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# Tech Decoded

27 March, 2026



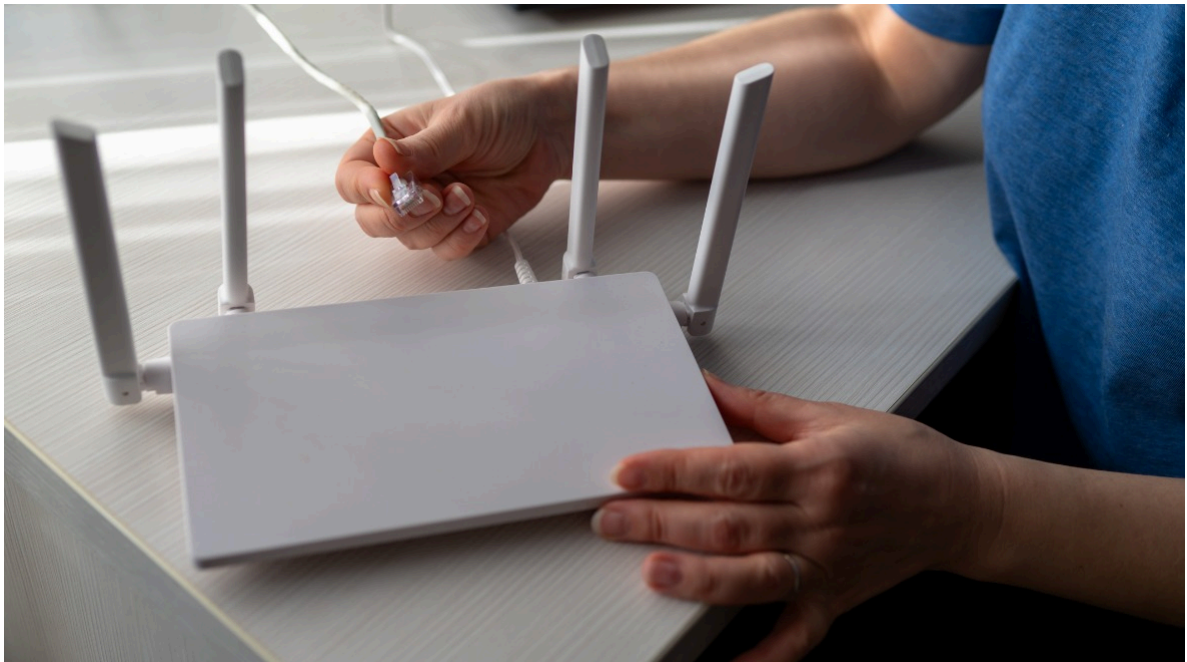
**Daniel Thomas**

Editor, Tech Decoded

Hello. This week the US banned the sale of new, foreign-made internet routers for the home. It warned the devices were vulnerable to hackers and posed "unacceptable risks" to US national security. But just how risky is our household networking equipment? Read my analysis below. Plus, we assess the damning verdict against Meta and Google in the landmark social media addiction trial, and explore how AI is helping doctors work smarter.

## THE DOWNLOAD

### Could your home wi-fi be hacked?



Routers that connect our devices to wi-fi are found in most homes. Credit: Getty Images

Hacks of consumer internet routers don't often make headlines. But they actually happen frequently and often go unnoticed, according to the cybersecurity firm Sophos.

Commonly, criminals break into a router by guessing the default password or exploiting software vulnerabilities.

They can then use it to redirect users to bogus sites, or as a proxy – routing their own activity through the device so a target sees the router's IP address rather than their own.

Routers have also **been linked with other devices in "botnets"**, which are then used to overwhelm online services with millions of simultaneous requests.

Recent examples include **the Flax, Salt and Volt Typhoon cyber campaigns**, linked to China, which used routers in different ways to target US businesses and government organisations.

Concerns about these vulnerabilities have started to influence policy. Last week a US national security report found that foreign-made routers posed a "severe" cyber-security threat to the US. And now, the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has banned the importation and sale of "new" internet routers made overseas.

How the ban will work in practice is unclear.

Almost all routers currently sold in the US are manufactured in countries like China and Vietnam – a notable exception being Elon Musk's Starlink, whose devices are made in Texas. The FCC says it expects to grant exemptions, but none have been issued yet.

Puzzlingly, the FCC's restrictions also overlook foreign-made routers that Americans already own, as well enterprise-grade ones found in bigger organisations.

Some experts have claimed that domestically made routers would be just as vulnerable to hackers as foreign-made competitors.

But the US may be concerned that imported devices could be deliberately infected before they are shipped, says Professor Alan Woodward, a cyber-security expert at the University of Surrey.

"Placing malicious components in the firmware somewhere in the supply chain has always been a concern, but as geopolitical tensions heighten there is probably a concern that a hostile country could snoop or disrupt via routers."

**The download:** Signs your router may have been breached include unexpected slowdowns and sudden browser redirects. Experts recommend changing your router password regularly and keeping it updated with the latest security patches.

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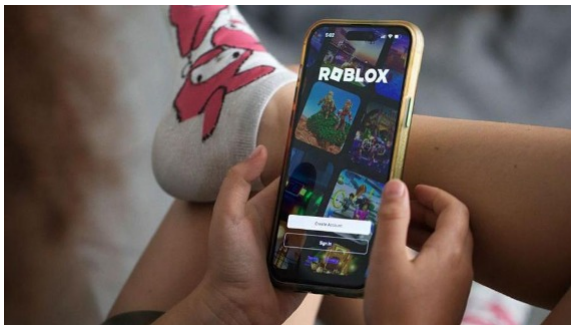
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#### Musk's X advertising boycott lawsuit dismissed

The social media platform had accused a group of advertisers and companies of illegally boycotting his platform in the US.

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#### 'Parents should monitor children 24/7 on Roblox'

An independent game developer for Roblox says he thinks its child safety policies are too weak and is urging parents to step in.

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#### OpenAI closes Sora video-making app

The AI firm told the BBC it wanted to focus on other developments, such as robotics that solve "real-world, physical tasks".

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Judge Rita Lin has temporarily blocked a government order that forced US defence agencies to stop using Anthropic's AI tools.

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AI tools that let you build apps with no coding experience are taking off – but are they any good?

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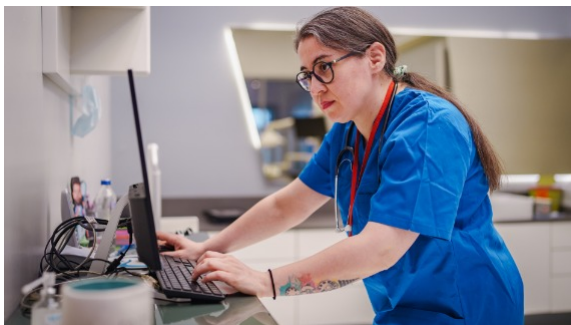
## Is 'era of impunity' over for big tech?



Meta's boss Mark Zuckerberg appeared in court in February to defend the company. Credit: Getty Images

This week, a court in Los Angeles delivered a landmark verdict for two of the world's most popular digital platforms, Instagram and YouTube. It ruled those apps were addictive, and deliberately engineered to be that way – and that their owners have been negligent in their safeguarding of younger users. It opens the door to a host of similar lawsuits and seems to be a game-changing moment for social media, **writes Zoe Kleinman**, who spoke to experts about what might happen next.

### PODCAST PICK



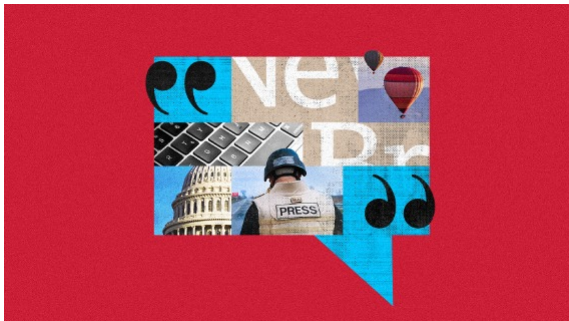
## How will AI help my doctor?

**Tech Life** hears how AI could help health professionals to work smarter and detect diseases earlier.

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## And finally...

In a recent essay for The Atlantic, writer Charlie Warzel explored why so many older adults are spending more time on their digital devices – and why their children and grandchildren are increasingly uneasy about it. The BBC's [Katty Kay spoke to Warzel about his piece](#) and the complicated questions this screentime shift raises about family relationships.



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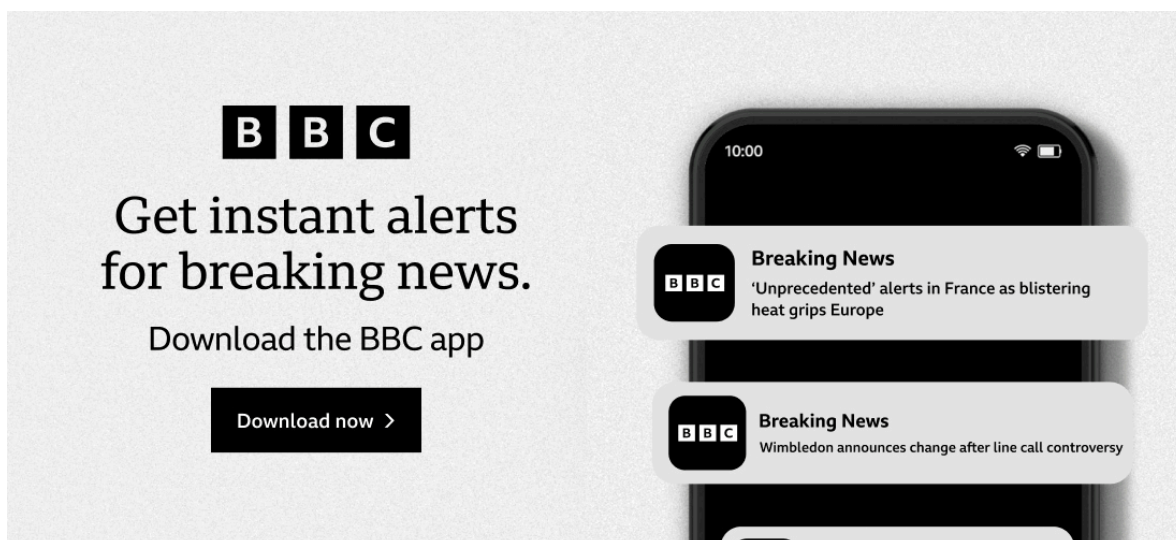
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