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Andy Sack: This is AI First with Adam and Andy, the show that takes you straight to the front lines of AI innovation and business. I'm Andy Sack and alongside my co-host, Adam Brotman. Each episode, we bring you candid conversations with business leaders, transforming their businesses with AI. No fluff, just real talk, actionable use cases and insights for you. Today, we're going to talk about the changes really since January 1st, 2026 that we see amongst the top six or seven major LLM providers, meaning specifically Google, Microsoft, Anthropic, ChatGPT Meta, Apple, and Grok.

And we're going to just talk because there's been a lot of movement amongst the big elephants, we'll call them the providers of LLMs. And not to mention, we may also talk about the Chinese providers that have followed suit. But we want to just talk about the LLM landscape in the market and give that as an over our comments about what's happening and share that with the audience. What prompted this episode was Microsoft just did a press release or about a deal that they did with Anthropic.

And they are bringing Claude Cowork into Microsoft's Copilot. there's a lot of other stuff that we're going to talk about this episode, but that press release really triggered this episode. Adam, you want to tee us up?

Adam Brotman: And yeah, so just to try to take what's kind of a complex eye chart full of companies and make it simple or try to make it simple. Andy's right when he talked about LLM providers. But really, if you want to break the world in the way Andy and I think about it, there are actual LLM labs. And then there are these other companies that are like, I don't even know what you call them. Call them hyperscalers or call them, know, quote unquote, traditional hyperscalers that already have tons of distribution.

OK and there's by the way, it's a Venn diagram. This is not perfect. I'm about to say, but this will help make it clear. You have you have the labs that make these LLMs, these research labs, which is open AI with ChatGPT Anthropic with Claude. And Google with Gemini, Google also happens to be a hyperscaler. That's why I'm saying it's confusing. But you've got those three. Those labs, Gemini, Anthropic, and OpenAI, you've also got Meta. And you've also got XAI, which is Grok, G-R-O-K, and the Elon Musk company and then on top of that, like Andy said, in China, there are at least three major labs that we know of.

And you call those like frontier model labs, okay? So you got all those labs. And then you've got separate from the labs, you've got these other behemoths that are with massive hyperscale

distribution, like Apple, Microsoft, Google, and Amazon, okay? So independent of what's going on with an LLM or a lab, you've got that.

Andy Sack: Amazon.

Adam Brotman: Now, what's fascinating is that, Andy said, is that going into the end of last year, Google was its own kind of distributor, and it had Gemini, but it had its own massive distribution. But it was a rumor that they were doing a deal, and it got announced, think, effectively, that they're going to do some kind of a deal with Apple and power Siri. But I don't know if that's official, but that's sort of the news. So you got Apple and Google teaming up. The other thing you had going into the end of the year, was up until now, Amazon had been sort of teamed up with Anthropic and Microsoft had been teamed up with OpenAI.

And those guys flipped. Okay. And it's interesting they flipped right when Claude was making this sort of meteoric rise to catch up. Everyone was talking about Gemini at the end of last year, but then for a number of reasons, it's like Claude, Claude, Claude, right? And meaning Anthropic's model became the hot commodity. As we came into December, January, February. then right as it's like, it's Claude as that it's sort of like, I'll call it peak of getting a lot of users and a lot of talk, not all good talk, a lot of good talk though.

They get teamed up with this Microsoft announcement that Andy's mentioned. And Amazon announces they're putting, I want to say \$50 billion in as an investment into OpenAI and partnering with OpenAI on a number of initiatives to be sort of a hyperscaler partnered with OpenAI. So that's sort of the landscape, putting aside Meta, putting aside Grok from XAI, and putting aside the Chinese for a moment. You've got this sort of new world order that's sort of lining up as we go into March, April timeframe.

And that's the shadow or the background of this announcement with Microsoft. And by the way, I'll flip it back to you, because you've got some experience with Microsoft. But the interesting thing is that Copilot specifically from and code, which kind of go together, coworking code from Claude, Anthropic are like the talk of the town. We use it. Everyone I know who's tried Claude code and cowork is just over the moon about it. and so it's interesting that it wasn't just Claude, it was Claude cowork. That was the big announcement.

So they took the hottest kind of edge of the spear product from Anthropic and announce that that's coming into Copilot. I mean, talk about get your popcorn out. And by the way, I'll turn it back to you, Andy, because I think what's on our audience's mind is probably like, well, geez, know, what do I, if I'm just a Copilot shop, does that mean I just hang on and just keep using Copilot and assume that's going to be good enough? Or do I still advocate for Claude or ChatGPT for my enterprise? What are your thoughts on that topic?

Andy Sack: Yeah, so I have a couple of observations that I'll share about what's going on as you well put out framed it with amongst the LLM labs. It's worth noting that Apple continues for the most part to be asleep at the switch of AI. However, Apple is absolutely going to have a win with

their Mac minis as a result of open claw. So there was an unexpected unanticipated there the beneficiaries of some developer who put out open claw and it went viral. And in order to install that Mac mini's in particular are a really good way of being part of the open claw community.

That's win number one. Win number two is, Apple just came out with the M5 chip, and then that's their first foray into laptops. And so both of those are developments. It's still fair to say, I mean, it's still fair to say that Siri is a total disappointment. It sucks. It's like an embarrassment to Apple. It's an embarrassment to me as a huge Apple fan, customer fanboy. So that's Apple. I think my biggest observation, separate from the rise of Anthropic, and Anthropic, would say, has taken the chalice and has become the belle of the ball.

And they've stolen the chalice either from Gemini or ChatGPT And it's a combination of Claude Code, co-work and just Dennis Esavis' battle with the Pentagon. I think those three events have made it. Sorry, Dario Amadei, not Dennis Esaava, Dario Amadei. I think that those three events in the first part of 2026 coupled with the announcement that they added, want to say \$6 billion in a period of their run rate, their revenue run rate increased from 12 to \$18 billion, I believe an increase of \$6 billion over a two week period.

It was an insane exponential growth. I might have those numbers slightly wrong, but directionally correct.

Adam Brotman: Close enough. I don't know the exact numbers either, but they're directionally correct.

Andy Sack: Yeah, so why is that so important? Well, they stole the chalice. That's great. But the real thing is it highlights the power of just like the switching costs and the competition that exists amongst the frontier labs. And really, at some point, I think we're going to do a totally different episode just on consumer switching costs and enterprise switching costs, because clearly the barriers are low and the competitive battle is on. I think that's my biggest observation since January. That coupled with the rise of agents.

Adam Brotman: Yeah, it's worth mentioning you nailed it, mean, like how you put it, know, Anthropic took the chalice of like the number one kind of hottest, they're still not number one market share, but they are the, you know, they became kind of the hottest commodity in terms of, you know, catching up to Gemini and...and probably surpassing Gemini, frankly, but either way, and trying to catch up to ChatGPT still significantly has more users and more revenue, particularly users, but they're higher ahead in users than they are revenue.

They're still ahead by I don't want to say \$5 billion run rate ahead of Anthropic last I saw, however, they became hot, right? A big part of the reason that happened for all the reasons you mentioned, and they came out with Opus 4.6 and Sonnet 4.6, which are just remarkably good models. OK, that's all true. But guess what, guys? Like Gemini has Gemini 3.1. They've got NanoBanana Pro 2. They are doing some incredible things. And OpenAI came out with ChatGPT 5.4, Thinking in Pro.

And those are, in terms of benchmarks, blowing people away. I only bring that up to say, we're getting to a place. I actually read a tweet about this. We're getting to a place where amongst the frontier model providers, like they're all going to become really good, like really good. And they're getting better every month, maybe in every week, but definitely every month. And we're in this sort of takeoff period. You'll notice we spend less time marveling about one model over another.

And we're talking more about the harnesses that sort of hold those models and can do computer use and tool use and communication channel use and have memory. And that's the agent era. So as you think about the players and what you should do for your own enterprise AI strategy, we're here to tell you that like Cework and Claude are amazing. We're big fans still of ChatGPT and Gemini. And we're not just trying to be like, we're not picking a horse. We're like, no, they're all really good.

I think Claude is the most agentic right now with Claude, Cework, and Claude Code. But you can use any model in OpenClaude that you want, as far as I know. And that's not literally true, but for all intents and purposes it is. And so as you think about your AI strategy for your company, you think about your agent strategy, which you're going to hear Andy and I talk about over and over and over. Understand that the models are becoming somewhat fungible on some level in terms of being super capable to power agents.

And we really want to encourage everyone to don't get hung up on one thing or the other. Think about what your agent strategy is and know what models are perfectly good to power your agent strategy. And I'm telling you right now, like, definitely like by the way, so going back to the beginning of this episode kudos to Microsoft like for recognizing that co-work is an absolute game changer it is and they you know There's a reason why they went right to co-work and it's it's an and Satya Nadella is talking about agents this and agents that.

All those tweets in the last week because it is all about the power of agent strategy and You know, we hope that we can kind of demystify these pieces and parts that people can focus on, keep their eye on the ball, which right now is all about agents going into the rest of 2026.

Andy Sack: Any final comments and then I'll add mine. No, two comments that I'd make. One is, mean, it took, I want to say, co-work came out January 9th, plus or minus. It's now early March and it took Microsoft two months to get that deal done. And it really speaks to the power of co-work and the speed of the technology that Microsoft felt compelled to do that deal. And I'm sure it's a win win deal both for Microsoft, Microsoft customers and Anthropic. So that's thing one.

The second thing that I want to highlight is, just as Adam was saying that all of these foundational LLMs are going to be very good at Forum3 we've already experienced customers who are just going, I'm overwhelmed and confused. And frankly, we live in this space. We're overwhelmed and confused. I expect that to continue for the rest of 2026 at an accelerating rate.

So what to do about that. One, choose your workflow and maybe choose two models. So if you're a Microsoft co-pilot user, we've seen a bunch of people choose either Anthropic or OpenAI, ChatGPT as a second model and using both of those.

I would tell you just choose to don't try and do it all and stay focused on one workflow and being good at that, but you need to pay attention to experts like us and go, we'll let you know. Cowork is something that if you want to dip a toe into, it is absolutely worth dipping a toe into. That's the first thing that I would say. Even if you're not a Claude user, Cowork warrants being played with. That's my advice. And just recognize that the confusion and the overwhelm just comes with the AI era.

And we're going to experience it more as the technology and the competitive battles continue. So with that. Thank you for listening to our mini episode. Thanks to the audience for listening to AI First with Adam and Andy. For more resources on how to become AI First, you can visit our website, forum3.com. You can download case studies, research briefings, executive summaries, and join our email list. We also invite you to connect with our AI First community, a curated hub and network for leaders turning AI hype into action.

We truly believe you can't over-invest in your AI learning. Onward.