

Manus: The First Agentic AI



We're living in the era of artificial intelligence (AI). The 2020s mark the explosion of learning language models and generative AI. Open AI has led the charge in the tech industry with ChatGPT 3 and 4, inspiring many chatbots and alternative models to spawn in its wake, like Gemini, Copilot, and Perplexity. However, the market is becoming increasingly competitive, and consumers are pushing the limits of AI chatbots. Minor updates aren't sufficient. The thresholds of breakthroughs must be shattered to sustain the business.

Tech engineers strive for agentic AI. Fully autonomous and smart digital assistants that execute specific and complex commands. Rather than generating random predicted text, it can research and reason, open tabs, and interact with the web on a user's behalf. To some, this sounds like science fiction. To others, this sounds like the annoying spambots that bloat social media with fake engagement. However, agentic AI leans much more toward the former. It's closer to a human worker and interaction than computers have ever been.

But there's never been a working agentic AI model. Until now, that is.

Enter Manus

On March 5th, 2025, a [YouTube video](#) broke the tech community. In the video, Yichao 'Peak' Ji, Co-founder and Chief Scientist of Manus AI, claims they developed the world's first general AI agent. "It doesn't just think. It delivers results," he says. "This isn't just another chatbot or workflow. It's a truly autonomous agent that bridges the gap between conception and execution." The name Manus comes from the Latin phrase "Mens et Manus," which means mind and hand, representing this agentic AI as the hand of the human mind.

Peak also calls this a potential glimpse into AGI (artificial general intelligence), suggesting it's on the path to human-level AI. In the debut video, Peak showcases a variety of tasks that Manus is capable of. Manus can open zip files and scan several resumes, reading each applicant's page by page in different tabs and taking notes of strengths and skills.

Each Manus agent has its own computer independent of your browser tabs, allowing it to research on the web, program code, and edit documents. It interacts with the internet and software just like a human would. Unlike generative models, it shows its progression. The user can close their screen whenever they feel like it, and Manus will keep working until it's done, notifying you when the results are in.

What about something more complex, like finding an apartment? Peak covers this as well. First, Manus organizes its objectives step-by-step. Then, it opens several tabs related to residency articles, nearby schools, codes in Python to adjust for budget, and so much more in the blink of an eye. Finally, Manus provides the user with a comprehensive summary of its findings.

"But can it make a website if I asked it to?" Why, yes. Yes, it can. Manus compiles all the information it has gathered, organizes the sections on the website, and sends its user the link.

Manus isn't *exactly* one model, but more like a captain leading its organized crew of sub-agents to complete specific tasks. Each sub-agent has a role like web-surfing and research, document editing, planning, and decision-making. This sophisticated network borrows power from open-source patrons such as Anthropic's Claude 3.5 Sonnet model and Alibaba's Qwen models. It's a hive of general intelligence, with specialized drones led by the queen bee, Manus.

Who can use it?

Manus AI is not available to the public as it's currently in its beta phase. "It's very limited," states Annabelle Droulers on [Bloomberg](#). She mentions having tried signing up as a Bloomberg journalist to get access, though it is unclear if it was successful or not. By invitation only, one could join the private beta and try out Manus. Beta testers are currently reporting crucial bugs and mistakes to the staff. Manus AI has an official Discord channel with hundreds of thousands of members, and they're sending out invitation codes daily.

Tech Supremacy War

The war of ones and zeroes for technological supremacy continues between the West and the East. The stock market had just recovered from the devastating upheaval created by DeepSeek, a Chinese startup, when it [landed on the scene](#). American chip manufacturer Intel is [losing its edge](#) against foreign competitors like TSMC, which may be [relying on them](#) to survive.

Manus AI is being called China's next ["DeepSeek moment."](#) CNBC news anchor Deidre Bosa describes that investors might end up pulling out of American AI in favor of China, which could contribute to another recession. If Manus does become the next DeepSeek and fulfills its general AI agent claims, it could very well carve another wound in the stock market and raise the bar of competition beyond what current models are capable of. Suspicion looms over Manus, like whether Peak's claims of achieving an autonomous AI agent are accurate. However, many are in the beta and reporting back that it's real but with flaws. But we don't know whether Manus is its own model or leeching off of a powerful patron like OpenAI, DeepSeek, or something else.

Decades ago, we had the space race, in which the participating opponents were America and the Soviet Union. Although America lost the race to space, it succeeded in lunar conquest. But is that the end of the competition? Of course not. There's Mars, the moons of Jupiter, and beyond.

Does the battlefield of tech and artificial intelligence have a finish line? Apparently not. Chips are getting more advanced as transistors get smaller despite [Moore's Law](#). Google announced that they had invented a ["new state of matter"](#) for their quantum computation. Technology is as boundless as the stars. Our generation's "Moon landing" may have just happened.

These daring startups must constantly outdo each other to find the next threshold to crack. Agentic AI is hardly the end of technology acceleration as a whole, but we may have seen America fail to crack a marketable agentic AI model first. But what if this was the farthest AI could go, and America just lost the AI race?

Limitations & Concerns

Slidebean shares the emerging theory that AI LLMs have a [fatal flaw](#) that cannot be fixed. To put it simply, the amount of data needed to train LLMs does not exist. These models will eventually hit their peak and cannot advance. That's not to mention the server costs and environmental impact of data farms (which is why DeepSeek's [energy efficiency](#) looked so promising). However, this does not necessarily concern AGI yet. This gives some scientists more reason to pursue efficiency and superintelligence, evolving from the limitations of LLMs and generative AI.

But is humanity ready for this responsibility? We look at this as if Apple released a new phone, but we're talking about one brick forward on the road to humanity's final invention. America vs China in the AI space isn't about money but power through intelligence. Whoever reaches the next threshold can reshape the world like we have never imagined. Our security infrastructure is surely not prepared for super-intelligent agents to swarm the internet. Tech giants can hardly protect themselves from [teenage hackers](#). Commercial AI agents hitting the market would see sophisticated scams explode.

That's not to say we should never have this technology. AI provides hope in the medical field, helping doctors [diagnose patients](#) and solve [protein structures](#). It'd be impossible to cover every positive and negative, but it is worth being conscious of how much power we give AI so that it doesn't get power over us.

Positive Potential of Manus

Giving the critiques a break, I see potential in Manus. It can allow one person to create a business where one employee can oversee accounting and the website's coding. Additionally, establish logistics with distribution and book appointments. Now, the average person has the opportunity to create a better, easier life for themselves. Although corporations could abuse this and cull jobs, we're one step closer to having smarter robots who can do our chores and taxes.

With a tireless worker like Manus, biochemists could leave it on in the background of their supercomputers as it truly multitasks (despite popular belief, humans cannot multitask) to analyze proteins and chemicals to advance medicine.

Seeing how fast Manus moves through websites would make it a faster content moderator. Not the kind of humans usually enjoy doing. More so, the tedious tasks that gruel a long work day. Of course, more data would be needed to help AI tell the difference between reality, fiction, and well, AI.

Who knew we'd see a tech startup bombshell again so soon after DeepSeek? Another Chinese startup at that. It's becoming clear that China is crawling for a top contender in the AI race if it hasn't already claimed it.