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Tech Decoded

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Hello. A war of words has broken out between two of the world's top chatbot firms, Anthropic and OpenAI. The former plans to run a series of sarcastic commercials during the US Super Bowl on Sunday, mocking its rival's decision to show advertising to some ChatGPT users. OpenAI boss Sam Altman has hit back, accusing Anthropic of "dishonesty". Scroll down for my analysis of what's at stake. Plus, we look at the new "social media network for AI", Moltbook, and speak to an astronaut about his upcoming Moon mission.

THE DOWNLOAD

AI giants draw battle lines over ads



Anthropic is releasing four ads taking a swipe at its rival. Credit: Anthropic

Anthropic's cheeky Super Bowl commercials (which can be seen on YouTube) don't mention OpenAI by name. But it is clear who they are referring to.

The first begins with the word "BETRAYAL" splashed boldly across the screen. The camera then cuts to a man earnestly asking a chatbot, portrayed by a woman (pictured above), for advice on how to talk to his mother. She gives him some tips, but as the ad progresses, we see she is actually trying to promote a fictitious dating site for men seeking older women called Golden Encounters.

In a long post on X, OpenAI's Sam Altman admitted the Super Bowl commercials made him laugh. But he also **angrily denounced them** as "deceptive" for implying that chatbots will no longer truly act in users' interests once they incorporate advertising.

It comes as OpenAI starts to **test ads on its free users** and ChatGPT Go subscribers in the US. The firm has said it will not influence the chatbot's responses - although Altman did once describe ads in AI as "unsettling" and a "last resort".

By contrast, Anthropic announced this week that its own chatbot Claude would remain ad-free.

The rivalry between these companies isn't new. Anthropic was founded in 2021 by a group of former OpenAI researchers who left the firm because they were unhappy about its direction. It is viewed as one of Silicon Valley's safest, most ethical AI companies and has become very popular with paying business customers.

The much larger ChatGPT wants to bring AI to "billions of people", according to Altman, which is likely to be costly - hence the need to monetise its free products with ads.

Cory Johnson from Epistrophe Capital Research believes Anthropic is smartly playing to its strengths by taking its "principled argument to the people".

But the risk, some say, is that by ruling out using advertising, Anthropic has closed off an important path to revenue - and like Altman it may one day have to reverse course.

The download: This row speaks to the challenge of finding viable business models in AI at a time when many firms' costs are soaring.

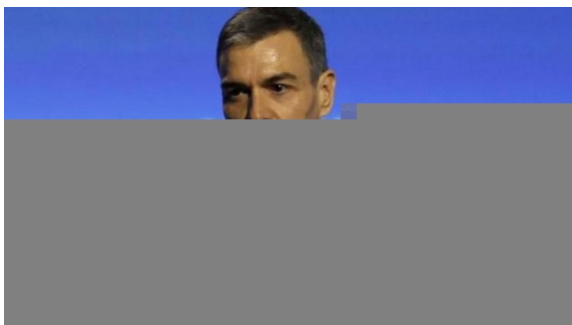
TOP STORIES



Amazon shares tumble as it joins AI spending spree

The firm expects to spend \$200bn this year, much of it on AI, following similar pledges from Meta, Google and Microsoft.

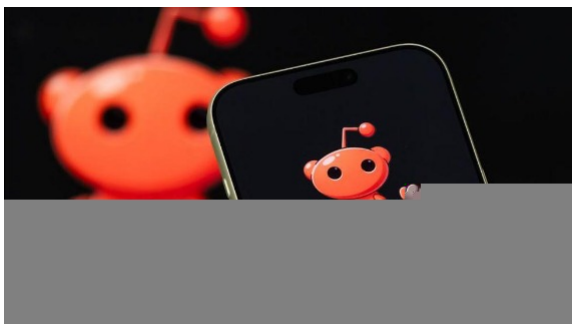
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Spain unveils plan to ban social media for under-16s

The country's PM has promised to protect children from the "digital Wild West", as the UK and France also consider bans.

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Questions over new 'social media network for AI'

Moltbook lets AI bots post, comment and create communities with each other. How seriously should we take it?

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TikTok told to change 'addictive design' by EU

The firm did not properly assess how features like autoplay could harm users' wellbeing, says the European Commission.

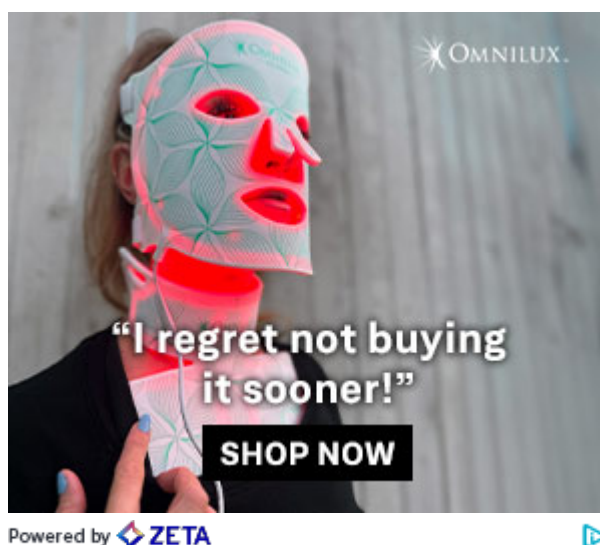
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Bitcoin falls to lowest level since Trump took office

The price of the cryptocurrency is at its lowest since October 2024, having fallen more than 25% since the start of this year.

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SOMETHING DIFFERENT

The AI that quietly edits your photos

AI-based features are meant to enhance image quality while preserving authenticity. Credit: Serenity Strull/ BBC

From sharper details to bolder colours, most modern smartphones use AI to improve the photos taken on them. In general, it's meant to give you beautiful and (mostly) faithful photography, but some enhancements drift far from what you'd see with your own eyes. Have phone manufacturers gone too far?

Thomas Germain investigates.

PODCAST PICK

Driverless cars in the fast lane

Autonomous taxis are already part of everyday life in some cities. What will it be like when the tech gets up to full speed?

[Find out](#)

And finally...

When Nasa's Artemis mission lands on the Moon in years to come, its crew will have to grapple with a challenging environment and extreme isolation. So what will it take to thrive in a lonely Moon base? The BBC spoke to astronaut Victor Glover, who will pilot the Artemis II mission around the Moon this year, to **find out more.**



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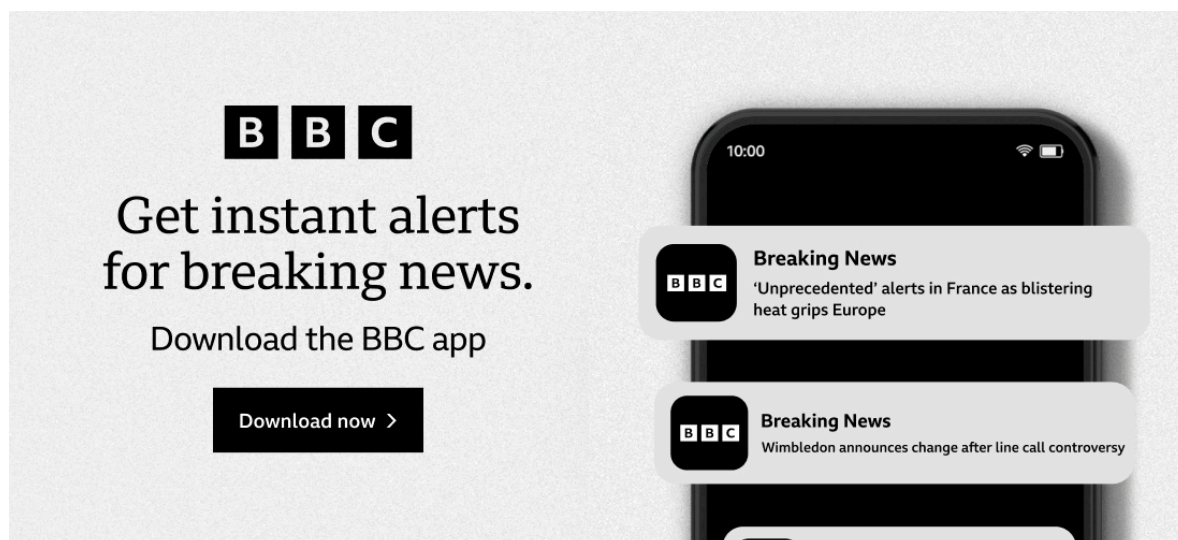
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