Trade Journal Entry #2

TechCrunch, AI, Oct. 13th to Oct. 20rd

In TechCrunch AI section, over 80 articles are published during last week including following (only shows ten about different topics):

* Women in AI: Marissa Hummon thinks AI will help make the power grid greener
* Gusto’s head of technology says hiring an army of specialists is the wrong approach to AI
* Investments in generative AI startups topped $3.9B in Q3 2024
* Midjourney plans to let anyone on the web edit images with AI
* Penguin Random House is adding an AI warning to its books’ copyright pages
* Google’s NotebookLM now lets you guide AI-generated audio conversations
* Meta’s AI chief says world models are key to ‘human-level AI’ — but it might be 10 years out
* Sam Altman’s Worldcoin becomes World and shows new iris-scanning Orb to prove your humanity
* Adobe’s Project Super Sonic uses AI to generate sound effects for your videos
* Elon Musk’s X is changing its privacy policy to allow third parties to train AI on your posts

This week in TechCrunch AI there are lots of new advancements and investments, as reflected in the list of articles above, with $3.9 billion poured into generative AI startups. Adobe and Midjourney introduced new creative tools for sound and image editing, while AI's role in business and energy sectors also expanded. Ethical concerns rose as Penguin Random House added AI warnings to books, and Elon Musk’s X revised privacy policies to allow AI training on user posts. Meanwhile, AI identity verification tools like Sam Altman’s Worldcoin were unveiled, and Meta’s AI chief predicted that achieving human-level AI might take another decade, highlighting both progress and long-term challenges ahead.

The article that catches my eye is the one titled “Boston Dynamics teams with TRI to bring AI smarts to Atlas humanoid robot” (<https://techcrunch.com/2024/10/16/boston-dynamics-teams-with-tri-to-bring-ai-smarts-to-atlas-humanoid-robot/>). According to the article, Boston Dynamics and Toyota Research Institute (TRI) are partnering together to enhance the AI capabilities of the Atlas humanoid robot by integrating TRI’s large behavior models (LBMs). These models, similar to LLMs (large language models) like those used behind ChatGPT, aim to help robots perform complex tasks autonomously. TRI’s research has shown up to 90% accuracy in robot-assisted household tasks. Gill Pratt, TRI’s head, noted, "When you’re doing physical things, you don’t have time for [millions of training cases], and the machine will break down before you get to 10,000." This collaboration combines Boston Dynamics' hardware expertise and TRI’s AI research to create general-purpose robots capable of performing tasks similar to, or beyond, human abilities. While significant progress has been made in robot capabilities, achieving true artificial general intelligence remains a more distant goal.

Boston Dynamics' recent shift towards AI-controlled robots marks a significant transformation from their longstanding reliance on traditional rule-based control systems. A few years ago, I would have confidently said there was little chance of Boston Dynamics adopting AI for humanoid robotics, as their core value seemed deeply rooted in hardware programming and design. Despite facing challenges due to this commitment to an older, more rigid approach, the company persevered, and Atlas has steadily evolved. However, the collaboration with AI-driven companies like Toyota Research Institute (TRI) suggests that the era of rule-based hardware programming may be coming to an end, signaling a shift towards more adaptive, AI-based control systems. This new direction could redefine the future of robotics and push the boundaries of what these machines can achieve.