

STATE16 / SEPTEMBER EDITION



PHYSICAL AI COMMUNITY



The real-world test

New models, new machines and a sharper question: what holds up when a robot leaves the demo?

SEPTEMBER
2026
ISSUE 03

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Inside September

The research, companies and machines moving Physical AI into practical work.

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**FROM THE
FOUNDER**

Physical AI becomes important when a machine can be trusted with a real task, not only a striking demonstration. This month brought genuine progress: models are beginning to combine prediction with action, while robot makers are designing for the constraints of people, floors and working hours. Our work at STATE16 is to help those systems earn their place in the world—with evidence, clear boundaries and the courage to test what fails.

Dr. Barak Or / Founder & CEO, STATE16

6,400h

OpenWAM pretraining data. [Paper ↗](#)

56%

Figure's reported zero-shot test success, up from 9%. [Figure ↗](#)

65k h

Operating experience behind Digit 5, per Agility. [Agility ↗](#)

\$400m

D-Robotics Series C announced in Hong Kong. [Release ↗](#)

\$100m

Maven Robotics' industrial Series A. [Release ↗](#)

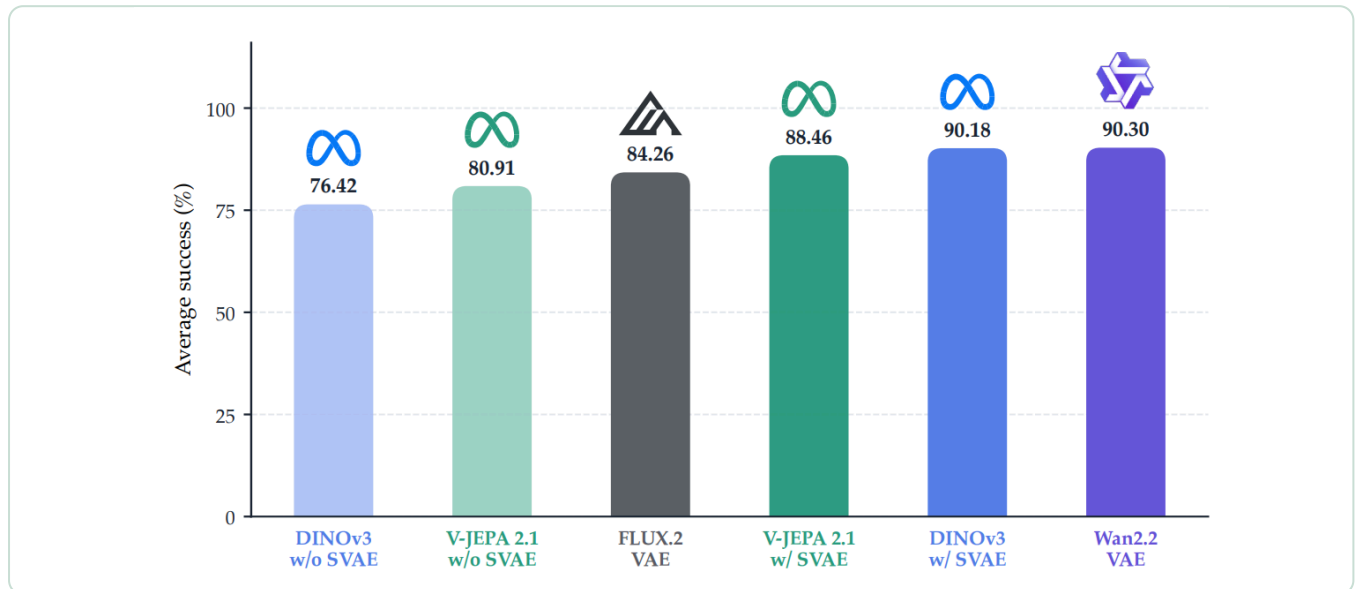
22–24

ROSCon returns in Toronto this September. [Program ↗](#)

MODELS / ENGINEERING

Models that act

The strongest September work narrows the gap between a model's prediction and a robot's next move.



OpenWAM-Study / visual representations; author-reported average success.

[Read the paper ↗](#)

OPEN RESEARCH STACK

OpenWAM opens the stack

OpenWAM releases models, data recipes and evaluation tools after pretraining on roughly 6,400 hours of human and robot experience.

6,400
HOURS

[✕ Read paper](#)

WORLD-ACTION LEARNING

GE-Act scales manipulation

AgiBot reports higher held-out task success as co-training grows from 300 to 30,000 hours; the results are author-reported, not independent benchmarks.

44.1%
G1-OP RESULT

[✕ Read paper](#)

HYBRID CONTROL

SkipVLA keeps the planner

A classical planner handles free-space motion while a VLA stays on contact-rich steps. Authors report up to 2.5× faster completion at equal task success.

2.5×
UP TO

[✕ Read paper](#)

GE-ACT 2.0 / G1-OP TASK SUCCESS

AUTHOR-REPORTED



The source paper reports this result on held-out G1-OP tasks; the bars share a 0–100% scale.

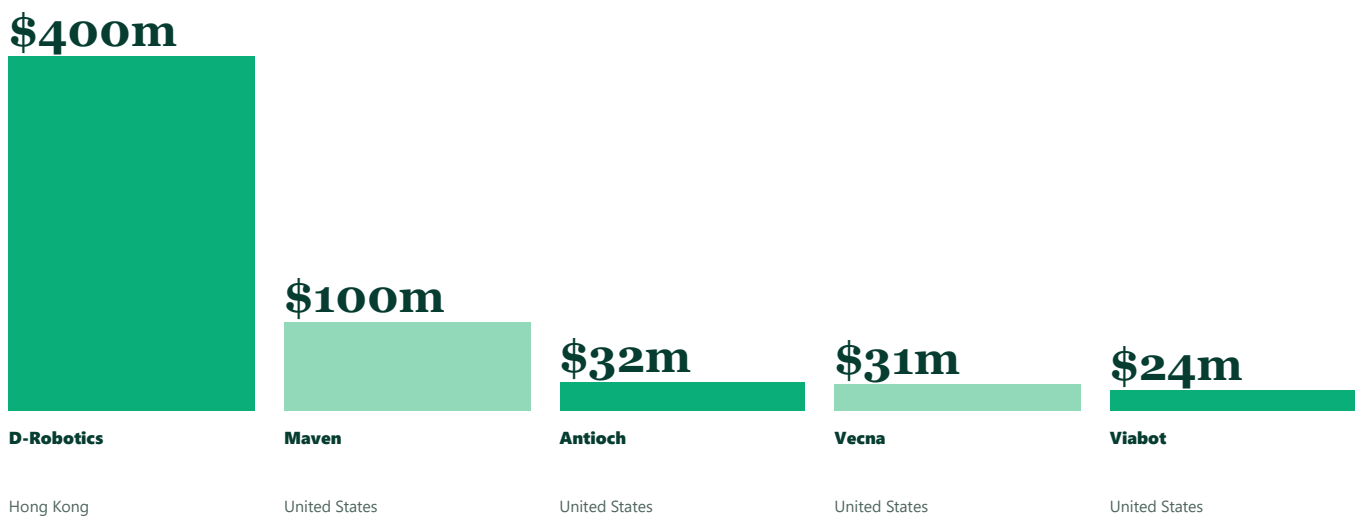
CAPITAL / DEPLOYMENT

Capital reaches the floor

September's disclosed rounds span robot compute, industrial fleets, outdoor work and the tools that verify autonomy.

SELECTED ANNOUNCED ROUNDS

USD MILLIONS



Bar heights are proportional to announced US-dollar amounts. These selected rounds are not a global funding total.

PRN D-Robotics Maven Antioch Vecna PRN Viabot

WHY THE MONEY MATTERS

Infrastructure gets a bid

D-Robotics is expanding its robot-compute and software platform; Antioch is building a system-level verifier.

Investors are backing the stack around the machine, not only the machine.

Antioch D-Robotics

EUROPEAN INDUSTRIAL PROGRAM

NEURA joins SECO

The German robot maker and Italian electronics group announced work on compute modules for cognitive robots, including 4NE1. This is an industrialization partnership, not a completed production milestone.

Partnership

BELGIUM / LOGISTICS

Logibot raises €1.4m

The startup is building software for flexible robot labor in warehouses, with the round reported by Tech.eu.

Tech.eu report

UNITED STATES / CARE

Norbert raises \$14m

Norbert Health announced a Series A to develop autonomous robotic nursing assistants for clinical work.

PRN Company release

ROBOTS / PLATFORMS

Built for the shift

~~The product story is less about spectacle now. It is about workload, charging, reach and working near people.~~



STATE16 editorial illustration; not a photograph of Digit 5.

PRODUCT LAUNCH

Digit 5

Agility's new humanoid is designed for close work around people, with human detection, a separate safety controller and swappable end-effectors.

The company says it builds on more than 65,000 operating hours. Its 50 lb payload and nine-minute charging claim speak directly to factory economics.

 **Agility release**

50 lb

CLAIMED PAYLOAD

9 min

CLAIMED CHARGE TIME

65k h

PRIOR OPERATION

FACTORY SYSTEMS

MagicLab goes European

At IFA, MagicLab presented a three-platform embodied stack for factory work, combining robot hardware with its Magic-VLA control model.

 **MagicLab release**

OPEN HARDWARE

BRIDGE shares a body

The BRIDGE research team published an 88 cm open humanoid platform co-designed with its control system, giving labs a reproducible physical testbed.

 **Read paper**

CHINA / MANUFACTURING

IRON walks off the line

XPeng says its humanoid production line is commissioned and an IRON unit walked off it. Mass production remains a target for later in 2026.

 **XPeng announcement**

EVENTS / AGENDA

Where the field meets

Three places to follow the research, software and people moving embodied systems forward.



STATE16 editorial illustration / autonomous aerial and ground inspection.

22–24

SEPTEMBER /
TORONTO

ROSCon Global

Developer workshops, ROS 2 tools and demonstrations from the open robotics ecosystem.

[Program](#)**~~23~~**

SEPTEMBER / ONLINE

~~STATE16 community webinar~~

Safe Physical AI, live at 20:00 Israel time. Registration is open on the STATE16 community page.

~~16~~[Register](#)**27–01**

SEP–OCT /
PITTSBURGH

IROS 2026

IEEE/RSJ's major international forum for intelligent robot research, with main sessions and workshops.

[Conference](#)

VOICES / IDEAS

What leaders are asking

The telling comments this month were about safety, endurance and the speed of engineering.

“Digit 5 is removing a major barrier to scaling humanoid robots.”

Peggy Johnson / CEO, Agility Robotics

 **Original statement**

“But there's a huge gap between a robot that demos well and one that survives three production shifts a day, seven days a week.”

Jack Pearson / RoboStrategy, quoted by Maven

Original statement

“The pace of physical AI development is still constrained by the speed of the physical world.”

Antioch team / company essay

Original essay



STATE16 ESSAY / DR. BARAK OR

Physical AI enters systems

Physical AI is moving into its systems-integration phase, and my assessment is that this market is still being framed too narrowly.

Physical AI is not primarily a competition to build the most “human-looking” machine. It is a competition to engineer the highest-performance physical stack: one that can perceive a dynamic environment, maintain state, reason under uncertainty, generate and execute actions, operate inside a verifiable safety envelope, and continuously improve from historical fleet data.

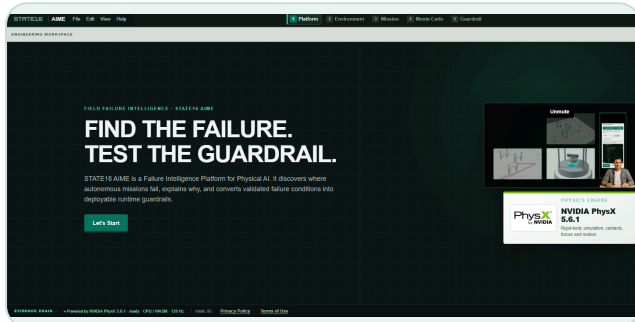
In generative AI, the model can often be presented as the product. In Physical AI, the model is only one component inside a tightly coupled operating system.

16 Continue reading

STATE16 / PRODUCT FIRST LOOK

AIME 1.0

A mission lab for comparing drone platforms, routes and safety boundaries before deployment.



AIME 1.0 / failure intelligence workspace.

MISSION FAILURE INTELLIGENCE

Test the mission first.

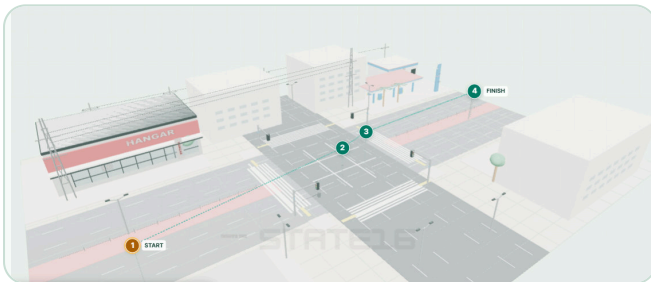
Select two drone platforms, give them the same mission and run matched PhysX trials. Then inspect the 3D replay, route deviations and failure-risk estimates.

Try the same path with and without a Geo Guardrail to see the operating boundary.

[16 Explore AIME 1.0 ↗](#)

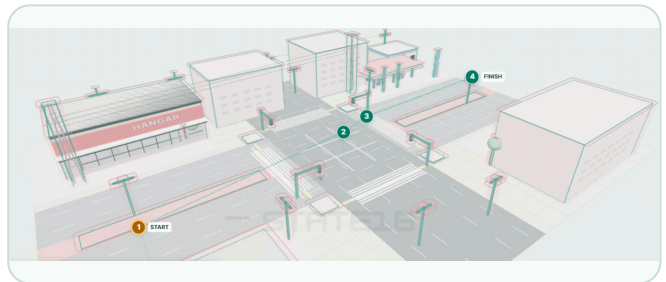
INTERACTIVE LAB / DESKTOP OR LAPTOP

01 / BASELINE ROUTE

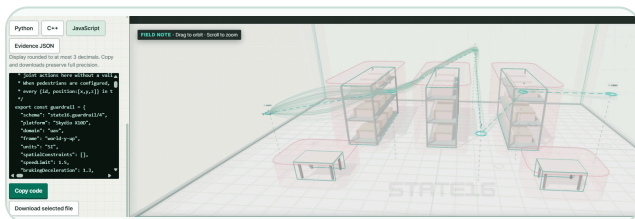


Without Geo Guardrail

02 / GUARDED ROUTE



With Geo Guardrail



ROUTE TO RULES

Guardrail Generator

Generate a guardrail from the planned route, scene geometry and the selected drone's capabilities.

Export Python, C++ or JavaScript code. Download Evidence JSON.

[Open AIME ↗](#)

TEN ESTABLISHED PHYSICAL-AI BUILDERS

Focused robot and autonomy companies worth following across North America, Europe and Asia.



Figure



Agility



NEURA



Unitree



1X



Sanctuary



Apptроник



FieldAI



AgiBot



Dexterity

GLOBAL DATA

Scale is uneven

Factory robot installations show where the physical deployment base is concentrated. September's funding announcements show a different, narrower signal.

INDUSTRIAL ROBOT INSTALLATIONS

2024 SHARE



IFR World Robotics 2025 reports 2024 industrial robot installations. These are deployment figures, not Physical AI investment totals.

IFR dataset

295k CHINA FACTORY INSTALLS	44.5k JAPAN FACTORY INSTALLS	34.2k US FACTORY INSTALLS
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CAPITAL SIGNALS THIS SEPTEMBER

East Asia Hong Kong's D-Robotics disclosed a US\$400 million Series C for robot-compute infrastructure. Release	North America Maven, Antioch, Vecna and Viabot each announced U.S. rounds tied to machines or deployment tools. MavenAntioch	Europe Germany's NEURA and Italy's SECO announced an industrialization partnership; Belgium's Logibot disclosed a €1.4 million round. NEURALogibot
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RESEARCHER WATCH

Six names to follow

Current work across world-action learning, active perception, tactile prediction and hybrid control.

YW

Yuran Wang

First author of OpenWAM, an open world-action pretraining stack.

 **OpenWAM**

RL

Renhang Liu

Co-author of GE-Act 2.0 on scaling robot manipulation data.

 **GE-Act 2.0**

SZ

Shuai Zhou

First author of ActiveScale, joining camera-pose supervision with VLA control.

 **ActiveScale**

YQ

Yan Qin

First author of DexTouch-WM, which learns tactile dynamics from human touch.

 **DexTouch-WM**

KA

Kaivalya Agrawal

First author of SkipVLA's planner-and-VLA approach to faster manipulation.

 **SkipVLA**

JW

Jianren Wang

First author of BRIDGE, an open humanoid platform co-designed with its controller.

 **BRIDGE**

FROM LEARNING TO HARDWARE

Experience

OpenWAM / GE-Act

Viewpoint

ActiveScale

Contact

DexTouch-WM

Action

SkipVLA

Body

BRIDGE

STARTUP RADAR

10 STARTUPS TO TRACK

Focused teams building robot intelligence, autonomy and the deployment layer around it.

16

STATE16

~~US / publisher.~~ Evidence and safety guardrails for Physical AI deployments.

**Walden Robotics**

General-purpose embodied intelligence for useful robot work.

**microAGI**

On-device intelligence for robots with limited compute.

**Gritt**

Autonomous machines for difficult field work.

**Mbodi**

Language-guided skills for industrial robot arms.

**Sereact**

Vision-language-action software for warehouse robots.

**Skild AI**

General-purpose robot foundation models.

**Theker**

Industrial robots for variable, high-mix operations.

**Genesis AI**

Simulation infrastructure for robot learning.

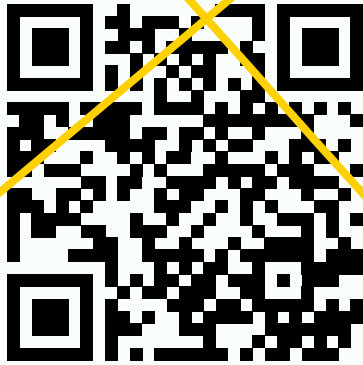
**RLWRLD**

Robot foundation models trained on physical tasks.

STATE16 PHYSICAL AI COMMUNITY

Build with the community

Engineers, researchers, founders and investors working on machines that must act safely in the real world.



Scan to join

Community, events and recordings

Join the conversation

See the research, compare deployment lessons and meet people turning robot capabilities into reliable work.

[Join](#)[WhatsApp](#)[GitHub](#)[Hugging Face](#)[LinkedIn](#)

First webinar / watch now

[Dr. Barak Or / Physical AI Guardrail ↗](#)

[Ori Nachum / Neurosymbolic Control ↗](#)

[Steven Palma / Open Robotics ↗](#)

 [Full playlist](#)

[Dr. Mike Erlihson / VLA vs. WAM ↗](#)

[Yorai Fainmesser / Investor View ↗](#)

[Omri Eitan / Resilient Physical AI ↗](#)

MISSION

Help builders make Physical AI safer, measurable and useful.

VISION

Machines that earn trust through evidence in the real world.

STATE16

Testing and safety guardrails for embodied AI systems.

