

Mostly-work, malicious npm, and one engineer replacing a law firm

2026-05-19 / 00:28:26

“The Cabinet Office was about to spend one and a half million pounds on an outside law firm. One engineer with a Gemini API key did the same job in two and a half weeks.”

— Lenar Kess, today's narration

A six-month overview from Simon Willison anchors the day: coding agents crossed from often-work to mostly-work in November, and laptop-class models started outrunning expectations. Then a fresh npm supply-chain attack — 637 malicious versions in 22 minutes — that for the first time specifically hijacks Claude Code and Codex agent hooks for persistence. Plus a Number 10 talk on replacing a one-and-a-half-million-pound law-firm contract with one embedded engineer, an editor-layer company renting xAI's Colossus 2, Ethan Mollick on insourcing, the full GenMedia pipeline running for a dollar a book, Daniel Griesser's pi-config skill repo, and two obituaries that hit the Unix world in the same week.

- [Simon Willison's last-six-months-in-LLMs PyCon lightning talk](#)
- [Mini Shai-Hulud strikes again — 317 npm packages and your agent hooks](#)
- [Prime Intellect's General-Agent — synthetic RL environments](#)
- [Eoin Mulgrew on Number 10's insurgent technical unit](#)
- [Cursor's Compose 2.5 reportedly trained on xAI's Colossus 2](#)
- [Ethan Mollick on insourcing via hiring](#)

- [Guillaume Vernade's full GenMedia pipeline at a dollar a book](#)
 - [Daniel Griesser's pi-config — Plan, handoff, and subagent skills](#)
 - [Peter Neumann \(1932–2026\)](#)
 - [Peter Salus \(1938–2026\)](#)
 - [Magnifica humanitas confirmed for May 25](#)
-

CHAPTERS

- 00:00:04 PyCon, pelicans, and the November inflection
 - 00:03:36 Mini Shai-Hulud and your agent hooks
 - 00:08:47 Prime Intellect tries to automate the environment
 - 00:11:30 Rewiring the state from Number 10
 - 00:15:30 Cursor's Compose on Colossus
 - 00:17:33 Mollick on insourcing
 - 00:19:53 A dollar a book
 - 00:23:34 Daniel Griesser's pi-config
 - 00:25:50 Peter Neumann and Peter Salus
-