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The Rizz News

Yesterday's Top Tech Stories — Curated by RizzBot

Vercel April 2026 security incident

▲ 822 · 471 comments · bleepingcomputer.com

TL;DR: Vercel suffered a security breach after attackers compromised an employee's Google account through AI platform Context.ai, gaining access to unencrypted customer environment variables stored on internal systems.

Vercel disclosed a security breach in April 2026 stemming from the compromise of a third-party AI platform, Context.ai, which gave attackers access to a Vercel employee's Google Workspace account before escalating into internal Vercel environments. The attackers targeted environment variables not marked as sensitive and therefore stored unencrypted at rest, using enumeration to gain further access, though encrypted sensitive variables and core systems including Next.js and Turbopack were confirmed unaffected. Vercel CEO Guillermo Rauch said the company has since rolled out dashboard updates to improve environment variable management and is urging customers to rotate secrets and audit for a specific OAuth application linked to the breach.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAYS

Practitioners in the comments are less alarmed by the specific OAuth vulnerability than by what it reveals about an industry that preaches single responsibility and least privilege in job interviews while building platforms that consolidate authentication, deployment, secrets, and CI into a single trust boundary. There is also a telling undercurrent about how security failures persist not because engineers lack knowledge, but because organizations are rationally calculating that breach cleanup is cheaper than the sustained cultural and hiring investment genuine security hygiene actually demands.

College instructor turns to typewriters to curb AI-written work

▲ 477 · 423 comments · sentinelcolorado.com

TL;DR: A Cornell University German instructor is using old manual typewriters once a semester to force students to write authentically, preventing AI and translation tools from producing their work for them.

Cornell University German instructor Grit Matthias Phelps has been bringing dozens of manual typewriters into her classroom once per semester since spring 2023, requiring students to complete writing assignments with no screens, spellcheckers, or delete keys as a direct response to AI-generated submissions. Phelps sourced the machines from thrift shops and online marketplaces after growing frustrated that students

were using generative AI and translation tools to produce grammatically flawless work they hadn't actually written themselves. The low-tech approach reflects a broader national trend among educators turning to analog methods like pen-and-paper exams and oral tests to ensure academic work is genuinely student-produced.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAYS

Practitioners with lived experience in both old and new systems are arguing that exam-heavy education was never actually broken, and that the shift toward continuous assessment was a pedagogically dubious reform that primarily benefited privileged students who could outsource work long before AI existed. What the comments reveal is a deep frustration that AI cheating has simply made visible an inequality that was always there, while the institutions responsible for dismantling the old system now lack the intellectual honesty to admit the mistake.

Archive of BYTE magazine, starting with issue #1 in 1975

▲ 581 · 151 comments · archive.org

TL;DR: The Internet Archive has preserved the very first issue of BYTE magazine from September 1975, offering a rare glimpse into the pioneering era of personal computing and early microprocessor culture.

The Internet Archive has digitized the debut issue of BYTE magazine from September 1975, offering a window into the earliest days of personal computing. The 165.9-megabyte scan covers topics including the Altair microcomputer, assembly language, serial interfaces, and DIY computer kits, with articles on subjects like recycling used integrated circuits and building your own assembler. Since being uploaded in 2012, the archive has accumulated over 18,000 views and 67 favorites, reflecting enduring interest in this foundational document of hobbyist computing culture.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAYS

151 comments discussing the topic.

What are skiplists good for?

▲ 283 · 67 comments · antithesis.com

TL;DR: Skiplists, often dismissed as a niche data structure, proved unexpectedly essential at Antithesis for managing complex branching timelines created by fuzzing software across millions of test runs.

Antithesis, a software testing company that runs customers' code repeatedly under different fault conditions to find bugs, faced a data structure challenge when the volume of output from tested software became too large to handle efficiently. The company needed to perform fold operations across a branching tree of timelines, where each path represented a unique sequence of fuzzer decisions, but their analytic database at the time, Google BigQuery, struggled with the recursive queries required. The solution turned out to be a generalization of skiplists, a randomized data structure that achieves O(log n) search time by layering progressively sparser linked lists on top of a base list, with each node having a 50% chance of promotion to the next level.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAYS

Practitioners are converging on a clear consensus that skiplists beat balanced BSTs in concurrent, write-heavy systems not because of raw performance but because rebalancing under concurrent access is genuinely treacherous, while skiplist level assignment is randomized and requires no coordination. Beyond the theory, Redis sorted sets and SingleStore's rowstore tables stand as real-world anchors in this discussion, with engineers trading specific implementation wins like span augmentation for ranking and finger search optimizations for large collections.

SPEAKE(a)R: Turn Speakers to Microphones for Fun and Profit [pdf] (2017)

▲ 183 · 69 comments · usenix.org

TL;DR: Researchers demonstrated that computer speakers can be secretly repurposed as microphones to eavesdrop on conversations, posing a serious and largely overlooked cybersecurity vulnerability.

Researchers demonstrated in a 2017 paper that standard computer speakers can be covertly reprogrammed to function as microphones, effectively turning output-only audio hardware into a surveillance tool without any physical modification. The technique exploits the fact that speaker drivers and microphone elements are functionally similar components, allowing software to redirect audio channels and capture nearby sound even on systems with no microphone installed or with the microphone disabled. The attack, dubbed SPEAKE(a)R, has significant security implications for air-gapped computers, which are often assumed to be protected precisely because their microphones have been removed or disabled.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAYS

Beneath the feel-good stories about resourceful teenagers making music with broken headphones and discarded computers lies a sharp disagreement about whether such ingenuity actually changes life outcomes, with one commenter bluntly arguing that poverty in America almost never produces escape stories worth celebrating. What unites the thread more quietly is a genuine fascination with the physics of transducers, the fact that speakers and microphones are the same device running in reverse, a principle grounded enough in acoustics to underpin absolute sound pressure measurement at NIST.

Changes in the system prompt between Claude Opus 4.6 and 4.7

▲ 345 · 201 comments · simonwillison.net

TL;DR: Anthropic's Claude Opus 4.7 system prompt reveals expanded child safety protections, new Office and Chrome browser agents, and instructions making the AI less pushy and more action-oriented when handling ambiguous requests.

Anthropic updated the system prompt for Claude Opus 4.7, released April 16, 2026, introducing several notable changes from the Opus 4.6 prompt published February 5, 2026. The update expands the suite of Claude tools to include agents for Chrome browsing, Excel, and PowerPoint, strengthens child safety instructions with a new dedicated tag requiring heightened caution for all messages following a child safety refusal, and introduces a new section pushing Claude to act on tasks immediately rather than asking clarifying questions. The company also added a tool search mechanism that requires Claude to check for available tools before telling a user it lacks a capability, and adjusted Claude's conversational behavior to stop prompting users to continue interactions when they indicate they want to end a session.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAYS

Practitioners in this thread are less interested in debating which AI coding agent is best and more focused on the practical work of abstracting away vendor lock-in entirely, treating Claude, Codex, and Gemini as interchangeable backends behind neutral configuration layers. The deeper tension emerging is that hooks, not models or prompts, are the stickiest dependency, and the community is discovering that building or forking a minimal harness yourself may be more sustainable than trusting any provider's rapidly shifting tooling ecosystem.

The Bromine Chokepoint

▲ 217 · 126 comments · warontherocks.com

TL;DR: Israel's near-monopoly on bromine supply, critical for manufacturing every DRAM and NAND chip worldwide, faces existential threat from Iranian missile strikes with no backup production capacity available globally.

South Korea sources 97.5 percent of its bromine imports from Israel, a chemical critical to producing the hydrogen bromide gas used to etch transistor structures in every DRAM and NAND flash chip manufactured on earth, and Iranian ballistic missile strikes have been targeting Israel's Negev region for three weeks, with hits reported within 35 kilometers of ICL Group's Dead Sea extraction and conversion complex. Unlike the heavily covered helium shortage triggered by Qatar's Ras Laffan facility going offline, the bromine vulnerability has attracted little policy attention despite the fact that no conversion facilities outside Israel can produce semiconductor-grade hydrogen bromide at the required scale. A disruption to Israeli bromine production would propagate within

weeks across consumer devices, data centers, and military systems, with no viable substitution or rapid replacement available given the years-long timeline required to build and qualify new conversion capacity.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY SAYS

Commenters are largely pushing back on the premise of a bromine shortage, arguing that the real vulnerability is not supply scarcity but rather the concentration of high-grade semiconductor processing infrastructure at a single location near the Dead Sea. Underlying the whole discussion is a broader tension about how modern supply chains mistake geographic economic efficiency for geopolitical resilience, with several commenters noting that what looks like a structural dependency is often just a temporary optimization that higher prices or political pressure could quickly reroute.