IBM Newsroom

Think 2026: IBM Delivers the Blueprint for the AI Operating Model as the AI Divide Widens

- Next-generation agent orchestration and agentic development give enterprises a unified way to plan, build, deploy, and govern AI agents at scale

- Real-time, AI-ready data foundation gives enterprises the governed, connected information agents need to act with speed

- AI-powered hybrid cloud management connects infrastructure, security, and operations across hybrid environments

- Built-in governance and sovereignty controls let enterprises run AI at scale

BOSTON, May 5, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Today, at its annual Think conference, IBM (NYSE: IBM) announced its most comprehensive expansion of enterprise AI and hybrid cloud management capabilities to date. Products and capabilities unveiled today include the next generation of **IBM watsonx Orchestrate** for multi-agent orchestration, **IBM Confluent** to bring real-time data to AI**, IBM Concert platform** for intelligent operations, and **IBM Sovereign Core** for operational independence.

The announcements address the defining challenge facing enterprises: many have invested heavily in AI, but only few believe it is paying off. The products and capabilities unveiled today address this gap for enterprises.

"The enterprises pulling ahead are not deploying more AI – they're redesigning how their business operates," **said Arvind Krishna, Chairman and CEO, IBM.** "*Running AI in the enterprise requires a new operating model, and IBM is enabling organizations to manage AI-driven systems with the same rigor, governance, and scale as their most critical infrastructure."*

A New Operating Model for the Agentic Enterprise

AI requires a new operating model, built on four integrated systems working together: **agents** through coordinated AI that

executes and adapts across the business; **data** through real-time, connected information that gives teams a shared view of what's happening; **automation** through end-to-end infrastructure and automated workflows that scale across processes; and **hybrid** through operational independence for sovereignty, governance, and security that allows AI to run consistently and with controls. Each is a separate priority that enterprises are chasing. Together, they represent a fundamental shift from improving parts of the business to changing how the business operates. Today's announcements represent the next evolution of IBM's portfolio, to deliver against the operating model.

Agents: Orchestration and Development at Scale
As organizations move from deploying a handful of agents to managing thousands, built by different teams on different platforms, the core challenge shifts from building agents to keep them governed and auditable in near real time.

IBM is announcing the next generation of watsonx Orchestrate (available in private preview), evolving it into an agentic control plane for the multi-agent era, where organizations can deploy agents from any source with consistent policy enforcement and accountability.

Alongside watsonx Orchestrate, IBM recently announced:

- **IBM Bob** (generally available), an agentic development partner designed for the enterprise, partners with developers to build agents with security and cost controls built in.

Data: AI-Ready Foundation
For most enterprises, data is siloed and without meaning. To effectively power agentic systems with up-to-date data, IBM is delivering, real-time, AI-ready data foundation through its recent acquisition of Confluent for real-time data streaming built on Kafka and Flink technologies, and pairing new capabilities coming to watsonx.data with a real-time context layer for AI.

Additional announcements include:

- **Context** in **watsonx.data** (available in private preview) extends watsonx.data with an open, federated context layer that makes enterprise AI reason reliably over business data — applying semantic meaning, enforcing governance at runtime, and making decisions explainable. Featuring new capabilities including **context, OpenRAG,** and **OpenSearch** on watsonx.data, and **Confluent's Real-Time Context Engine**.
- **Confluent** and **Tableflow** integration with **watsonx.data** (generally available) and **Confluent** and **Flink** integrations with watsonx.data deliver unified AI and analytics across all data, connecting real-time event streaming with batch workloads across the hybrid enterprise.
- **watsonx.data GPU-accelerated Presto** (available in private preview) showed the potential to significantly reduce the cost of running certain workloads and processing time on large enterprise datasets in internal benchmark testing with NVIDIA. In a proof of concept with Nestlé, the engine delivered 83% cost savings and an overall 30x price-performance improvement on a global data mart spanning 186 countries.
- **IBM Z Database Assistant** (available in private preview) gives Db2 and IMS database administrators an AI-powered workspace to monitor performance, automate routine tasks, and optimize configurations across complex IBM Z environments.
- **HCP Terraform powered by Infragraph** (available in public preview) delivers unified infrastructure visibility through a centralized, event-driven knowledge graph by connecting data across cloud environments, infrastructure-as-code workflows, security tooling, and operations platforms to help streamline operations and automate remediation.

Automation: Intelligent Infrastructure Operations
Running AI at the core of the business can make infrastructure exponentially more complex, and most enterprises are managing that complexity through fragmented tools, siloed teams, and humans serving as the connective layer between systems that were never designed to work together.

IBM is announcing **IBM Concert platform** (available in public preview), an AI-powered operations platform to move organizations from passive monitoring to coordinated, intelligent response. Where traditional tools capture metrics, the Concert platform brings systems together. It correlates signals together into a single view across applications, infrastructure, network, without requiring organizations to rip and replace existing tooling.

Concert delivers this through three interconnected capabilities: cross-domain understanding to eliminate silos and surface what matters most; context-driven decisions that correlate signals across risk and dependencies, so teams act from a shared, clear view; and coordinated execution that moves organizations from insight to action with built-in governance and human oversight.

The threat landscape is changing— AI can now identify and exploit vulnerabilities in hours, not days. IBM Concert Secure Coder (available in public preview) addresses this by embedding security management directly into the developer workflow. Available in IBM Bob and VS Code, it identifies and prioritizes risks as code is written, and can generate automatic remediations to fix vulnerable code, or patch OS, middleware, packages and images. This makes security continuous and proactive and can help identify vulnerabilities before they are exploited.

Additional announcements include:

- **HCP Terraform powered by Infragraph** (available in public preview) transforms infrastructure into a live, intelligent system with real-time visibility and context-aware automation across the infrastructure lifecycle.
- **IBM Vault 2.0** (generally available) introduces AI-driven analysis of leaked secrets for rapid triage, dynamic short-lived credentials across major cloud providers, and automated secrets rotation to reduce credential sprawl.
- **IBM zSecure Secret Manager** (planned availability June 2026) brings enhanced security automation to RACF mainframe environments, integrating with IBM Vault Self-Managed for IBM Z and LinuxONE to streamline certificate lifecycle management.

Hybrid: Operational Sovereignty
AI embedded into the core of business means it operates in the most sensitive and complex environments: regulated data, critical infrastructure, cross-border jurisdictions. For those contexts, compliance cannot be a configuration choice.

IBM is announcing the general availability of **IBM Sovereign Core**, a platform that embeds policy at the infrastructure runtime level, so governance can be addressed as regulatory requirements evolve, while prioritizing workload portability. IBM Sovereign Core includes an extensible catalog that organizations can curate for their own users, with their own applications, or populated with pre-vetted IBM, third-party and open-source software and services from an ecosystem of partners that includes: AMD, ATOS, Cegeka, Cloudera, Dell, Elastic, HCL, Intel, Mistral, MongoDB and Palo Alto Networks.

Built on open, enterprise-grade technologies like **Red Hat OpenShift** and **Red Hat AI**, IBM Sovereign Core enables organizations to extend existing investments across hybrid and partner environments.

Supporting Materials:
Blog: Manage all your AI agents in one place with watsonx Orchestrate

Blog: Shifting from AI-assisted coding to AI-assisted delivery with IBM Bob
Blog: Real-time context for AI across hybrid environments
Blog: Introducing GPU acceleration for IBM watsonx.data
Blog: IBM Data Gate for Confluent: Turning Z data into real-time action
Blog: IBM Z Database Assistant brings intelligent operations for the AI era
Blog: Introducing IBM Concert platform: Closing the gap between insight and action
Blog: Announcing IBM Concert Secure Coder: Bringing security to the moment code is written
Blog: Introducing HCP Terraform powered by Infragraph: Now in public preview
Blog: Vault Enterprise 2.0 modernizes identity security at scale
Blog: Introducing IBM zSecure Secret Manager: Bringing automated certificate lifecycle management to IBM z/OS
Blog: IBM Sovereign Core creates AI-ready sovereign environments with verifiable control

Statements regarding IBM's future direction and intent are subject to change or withdrawal without notice and represent goals and objectives only.

Examples presented are illustrative only. Actual results will vary based on client configurations and conditions and, therefore, generally expected results cannot be provided.

About IBM

IBM is a leading provider of global hybrid cloud and AI, and consulting expertise. We help clients in more than 175 countries capitalize on insights from their data, streamline business processes, reduce costs and gain the competitive edge in their industries. Thousands of governments and corporate entities in critical infrastructure areas such as financial services, telecommunications and healthcare rely on IBM's hybrid cloud platform and Red Hat OpenShift to affect their digital transformations quickly, efficiently and securely. IBM's breakthrough innovations in AI, quantum computing, industry-specific cloud solutions and consulting deliver open and flexible options to our clients. All of this is backed by IBM's long-standing commitment to trust, transparency, responsibility, inclusivity and service.

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