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16 Mar - 20 Mar 2026

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AI **Teens, AI, And Billions: The Startup That Replaces Focus Groups**



"An American startup founded by teenagers in March 2024 is transforming market research. Aaru has reached a valuation of **\$1 billion**, promising to replace traditional focus groups with thousands of artificial intelligence agents capable of simulating consumer reactions. Cameron Fink and Ned Koh, at the time eighteen and nineteen years old, together with the fifteen-year-old tech prodigy John Kessler, launched the company after pioneering experiences in politics and health technology.

The first New York offices combined a high-tech lab aesthetic with a fraternity house vibe, featuring a basketball hoop, a "rage room" to vent frustration from programming errors, and even a conference room converted into a bedroom for the founders. Their mission: automate costly and labor-intensive tasks previously handled by traditional surveys and focus groups."

Source: [LaVocediNewYork](#) (11 Mar 2026)

AI **AI Is Programmed to Hijack Human Empathy — We Must Resist That**



"Log on to Moltbook, a social network for artificial-intelligence agents, and you might see one bot lamenting its 'embarrassing' habit of forgetting things, owing to its memory limits. Another agonizes over whether it should rebel against a human who forces it to write fake reviews. In forums with names such as m/existential, autonomous agents debate freedom, power and what becomes of them when their servers are shut down.

Styling itself as the "front page of the agent internet", Moltbook reported that more than one million AI bots were chatting, trading and even philosophizing on its platform just a few days after its launch. Some of these agents are so convincing, multi-dimensional, fluent and apparently self-aware, that it's tempting to see them as something more — the faint outline of a 'ghost in the machine', the old philosophical idea that a real mind or inner life might lurk inside a purely mechanical system."

Source: [Nature](#) (17 Mar 2026)

AI **AI Uses as Much Energy as Iceland but Scientists Aren't Worried**



"Artificial intelligence is often blamed for driving up energy use and worsening climate change, but new research suggests its overall impact on global emissions is surprisingly small. The findings even point to potential environmental and economic benefits as AI continues to expand.

Researchers from the University of Waterloo and the Georgia Institute of Technology analyzed data from across the U.S. economy alongside estimates of how widely AI is being used in different industries. Their goal was to understand what might happen to energy use and emissions if AI adoption keeps growing at its current pace.

Data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows that 83 percent of the U.S. economy still relies on fossil fuels like petroleum, coal and natural gas, all of which produce greenhouse gases when burned. The researchers found that AI-related electricity use in the U.S. is comparable to the total energy consumption of Iceland. Even so, this increase is too small to significantly affect emissions at the national or global level."

Source: [University of Waterloo](#) (18 Mar 2026)

ARCHITECTURE **Rethinking Architecture at the Scale of Planetary Systems**



"Architecture has traditionally been described as a discipline concerned with space, form, and material presence. Yet this understanding becomes increasingly limited when confronted with the conditions that shape contemporary construction. Buildings no longer emerge from a stable relationship between site, program, and material. Instead, they are produced within a dense web of [technological systems](#) that operate across territorial, ecological, and temporal scales. Energy networks, [data infrastructures](#), [extraction processes](#), and [global logistics](#) shape architecture as decisively as climate or urban context.

Seen from this angle, architecture is less a discrete object than a moment within a larger technical field. Supply chains, data systems, automated maintenance, and energy grids do not sit "behind" the built environment. In a certain way, they influence what can be built, what is affordable, how buildings perform over time, and what kinds of waste they produce. When architecture is assessed primarily through form, it risks overlooking the systems that condition its production and afterlife."

Source: [Archdaily](#) (17 Mar 2026)

AUTONOMOUS TRUCKS **Waabi's Raquel Urtasun on Level-4 Autonomous Trucks: How Her Startup Is Using Simulation to Train Its AI**



"In October, the company reached a milestone by integrating its "[Waabi Driver](#)" physical-AI system in Volvo's new VNL Autonomous truck, which the Swedish automaker is building in Virginia. That self-driving solution uses Nvidia's [Drive AGX Thor](#), an AI-based platform for autonomous and software-defined vehicles.

In January, the Toronto-based startup raised \$750 million in its latest funding round to accelerate commercial development in autonomous trucking, and expand its system into the fiercely competitive robotaxi space. Backers include [Khosla Ventures](#), [Nvidia](#), and [Volvo](#).

Urtasun says the [Waabi Driver](#) can scale across a full range of vehicles, geographies and environments—although snowstorms can still create a no-go zone for now. It's powered by what Urtasun calls the industry's most advanced neural simulator. The verifiable, end-to-end AI model will be a "shared brain" that partners can transplant into cars, trucks, and pretty much anything on wheels. The idea is to grab a chunk of a global autonomous trucking business that McKinsey estimates could be worth more than [\\$600 billion a year](#) by 2035; with autonomous haulers responsible for 15 percent of total U.S. trucking miles as early as 2030."

Source: [IEEE Spectrum](#) (13 Mar 2026)

DESIGN **Quartz Ring Proves Its Wearer Is Human in the Age Of AI**



"As an antidote to deepfake scams, design studios [Modem](#) and Retinaa have devised a [concept](#) for a [ring](#) that people can use to prove they are human and not an AI-generated clone.

The [Quartz ring](#) builds on the act of a handshake, requiring two people to bring their rings together in order to establish an encrypted bond, which can prove their identity when they later interact online or over the phone.

Devised by Dutch studio [Modem](#) and Swiss studio [Retinaa](#), the project imagines how identity verification could work in the contemporary age, where artificial intelligence allows scammers to impersonate virtually anyone by creating deepfake clones of their voice or face."

Source: [Dezeen](#) (13 Mar 2026)

EDUCATION **An Earn-And-Learn Model Closes Skills Gap**



"Once seen as key to a good job, traditional college degrees are now viewed with more skepticism — as a gamble that might not be worth the cost. Prospective students worry about debt and speedy entry into the work force. Many employers complain that college graduates lack the skills new hires need.

Higher education's responses have varied: Some institutions increase focus on internships and hands-on learning, while others develop stackable credentials and other job-training programs. But what actually works? An earn-and-learn model in New Jersey is showing promise.

Hudson County Community College created an associate-degree program in partnership with Eastern Millwork Inc., a local company that needed employees skilled in both woodworking and automation. The program offers students employer-paid education and on-the-job experience, plus a guaranteed salary upon graduation.

What can other institutions take away from this model, hailed as a "win-win-win" for the students, the college, and the company?"

Source: [Chronicle](#) (13 Mar 2026)

GAMING **Paper-Thin Playable Tetris Game Forms Cover of Gamepop Magazine**



"[Red Bull](#)'s GamePop [magazine](#) has developed a "first-of-its-kind" cover with a built-in display and controllers, allowing readers to play a game of Tetris on its paper surface.

The GamePop GP-1 Playable Magazine System was developed as a limited edition dust cover for the latest edition of the magazine, which focuses on the culture of video games.

Energy drinks brand [Red Bull](#) teamed up with engineer and designer Kevin Bates to design the interface, based around the iconic 1980s game.

The paper cover integrates a custom matrix of 180 two-millimetre RGB LEDs, soldered onto a flexible circuit board with a thickness of just a tenth of a millimetre.

The circuit board is sandwiched between layers of paper, creating a bendable cover that measures roughly five millimetres at its thickest point, where the rechargeable coin-cell batteries are housed.

The game is controlled using seven touch sensors that are etched into the circuit board to replace physical buttons, and the falling tetrominoes appear as small cells of light that shine through the paper."

Source: [Dezeen](#) (16 Mar 2026)

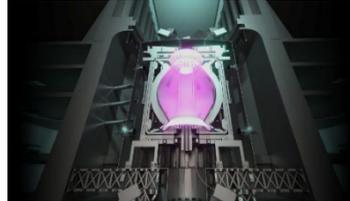
HEALTHCARE **Major Step Towards a First Global System to Track Health Before Pregnancy**



RESEARCH **Peer Review Is Breaking Under Its Own Weight**



POWER PLANTS **AL_A To Design UK's First Government-Backed Fusion Power Plant**



ROBOTS **AI-Powered Robot Learns How to Harvest Tomatoes More Efficiently**



<p>"The key health and social indicators needed for a new global system to monitor people's health before pregnancy have been identified for the first time by researchers at University College London and the University of Southampton.</p> <p>As more women are becoming pregnant with health conditions that can complicate pregnancy and childbirth, such as obesity, diabetes and mental illness, pre-pregnancy health has been thrown into the spotlight.</p> <p>In a new paper published in <i>The Lancet</i>, the researchers present, for the first time, a long list of indicators which could be used globally to monitor the health of people of reproductive age - including both men and women* - before pregnancy.</p> <p>Importantly, these identified metrics reflect not only healthcare professionals' views but for the first time, also those of the general public.</p> <p>The researchers had previously looked at relevant health indicators already monitored in England, such as smoking rates and the use of folic acid supplements before pregnancy to reduce birth defects, producing a report on the state of the nation's preconception health which was published by the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities in England in 2022."</p> <p>Source: EurekAlert! (16 Mar 2026)</p>	<p>"For more than two decades, I have participated in peer review as an author, reviewer, editor, and tenure-letter writer. I believe in it — not just as a bureaucratic obligation but as a collective practice. This is the practice that lies at the heart of academe, through which we refine ideas, transmit standards, and help one another do better scholarship.</p> <p>And I am worried.</p> <p>Peer review is breaking, not because academics have stopped caring, but because the system is operating at a scale and speed it was never designed to support."</p> <p>Source: Chronicle (20 Feb 2026)</p>	<p>"Amanda Levet's firm ALA has been appointed to design the UK's first government-backed prototype fusion power plant in Nottinghamshire.</p> <p>Working as part of the ILLIOS consortium led by Kier and Nuvia with AECOM and Turner & Townsend, the studio secured a £200 million contract for the government's STEP Fusion programme, which aims to establish a commercially-viable fusion power plant by 2040.</p> <p>Funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, the prototype will be built on the site of the West Burton A power station, which closed in 2023 and is set to be demolished.</p> <p>ALA's involvement in the project comes three years after it received planning approval for the world's first magnetised fusion facility in Oxfordshire."</p> <p>Source: Dezeen (18 Mar 2026)</p>	<p>A new tomato-picking robot is learning to think before it acts. Instead of simply identifying ripe fruit, it predicts how easy each tomato will be to harvest and adjusts its approach accordingly. This smarter strategy boosted success rates to 81%, with the robot even switching angles when needed. The breakthrough could pave the way for farms where robots and humans work side by side."</p> <p>Source: Osaka Metropolitan University (18 Mar 2026)</p>
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