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Subject: OpenAI's GPT-5.6 Enters the Government Waiting Room

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Jun 29, 2026

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Heads up, Tech Insiders.

Models are quarantined, couriers are upskilling, and cameras are stalking your earbuds, proof that everything smart this week comes with a chaperone.

Strap in; the watchdogs are busier than the inventors.

Here's what you need to know today:

- [OpenAI's GPT-5.6 arrives under US review](#)
- [JD.com retrains 700K couriers for robots](#)
- [Plate readers now sniff your AirPods, too](#)
- [KDDI breach leaks 14 million ISP logins](#)
- [Midjourney bets big on 60-second body scans](#)

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GPT-5.6 Debuts Under US Watch

OpenAI just rolled out its latest model, but only for those on the velvet-rope list.

OpenAI is previewing GPT-5.6, a three-pack of models dubbed **Sol**, **Terra**, and **Luna**, but the keys are in the hands of a tiny set of "trusted" partners vetted by the US government at the Trump administration's request.

Sol is the heavyweight, promising deeper reasoning. Terra targets everyday workloads with GPT-5.5-level performance at half the cost. Luna trades some raw power for speed and bargain pricing.

The [company says](#) the gated launch will run for [a few weeks](#), after which the models will open up, through ChatGPT, Codex, and OpenAI's API, once Washington finishes crossing t's on a new AI-safety playbook.



Image via OpenAI

It's a déjà-vu moment: Anthropic's [Fable 5](#) and [Mythos 5](#) faced similar heavy-handed government intervention [weeks ago](#) when they were [shut down three days after their release](#). Washington did just toss Anthropic a bone, though, [partially unblocking Mythos 5](#) for a hand-picked list of US entities on the exact same day it restricted GPT-5.6. Meanwhile, the White House is still hammering out longer-term guardrails for "frontier" AI.

OpenAI is also testing a "max reasoning effort" toggle, a swarm-of-subagents trick for heavier code and research tasks, plus a sturdier safety stack meant to neuter offensive cyber use. That extra diligence, OpenAI says, should ease regulators' nerves before the models hit general release.

Still, OpenAI isn't exactly thrilled, openly grumbling that this flavor of government gatekeeping shouldn't become the "long-term default."

Why it matters: The hottest new AI is arriving in quarantine, underscoring how quickly cutting-edge models have become geopolitical assets. If US vetting becomes the norm, innovators and enterprises may need fresh playbooks (and patience) before next-gen tools reach the open market.

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Pulse Check

Should the US government preapprove every frontier AI model release?

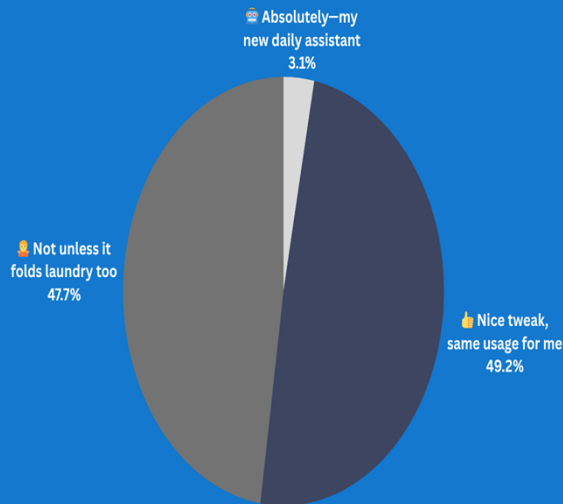
☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Yes—national security comes first

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ Maybe—light oversight, but don't slow progress

🚫🚫🚫🚫 No—let the market move at full throttle

Results from Friday's Pulse Check

Will GPT-5.5 Instant's upgrade change how you use ChatGPT?



Insider Intel

JD.com Couriers Face Robot Reality Check

Rainy days may soon be for robots, not couriers.

Early last week, JD.com founder Richard Liu said his company's **700,000 couriers will be "basically no longer needed"** once fleets of drones and autonomous vehicles mature. To soften the blow, he unveiled "Nirvana," an initiative that partners with 120 technical schools to transition delivery staff into robot-repair tech and AI-trainer roles rather than handing them pink slips.

The stakes are massive: front-line logistics staff make up nearly three-quarters of JD's 900,000-strong payroll. Liu's pledge lands as China's gig-worker ranks swell toward 320 million and youth unemployment hovers around 16%, putting regulators on edge with courts already ordering compensation for AI-linked layoffs.

Meanwhile, the broader tech sector has slashed nearly 160,000 jobs this year, including 21,000 at Oracle over the past 12 months, as global companies aggressively pivot toward artificial intelligence and automation.



Image via JD.com

Skeptics note that there simply won't be enough robot-servicing jobs to cover the current courier headcount. Plus, JD itself is charging ahead with unmanned warehouses and plans to deploy 3 million robots and 1 million autonomous vehicles by 2030.

Still, Liu insists that technology should make work "more interesting," not erase livelihoods—a guarantee that rivals like Alibaba and Amazon may soon be pressed to match before workers realize the math doesn't quite add up.

If retraining 700,000 people sounds hard, try programming a drone to evade a barking dog.

Flash Bytes

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Your Microsoft 365, Entra ID, Salesforce, and Azure environments are interconnected—and that connectivity is exactly what attackers exploit. Once compromised credentials enter your environment, native retention preserves the damage, not the clean state you need to recover from.

The shared responsibility model is clear: cloud providers secure the platform. You secure the data.

Veeam's latest guide outlines 8 key advantages of a SaaS-delivered backup service. From frictionless setup and elastic storage to immutable, air-gapped recovery that compromised identities can't reach. You'll also learn why purpose-built, context-aware recovery across your specific workloads is the difference between a clean rollback and weeks of manual reconciliation.

Stop managing backup like a second job. Download the guide and see how Veeam Data Cloud delivers predictable, scalable, enterprise-grade data resilience — without the infrastructure overhead.

[Read Now](#)

Security Alerts

License Plate Readers Now Track Your AirPods and Smartwatch

Leonardo's **new SignalTrace add-on** allows law enforcement to **match passing vehicles with the wireless Bluetooth and RFID signals constantly broadcast by personal devices** like iPhones, wearables, and pet microchips. Civil liberties groups warn this combination effectively transforms standard traffic cameras into warrantless surveillance tools.

Since consumers cannot easily opt out, the technology generates a persistent "electronic fingerprint" capable of tracing a person's physical movements through their gadgets.

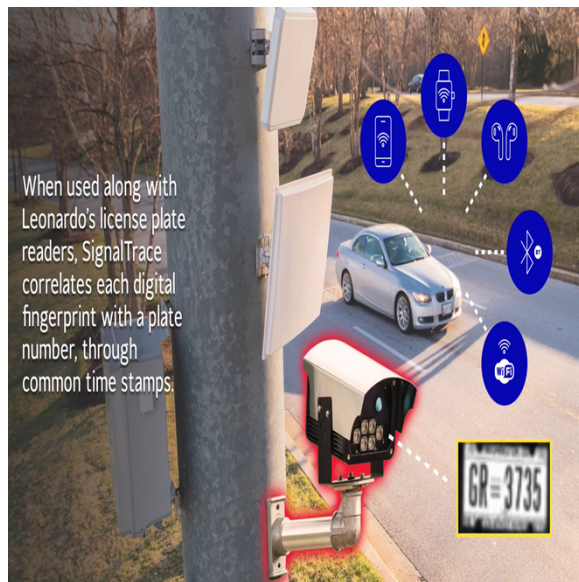


Image via [Leonardo](#)

Even though this particular sensor integration is just rolling out, existing license-plate surveillance infrastructure from vendors like Flock and Leonardo already spans thousands of jurisdictions. Notably, federal cybersecurity officials at CISA issued warnings in 2024 that these massive data hubs are prime targets for hackers.

Until clear legal boundaries are established, experts recommend limiting always-on Bluetooth (but be prepared for the nagging turn-it-back-on notifications from your insurance company's let-us-track-you-for-a-discount service), keeping Wi-Fi disabled in transit, and planning routes with evasion tools like [DeFlock](#).

Your car can't fall off the grid if your tech is still broadcasting your location.

KDDI Breach Exposes 14.2M ISP Email Credentials

KDDI says attackers cracked an email platform it runs for six Japanese ISPs, potentially leaking up to **14.22 million email addresses and passwords**, including those from canceled or long-dormant accounts.

The telco spotted the intrusion on June 17, modified the system the same day, and traced the breach to a flaw in third-party software. Some passwords were hashed or encrypted, but the company hasn't said how strongly.

The affected providers—STNet, JCOM, Chubu, Nifty, Biglobe, and KDDI Web Communications—were notified starting June 17, with regulators alerted shortly after.

If you used any of these services, reset passwords now, enable 2FA, and watch for phishing camouflaged as your ISP's "security" alerts.

Changing your password beats practicing your kanji for "Whoops."

Industry Shakeups

Midjourney Unveils Ultrasound Body Scanner, Eyes AI Health Hardware

AI image darling Midjourney is eyeing the AI health hardware market, unveiling last week Midjourney Medical, a water-tank ultrasound scanner that promises a **neck-down body map in roughly 60 seconds**.

The device lowers visitors (keeping their heads safely above water) through a ring of 40 ultrasound-on-chip modules from Butterfly Network containing roughly 358,000 ultrasound elements, streams terabytes to a two-petaflop compute cluster, and will debut inside a 25,000-square-foot "Midjourney Spa" in San Francisco in 2027; the company wants 50,000 scanners operating worldwide by 2031.

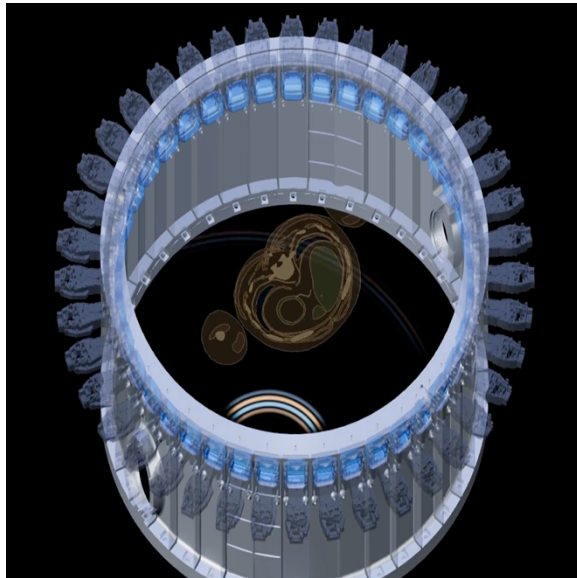


Image via Midjourney

The company says the first-gen machine will stick to nondiagnostic body-composition maps while it climbs the FDA ladder. But privacy, accuracy, and cost questions loom, and radiologists note the MRI comparisons are a massive stretch, with University of Michigan radiologist Matthew Davenport calling the medical claims "wildly unsubstantiated" due to ultrasound's physical limitations in imaging bone and body fat.

At least you leave the spa glowing, fully digitized, and hopefully not a victim of a Silicon Valley grift.

Meet Our Author



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Justin Meyers is an investigative writer and editor who draws on over a decade of meticulous hands-on research to deliver the full, trustworthy story behind consumer and enterprise tech, including cybersecurity.

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★★ Needs a patch: "It ran, but had bugs."

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