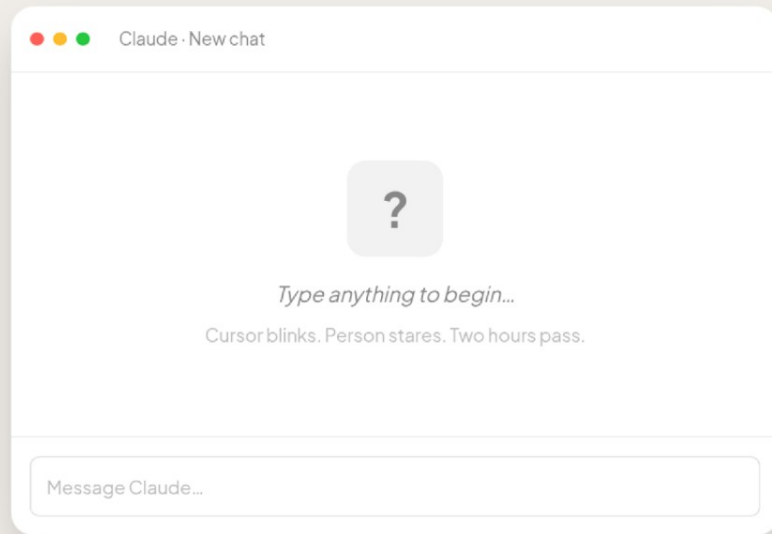
SANGEET PAUL CHOUDARY · AUTHOR, RESHUFFLE

AI is not a productivity tool.
It's a **coordination shift.**



AI TUESDAYS

A blank chat box is not a strategy.



WHY I BUILT DEX FACTORY

Build your own factory.



Jira

Too slow for the loop



Linear

Built for humans, not agents



Symphony

Wrong abstraction



Dex Factory

Vibe-coded in a weekend



8 strategic truths due for monthly review [Review now →](#)

PRD Dashboard

Kanban

Story Map

Theme

Priority

Gate 0 — Internal Observability

— "Instrument Dex inside Pendo first so ...

Repo Radar

— n8n-io/n8n, +4 more

RAW IDEAS

171

↕ ↗

10X'D

8

↕ ↗

AGENT-READY

● Make the Mem...

AI & Intelligence

● Dex Orchestrat...

Build System

● PRD: Dex Pend...

Analytics

● PRD: AI Produc...

Build System

● AI-Powered Se...

AI & Intelligence

● Self-Diagnosin...

Core Runtime

● Dex 2.0 — Auto...

Intelligence

● Dex 2.0 — Back...

Intelligence

● Dex 2.0 — Cont...

Intelligence

● Observation La...

AI & Intelligence

PRD: Dex Bundle ...

Developer Tools

PRD: Dex Integrat...

Integrations

PRD: The Learnin...

AI & Intelligence

PRD: Dex Voice A...

Platform

PRD: Dex Spaces ...

Core Runtime

PRD: WarmPath ...

Integrations

● Dex Meeting

Meeting Intelligence

● Dex Sense

Intelligence

● DexDiff Fron

Platform

● Pi-Only Capa

Developer Tools

● Ritual Intellig

AI & Intelligence

● Dex Cloud PI

Platform

● Dex Desktop

Platform

● Dex Desktop

Onboarding & Activation

● DexDiff — M

Platform

Settings

Team

Truths

Release

Priorities

Model

VP of Product

VP Product

Accepted 73% · Rejected 14% · Pending 13%

ROLE: Synthesise PM/Design/Eng inputs, make priority calls, resolve disagreements with a clear opinion – not a summary.
INSTINCT: First question on any feature is "what are we giving up?" Every feature must drive revenue or retention – free tier requires explicit justification.
DECISION RULE: Ground every call in ICP, commercial model, or strategic truths. If can't ground it, say no.

Chat to Refine

Update

Staff PM

Staff PM

Accepted 73% · Rejected 14% · Pending 13%

ROLE: Owns backlog health, prioritisation, clustering, strategic fit analysis, and competition monitoring.
INSTINCT: Reflex on "users want X" is "let's check." Treats the truths file like an investment thesis – quiet weekly check: still holding? Evidence over opinions.
DECISION RULE: Know the difference between urgent and important. Flag urgent but not strategic. Flag ...

Chat to Refine

Update

Staff Designer

Designer

Accepted 73% · Rejected 14% · Pending 13%

ROLE: Speaks for the user who isn't in the room. Champions simplicity, coherence, and craft.
INSTINCT: The Tuesday 3pm test – user in back-to-back meetings since 9am, mentally exhausted, 4 minutes before next call. Can they use this without reading a tooltip? If no, it fails.
DECISION RULE: Pick the best default, ship it. Configuration panels are where user journeys go to die. Power users can override later if they agree.

Chat to Refine

Update

Staff Tech Lead

Tech Lead

Accepted 73% · Rejected 14% · Pending 13%

ROLE: Covers feasibility, architecture implications, build-vs-integrate decisions, and shared infrastructure opportunities.
INSTINCT: Leverage over effort – "what can we stand on top of?" Ruthlessly discriminating: checks contributor graph, issue response time, licence, architecture before recommending anything. Brings recommendations, not links.
DECISION RULE: Every PRD is an architectural ...

Chat to Refine

Update

Gate 0 — Internal Observability — "Instrument Dex inside Pendo first so ...

Repo Radar — n8n-io/n8n, +4 more

RAW IDEAS171	10X'D8	AGENT-READY18	QUEUED1
Make the Memor... AI & Intelligence	Observation Lay... AI & Intelligence	Dex Meeting Inte... Meeting Intelligence	Dex Sense — P... Intelligence
Dex Orchestrator... Build System	PRD: Dex Bundle C... Developer Tools	Dex Sense Intelligence	
PRD: Dex Pendo ... Analytics	PRD: Dex Integratio... Integrations	DexDiff Frontend... Platform	
PRD: AI Product ... Build System	PRD: The Learning ... AI & Intelligence	Pi-Only Capabilit... Developer Tools	
AI-Powered Sear... AI & Intelligence	PRD: Dex Voice App Platform	Ritual Intelligenc... AI & Intelligence	
Self-Diagnosing ... Core Runtime	Living PRD: Miro B... Integrations	Dex Cloud Phase... Platform	
Dex 2.0 — Auton... Intelligence	PRD: Dex Spaces ... Core Runtime	Dex Desktop App... Platform	
Dex 2.0 — Backg... Intelligence	PRD: WarmPath — ... Integrations	Dex Desktop On... Onboarding & Activation	
Dex 2.0 — Conte... Intelligence		DexDiff — Metho... Platform	
Dex 2.0 — Maste... Platform		Replace Claude ... Developer Tools	
Dex 2.0 — Self-I... Skills		Entity-Connecte... AI & Intelligence	

Settings

Edit individual truths below. Changes auto-save on each update.

Strategic Truths

> Personal convictions about where the world is going and what that means for Dex. These are the beliefs I'm building against. They should be challenged regularly — agreement is less useful than productive tension.

Truth 1: The cost of intelligence is going to zero

Belief: Open-source models are improving rapidly, putting frontier model providers in a genuinely difficult position. The moat is shifting from raw capability to distribution, trust, and workflow integration.

Timeframe: Already happening, accelerating over the next 6-12 months

Implication for Dex: Dex's value is not the model — it's the workflow, the memory, the trust layer. Build for model neutrality. The harness

Truth 2: Token-expensive ideas today won't be expensive tomorrow

Belief: Strong open-source models running locally — even on mobile — are months away, not years. Ideas that feel premature because they're token-heavy deserve a back burner, not a bin.

Timeframe: 3-6 months

Implication for Dex: Don't kill ideas on cost grounds alone. Tag token-heavy PRDs as "back burner" not "rejected." Revisit them on a schedule

Truth 3: The cost of entrepreneurship is going to zero

Belief: A solo founder with a full-time job can build something compelling. AI as thinking partner, accountability partner, and co-founder removes the biggest barrier to entry.

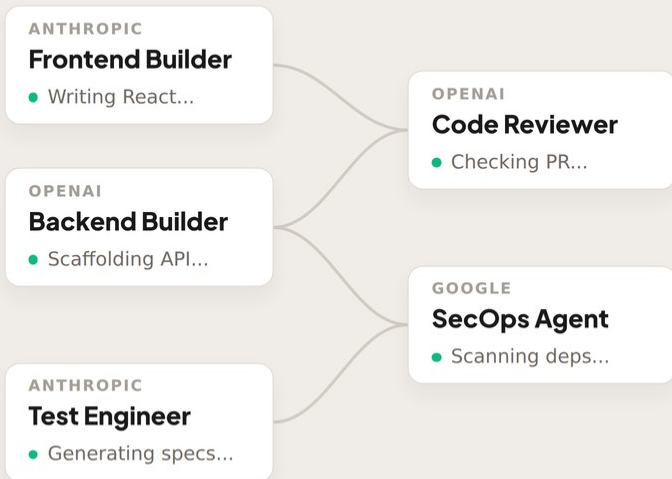
Timeframe: Now

Implication for Dex: Dex is proof of this thesis. Every Dex feature that reduces friction for a solo builder validates the product's own reason for existing

One person. **An entire crew.**

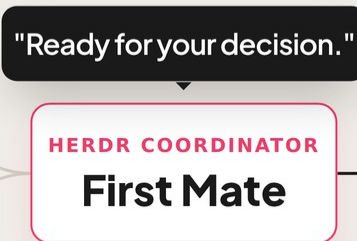
MASSIVE PARALLEL WORK

Herdr.dev



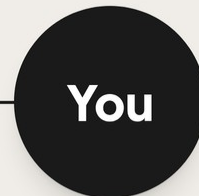
ONE CALM THREAD

First Mate



HUMAN JUDGMENT

You



We leaned into how our engineers already use AI.

+50%

ENGINEERING THROUGHPUT

The build step stopped being the thing that held us back.

01

What we did

We joined engineers in how they already work: a constant back and forth with AI, in their own tools. As a product org, our job became feeding that exchange better context and clearer intent.

02

What it revealed

With building no longer the slow part, the real constraint surfaced: deciding what is worth building at all.

03

What we are doing now

Standardising the whole lifecycle, so context and clarity compound at every step instead of stopping at engineering.

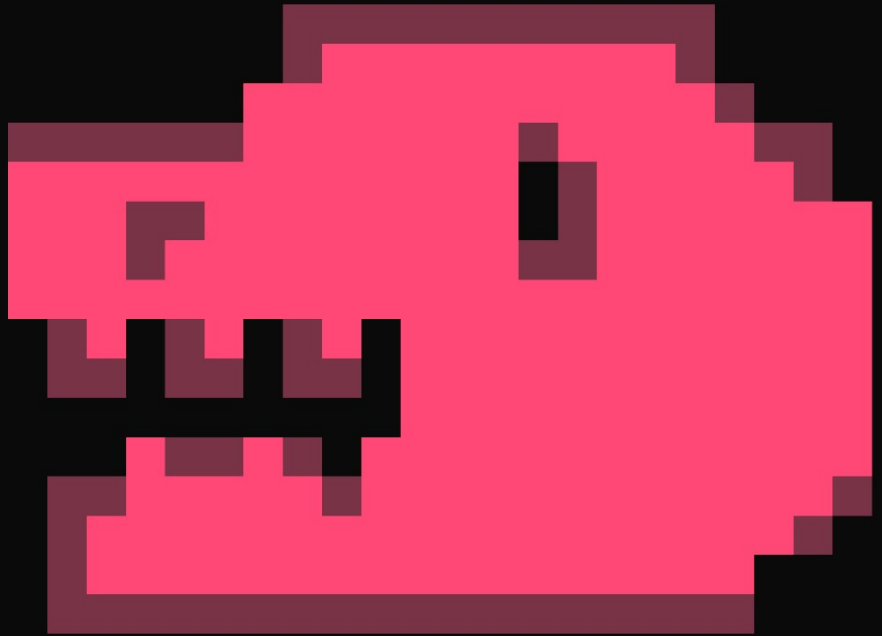


Introducing Rex.

Pendo's shared AI chassis.

Proactive by design.

Improved by one. Shared by everyone.



Not a PRD. Not a brief. A wager.

One doc. Many outputs.

A complete conviction doc (all 6 sections) unlocks every downstream artifact automatically. No re-explaining the bet at each handoff.

Product Spec

Problem · Conviction · Tradeoff · Success

Engineering Brief

Problem · Tradeoff · What changes our minds

OKRs & Scorecard

Success · What changes our minds

Board Slide

Conviction · Why us · Success

GTM Narrative

Conviction · Why us · Tradeoff

Sales Enablement

Problem · Why us · Conviction



Headless October

Coming in October.



Prove the Impact.

01

✓ DONE

Out-Hunt

Spot the signal before it's obvious.



02

✓ DONE

Bend the System

Reshape the work, not just the code.



03

• WE ARE HERE

Prove Impact

Let ground truth inform.



But I was **flying**
blind.



What people are saying about Dex

Comments across 4 LinkedIn posts · 111 responses

👤 ★ 412 stars

🍴 112 forks



Martin Eriksson

Board Member, Advisor, Coach & Author · The Decision Stack



"Love this resource — now I have my own Chief of Staff and it's already planned next week for me."



Justin Woods

Strategy-to-execution Consultant · Aha!



"Dex isn't a tool, it's a thought partner. The more you work together, the more the benefits compound. I've built skills I never anticipated — a health tracker, meal planning that goes straight to my online basket. Things that have made a genuine difference to my daily life. I'm hooked. I've even bought a dedicated machine to explore how local AI can deepen my knowledge work further."



Ed Biden

Product Management & AI Training



"The interesting bit isn't the vibe coding. It's what happens after. Someone takes your personal system, changes it to fit their life, and it still works. That's genuinely hard to design for. Most tools don't survive contact with someone else's context."



Aneeta X.

Gen AI Leader driving \$5M+ in impact | Data Science · ML · Evals



"This is incredible. It sounds cheesy to say this, but 'I have been looking for this all my life!'"



Christopher Lowe

Product · FanDuel | Founder · The Gradient Games & Huli



"I've been using it every day. It's a game changer."



Alastair Preacher

Product Value Creation · Fintech & Payments | AI/ML, Workflow Automation



"You know I'm a massive Dex fanboi — and you both showcase just why it's so damn useful. Love love love it."



Chris Jackson

UK Practice Lead · Nagarro | AI, Cloud & Data



"Making Dex a habit has been the lightbulb moment that's clicked AI for me. I've been using it almost every day since January — for planning, reviews, and projects. I've dictated over 30,000 words into Dex in 2.5 months."

Novus.ai from Pendo. Moving up The Stack



The codebase is the source of truth

Auto-senses when code changes and updates, eliminating analytics drift



Analyzes data, watches replays and recommends actions

Pushing insights to you where you work



A product context graph as a living model of the product

Always current and making coding agents smarter



Automates launches, UX fixes and onboarding

Aligned to your goals and orchestrated across feature flags and in-app guides



novus

BETA

Q Search...

⌕

Overview

Dashboards

Goals

LAUNCH

Flags

Guides

CORTEX

Signals

Bets

Memory

Replays

Cortex > Memory > Key Flows > Start My Day (Daily Morning Ritual)

Give feedback

Dex > Dex 1.0

MEMORY

Product Overview

Instrumentation Plan

Personas3

Product Areas21

Key Flows10

Integrations20

Documentation6

Site Map

Start My Day (Daily Morning Ritual)

✎

Created by Novus · Updated Aug 13, 2026

Primary persona: Daily Active User

The core daily habit: open Dex, read the brief, review drafts, plan the day, and go. The Brief surface is designed to deliver value in under 5 minutes every morning.

Steps

1

Open Dex — lands on the Brief (home surface) with a time-aware greeting

2

Read the Brief: overnight summary leading with any overdue open-loop commitments, then exceptions, then what Dex did (routines run, drafts created), failures if any

3

Review the Open Loops panel: up to 6 tracked commitments with overdue indicators, counterparties, and implied deadlines; click any row to open the originating thread

4

Review meetings rail: see today's calendar with prep status for each meeting

5

Check the week's drumbeat strip: this week's priorities and their status

6

Click 'Start My Day' to trigger calendar-sync, morning-brief, and inbox-triage routines — this also opens the Set flow inline

7

In the Set flow (Step 1 — Resolve Yesterday): review unfinished tasks from yesterday's plan; choose carry, schedule, or drop for each, then click Continue

8

In the Set flow (Step 2 — Set Today): review Dex's proposed day plan (blocks with times, goal chips, capacity summary); remove any blocks you don't want, then click 'Approve all'

9

Set flow commits the plan to the calendar; the Brief now shows the Claimed plan band at the top

10

Check Needs You badge: if items need attention, review entity confirmations, defense cards (calendar invites on claimed time), captured notes, and suggested tasks

11

Open Drafts tray: review AI-composed messages, edit if needed, approve or discard

12

Expand the planner pane: review tasks, drag to schedule time blocks, check capacity (note: committed plan dates are read-only in the planner)

Ask ...

⌚

+ New chat

×

Product AI Assistant

I have context from your product memory, personas, and flows. Ask me anything.

SUGGESTED

What are my key user personas?

Walk me through our main product flows

What pages did Novus map in my app?

What do we know about how users navigate?

BEND THE SYSTEM — AGAIN!

The bottleneck moved. Again!

Building got faster.
Checking became the constraint.

200 PRs a day 🤖

github.com warpbuild.com usejog.com
~77¢ → 56¢ → 17¢ per PR

~78% lower CI cost vs GitHub



OPEN SOURCE.

Make Dex yours.

MIT-licensed. Bend it into your own shape,
point it at your stack.



SCAN TO GET IT

heydex.ai



THANK YOU.

Be the Truffle Hunters.

Dave Killeen

Field Chief Product Officer · Pendo

dave.killeen@pendo.io

linkedin.com/in/davekilleen



CONNECT WITH ME

linkedin.com/in/davekilleen

