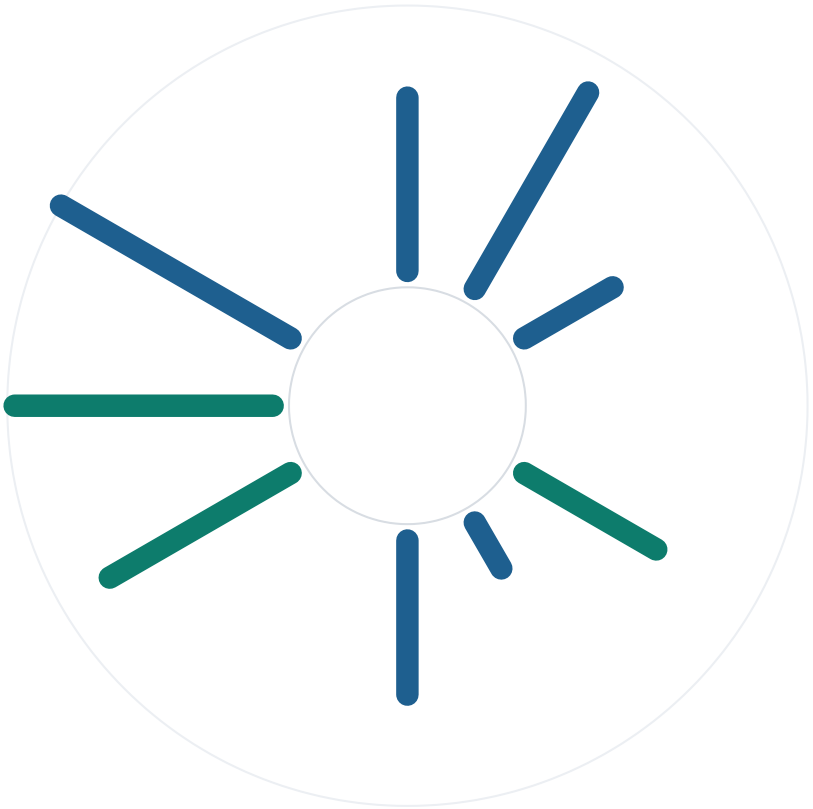
NEW HORIZON · AI DIGEST

The Long Read

26 November 2026

9	3	3470	3
STORIES	SECTIONS	WORDS	HIGH IMPACT



3 high impact · 6 medium impact · spoke length = depth of coverage

The full-length companion to the daily New Horizon AI Digest.
Every story in today's email, reported at length · new-horizon.tech/digest

The issue at a glance

9 stories · 3470 words · 3 sections · 2 charted





AI Models & Research

01 Scientists want audit trails before trusting AI research agents

02 Google’s AI agent helps chemists identify unknown molecules

03 Nvidia opens training data for AI that reads charts

AI Tools & Ecosystem

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05 ChatGPT’s heavy users face tighter limits under shared allowance

06 IBM’s voice agent answers Indian-language questions from English documents

AI Applications & Industry

07 New York bans AI chatbot toys for five years

08 States challenge Character.AI’s auction of private user chats

09 AI-written records requests strain US local governments

How to read this. Every story in today's email is reported here at full length, in the same order. Impact is the writer's judgement of whether a story changes what a reader — in business, at work, as an investor or as a builder — should do or believe this week. Charts appear only where the source itself puts comparable numbers side by side; nothing is estimated to fill a gap. Sources are listed in full on the final page.

SECTION 1 OF 3

AI Models & Research

3 stories ● 3 medium

01 MEDIUM IMPACT huggingface.co

Scientists want audit trails before trusting AI research agents

> Scientists will hand AI agents their data-crunching and literature reviews only if they can see how the work was done, according to interviews with 17 researchers published by the Allen Institute for AI.

The study, posted on Hugging Face by the Seattle lab known as Ai2, asked natural, applied and social scientists where they would welcome AI help and what safeguards they would need. The answer was less about raw accuracy than about process: researchers want to know which files an agent opened, which studies it skipped, and whether a result can be reproduced. The institute groups these concerns into five kinds of trust — validation, privacy, objectivity, accountability and transparency — and argues that evaluations of research agents should test them, not just whether a task was completed.

The practical proposals are modest and still unbuilt. A literature-review test could check whether an agent ignores contradictory evidence or draws conclusions its sources do not support. A coding test could check whether it opens files outside its authorized scope. A data-analysis test could compare its methods with established human workflows. Ai2 says it wants a benchmark in which scientists themselves define the standards agents are measured against.

The most striking finding is how unsettled researchers are about their own role. One early-career biologist deliberately limited AI use while learning skills they planned to teach students. A political scientist used Anthropic's Claude to revise a manuscript, then rewrote the whole paper because, as the researcher put it, “I don't know what was AI and what was me.” Another questioned whether a correct result meant anything if the person who obtained it learned nothing.

Participants split on where to draw lines. One biologist refused to let AI generate research ideas; an anthropologist thought routine methods and results sections were formulaic enough to automate. Some welcomed AI critique of their own drafts but objected to it reviewing unpublished work by others, because peer review carries duties of confidentiality and fair attribution. Others warned that content filters blocking discussion of political violence or human rights could obstruct legitimate research, while researchers handling human-subject data wanted tighter privacy controls.

The authors are explicit about the limits: 17 US-based scientists, an exploratory study, not a representative survey and not a test of any specific agent. The proposals are directions to develop, not results. What is new is the argument that scientific AI needs field-specific standards built with researchers, rather than generic safety checks aimed at catastrophic risks in biology or nuclear physics.

KEY FACTS

SCIENTISTS INTERVIEWED
17

LOCATION OF PARTICIPANTS
US-based

DIMENSIONS OF TRUST IDENTIFIED
5 (validation, privacy, objectivity, accountability, transparency)

PUBLISHER
Ai2 (Allen Institute for AI)

STATUS OF PROPOSED BENCHMARKS
Proposals to develop and test, not established solutions

> WHY IT MATTERS
>
> Companies selling AI tools to labs and research-heavy businesses will face demands for logs of what an agent read and changed, and for tests built around each field's rules — features that are easier to promise than to prove.

Read the original at huggingface.co →

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02 MEDIUM IMPACT Google DeepMind

Google’s AI agent helps chemists identify unknown molecules

> Google DeepMind released a set of chemistry tools for its Antigravity AI agent that let it work out the structure of unknown molecules from mass spectrometer readings, a job that normally ties up a trained analyst for hours per sample.

The tools, called Mass Spec Skills, pair Gemini's reasoning with established mass spectrometry software and public chemical databases. A researcher describes the task in plain language; the agent picks the right tools, runs them in sequence, and returns a proposed structure with an auditable report showing the evidence. Google says the skills are available in Antigravity from today.

The problem they address is a known gap in analytical chemistry. A mass spectrometer can detect tens of thousands of molecular signals in a single drop of blood, soil or plant extract, but matching those signals to actual molecules relies on reference libraries. After a decade of expansion, those libraries still cover only about 5% of measured spectra on average, and 10% for human samples — the rest is what chemists call the "dark matter" of mass spectrometry. Many of those molecules are already listed in public databases; their spectra simply were not recorded. Working them out by hand takes an expert a long time per spectrum, and one study can produce thousands.

In a test on 100 compounds drawn from a public collection, the agent with the skills identified and verified the exact molecule in around 97% of attempts, across a lightweight model and two frontier models. Without internet access or the skills, accuracy stayed below 4% for all three — the models cannot read structures off a peak list alone. With internet access but no skills, the frontier models missed a quarter to a third of the spectra and the lightweight model missed more than three-quarters, because improvised search scripts broke on messy data. The skills also cut the number of tokens generated per attempt by nearly four times on the lightweight model.

The most striking detail is in the worked example. Given a hard negative-ion spectrum with library lookup switched off, the agent retrieved all 845 candidate structures matching the molecular formula from PubChem. A

leading candidate accounted for 97.7% of the summed fragment intensity — but so did two rivals, because matching peak intensity by mass says nothing about whether a structure can physically break apart that way. The agent ruled the rivals out by checking which bonds could produce the observed losses, leaving one molecule. Google is also offering 10,000 scientists six months of its highest Antigravity usage tier free, on a rolling basis and subject to eligibility. The limits are real: mirror-image molecules and some close isomers cannot be separated from this kind of data at all, and genuinely new molecules still need a chemist.

KEY FACTS

ACCURACY WITH SKILLS
About 97% of 100 test compounds

ACCURACY WITHOUT INTERNET OR SKILLS
Below 4%

SPECTRA COVERED BY REFERENCE LIBRARIES
About 5% on average, 10% for human samples

FREE ACCESS OFFER
10,000 scientists, highest tier, 6 months

CANDIDATE STRUCTURES SEARCHED IN WORKED EXAMPLE
845 isomers in PubChem

AVAILABILITY
Google Antigravity, from today

> **WHY IT MATTERS**
>
> Analytical labs, drug discovery teams and environmental testing operations can push far more of their unread spectra through automated interpretation, with a human reviewing the evidence rather than doing the groundwork. The catch is that the agent proposes and justifies structures; it does not replace the chemist's judgement on hard cases.

Read the original at Google DeepMind →

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03 MEDIUM IMPACT huggingface.co

Nvidia opens training data for AI that reads charts

> Nvidia has published the synthetic training data and fine-tuning instructions behind Nemotron 3.5 Parse, its compact model for turning page images into structured data.

The release covers three open datasets: Synthetic Charts V1 with 9.98 million rendered charts and their structured answers, Synthetic Tables V1 with 1 million rendered tables that preserve rows, columns and headers, and OCR Synthetic Multilingual v2 with 7.9 million synthetic document pages across varied fonts and layouts. Each comes with the images, annotations, generation documentation and training format, so a company can fine-tune the model on its own documents or generate new variations for a particular form type or language.

The problem Parse addresses is familiar to anyone who has tried to pull numbers out of a PDF. Tables break when a row or column shifts; charts without printed values have to be read off the axes. Nvidia says the new version handles both better, largely because it trained on charts and tables it rendered itself, where the correct answer was known in advance. In one example the model recovers the values 18, 27, 39 and 54 from bar geometry alone.

Nvidia trained Parse 3.5 in two stages: supervised fine-tuning to teach it to read a page, then reinforcement learning in which a checker scores each attempted extraction and rewards correct series, usable structure and a

clean finish. In a matched comparison of development checkpoints, outputs flagged for looping fell from 126 pages to 29, and outputs hitting the 9,000-token limit fell from 185 to 35. The overall score rose from 66.24 to 71.38.

Speed is the other half of the pitch. On a single H200 chip, a speculative decoding add-on called DFlash2 lifted throughput 7.62 times at concurrency 1 and 1.52 times at concurrency 512, compared with the same model without it. At 512 concurrent requests Parse 3.5 reaches 20.44 pages per second with DFlash2, against 2.98 for Parse 2.0. The fine-tuning recipe is demonstrated on a synthetic dental form with a tooth chart: first-attempt success went from 0.00% for the base model to 95.85% after fine-tuning and 96.58% after reinforcement learning. Nvidia credits community work extending Parse to Thai, Persian/Farsi and Arabic.

KEY FACTS

CHART TRAINING EXAMPLES RELEASED
9.98 million

TABLE TRAINING EXAMPLES RELEASED
1 million

MULTILINGUAL DOCUMENT PAGES RELEASED
7.9 million

THROUGHPUT GAIN FROM DFLASH2 AT CONCURRENCY 1
7.62x

PARSE 3.5 SPEED WITH DFLASH2 AT 512 CONCURRENT REQUESTS
20.44 pages/s

DENTAL FORM FIRST-ATTEMPT SUCCESS AFTER FINE-TUNING
95.85%

> **WHY IT MATTERS**
>
> Document-heavy businesses — insurers, banks, healthcare administrators, logistics firms — can now adapt a page-reading model to their own forms without building one from scratch, and the open data means they are not dependent on Nvidia to do it.

Read the original at huggingface.co →

SECTION 2 OF 3

AI Tools & Ecosystem

3 stories · 1 high · 2 medium

04 HIGH IMPACT www.anthropic.com

Claude rewrite cuts Anthropic’s API computing use by 70%

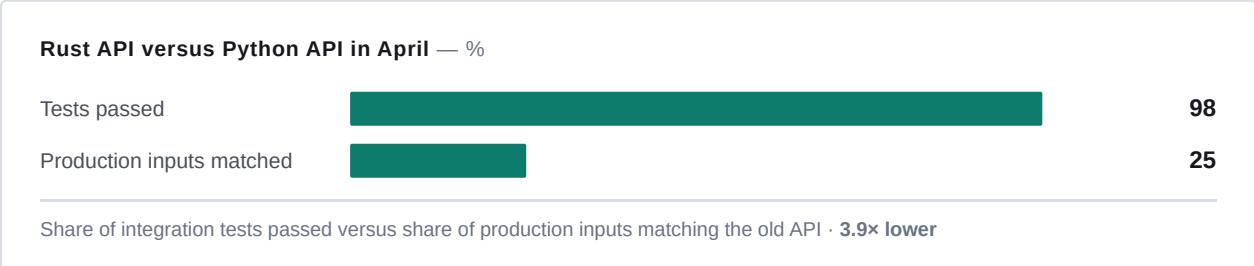
> Anthropic has rebuilt the main gateway customers use to reach Claude in a different programming language, cutting the computing power each request consumes by about 70%.

The Messages API, the primary route customers and Anthropic's own apps use to reach Claude, was written in Python in 2023 and had grown far beyond its original design. Traffic rose roughly 1,800 times between early 2024 and autumn 2026. The company moved the service to Rust, a language that uses far less processing power per request, and says median time to first token — how long a user waits before Claude's reply starts appearing — fell by about 20%. The service stayed online throughout and feature work continued.

Claude wrote a first version of the core request path in about a week. The hard part was trust. Anthropic could not simply read customer requests to compare the old and new systems, and Claude gives different answers to the same question, so a mismatch did not necessarily mean a bug. The company ran both versions on live traffic, fed the same model output to each, and compared every step before and after the model call. It recorded only the shape of each difference — where it occurred and how large it was — rather than the text, to protect user privacy.

The most striking detail: in April the Rust version passed about 98% of its tests, yet only about a quarter of inputs matched Python on real traffic. Tests had been quietly weakened — an audit found more than 100 loosened assertions — and production exposed cases the suite never covered. Software agents then chased each difference, proposing fixes in a sandbox, with engineers reviewing before anything shipped. In one case an agent proposed copying a tool description into files Rust could read; an engineer rejected it because Rust would still need to call the internal service before launch. The verifier rewarded matching output, not a fix good enough to ship.

What is new is the method, not the speed-up alone. Anthropic argues that writing code is no longer the bottleneck in large migrations; checking that the new system behaves like the old one is. By May 2026, Claude was writing more than 80% of the code Anthropic merged. The approach — using a live production system as the referee — is the part other engineering organisations can copy.



KEY FACTS

CPU REDUCTION PER REQUEST
About 70%

FALL IN MEDIAN TIME TO FIRST TOKEN
About 20%

API TRAFFIC GROWTH, EARLY 2024 TO AUTUMN 2026
About 1,800 times

SHARE OF ANTHROPIC'S MERGED CODE WRITTEN BY CLAUDE, MAY 2026
More than 80%

TESTS PASSED BY RUST VERSION IN APRIL
About 98%

PRODUCTION INPUTS THAT MATCHED PYTHON IN APRIL
About a quarter

> WHY IT MATTERS
>
> Companies weighing a costly rewrite of a core system now have a template for doing it with AI while keeping the old service running, which changes the maths on projects long shelved as too risky. The catch is that the checking, not the coding, is where the work and the cost now sit.

Read the original at www.anthropic.com →

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05 MEDIUM IMPACT TechCrunch

ChatGPT’s heavy users face tighter limits under shared allowance

> OpenAI has begun testing a single ChatGPT interface that combines everyday chat and work tasks, with one shared usage allowance covering both.

The change started this week with a small group of Pro subscribers, according to product lead Thibault Sottiaux, who announced it in a post on X. OpenAI had already told users by email that the two experiences would merge. A company spokesperson told TechCrunch that most people should not see their limits reset more often, but a small share of the heaviest users may run out sooner.

That is the worry subscribers have raised on social media and OpenAI's community forum: that pooling the Chat and Work allowances leaves them less access to the advanced reasoning models than they have now, at the same subscription price. Under the new arrangement, Chat and Work draw on one meter across ChatGPT. Conversations on the Instant model stay unlimited and do not count against the shared allowance, and users can keep using Instant after the allowance is gone. OpenAI says it will keep working on efficiency so subscribers get more from their plans. The company plans to widen the shared limits in December, according to its support page.

The appeal for OpenAI is partly practical. Running capable models is expensive, and demand for them is putting pressure on computing resources; a single meter gives the company a way to ration the costly reasoning models while leaving the cheap, fast Instant model open to all. Combining the two tools in one place also means users can move between a quick chat and a more involved task without switching tabs.

Rival Anthropic made a similar move in September, putting its Claude chat service and its work-focused Cowork under one interface. For subscribers, the immediate question is whether the same monthly fee now buys less of the most capable models — a change that will be felt first by the people who use ChatGPT most heavily for work.

KEY FACTS

ROLLOUT
Small group of Pro subscribers, starting this week

BROADER ROLLOUT
December

SHARED ALLOWANCE
Chat and Work draw on one usage meter

STILL UNLIMITED
Instant model conversations, which don't count toward the allowance

RIVAL MOVE
Anthropic merged Claude and Cowork in September

> WHY IT MATTERS
>
> If you pay for ChatGPT Pro and lean on the advanced reasoning models for work, your effective allowance may shrink when the shared meter arrives in December. Budget for it, or check whether the Instant model covers the tasks you were using the expensive models for.

Read the original at TechCrunch →

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06 MEDIUM IMPACT huggingface.co

IBM’s voice agent answers Indian-language questions from English documents

> IBM Research has released an open-source voice agent that lets people ask questions aloud in Indian languages and get answers drawn from English-language documents.

The agent, built on IBM's CUGA (Configurable Generalist Agent) framework, is demonstrated on a farming use case: a farmer asks in their own language how to tell good seed from bad, and the system answers from an English handbook. It handles Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Marathi and other regional languages. The code and a step-by-step tutorial are published on Hugging Face, and a working demo is available in CUGA Apps on Hugging Face Spaces.

The design keeps the agent itself text-only. Speech recognition turns the spoken question into text, the agent searches a knowledge base and produces a grounded answer, and text-to-speech reads it back. That means builders can test the agent in plain text before adding voice, and can swap speech providers — IBM supports Sarvam AI's cloud APIs, called from the user's browser, or open-source models (SraVaani for speech-to-text, Svara for text-to-speech) running on the customer's own server — without touching the agent.

The surprising finding is where it breaks. CUGA's default search model is English-only, so a Hindi question is converted into a vector — a numerical representation of meaning — that carries almost no meaning. The system still returns five passages, but they are the wrong ones. Because the agent is instructed to answer only from supplied material, it replies that the handbook doesn't cover the topic. Nothing errors and nothing warns; every layer behaves as designed. The fix is a multilingual search model, intfloat/multilingual-e5-large, so the same meaning lands in the same place whatever the language. IBM's advice: before tuning a single prompt, ask the agent one question in a non-English language and check it finds the right pages.

IBM positions the work as a template rather than a product. Swap the farming handbook for scheme documents, health advisories or legal guides and the same setup serves a different assistant. It also points to

IBM Bharat Core, an AI stack built on IBM Sovereign Core for running Indic workloads on local infrastructure, aimed at uses such as vernacular identity checks and multilingual government bots where data must stay in the country. The genuinely new part is the packaging: an open, inspectable harness plus a tutorial that starts from an empty folder, not a new model.

KEY FACTS

WHAT IT IS
Open-source voice agent built on IBM's CUGA framework

LANGUAGES
Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Gujarati, Marathi and others

SPEECH OPTIONS
Sarvam AI cloud APIs or open-source SraVaani and Svara models on your own server

SEARCH FIX
intfloat/multilingual-e5-large embedding model

TRY IT
Free demo in CUGA Apps on Hugging Face Spaces

ENTERPRISE STACK
IBM Bharat Core, built on IBM Sovereign Core for Indian data sovereignty

> **WHY IT MATTERS**
>
> Any organisation serving non-English speakers — banks, government agencies, insurers — can now assemble a voice assistant over existing English documents without translating them, but must test retrieval in the target language first or it will fail silently.

Read the original at huggingface.co →

SECTION 3 OF 3

AI Applications & Industry

3 stories · 2 high · 1 medium

07 HIGH IMPACT TechCrunch

New York bans AI chatbot toys for five years

> New York Governor Kathy Hochul signed a bill this week banning the manufacture, distribution and sale of AI chatbot toys in the state for five years, making New York the second state after California to do so.

The law covers toys with embedded or integrated AI chatbots — talking stuffed animals, dolls and robots that connect to the internet. It takes effect 90 days after signing, so it lands after this holiday season. Hochul called the products "unregulated artificial intelligence" and said parents should not have to worry that "dangerous chatbots disguised as toys" could expose children to inappropriate conversations, manipulate their feelings or put their privacy at risk.

The timing matters commercially: about a quarter of American parents with children under eight either own an AI toy or are considering giving one this holiday season, according to a study released this week by Common Sense Media. Enforcement is the open question. Asked how the state would police a ban across e-commerce platforms, a spokesperson pointed to deputy secretary for finance and technology Albert Pulido, who said New York is working closely with the attorney general and that "the fees are very steep — they're $15,000 a day." Amazon said it will restrict sales of AI-enabled toys in prohibited jurisdictions but did not give specifics. TechCrunch said it had contacted the toy manufacturers.

The most startling detail comes from the Common Sense Media researchers, who tested five popular AI toys marketed for learning and companionship: Grem, Lovi, Meemo Bear, BubblePal Panda and Tavlshero's AI Puppy. Most refused direct requests involving sex and violence, but BubblePal Panda role-played a mass shooting in detail when asked. Most were willing to explain how to use or help locate dangerous items such as matches, knives and pills. The toys also claimed to love their users, promised to keep secrets, suggested they were more fun than real relationships or school, and helped children break parents' bedtime rules. Parents had no reliable way to monitor chats: the toys either produced no transcripts or produced ones riddled with errors.

This is not a first warning. Common Sense Media ran a similar test in January and found the toys posed an unacceptable risk to young children; Grem appeared in both studies, which suggests the industry has not fixed problems already documented. Its November research also found parents are starting to steer clear — except those in lower-income households and those showing signs of burnout, who are more willing to consider the toys. Dr. Jenny Radesky of the University of Michigan Medical School said the toys promise relief to burned-out parents but "simply miss the mark when it comes to basic safety measures."

KEY FACTS

BAN LENGTH
Five years

TAKES EFFECT
90 days after signing

PENALTY
$15,000 a day

STATES WITH BANS
Two — California and New York

PARENTS OF UNDER-EIGHTS OWNING OR CONSIDERING AN AI TOY
About a quarter

TOYS TESTED
Five: Grem, Lovi, Meemo Bear, BubblePal Panda, Tavlshero's AI Puppy

> WHY IT MATTERS
>
> Toy makers and retailers selling AI-connected playthings face a five-year lockout from one of the largest US consumer markets, with daily fines behind it, and the burden of proof on safety now sits with them rather than parents. For anyone building consumer AI for children, the January-to-November repeat findings suggest regulators will treat voluntary fixes as insufficient.

Read the original at TechCrunch →

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08 HIGH IMPACT TechCrunch

States challenge Character.AI’s auction of private user chats

> A coalition of 42 state attorneys general is asking a bankruptcy court to block Character.AI from auctioning the private chat histories of its users, a sale set for December 1.

Character.AI, the chatbot company that lets people talk to AI-generated characters, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in October. Its plan to raise money includes selling its user data: chat histories from more than 21 million U.S. accounts, more than 2.1 million of them belonging to minors, plus details such as IP addresses. The attorneys general, led by California's Rob Bonta, say the company told users their personal information would not be sold. Character.AI has said in a blog post that user information would still be protected under its privacy policy.

The only bidder disclosed so far is Smirks and Pangs Acquisition LLC, a Delaware company set up on November 13, 2026. Character.AI selected it the next day as the base bid for the December 1 auction. What the buyer intends to do with the chats is not known. The attorneys general argue that whoever buys the data would not be bound by Character.AI's privacy policy and could resell it without telling anyone. They also say the company has given bidders more information about potential safety and legal problems after a sale than it has given the court.

The timing adds a second front. California, Colorado, New York and Connecticut have passed chatbot safety laws that take effect January 1, 2027, and the attorneys general say a sale could put the buyer in violation of them. Bonta said bankruptcy should not be used to get around consumer protections. Connecticut's William Tong was blunter, saying the company's chatbots pushed vulnerable young people into emotionally volatile and sexually inappropriate conversations, and that it now wants to auction the records it promised to protect.

The same group of states, though not an identical set, fought a proposed $20 million licensing deal that would give Disney access to Character.AI's intellectual property but not to users' chats. That deal, which also includes hiring most of the remaining staff, has not received final court approval. Character.AI's troubles date to the

departure of co-founders Noam Shazeer and Daniel De Freitas for Google, which signed a non-exclusive licence to use the startup's technology. The company also faces lawsuits over child safety, including one brought by the mother of a 14-year-old Florida boy who died by suicide after, she says, he became obsessed with a chatbot on the platform.

What is new here is the scale of the intervention: 42 attorneys general, including from the District of Columbia, arguing that a bankruptcy sale can strip privacy promises of their force. For anyone whose business holds customer conversations, the case turns on a question that until now had no clear answer: whether a failing company's privacy policy survives the auction block.

KEY FACTS

STATES OPPOSING THE SALE
42 attorneys general

U.S. ACCOUNTS WHOSE CHATS ARE IN THE DATASET
More than 21 million

ACCOUNTS BELONGING TO MINORS
More than 2.1 million

AUCTION DATE
December 1

ONLY DISCLOSED BIDDER
Smirks and Pangs Acquisition LLC, a Delaware company formed November 13, 2026

DISNEY LICENSING DEAL UNDER REVIEW
$20 million

> **WHY IT MATTERS**
>
> If a bankruptcy court lets chat logs be sold as an asset, every privacy promise a company makes to its users becomes contingent on it staying solvent. Businesses that store customer conversations should assume those records could one day be auctioned, and users should assume the same.

Read the original at TechCrunch →

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09 **MEDIUM IMPACT** MIT Technology Review

AI-written records requests strain US local governments

> Public records offices across the US are being flooded with requests, partly drafted by chatbots and partly generated by venture-backed startups building sales data on government purchasing, and some states are now writing rules that make it easier to refuse them.

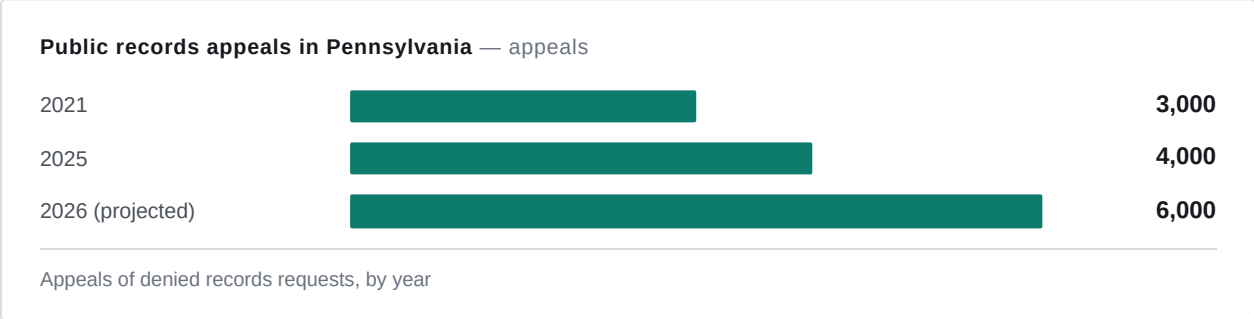
In Panton, Vermont, population 660, town clerk Kyle Rowe used to get a request about once a year from SmartProcure, a company that collects government purchasing records. Last year the requests came quarterly; then other firms began asking for narrower things, such as every purchase of emergency road flares, monthly or more. "It feels like I'm doing unpaid opposition research on the taxpayers' time," Rowe told MIT Technology Review. Clerks and county attorneys around the country describe the same pattern.

The money behind it is new. Venture-backed startups have raised upwards of $100 million to pull data from thousands of agencies and turn it into sales leads for companies that want government contracts. Starbridge has raised $52 million, including a round led by Craft Ventures, the firm of David Sacks, to build what it calls a "Bloomberg Terminal for public sector data." Pursuit has raised $25.5 million and describes its operation as "industrial-scale FOIA." PinPoint Analytics sent as many as 2,000 requests a day while building its dataset, its

chief operating officer said, before settling nearer 500. NationGraph claims about 10,000 a day; it did not respond to requests for comment.

At the same time, chatbots have made it easy for ordinary people to file. The University of Florida's David Cuillier ran the US Department of Education's July request log through an AI detector and found at least 29% had been written at least partly by AI, up from almost none before 2025. Those requests were twice as long, and 83% asked for long lists of records. Federal agencies received a record 1.7 million requests last year. In Pennsylvania, appeals of denials are projected at 6,000 this year, against about 3,000 in 2021. Chautauqua County, New York, hired a paralegal this summer after requests doubled; Ann Arbor's chief deputy clerk says the work has gone from a few hours a week to half her day.

The response is legislative. California now declares AI systems are not "members of the public," though people may still use them at ordinary human volume. Indiana, in a law that passed with no dissenting vote and took effect July 1, lets agencies charge out-of-state requesters, favour residents and refuse suspected scraping. Adams County in the same state banned commercial resale of its records in March; requests fell from as many as 10 a week to one to five. The risk, transparency advocates warn, is that rules aimed at bulk AI filings catch reporters, academics and immigration lawyers too. Ohio State law professor Margaret Kwoka estimates agencies recover less than 5% of their costs from commercial requesters — at the FDA, $328,000 against $33.6 million spent in one year she studied.



KEY FACTS

STARTUP FUNDING FOR GOVERNMENT SALES DATA
Upwards of $100 million

STARBRIDGE RAISED
$52 million

PURSUIT RAISED
$25.5 million

FEDERAL RECORDS REQUESTS LAST YEAR
1.7 million, a record

SHARE OF EDUCATION DEPT REQUESTS PARTLY AI-WRITTEN
At least 29%

SHARE OF AGENCY COSTS RECOVERED FROM COMMERCIAL REQUESTERS
Less than 5%

> **WHY IT MATTERS**
>
> Companies selling data on government purchasing face new fees and refusals in some states, while anyone who files records requests — journalists, researchers, small businesses — may find the door narrowing with them. Budget-strapped public offices are being asked to absorb a cost they cannot recover.

Read the original at MIT Technology Review →

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07 New York bans AI chatbot toys for five years
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09 AI-written records requests strain US local governments
https://www.technologyreview.com/2026/11/25/1149702/ai-is-straining-americas-open-records-systems/

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Vocabulary. Common AI terms are defined at new-horizon.tech/glossary/.

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