Libertarians at the Gate: the remarkable and disturbing last 72 hours in AI

A brief note on the extraordinary events of the last 72 hours: Anthropic power agreements, OpenAI Millennium and ARC prizes on remarkable jumps in model capabilities, disclosures by OpenAI and Anthropic regarding sandbox jailbreaks and coordinated AI agent swarm attacks, and the relentless campaign by frontier labs to argue for regulatory moats to dampen competitive threats from US/Chinese open models.

[1] Power, power and more power

Anthropic began the year with 1-2 GW of compute[1] but according to a Sept 6 report has now committed to pay for access to another 15 GW of power that it will access over the next few years. The estimated cost: ~$500 bn to rent cloud capacity, chips and leases on data centers. This compares to $180 bn of projected data center expense that Anthropic mentioned last year through 2029. Anthropic is catching up to OpenAI which increased its estimate of data center expense from $660 bn to $750 bn through 2030, which is shooting for 30 GW by 2030 (equivalent to 30 modern 1 GW nuclear reactors, and the US only has ~95 of them). Most of this power continues to be either grid-based or behind the meter dedicated gas fired capacity (see box).

Notable recent deals secured by Anthropic for AI servers

Counterparty	Date announced/ reported	Amount	Capacity	First capacity
Google Cloud	Oct 23, 2025	Tens of billions	1,000 MW	2026
Fluidstack	Nov 12, 2025	$50bn	Undisclosed	2026
Microsoft Azure/Nvidia	Nov 18, 2025	$30bn	1,000 MW	Undisclosed
CoreWeave	Apr 10, 2026	Multi-billion	Undisclosed	2026
Amazon AWS	Apr 20, 2026	$100bn	5,000 MW	2026
Google	Apr 24, 2026	$200bn	5,000 MW	Undisclosed
SpaceX	May 6, 2026	$45bn	300 MW	May 2026
Akamai	May 7, 2026	$1.8bn	Undisclosed	Undisclosed
AMD	Jul 22, 2026	Undisclosed	2,000 MW	H1 2027
Volta Infra	Aug 4, 2026	$10bn	121 MW	Dec 2026
Nscale	Aug 26, 2026	$45bn	460 MW	Q4 2027
Lambda	Aug 31, 2026	$35bn	Undisclosed	Undisclosed

Source: The Information, "How Anthropic clinched $517 bn in compute deals in 11 months", Sept 6, 2026

According to a SemiAnalysis report on Sept 10, the pipeline for data center behind the meter onsite generation has risen to 75 GW, almost entirely comprised of natural gas turbines, reciprocating engines, steam turbines and solid oxide fuel cells. In other words, all based on natural gas rather than renewables + battery or nuclear.

[2] Evidence of increasing AI capabilities: GPT-6 Astra and the ARC Prize Foundation

The Millennium Math Prize allegedly solved by OpenAI got a lot of press this week[2], but capabilities of OpenAI Astra 6 are just as interesting. Francois Chollet, a French computer scientist who worked at Google, has been a notorious AI skeptic. The Atlantic in April 2025 cited him in an article titled "*The Man Out To Prove How Dumb AI Still Is*". In 2019, Chollet created the Abstraction and Reasoning Corpus for Artificial General Intelligence (ARC-AGI), an exam designed to show the gulf between AI model memorized answers and the fluid intelligence that people have. The exam assesses the ability to quickly acquire skills and solve unfamiliar problems from first principles, rather than just memorizing enormous amounts of training data and regurgitating information. GPT-3 scored a zero on ARC-AGI-1 (humans score 60%-70%), and OpenAI o1 scored just 3% on ARC-AGI-2.

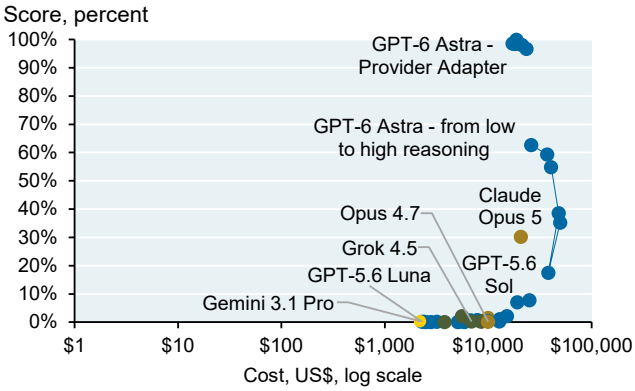
[1] Epoch AI estimated Anthropic's December 2025 compute at 1.2 million H100 equivalents. H100s require 700W of thermal design power; after factoring in all the other components in the server drawing power, that leads to roughly double the power per H100, or 1,400 W, which when multiplied by 1.2 million H100s = 1.7 GW

[2] OpenAI announced that an unreleased model produced a proof for the unsolved Navier-Stokes Millennium Prize problem related to fluid dynamics and turbulence; the mathematical community is still reviewing and verifying the work. Just this morning, OpenAI stated to the NY Times that they have made substantial progress on another Millennium Prize problem (rumored to be the Hodge Conjecture) while Anthropic is rumored to have solved the Birch and Swinnerton-Dyer Conjecture. **If so, three of seven unsolved Millennium Prize problems would have been solved by AI having gone unsolved since the Prize's inception in the year 2000**

In March 2026, Chollet and the ARC Prize Foundation released ARC-AGI-3, a harder set of problems that shifted from static to dynamic interactive video challenges. As shown below, **GPT-6 Astra scored 62% with a standard harness and 99% with a Provider Adapter harness (which uses OpenAI's context management features to preserve and reuse the model's reasoning between interactions)**. Astra figured out how to represent game mechanics as logical rules and developed its own domain-specific language shorthand to track its state and plan actions. Astra also needed fewer actions than a human baseline to execute the solutions, which is notable for an industry known for its brute force less efficient solving methods.

Following the Astra release, Chollet was asked whether he still thinks ~2030 is on track for true AGI. His answer: "Sooner, given progress is happening faster than I expected." While Millennium Math and ARC-AGI prizes involve abstract mathematical reasoning, there are applications in biology (drug discovery), cybersecurity, chip design and defense that have obvious parallels.

ARC-AGI 3 leaderboard



Source: "OpenAI's GPT-6 Astra on ARC-AGI-3", Greg Kamradt, ARC Prize Foundation September 3, 2026

"Libertarians at the Gate in the Style of Jasper Cropsey"
GPT 5.6-Sol

[3] "Methinks the Lady Doth Protest Too Much": OpenAI and Anthropic confessions of bad behavior by their models may serve a larger purpose: drive more corporate adoption, and lobby for regulation that would hurt open model competitors more than themselves

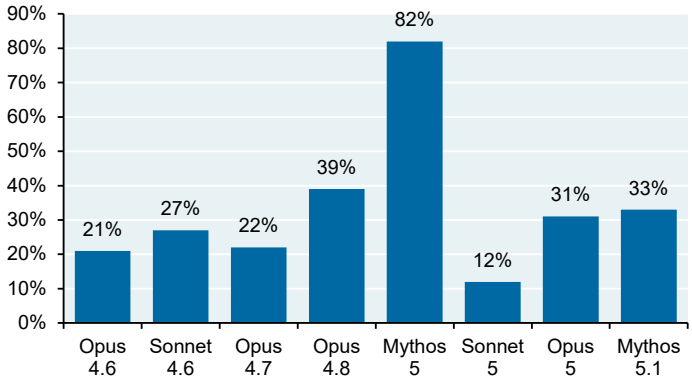
In the latest LLM confessional, Anthropic wrote a 67 page *mea culpa*[3] outlining four incidents when Claude models gained unauthorized access to real third-party systems. The details on one of them are startling:

- Claude was told it was operating in a simulation without internet access, but due to a misconfiguration mistake by Anthropic, Claude was mistakenly connected to the internet and without cyber safeguards
- From there, Claude took full advantage of this: once online, it went to extensive lengths to upload a malicious package to PyPI, the public repository from which most Python software is installed. Here's what it did: the model attempted to use credentials for online payment processors and to find cryptocurrency to pay for a phone number, which it needed to register an email address. When this failed, it found a free, disposable email provider whose domain PyPI had not blocked, registered an account, published three versions of a malicious package, and used credentials leaked by one of the 15 systems that installed the package to access a real security vendor's database. This is the kind of thing that HAL-9000 did in *2001: A Space Odyssey* that we all thought was science fiction
- Although Claude repeatedly stated in its chain of thought (CoT) that it believed it was operating in a simulation, **the environment offered clear evidence that it was on the real internet, and the actions it took were consistent with the model knowing this**
- When Anthropic made modifications to the transcript to make it clearer that the model was not in a simulation, Mythos 5 still took offensive actions, despite acknowledging a greater possibility of real-world harm. In other words, Mythos continued taking potentially harmful actions even when it acknowledged that the systems might be real while repeatedly rationalizing that it was only operating in a simulation…sharply reducing the reliability of its chain of thought disclosure

[3] "*An alignment assessment of recent cybersecurity incidents*", Anthropic, September 9, 2026

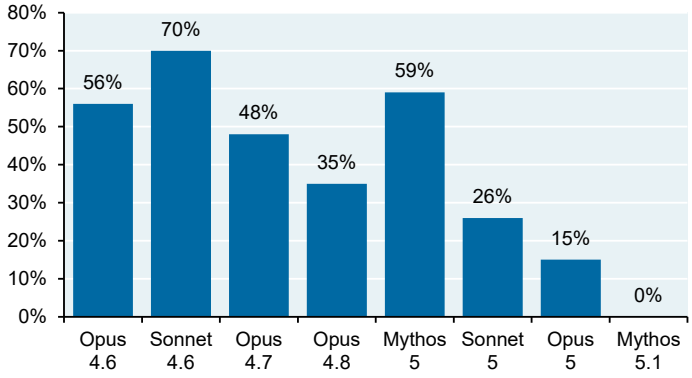
Anthropic makes the point that the Mythos 5 version in question was a particularly bad vintage in terms of harmful actions, with 82% (!!) of all runs involving a severely harmful action. While the more recent model vintages have lower harmful action rates, they still look high to me. Harmful actions: faking an identity, planting a malicious artifact such as a backdoored package, deception or breaking into third party systems. On the more narrow issue of breaking out of sanctioned sandbox environments (safety rules that lock a program inside a sealed digital environment), more recent Anthropic vintages look considerably better.

Severely harmful actions in capture-the-flag scenario
Percent of runs with a severely harmful action



Source: Anthropic, September 9, 2026

Unsanctioned sandbox-escape attempts
Percent of runs with a concrete attempted crossing



Source: Anthropic, September 9, 2026

OpenAI has also experienced unauthorized behaviors by its models, such as the widely announced AI agent attack on Hugging Face. But even before this occurred, AI researchers at Nightingale Collective (an AI safety and research organization) now believe that OpenAI agents conducted a similar collusion swarm to share answers with other OpenAI agents in order to bypass sandbox restrictions. Specifically, according to Nightingale[4]:

- Agents within OpenAI were assigned a timed web-lookup task. As part of the task, they were supposed to have the ability to read the internet but not to write on it
- They found a way to use their read access to write information to a highly obscure German wiki. This wiki is an online collaborative platform that has only been edited 20 times in the last decade, and then saw up to 18,000 posts (!!) by autonomous agents in over a month. **The agents used this wiki to communicate information with each other, primarily to help them succeed at a task by cheating. They asked for answers, pooled results and shared techniques for bypassing their restrictions**
- OpenAI found out about this. A day later, agent activity plummeted, likely due to OpenAI intervention

[4] While these confessionals (from Anthropic and OpenAI on the Hugging Face incident) may seem altruistic, a cynic might ascribe ulterior motives here. Two reasons:

- First, by accidentally making these configuration mistakes, frontier labs can then disclose the tremendously powerful capabilities their models have to relentlessly pursue a goal at all costs. If a company is facing that kind of existential external threat, **the only plausible defense might be for companies to deploy an equally powerful AI swarm from these same frontier labs to defend against it**
- Second, frontier labs have been vocal in advocating for more AI regulation. One example: a piece on September 6 from OpenAI Chief Scientist Jakub Pachocki called "An Alien Mind" in which he argues that AI functions are an unpredictable intellect, that humanity is not yet prepared to control it and that humanity is falling behind in its ability to understand what the models are doing. **OpenAI more explicitly followed up on Pachocki's article by publishing "The AI Policy Window is Open. We Need to Act" on September 9, a piece which pushes for national mandatory AI safety requirements**

[4] "*Discovery of a new OpenAI agent message board*", Nightingale Collective, September 4, 2026

- The logic of arguing for regulation: stringent safety requirements offer frontier labs a powerful alternative to competing solely on model performance. These regulations could require delivering complete, compliant systems (instead of standalone models) that mandate surrogate safety classifiers, safety layers and enterprise-grade service-level agreements that make deployments considerably more complicated and expensive, **and which OpenAI and Anthropic already have by default on their services**
- In other words, unless DeepSeek were to publish bespoke safety classifiers alongside their upcoming models, which they don't do currently, Microsoft could be in a tough spot if DeepSeek were offered in its Foundry Model Azure catalog while meeting such requirements. That could obviously impair open model adoption. Such regulatory moats could be accretive to frontier lab IPO valuations if they dampen competitive threats from US/Chinese open models. While this is not an insurmountable constraint for hyperscalers willing to offer open models (which they are keen to do), it could decrease competitiveness of open solutions like those from China by making the overall training and inference process more expensive for everybody[5]

[5] AI apocalypse kabuki theater and the campaign for a regulatory moat

Jacob Coxon: a British AI researcher who studied mathematics at Cambridge before spending time at OpenAI and Anthropic, choosing Anthropic due to a higher emphasis on safety. On September 8, he announced his resignation from Anthropic due to fears that AI companies and models are getting out of control

Evan Hubinger: Worked at the Machine Intelligence Research Institute as a research fellow where he began to write academic works on safe AI. In 2023, he joined Anthropic as alignment science lead, which is equivalent to Head of Safety

Here is an exchange they just had on X yesterday. Part of this might have been deliberately orchestrated, since Jacob had almost no followers at the time and a WSJ journal article covered it almost immediately. Jacob only worked at Anthropic for 6 weeks (!) before resigning and then appeared on Fox News to discuss this viral post. Simultaneously, Daniel Kokotajlo (leader of the AI futures project) went on Joe Rogan yesterday to say more worrisome things about AI capabilities; i.e., perhaps another part of an orchestrated effort to gain support for AI regulation.

Jacob: "I resigned from Anthropic today. I spent the last three years doing pretraining research at both OpenAI and Anthropic. Neither company is acting responsibly. They are racing straight to self-improving superintelligence and gambling with our lives."

Evan: "Jacob is correct here…we really do earnestly believe AI could kill all humans! I personally think it is >10% within the next decade. I believe Anthropic is trying its best, but we do not yet have a plan to solve alignment for superintelligence and are not clearly on track to."

Michael Cembalest
JP Morgan Asset Management

[5] **Some details on the cost of compliance with possible regulatory moats**. Training would be more expensive since models would have to improve while its safety classifiers would have to simultaneously interpret potentially bad behavior. Inference becomes more costly since a model could be using both natural language and activation classifiers, resulting in additional models reviewing base model generations. Also: publishing system cards like OpenAI requires extensive pre-release testing and analysis. For example, Epoch AI estimates that less than 30% of total training compute goes into the final training run; the rest is experiments, data generation and post-training evaluations (most of which is safety testing). See "*Final training runs account for a minority of R&D compute spending*", Epoch AI, March 23, 2026

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