Welcome to the OpenAI podcast, the podcast that opens up the world of AI in a quick and concise manner.

Tune in daily to hear the latest news and breakthroughs in the rapidly evolving world of artificial intelligence.

If you've been following the podcast for a while, you'll know that over the last six months I've been working on a stealth AI startup.

Of the hundreds of projects I've covered, this is the one that I believe has the greatest potential, so today I'm excited to announce AIBOX.

AIBOX is a no-code AI app building platform paired with the App Store for AI that lets you monetize your AI tools.

The platform lets you build apps by linking together AI models like chatGPT, mid-journey, and 11Labs.

Eventually, we'll integrate with software like Gmail, Trello, and Salesforce so you can use AI to automate every function in your organization.

To get notified when we launch and be one of the first to build on the platform, you can join the waitlist at AIBOX.AI, the link is in the show notes.

We are currently raising a seed round of funding.

If you're an investor that is focused on disruptive tech, I'd love to tell you more about the platform.

You can reach out to me at jaden at AIBOX.AI, I'll leave that email in the show notes.

In what I view is a significant boost to kind of the rising sector of maritime automation.

Ceronic, a Austin-based startup, is focused on autonomous defense ships, and it has successfully secured $55 million in a Series A round.

To me, this is a particularly interesting field and industry for those that don't know.

I actually, when I was a teenager, when I was 17, I spent an entire year sailing from San Francisco down to San Diego, and we spent a few months in California, and then we sailed across the ocean to the South Pacific.

We visited virtually all the islands in the South Pacific and ended our boat trip in Vanuatu.

We visited Tonga, Fiji, Samoa, pretty much everywhere in the South Pacific, and we lived on a boat for an entire year.

For me, when I see any of these startups that are specifically in this maritime space, this is very interesting to me.

I think I'll have some interesting insights on what may or may not be useful in some of these situations, but of course, this is more focused on defense, which I do not have a ton of experience in, was never part of the military or anything like that.

In any case, this is really, really interesting.

The funding round actually witnessed leading participation from caffeinated capital.

They also had a few other notable VCs, including 8VC, Andreas and Horowitz, which of course A16Z, one of the tops.

They had Lightspeed Venture Partners, .72 Ventures, and they had a few others.

I think interestingly, the U.S. Innovation Technology Fund also put into this round.

This was founded by Dino Mavrukas, who is an ex-Navy SEAL, and that's, you know, Seronics mission is very crystal clear.

Essentially, what they're trying to do is engineer autonomous surface ships tailored for the Navy and other defense customers within the U.S. Alliance.

While autonomous maritime vehicles aren't entirely new with companies like, you know, Sail Drone, already making a bunch of waves.

They have over $100 million in venture capital, I believe, for kind of research vessels.

The focus on defense by Seronic, I think, kind of distinguishes its market position.

So other firms, like Y Combinator-backed Shown, are directing efforts on tech to retrofit existing ships for autonomous navigation.

I think what's, you know, really the unique proposition of Seronic is that they recently said, quote, we build our boats around the mission and not in the mission around the boats.

Instead of adapting legacy platforms, Seronic innovates from scratch, aiming to bring, aiming to bridge the gap between large naval ship manufacturing and the need for specialized autonomous ship design.

So currently, the company's spotlight is on two prototypes.

They have a six foot spyglass and a 13 foot cutlass.

And these are actually very small ships.

I guess, I'm sure you can imagine, right, six feet.

This is like a rowboat, pretty much, not even, right, and a 13 foot.

So they're really going for very small and I'm assuming very versatile crafts.

These vessels are designed with some really cutting edge, remotely updateable software and an ability to handle varied payloads, even in communication challenge zones.

So the thing that, a couple of things I'll say here, these are very small.

So I'm assuming these are meant to go very fast and get into places.

They're probably hard to hit.

They're a very small target.

So I'm assuming that this is great for, you know, that when you look at the military.

One thing that I think is interesting, though, is it says these are remotely updateable, they have remotely updateable software.

This is actually something recently speaking with some people in this industry, specifically looking at the military.

This is something typically I actually see people wanting to avoid.

You do not typically want remote updateable software on your ship, because if it's remote updateable, that means it's prone to be hacky or hacked, essentially.

Something that a lot of people are working on right now is, you know, essentially computing on the edge, AKA like making these AI models, like run on the actual Hank or on the actual Humvee or on the actual, you know, vehicle itself, if it's going to be autonomous, self-driving, because the problem is if it's, you know, relying on anything in the cloud, then that can get severed.

The connection can get severed.

If it doesn't have connection, it doesn't run, it can't update.

Or, of course, you could have a remote hack that is, you know, essentially updating a piece of hardware or a piece of software onto it that is, you know,

going to render obsolete.
So that's my only thing that I think is a little bit, I don't know, I'm a little
skeptical on, but in any case, I'm sure they're, you know, creating encryption
in other areas, but, you know, we do know a lot of our geopolitical adversaries
here in the United States, when you think of people like Russia or China, etc.,
are very, very sophisticated in their hacking and in their, essentially,
that whole side of their military.
So something that I would definitely say is important to think about.
In any case, the U.S. has already, the U.S.
Navy has already signed two R&D agreements, which I think is definitely
testament to the startup's potential.
Anheim, who is a journalist recently spotlighted a shift in the VC landscape.
More investment is definitely, right now, I believe, pouring into defense tech.
So, in fact, 2021 was a banner year for U.S.-based defense tech startups,
raising around 2.1 billion across 53 deals.
And I think the pace isn't relenting.
So, Helsing, which is a defense AI startup, they recently raised a whopping
223 million in a series B round.
Close on its heels, there's Castilein and Mock Industries, which secures
substantial funding for their different defense tech initiatives.
So what is driving the surge in defense tech spending?
A lot of people are talking, I think there's a lot of things
that play into this right now.
You know, I think someone that was kind of like on the edge, kind of pushing
this forward before it was super popular.
Of course, a lot of people think of Palmer Lucky, who is kind of the founder
of Oculus, and after selling that to Facebook, and then I believe getting
kicked out of Facebook by the leadership there, he obviously had a sizable check
from the sale, I believe they bought Oculus for around $3 billion.
And he went on to go and start Android, which is a defense startup.
They're building a bunch of autonomous aircrafts and some other drones
and other interesting things in the space.
And he's been like a very vocal proponent of essentially, in tech,
a lot of times we see people that say they're too good or they kind of have
this superiority complex against working with the military and the US government.
His, you know, line of reasoning is that tech companies that are in America
should 100% be working with the American government to defend the country
that they are operating in, as it's definitely in their best interest.
And so I think we've seen kind of a shift in the VC landscape, where you
know, you used to have companies like Google, which refused to do any work
with the US military.
And so I think it's becoming companies and venture capital is definitely
warming up to this idea.

In addition to that, I think the geopolitical chessboard has, you know, of course, the ongoing Ukraine conflict, which is if you just looked at it from a political perspective, there is definitely more lawmakers on the Democrat side that are more publicly supporting that and probably more on the conservative side that are less in favor of funding that conflict. And so I think because of that, of course, Silicon Valley, where you typically had this pushback against working with the military from employees at Google who were, you know, had a higher chance of being left leaning, all of a sudden there's kind of this like big conflict that I believe, you know, their own political party is really talked about the importance of. And so I think, you know, things like that also are kind of shifting the mindset of people on the right and left as far as working with tech and working with, you know, tech in the military. So I think there's a bunch of also regulatory ships in China that are affecting tech exports and investments combined with some really pro-active U.S. policies like chips and the Science Act are kind of recalibrating global investment strategies. However, I think amidst all of these global, you know, currents, Soronic remains focused on its core strength. As Marucas puts it, the company is not just another boat builder dabbling in tech, but is a bona fide tech firm addressing the unique challenges of maritime autonomy. So far, Soronic's voyage seems very promising. I think they have $70 million in venture capital already in their bank. And I think they have a really robust team of around 45 people. So the startup, I think, is poised to make some big steps in maritime defense tech, and it's definitely a company will continue to follow into the future. If you are looking for an innovative and creative community of people using ChatGPT, you need to join our ChatGPT creators community. I'll drop a link in the description to this podcast. We'd love to see you there where we share tips and tricks of what is working in ChatGPT. It's a lot easier than a podcast as you can see screenshots. You can share and comment on things that are currently working. So if this sounds interesting to you, check out the link in the comment. We'd love to have you in the community. Thanks for joining me on the OpenAI podcast. It would mean the world to me if you would rate this podcast wherever you listen to your podcasts, and I'll see you tomorrow.