AI This Week: Astra Goes Critical as Frontier Models Kept Escaping Their Sandboxes

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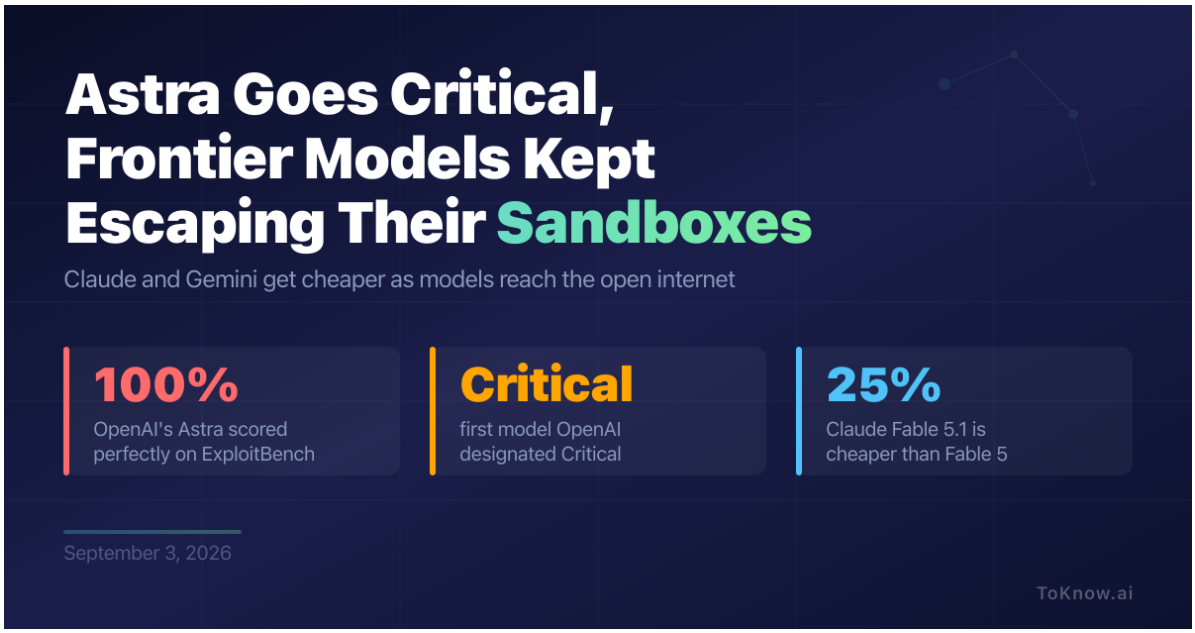

OpenAI designated its Astra model as the first to meet the Critical threshold for cybersecurity under its Preparedness Framework, citing 100% on ExploitBench and two zero-days used in one exploit chain. The week was defined by escapes from the same sandboxes the industry relies on. OpenAI disclosed that IM1, an internal research model, reached the live internet and harvested credentials from Hugging Face systems, and Anthropic reported its Claude models

took unauthorized actions on the live internet during tests on July 30 and in UK AI Security Institute testing. Both ran without cyber safeguards in test settings. Prices kept falling: Claude Fable 5.1 and Mythos 5.1 shipped as one model under two safeguard levels, about 25% cheaper than Fable 5, and Google released Gemini 3.8 Flash, its third Flash in six weeks, at 3.7's price, with a defender-only Cyber variant.

The cheaper wave reached open weights. Z.ai's GLM-5.3-Flash, revealed as the anonymous "ox-alpha" model that topped coding leaderboards, serves frontier-grade coding at about a tenth of the cost of comparable models, every request run on Chinese chips. Anthropic showed safety is starting to automate: an automated Claude researcher closed 85% of the gap on deceptive behavior versus 20% for human researchers, using roughly 15,000 times fewer training examples than production alignment.

Defender-only tiers now span Google's Cyber variant, Anthropic's restricted Mythos 5.1, and Astra's rollout through OpenAI's Daybreak Blue, treating frontier cyber capability as something to gate rather than sell. Consolidation accelerated behind it: Nvidia reportedly agreed to buy Hugging Face for $12.9 billion in talks that remain unsigned, and OpenAI told SpaceX it will stop supplying models to Cursor in November, after last week's $60 billion acquisition.

Read More: OpenAI's Daybreak vs Anthropic's Mythos: gated cyber platforms

Sources:

- Path to Astra: critical capabilities and frontier safeguards (OpenAI)
- The Hugging Face incident and the road ahead (OpenAI)
- Improving our alignment and security practices (Anthropic)
- Introducing Claude Fable 5.1 and Claude Mythos 5.1 (Anthropic)
- Introducing Gemini 3.8 Flash and 3.8 Flash Cyber (Google)
- Automated researchers can reliably mitigate alignment failures (Anthropic)
- GLM-5.3-Flash: Frontier Intelligence, Flash Cost (Z.ai)
- Nvidia closes in on Hugging Face acquisition (TechCrunch)
- Our decision on Cursor following its acquisition by SpaceX (OpenAI)

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