OpenAI bets on multi-agent products as OpenClaw becomes a foundation; Pentagon–Anthropic tensions and CNY model drops

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OpenAI's agents strategy sharpened with Peter Steinberger joining and OpenClaw moving to an independent open-source foundation, while Pentagon–Anthropic tensions highlight how usage restrictions can shape defense contracts. Meanwhile, China's Chinese New Year release window ramps up (including a reported Qwen 3.5 open-source drop), and long-form AI video claims spur debate over what's technically plausible.

Top Stories

1) OpenAI makes a major push into personal agents; OpenClaw moves into an independent foundation

Why it matters: This is a clear strategic bet that **multi-agent systems** and consumer-facing **personal agents** will become a core product surface—and that open source will be part of the ecosystem.

- OpenAI CEO Sam Altman said **Peter Steinberger** is joining OpenAI to drive the "next generation of personal agents," centered on "very smart agents interacting with each other to do very useful things for people," which OpenAI expects to become **core to product offerings** [1].
- Altman also said **OpenClaw** will live in a foundation as an **open source project** OpenAI will continue to support, emphasizing an "extremely multi-agent" future and the importance of supporting open source [1].

- Steinberger described the move as:

  "I'm joining OpenAI to bring agents to everyone. OpenClaw is becoming a foundation: open, independent, and just getting started." [2]

- Practical ecosystem signal: OpenClaw's maintainer reported PR volume rising from ~2700 to **3100+** with **600 commits** in a day, and asked for AI tooling to dedupe/review/select among near-duplicate PRs and issues [3, 4].

2) U.S. Pentagon–Anthropic standoff intensifies over restrictions on military use of Claude

Why it matters: This is a high-profile test of how AI labs' usage restrictions interact with defense procurement—and how "safety stance" can become a contract risk.

- Multiple reports say the Pentagon is considering cutting ties with Anthropic after Anthropic refused to allow its models to be used for "all lawful purposes," insisting on bans around **mass domestic surveillance** and **fully autonomous weapons** [5, 6].
- One thread frames the contract at risk as a **$200M** deal, with tensions escalating after a disputed episode involving Claude in a military operation [7, 5].
- A separate claim quotes a senior "DeptofWar" official describing Anthropic as a **supply chain risk** and suggesting vendors/contractors might be asked to certify they don't use Anthropic models [8].

3) China's Chinese New Year model-release window: Alibaba says Qwen 3.5 will be open-sourced "tonight"

Why it matters: Open-sourcing competitive models during peak attention windows can accelerate adoption—especially where cost/access drive default stacks.

- A report claims Alibaba will **open-source Qwen 3.5** on Chinese New Year's Eve (tonight), citing "comprehensive innovations in architecture" and expectations of a milestone for domestic models [9]. It also notes Alibaba released Qwen2.5-Max on the same occasion last year [9].
- Commentary separately praised **Qwen3-max** as a stronger reasoner than Seed 2.0 Pro when given high-effort problems [10].

4) xAI's Grok 4.20 is claimed to ship "next week," alongside a "Galileo test" framing for truth-seeking

Why it matters: A near-term major model revision plus an explicit "truth despite training-data falsehoods" goal signals how xAI is positioning Grok competitively.

- Elon Musk said "Grok 4.20 is finally out next week" and will be a "significant improvement" over 4.1 [11].
- Musk also proposed a "Galileo" test for AI: even if training data repeats falsehoods, the system must still "see the truth" [12].

5) Long-form AI video claims escalate (Seedance 3.0), but practitioners argue the likely path is agentic composition

Why it matters: If long-form, controllable video becomes cheap, it changes creator economics—but technical feasibility and framing matter.

- A report claims Seedance 3.0 entered a closed sprint phase and can generate **10+ minute** videos in a single pass (internal tests up to **18 minutes**) using a "narrative memory chain" architecture, plus multilingual emotional lip-sync dubbing and storyboard-level controls; it also claims per-minute cost down to ~**1/8 of Seedance 2.0** via distillation and inference optimization [13].
- Separately, an expert cautioned against interpreting "one-shot feature film inference" as supported by published research, citing quadratic scaling and arguing long-form video is more plausibly delivered via **agents decomposing a prompt into scenes** and stitching many short generations [14].

Research & Innovation

Why it matters: The most leverage this cycle comes from (1) training small models to sustain very long reasoning, (2) distillation methods that remove tool calls, and (3) infrastructure/benchmarks for agents and long-horizon tasks.

QED-Nano: pushing a 4B model to "millions of tokens" of theorem-proving reasoning

- Researchers report training a **4B** model to reason for **millions of tokens** through IMO-level problems [15].
- The pipeline includes distillation SFT (from DeepSeek-Math-V2), RL with **rubrics as rewards**, and a **reasoning cache** that summarizes chain-of-thought per turn to extrapolate to long horizons without derailing autoregressive decoding [16, 17, 18].
- At inference, they describe agentic scaffolds that scale test-time compute, including **Recursive Self-Aggregation (RSA)**, with claims that generating **>2M tokens per proof** can let the 4B model match Gemini 3 Pro on IMO-ProofBench [19, 16].
- They open-sourced datasets, rubrics, and models: https://huggingface.co/collections/lm-provers/qed-nano [16] and blog: https://huggingface.co/spaces/lm-provers/qed-nano-blogpost [15].

"Zooming without zooming" for vision-language models via Region-to-Image Distillation

- Region-to-Image Distillation (R2I) trains MLLMs to internalize "zooming," targeting fine-grained perception without zoom/tool calls; the ZwZ-8B model is claimed SOTA on fine-grained perception with **zero tool calls** [20].
- Released artifacts: paper https://huggingface.co/papers/2602.11858 [20], code https://github.com/inclusionAI/Zooming-without-Zooming [20], model/data https://huggingface.co/collections/inclusionAI/zooming-without-zooming [20].

Training efficiency and "minimal GPT" work continues to influence practice

- Andrej Karpathy released a project implementing GPT training and inference in **243 lines** of dependency-free Python, described as the "full algorithmic content" (everything else for efficiency) with code at https://gist.github.com/karpathy/8627fe009c40f57531cb18360106ce95 [21].
- A separate thread highlighted a "recipe" reducing GPT-2 1.5B training cost from **$43,000 to $73**, noting the reduction also depends on better hardware/data/optimizers/training, with architectural notes and discussion at https://github.com/karpathy/nanochat/discussions/481 [22, 23].

Agent training environments and delegation protocols

- Snowflake released an "Agent World Model" with **1,000 synthetic code-driven environments** for agentic RL, aiming for reliable state transitions and stable learning signals; it claims scaling to **35K tools** and **10K tasks** with real SQLite databases [24].
- Google DeepMind research introduced a framework for "intelligent AI delegation," covering authority/responsibility/accountability, role specification, and trust mechanisms; it argues missing delegation protocols could introduce significant societal risks as agents participate in delegation networks and virtual economies (paper: https://arxiv.org/abs/2602.11865) [25].

Products & Launches

Why it matters: Capability only becomes durable advantage when it lands in usable packages (latency, pricing plans, integrations, reliability, and agent-friendly workflows).

MiniMax M2.5 distribution expands (plus a "HighSpeed" SKU)

- MiniMax launched **MiniMax-M2.5-HighSpeed**, advertising **100 TPS** inference (3× faster than similar models) and support for API integration and coding workflows [26].
- Together AI announced MiniMax M2.5 availability for production-scale agentic workflows, highlighting (among other claims) **80.2% SWE-Bench Verified**, office-document deliverables, and "production-ready" infrastructure with **99.9% SLA** (model page: https://www.together.ai/models/minimax-m2-5) [27, 28, 29].
- A separate PSA says MiniMax M2.5 is freely available on "opencode" [30].

Kimi Claw: OpenClaw integrated into kimi.com as a browser-based workspace

- Kimi launched **Kimi Claw**, describing OpenClaw "native to kimi.com," online 24/7 in the browser [31].
- Features include **5,000+ community skills** (ClawHub), **40GB cloud storage**, and "pro-grade search" fetching live data (e.g., Yahoo Finance), plus third-party OpenClaw connectivity and app bridging (e.g., Telegram) [31].
- Beta access is advertised at https://www.kimi.com/bot [31].

Open-source agent harnesses and self-hosted assistants

- A developer open-sourced a harness used for a fully autonomous Pokémon FireRed playthrough, describing an agent that sees the screen, reads RAM state, maintains long-term memory, sets objectives, pathfinds, battles, and solves puzzles; they argue a universal harness is needed for fair cross-model comparisons [32].
- "Ciana Parrot" was shared as a self-hosted AI assistant with multi-channel support, scheduled tasks, and extensible skills: https://github.com/emanueleielo/ciana-parrot [33].

OCR/document extraction tooling

- LlamaCloud's "Extract" capability was demonstrated extracting structured JSON from PDFs (OpenAI tax filings), powered by the LlamaParse OCR engine and claimed to reconstruct complex form PDFs into markdown tables with ~100% accuracy (try: https://cloud.llamaindex.ai/) [34].

Industry Moves

Why it matters: Talent moves, distribution, and developer workflow adoption are shaping which agent stacks become defaults.

OpenAI: agents + Codex momentum

- OpenAI leadership and teammates publicly welcomed Peter Steinberger and tied the hire to both "the future of agents" and improving Codex [35].
- Sam Altman said Codex weekly users have "more than tripled since the beginning of the year" [36].

Anthropic: strong product traction, but increasing external friction

- One post claimed Claude Code recently passed a **$2.5B revenue run rate** [37].
- A separate leak-watching thread said Anthropic is preparing an in-app banner codenamed "Try Parsley," similar to "Try Cilantro" (which preceded Opus 4.6) [38].

AI-native development: shrinking cycle times

- Axios shared that a similar engineering project went from **3 weeks** to **37 minutes** using AI-based "agent teams," with claims of output doubling month-over-month and "dramatically fewer people" (source: https://www.axios.com/2026/02/15/ai-coding-tech-product-development) [39, 40].
- Spotify CEO Gustav Soderstrom reportedly said the company's top developers haven't written a single line of code manually this year and are "all in" on AI-assisted development [41].

Funding

- Simile raised **$100M** to build AI simulations modeled on real people to predict customer decisions [42].

Policy & Regulation

Why it matters: As agents get more autonomy and access to sensitive environments, governance questions are shifting from abstract principles to procurement rules, provenance, and transparency norms.

Defense procurement pressure on model usage restrictions

- The Pentagon–Anthropic standoff centers on the Pentagon seeking broad usage ("all lawful purposes") versus Anthropic's restrictions on mass domestic surveillance and fully autonomous weapons [5, 6].
- A claimed DoW sourcing concern suggests downstream vendor compliance requirements could be used as leverage ("certify they don't use any Anthropic models") [8].

Provenance and authenticity: "watermark real images"

- A researcher argued watermarking should shift toward **real, camera-captured imagery** rather than generated content [43].

Transparency artifacts as "best practice" in AI-assisted math

- DeepMind's Aletheia work shared a Human–AI interaction card, full transcripts (https://github.com/google-deepmind/superhuman/tree/main/aletheia), and a novelty-autonomy label (paper: https://arxiv.org/abs/2602.10177) [44].
- A commentator called transcript sharing "best practice" and expressed hope OpenAI would follow suit [45].

Quick Takes

Why it matters: These are smaller signals, but they often become the building blocks (or the warning signs) for the next wave.

- **Seed 2.0 eval notes:** A post said Seed 2.0 tops Chinese aggregate evals as the strongest Chinese model, with median score above Gemini 3 Pro (but lower max), described as slow with lots of reasoning and priced ~Kimi [46].
- **Grok image model distribution:** "Grok Imagine Image Pro" went live on Yupp [47].
- **Yupp leaderboard note:** GLM 5 was described as the best open-weight model on Yupp (speed control) based on 6K+ votes [48].
- **"Peak intelligence" and "intelligence-per-watt" both rising:** A post highlighted both trends and argued IPW is accelerating, complicating 2–5 year forecasting [49].
- **FireRed-Image-Edit-1.0:** Released as an Apache-2.0-licensed image editing model with local deployment and claims of strong GEdit benchmark performance; links include https://github.com/FireRedTeam/FireRed-Image-Edit and ModelScope pages [50].
- **Dots OCR update:** RedNote Hi Lab updated "Dots OCR" and shared a Hugging Face collection: https://huggingface.co/collections/rednote-hilab/dotsocr-15 [51, 52].
- **Agent safety footgun:** One warning described agents running `pkill` as "Russian Roulette" [53].
- **Benchmark integrity:** A lab member stated a tweet "falsely claims" FrontierMath scores for DeepSeek v4 and said they have not evaluated DeepSeek v4 [54]. Another comment argued benchmarks should be open source to be trusted [55].

Sources

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