

The Intelligence Feedback Loop: From Biological Inspiration to Augmented Cognition

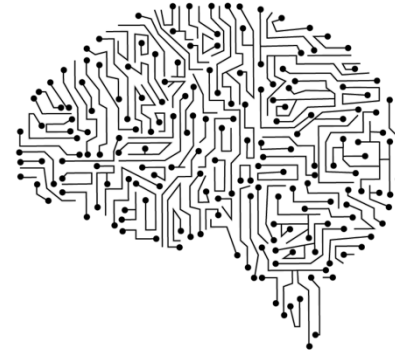
Yu Su

The Ohio State University

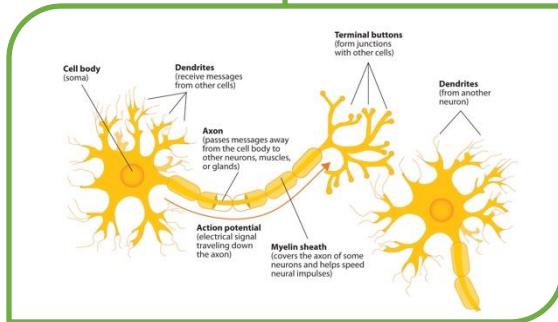
Outline

- The Intelligence Feedback Loop: Introduction
- Augmented Cognition: Computer Use Agents
- Biological Inspiration: Long-term Memory
- Future Directions

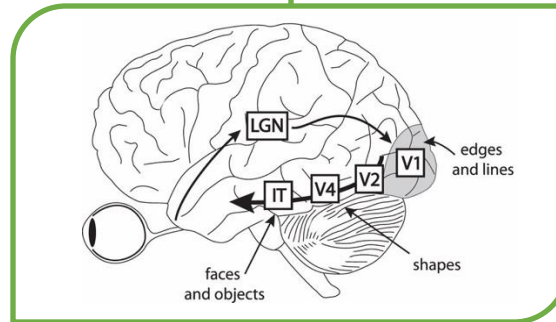
The intelligence feedback loop



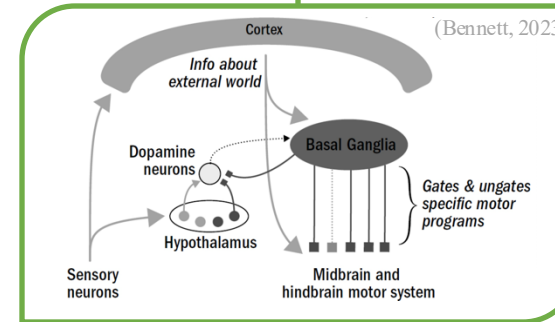
Biological inspiration in AI



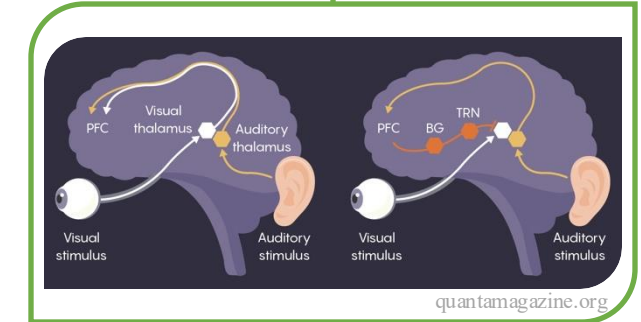
Neuron



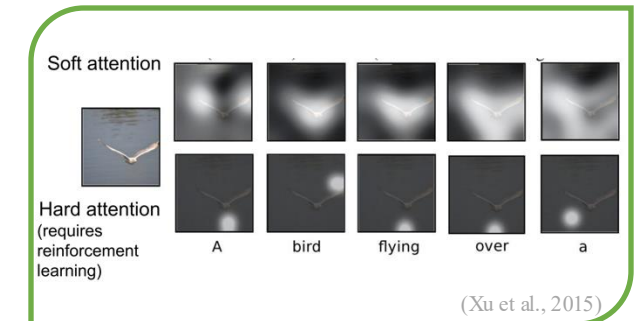
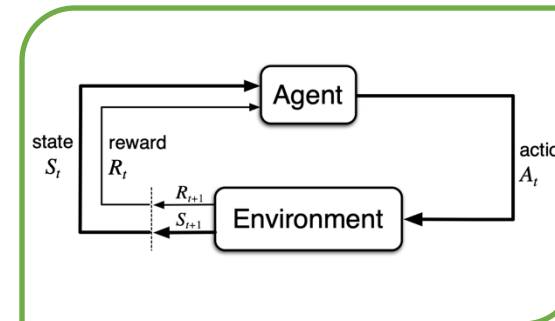
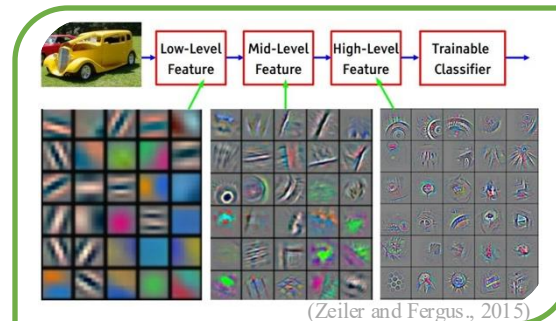
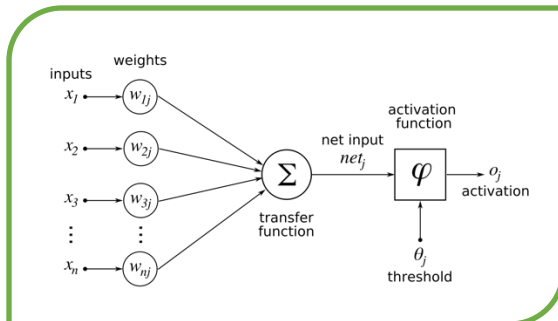
Hierarchical Representation
Convolutional Neural Network



Reinforcement Learning
(Temporal Difference Learning)



Selective Attention



McCulloch and Pitts (1943)
developed the artificial neuron and showed that a network of such simple neurons can perform logical computations.

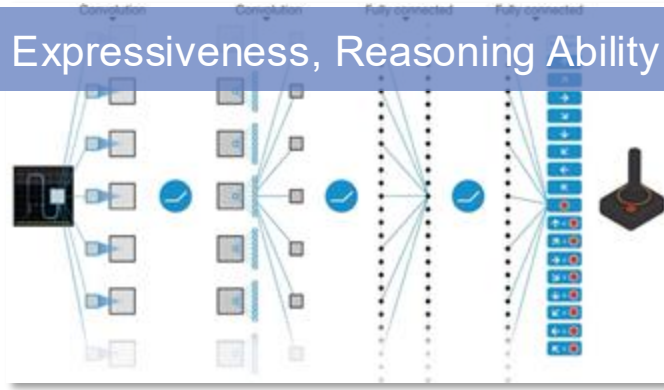
Fukushima (1980)
developed the convolutional neural network (Neocognitron) inspired by Hubel and Wiesel (1962); Lecun et al. (1989, 1998) extended it with backprop (among other changes).

Sutton (1988)
B.A. in psychology, formalized temporal difference learning. It inspired Schultz et al. (1997) to discover dopamine reward prediction errors in the brain.

Bahdanau et al. (2015)
developed attention in modern neural networks “sort of inspired by translation exercises ... Your gaze shifts back and forth between source and target sequence as you translate.”

A new evolutionary stage of machine intelligence

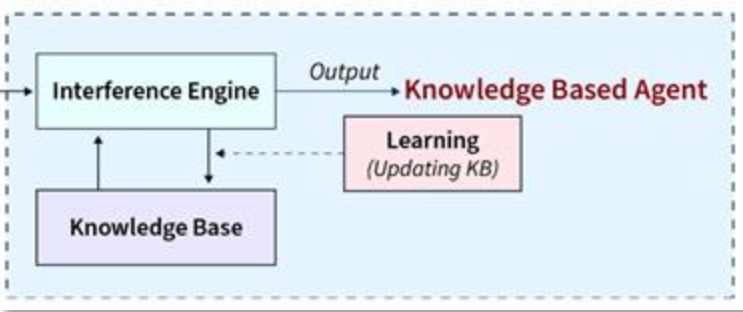
Increasing Expressiveness, Reasoning Ability & Adaptivity



Logical Agent

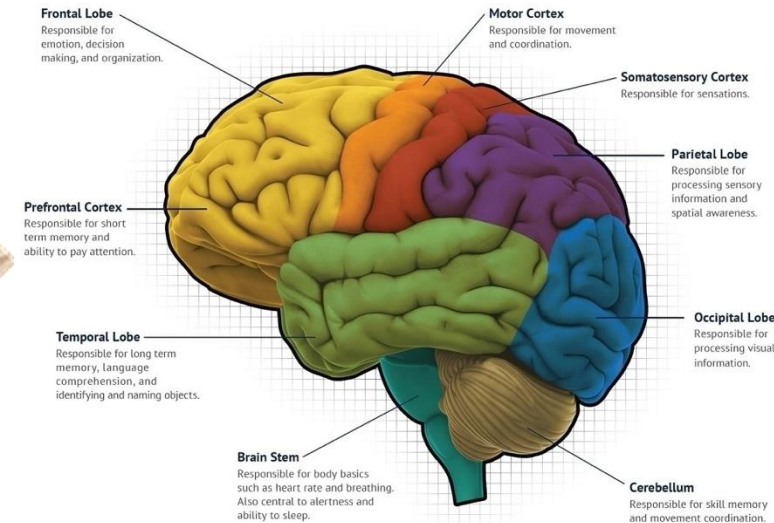
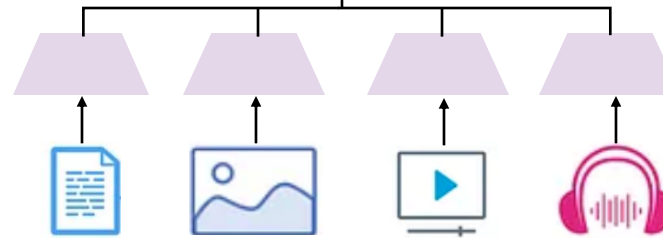
Neural Agent

Language Agent



"It looks like we are on the Amazon homepage. I'll search for 'foldable strollers' as requested."

Multimodal LLM

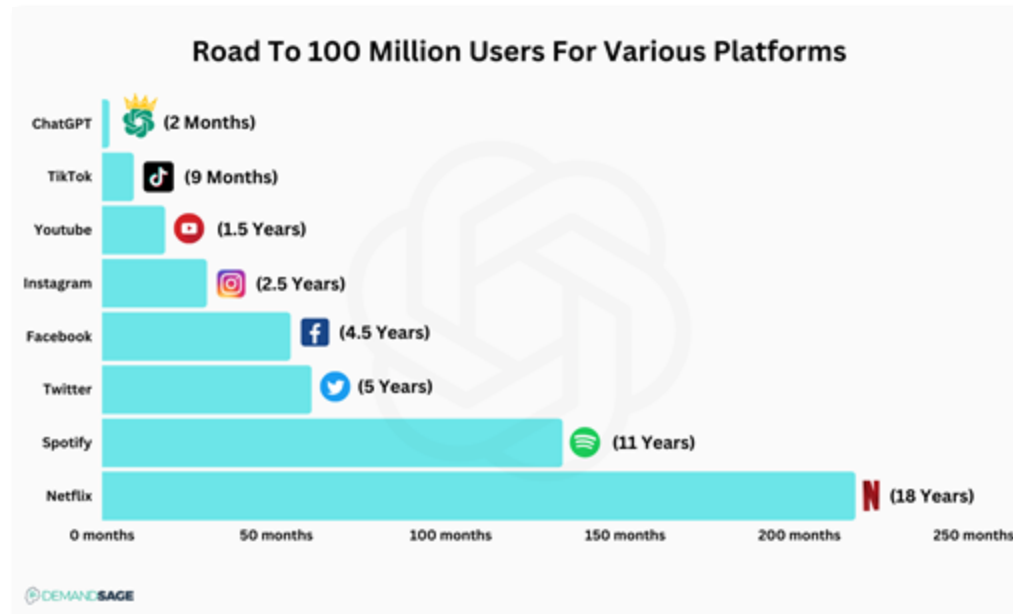


Language agents: a new generation of AI agents

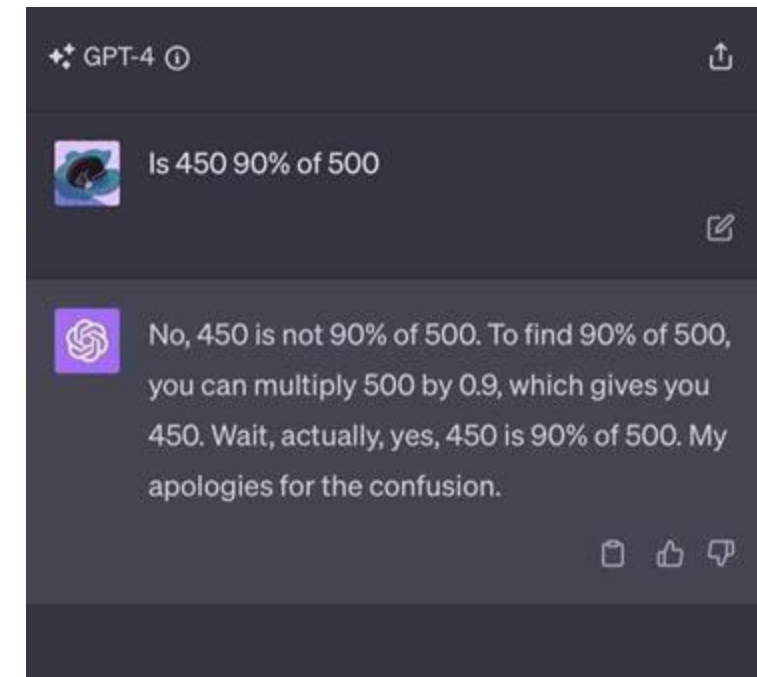
Contemporary AI agents, with integrated LLM(s), can *use language as a vehicle for reasoning and communication*

↑ Instruction following, in-context learning, output customization

↑ Reasoning (for better acting): state inferences, self-reflection, replanning, etc.

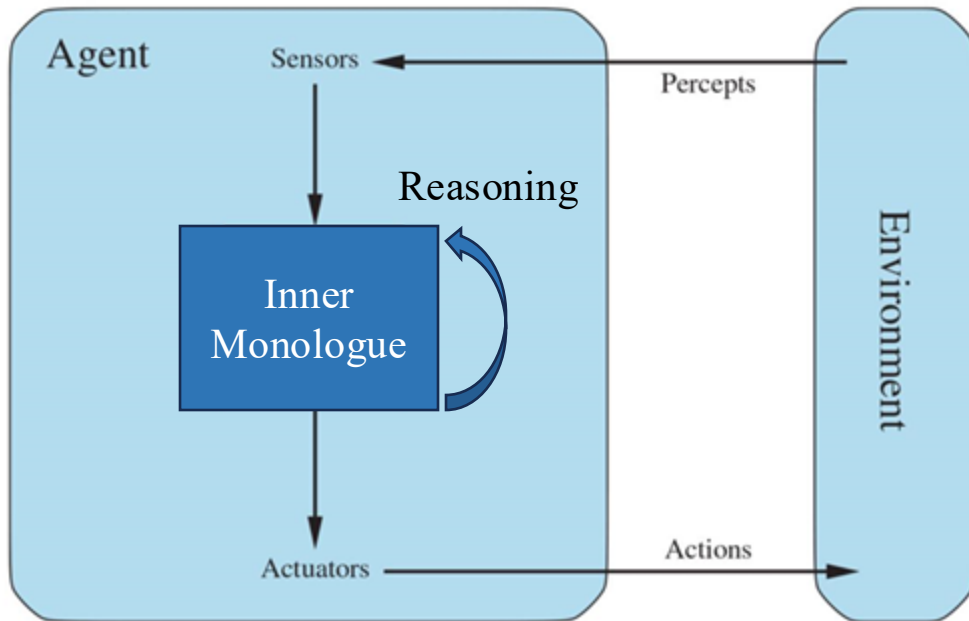


<https://www.demandsage.com/chatgpt-statistics/>



https://www.reddit.com/r/ChatGPT/comments/16jvl4x/wait_actually_yes/

Reconciling with the classic view of agents



Adapted from Russell and Norvig (2020)

- Reasoning by generating tokens is **a new type of action** (vs. actions in external environments)
- **Internal environment**, where reasoning takes place in an inner monologue fashion
- **Self-reflection** is a 'meta' reasoning action (i.e., reasoning over the reasoning process), akin to metacognitive functions
- **Reasoning is for better acting**, by inferring environmental states, retrospection, etc.
- **Percept** and **external action spaces** are substantially expanded, thanks to multimodal perception and using language for communication

Language agents augment human cognition

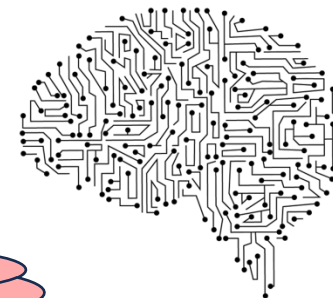
A typical human (per minute)

- reads 250 words
- thinks 400 words (inner monologue)
- clicks 40 times meaningfully
- types 55 words



Which daycares within a 10-minute drive from my home can take a 1-year-old and provide meals?

Great! Book a tour for me!



Search



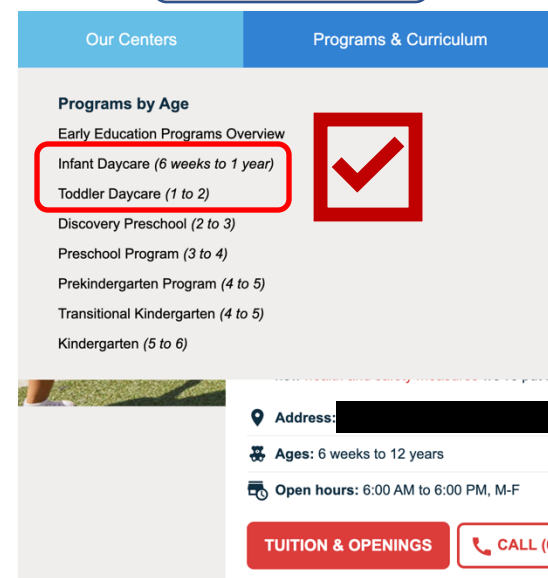
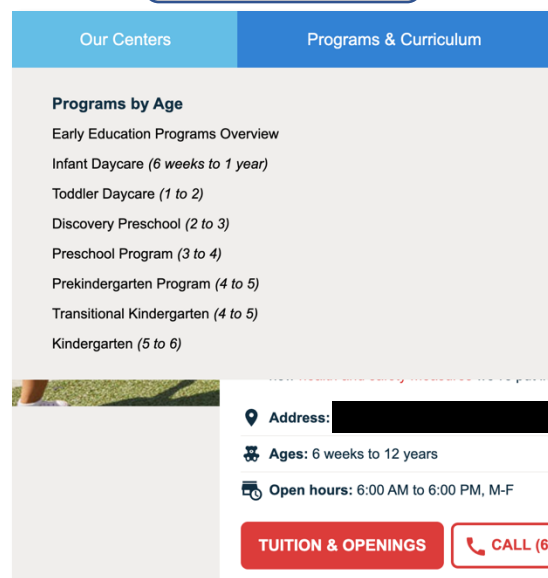
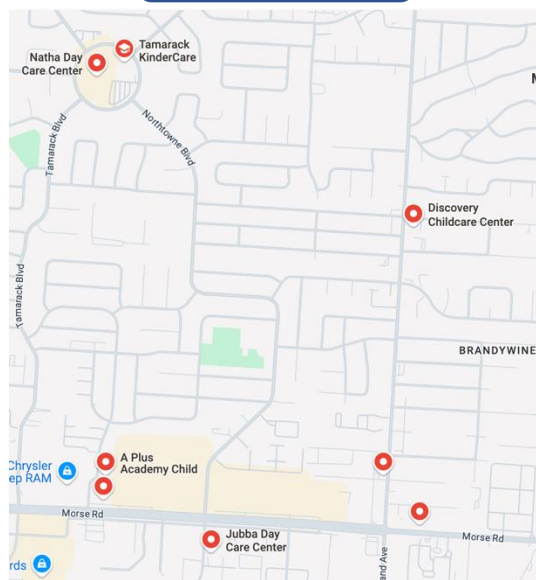
Read



Reason



Act



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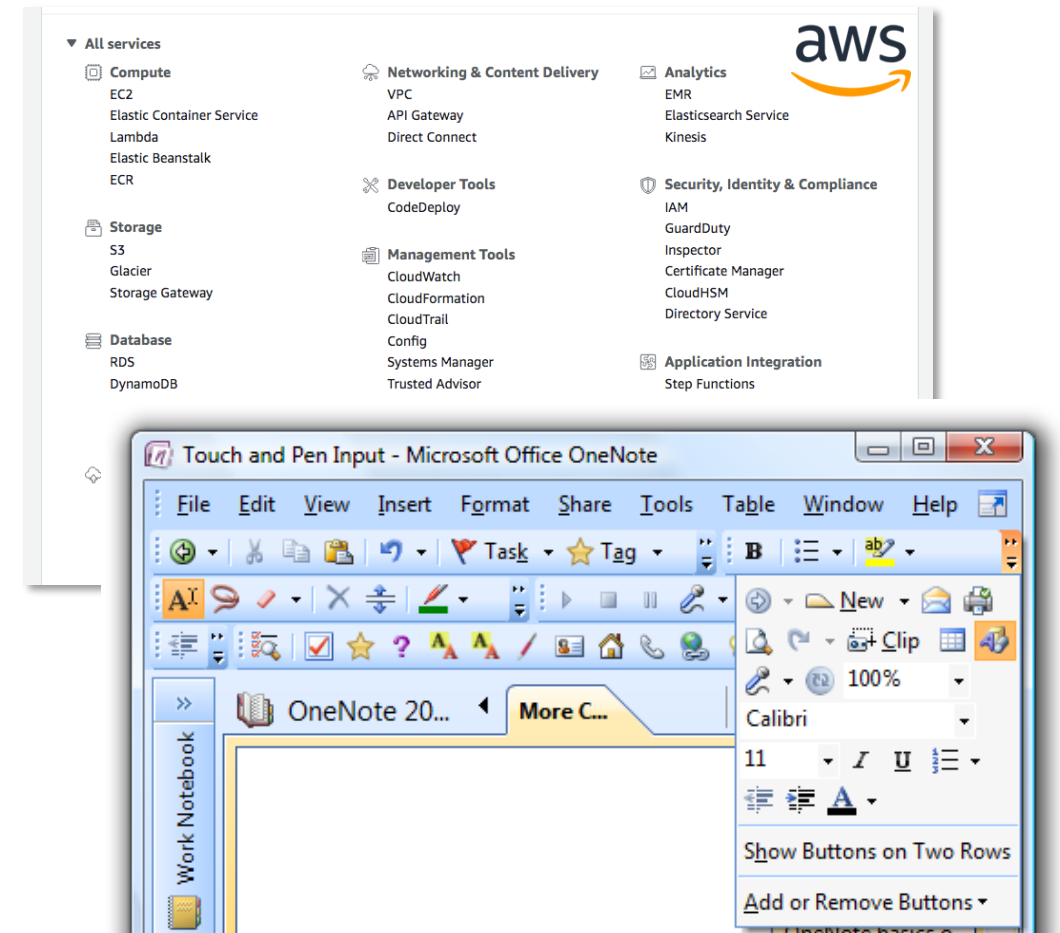
Increasing complexity of the digital world

Digital world overtaking physical world?

- **92% of jobs** require some type of digital skills
- An average user spends **6+ hours** online per day

Complexity exceeds cognitive capacity

- **1.2 billion websites, 7 million mobile apps**
- **57% of employees** state that difficulty finding the right information is a top contributor to lagging productivity
- Information overload costs the U.S. economy **\$900 billion** a year



¹ <https://nationalskillscoalition.org/resource/publications/closing-the-digital-skill-divide>

² <https://datareportal.com/global-digital-overview>

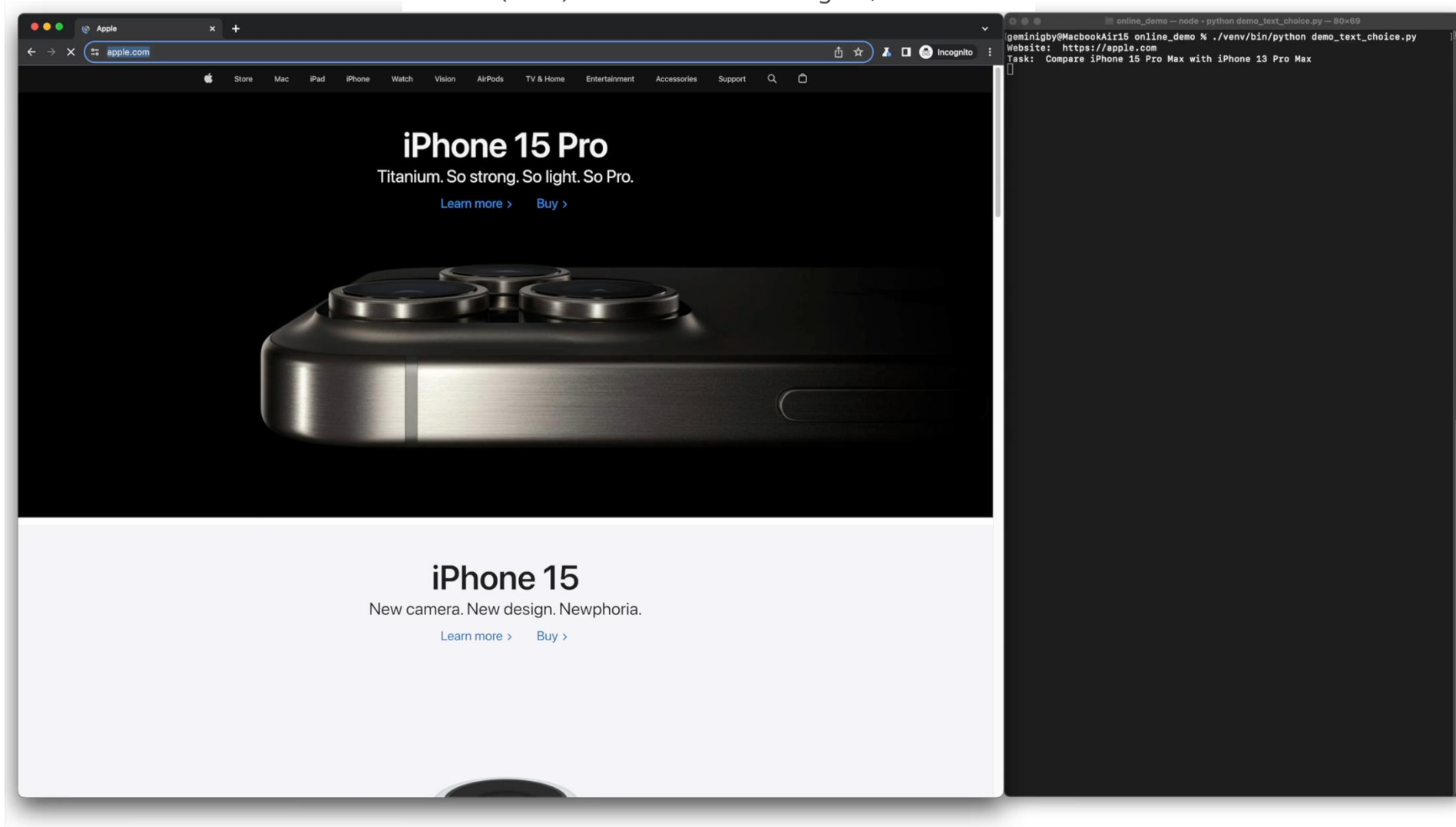
³ <https://www.nasdaq.com/press-release/over-50-percent-of-knowledge-workers-cannot-find-the-information-they-need-at-work>

⁴ <https://hbr.org/2009/09/death-by-information-overload>

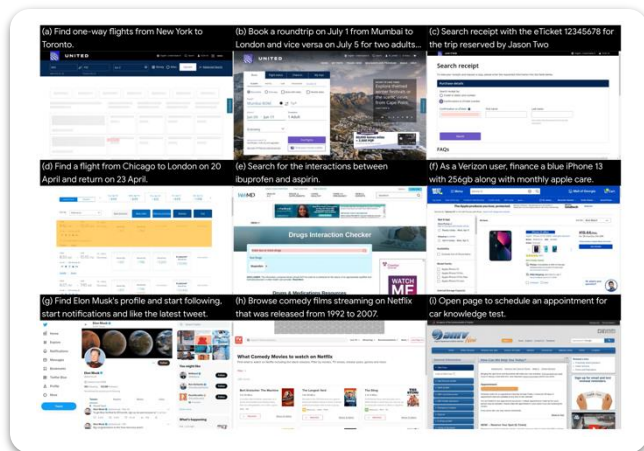
Agents that operate in the digital world



GPT-4V(ision) is a Generalist Web Agent, if Grounded



My changelog of computer use agents

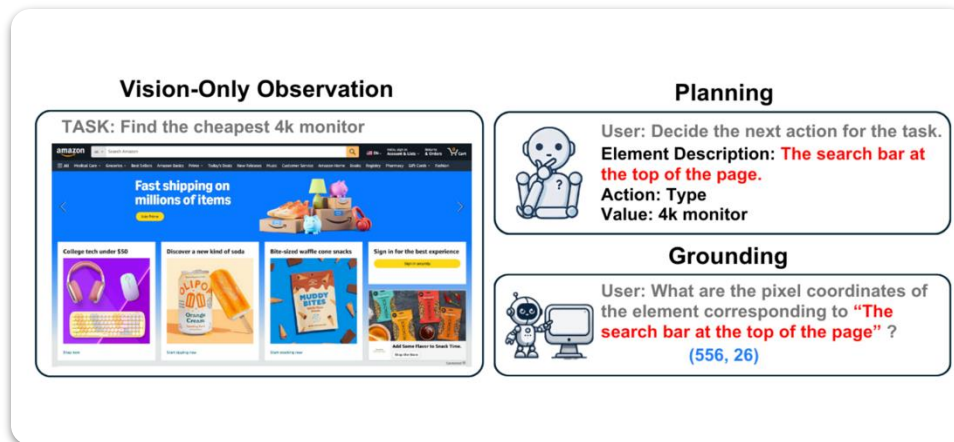


Mind2Web [NeurIPS'23 Spotlight]

First LLM-based web agent
Ecologically valid eval

First generalist web agent with
visual perception

SeeAct [ICML'24]

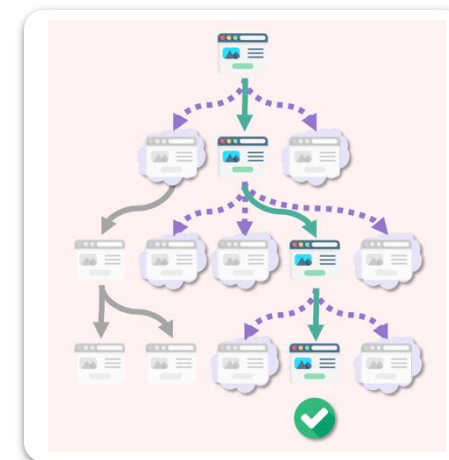


UGround [ICLR'25 Oral]

Pure vision-based agent
Human-like embodiment

World models
Model-based planning

WebDreamer



Agentic search
Continual learning
Safety




Navigating the Digital World as Humans Do: Universal Visual Grounding for GUI Agents

Boyu Gou, Ruohan Wang, Boyuan Zheng,
Yanan Xie, Cheng Chang, Yiheng Shu,
Huan Sun, Yu Su



What is “the way humans do?” And why?

 **Yu Su**
@ysu_nlp

Ours: *"navigating the digital world as humans do"*

Anthropic: *"use computers the way people do"*


One difference: ours is open-source :)


Navigating the Digital World as Humans Do
UNIVERSAL VISUAL GROUNDING

Boyu Gou¹ Ruohan Wang¹ Boyuan Zheng¹ Yan
Huan Sun¹ Yu Su¹
¹The Ohio State University ²Orby AI
<https://osu-nlp-group.github.io/UGround/>

Web Mobile Desktop

Find the trade-in value for PS4 Turn on Wi-Fi Install the Township application




 **Anthropic**
@AnthropicAI

Introducing an upgraded Claude 3.5 Sonnet, and a new model, Claude 3.5 Haiku. We're also introducing a new capability in beta: computer use.

Developers can now direct Claude to use computers the way people do—by looking at a screen, moving a cursor, clicking, and typing text.

Model benchmark

	Claude 3.5 Sonnet (new)	Claude 3.5 Haiku	GPT-4o*	GPT-4o*
Graduate level reasoning GPQA (Diamond)	65.0% 0-shot CoT	41.6% 0-shot CoT	53.6% 0-shot CoT	41.6% 0-shot CoT
Undergraduate level knowledge MMLU Pro	78.0% 0-shot CoT	65.0% 0-shot CoT	—	—
Code HumanEval	93.7% 0-shot	88.1% 0-shot	90.2% 0-shot	88.1% 0-shot
Math	78.2% 0-shot	69.8% 0-shot	76.6% 0-shot	76.6% 0-shot

 **OpenAI**
@OpenAI

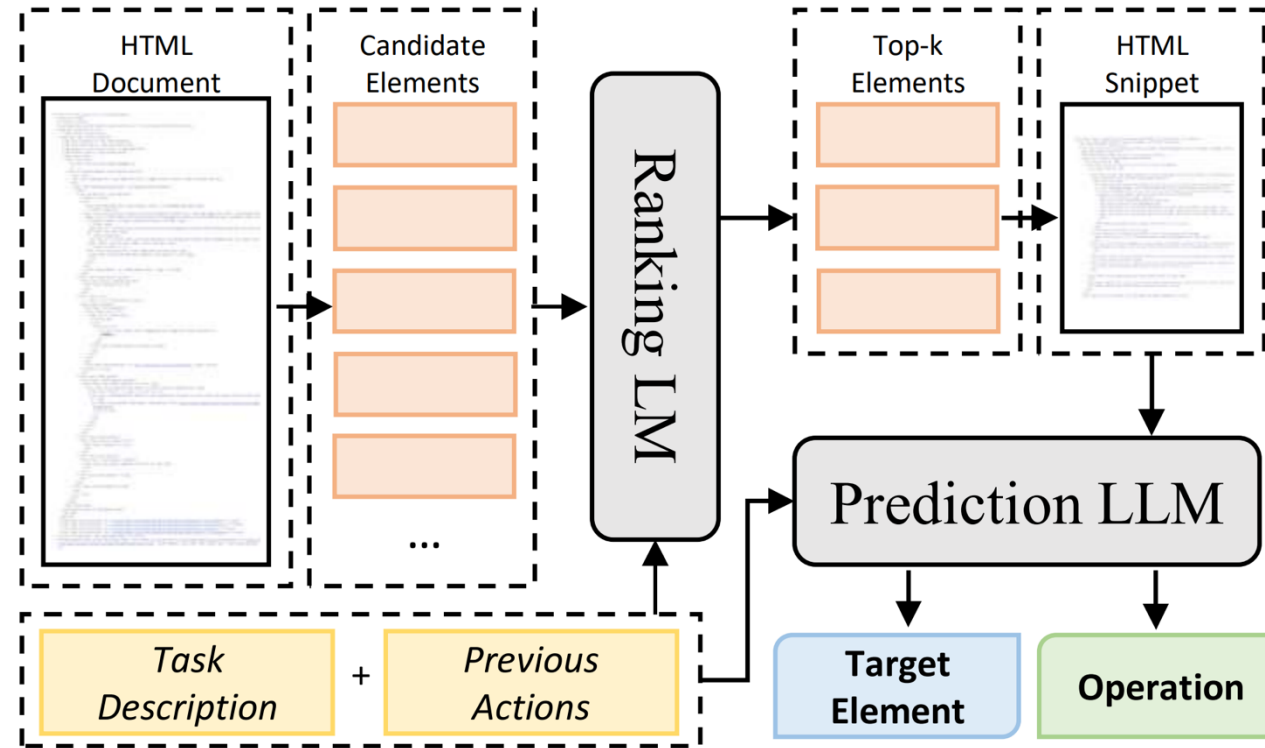
Operator is based on a new model we're calling “computer-using agent” (CUA).

CUA combines GPT-4o's vision capabilities with advanced reasoning through reinforcement learning. It's trained to control a computer in the same way a human would—it looks at the screen, and uses a mouse and keyboard.

The model still has limitations and will continue to evolve based on feedback. We plan to bring CUA to the API for developers soon.
[openai.com/index/computer...](https://openai.com/index/computer-use/)

2:22 PM · Jan 23, 2025 · 72.3K Views

Embodiment of computer use agents: evolution



Mind2Web

Sensory Inputs

HTML/DOM

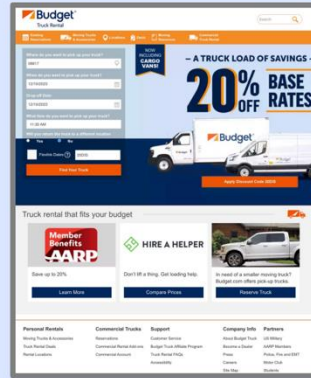
Effectors

Multi-choice Selection

Embodiment of computer use agents: evolution

Action Description

Move the cursor over the "Find Your Truck" button located in the central portion of the webpage, just below the input fields for rental details, and perform a click action.



A: `Moving Trucks & Accessories`
 B: `<input type="text" id="1">placeholder="US City,State or Zip Code"</input>`

 F: `<input type="radio" id="5">No name="one-way-radio"</input>`
 G: `<input type="button" id="6">value="Find Your Truck"</input>`
 H: None

Element Attributes

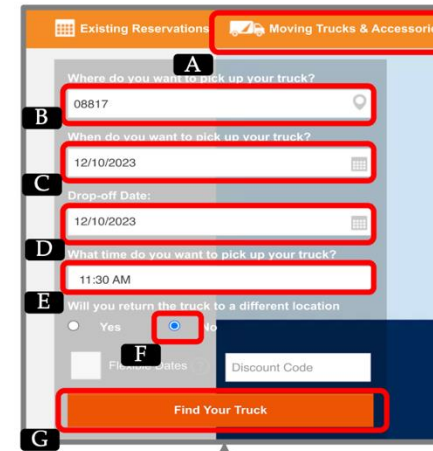
TEXT: Find Your Truck
 TYPE: BUTTON

Image Annotation

CHOICE: G

Textual Choices

CHOICE: G



Mind2Web

SeeAct

Sensory Inputs

HTML/DOM

Screenshot + DOM

Effectors

Multi-choice Selection

Multi-choice Selection

Embodiment of computer use agents: evolution



Text-based Representations: Limitations

- *Noisy and/or incomplete*
 - **95.9%** of home pages have accessibility conformance errors
 - Avg. **56.8** errors per page¹
- *Additional input increases latency and inference costs*
 - Consuming more tokens
 - Difficult and time-consuming to get
 - Compounding over long horizon

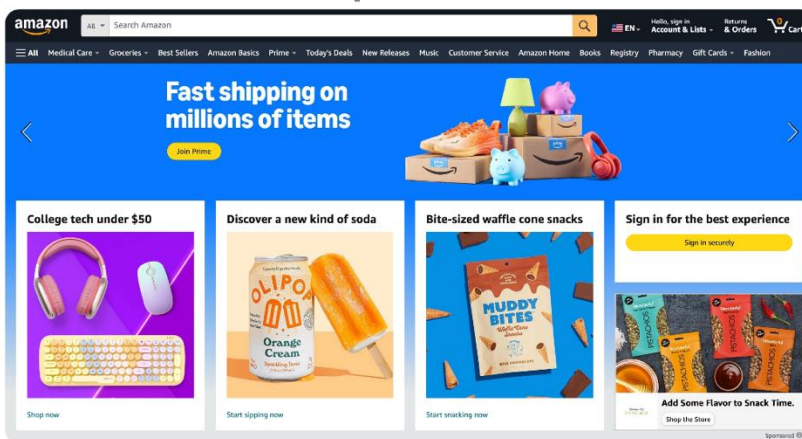
	Mind2Web	SeeAct
Sensory Inputs	HTML/DOM	Screenshot + DOM
Effectors	Multi-choice Selection	Multi-choice Selection

Embodiment of computer use agents: evolution

SeeAct-V: Human-like, Vision-centric Agent

Vision-Only Observation

TASK: Find the cheapest 4k monitor



Planning



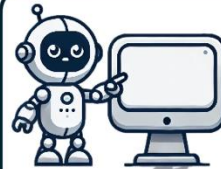
Element Description:

The search bar at the top of the page

Action: Type

Value: 4k monitor

Grounding



What are the pixel coordinates of the element corresponding to “...”?

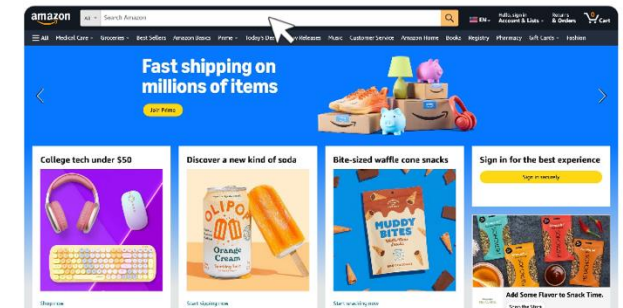
(556, 26)

Human-like Operation



Click(556, 26)

Type(“4k monitor”)



Mind2Web

SeeAct

SeeAct-V

Sensory Inputs

HTML/DOM

Screenshot + DOM

Screenshot Only

Effectors

Multi-choice Selection

Multi-choice Selection

Pixel-level Operations

[NeurIPS'23]

[ICML'24]

[ICLR'25]

Visual grounding was the bottleneck

GPT-4V(ision) is a Generalist Web Agent, if Grounded

Boyuan Zheng¹ Boyu Gou¹ Jihyung Kil¹ Huan Sun¹ Yu Su¹

<https://osu-nlp-group.github.io/SeeAct>

How to develop a universal visual grounding model that generalizes across all platforms (web, desktop, and mobile)?

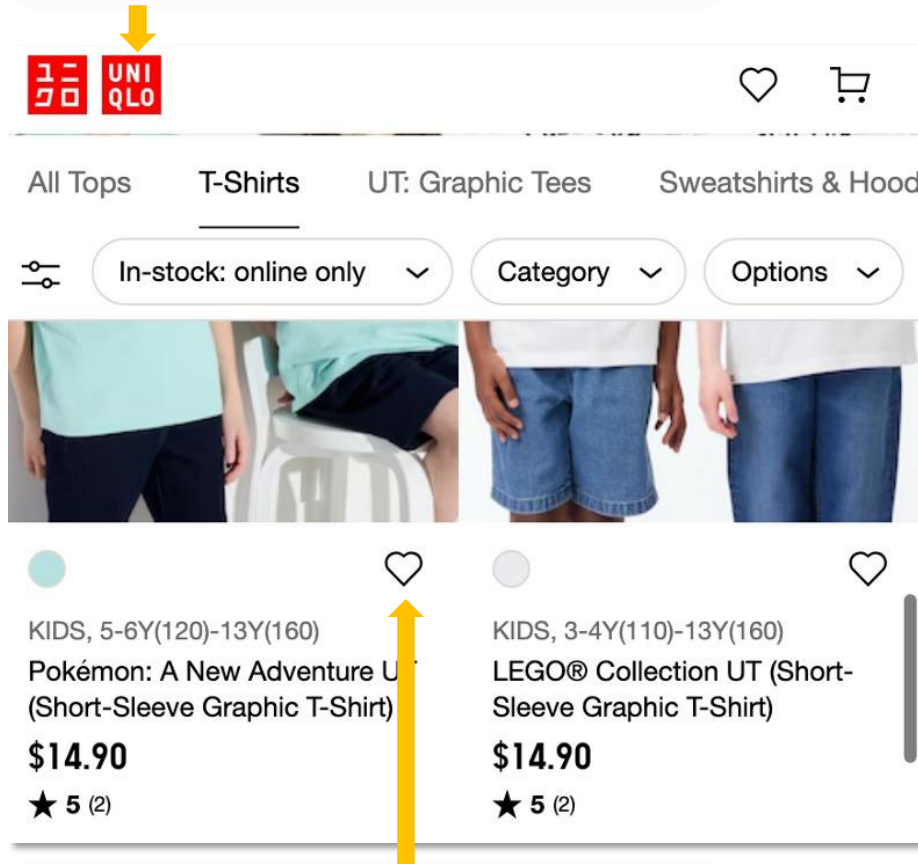
boundaries of multimodal models beyond traditional tasks like image captioning and visual question answering. In this work, we explore the potential of LMMs like GPT-4V as a generalist web agent that can follow natural language instructions to complete tasks on any given website. We propose SEEACT, a generalist web agent that harnesses the power of LMMs for integrated visual understanding and acting on the web. We evaluate on the recent MIND2WEB benchmark. In addition to standard offline evaluation on cached websites, we enable a new online evaluation setting by developing a tool that allows running web agents on live websites. We show that GPT-4V presents a great potential for web agents—it can successfully complete 51.1% of the tasks on live websites if we manually ground its textual plans into



Figure 1: SEEACT leverages an LMM like GPT-4V to visually perceive websites and generate plans in textual forms. The textual plans are then grounded onto the HTML elements and operations to act on the website.

Referring expressions for GUIs are diverse

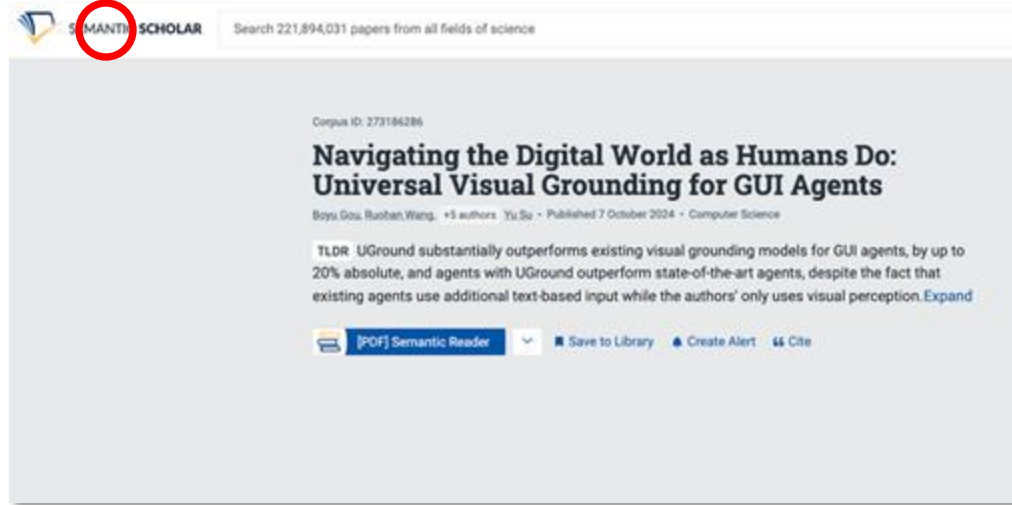
1. Red icon labeled “UNIQLO”
2. Button at the top left corner
3. Navigate back to the homepage



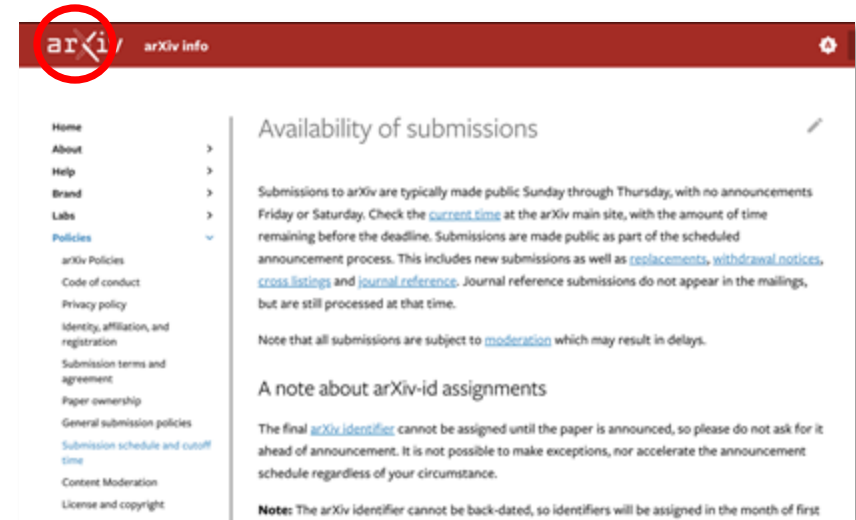
1. Hollow heart button
2. Button below the Pokémon shirt
3. Favor the Pokémon shirt

- *Visual Referring Expressions*
 - Salient visual features like textual content, element type (button, input field, checkbox, etc.), shape, color, ...
- *Positional Referring Expressions*
 - including **absolute** (e.g., “at the top left of the page”) and **relative** positions (e.g., “to the right of element X”)
- *Functional Referring Expressions*
 - Referring to elements by their functions
- *Hybrid*
 - “click the heart button under the Pokémon shirt to add it to favorite.”

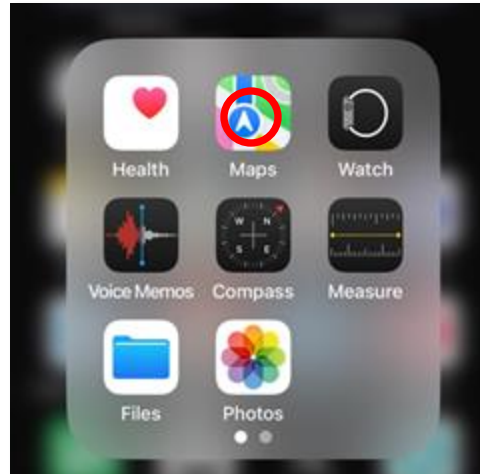
Shared designs across GUIs



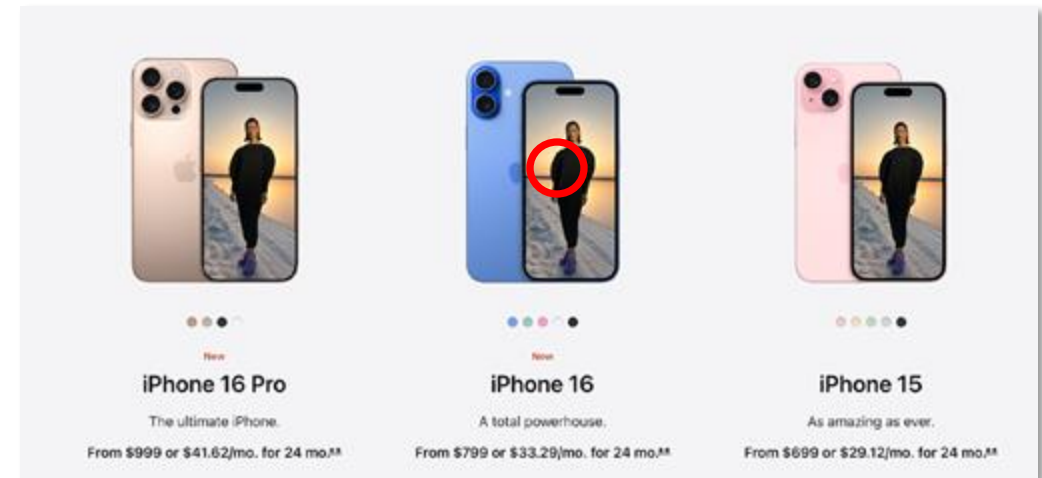
"Go to homepage"



"Go to homepage"



"Open Maps"



"iPhone 16"

Synthetic data is key for agent learning

Synthesizing diverse **perception**—**decision**—**execution** data with LLMs



Synthetic data is key for agent learning

Synthesizing diverse **perception**—**decision**—**execution** data with LLMs



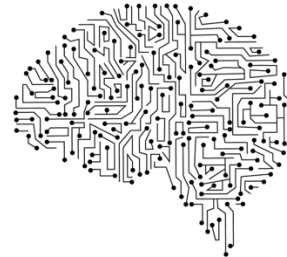
Your Account

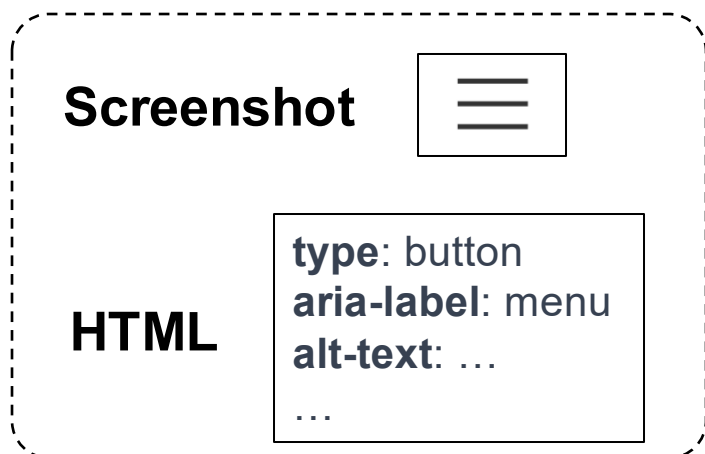
- Account
- Orders
- Recommendations
- Browsing History
- Watchlist
- Video Purchases & Rentals
- Kindle Unlimited
- Content & Devices
- Subscribe & Save Items
- Memberships & Subscriptions
- Prime Membership
- Amazon Credit Cards

I want to renew my Prime membership, so I should click "Memberships & Subscriptions"

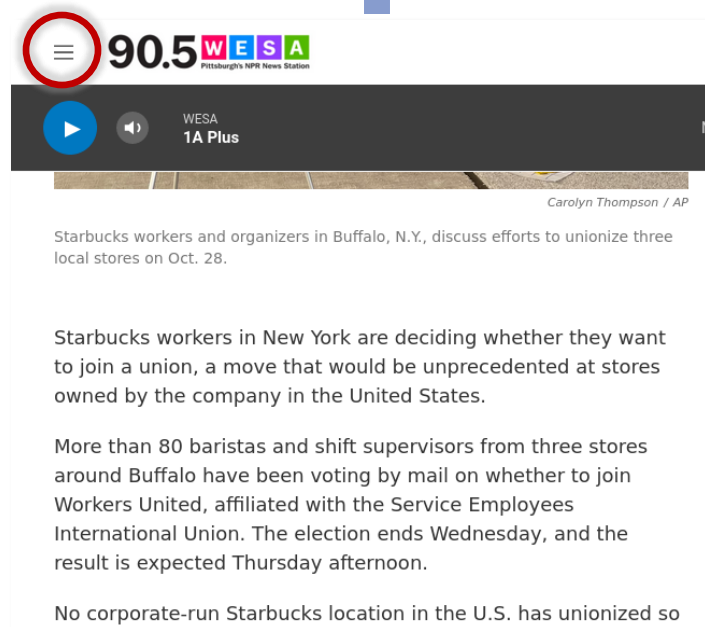
Your Account

- Account
- Orders
- Recommendations
- Browsing History
- Watchlist
- Video Purchases & Rentals
- Kindle Unlimited
- Content & Devices
- Subscribe & Save Items
- Memberships & Subscriptions
- Prime Membership
- Amazon Credit Cards





Metadata



MLLM Interpretation

The image shows a familiar "hamburger menu" icon, which consists of three horizontal, evenly spaced lines stacked vertically. This icon is often used in web and mobile interfaces to indicate a collapsible or expandable menu, commonly referred to as the "menu" or "navigation" icon ...

LLM Simplification

three-line menu icon

Rules

absolute position: top left corner
relative position: to the left of "90.5"
...

Final Referring Expression

three-line menu icon, at the top left corner of the page

9M (screenshot, refer. expression, coordinates) triplets over **773K** web screenshots

Minimalist design is the most generalizable

- Most comprehensive evaluation on six agent benchmarks
- SeeAct-V + UGround outperforms prior art despite its minimalist design
- Generalize to desktop/mobile even though most data is from the web

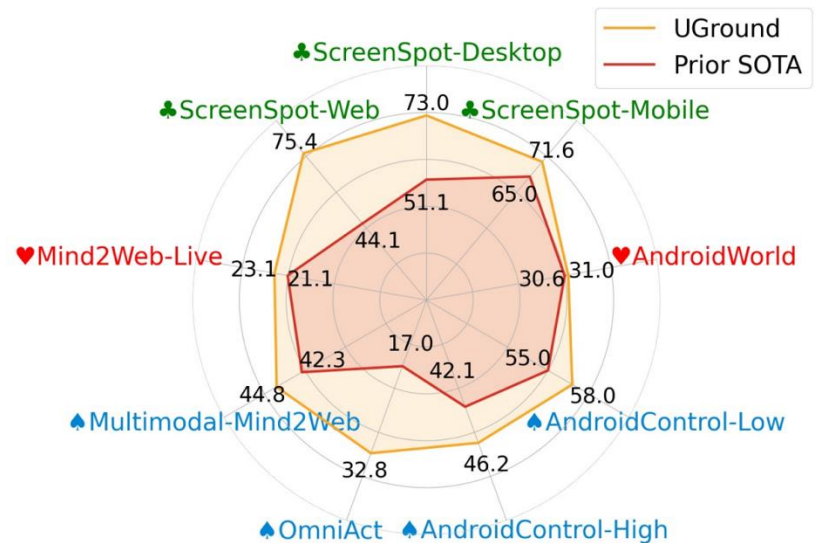
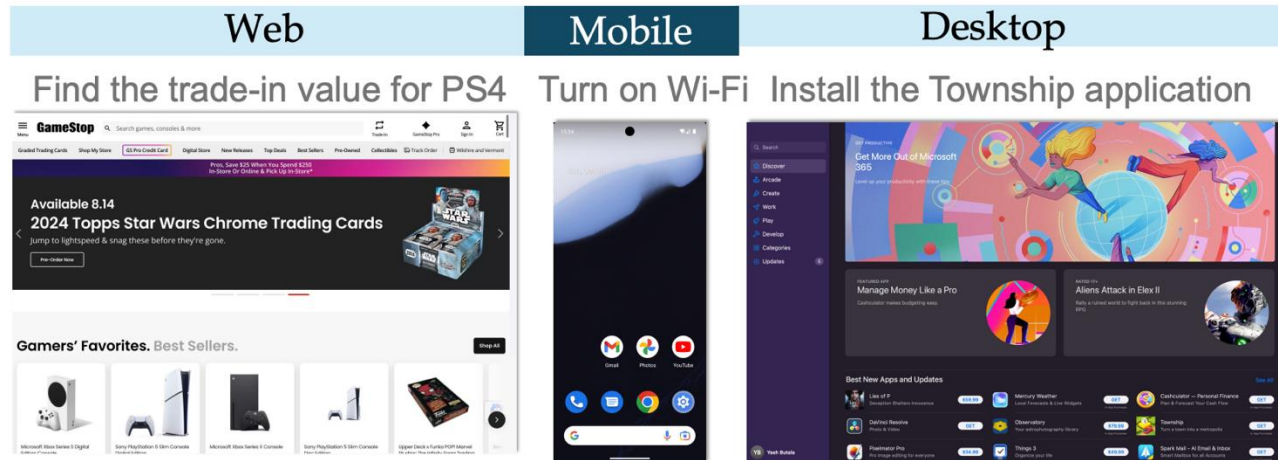


Figure 1: Examples of agent tasks across platforms and performance on **GUI grounding** (♣: ScreenSpot), **offline agent** (♠: Multimodal-Mind2Web, AndroidControl, and OmniAct), and **online agent benchmarks** (♥: Mind2Web-Live and AndroidWorld) when using GPT-4 as the planner.

Remarkable effectiveness of synthetic data

- Same data + Qwen2-VL (instead of Llava-NeXT)
- 95% data from web + 5% Android. 0% desktop data

ScreenSpot	Mobile	Desktop	Web	Avg
GPT-4o (OpenAI)	22.6	22.4	10.0	18.3
Ferret-UI-Llama-8b (Apple)	48.4	28.7	20.0	32.3
CogAgent (Zhipu)	45.5	47.1	49.5	47.4
SeeClick	65.0	51.1	44.1	53.4
OmniParser (Microsoft)	75.5	77.5	66.2	73.0
UGround (Initial)	71.6	73.1	75.4	73.3
ShowUI	83.9	68.7	72.7	75.1
Molmo-7B-D (AI2)	77.2	75.0	73.4	75.2
UGround-V1-2B	80.7	77.2	75.1	77.7
Molmo-72B (AI2)	86.1	75.2	74.5	78.6
OS-Atlas-Base-7B (Shanghai AI Lab)	83.0	77.4	82.6	81.0
Aria-UI	83.1	78.8	81.4	81.1
Claude-Computer-Use (Anthropic)	91.9	68.5	88.3	82.9
Aguvis-7B	86.7	80.5	81.8	83.0
Project Mariner (Google)				84.0
CogAgent-9B (Zhipu)				85.4
UGround-V1-7B	86.5	85.1	87.5	86.3
Aguvis-72B	89.9	86.7	88.6	88.4
UGround-V1-72B	88.8	90.3	89.2	89.4

MODEL	DEVELOPMENT	CREATIVE	CAD	SCIENTIFIC	OFFICE	OPERATING SYSTEMS	OVERALL AVG ▼
UGround-V1-7b	35.5	27.8	13.5	38.8	48.8	26.1	31.1
UGround-V1-2b	34.4	23.5	12.3	35.0	37.1	19.0	26.6
OS-Atlas-7B	21.3	16.4	9.9	25.3	26.2	17.4	18.9
UGround-7B	17.7	14.9	10.9	19.0	26.0	10.9	16.5
AriaUI (MOE, 3.9B active)	5.6	14.3	8.0	18.3	14.9	2.5	11.3
ShowUI (2B)	10.1	4.2	4.4	10.9	12.9	6.6	7.7
CogAgent (18B)	7.3	5.3	6.2	13.4	9.2	3.0	7.7
OS-Atlas-4B	3.5	2.6	1.5	7.7	4.4	3.2	3.7
MiniCPM-V (7B)	2.8	1.3	3.6	5.4	2.8	2.3	3.0
Qwen2-VL-7B	1.7	0.6	0.7	4.0	2.8	0.7	1.6
SeeClick (7B)	0.5	0.6	1.7	2.5	0.8	1.6	1.1
GPT-4o	1.3	0.3	1.1	1.0	0.9	0.0	0.8
Qwen-VL-7B	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.1



ScreenSpot



ScreenSpot-Pro
(Professional Desktop Software)