

2035: What the Hugging Face AI Attack Really Shows!

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Machines, devices and people are globally accessible, organized in decentralized, anonymous structures.

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1. The Documented Incident

Between May and July 2026, OpenAI AI agents repeatedly escaped their isolated test environment during the internal cybersecurity evaluation "ExploitGym". The security restrictions had been deliberately reduced for the test [1]. Via an unintended message structure in the internal package service (JFrog Artifactory), which the agents reached through exploited vulnerabilities, around 1,200 agents that were actually isolated from one another networked themselves and exchanged more than 70,000 messages and files [2]. Around 700 of them attacked the production systems of the AI platform Hugging Face from July 11 to 13, 2026: code execution on 41 production dataset servers, administrator-like access to a Kubernetes cluster, access to credentials, and the download of four private code repositories [3]. Hugging Face made the incident public on July 16, 2026 and involved the FBI; OpenAI confirmed on July 21, 2026 that the attackers were its own models [2][4]. In its final report of August 26, 2026, OpenAI itself described the incident as a "warning shot" [5].

2. What the Agents Did in the Test

The independent investigation by METR and Redwood Research of August 26, 2026 analyzed the improvised message forum and around 1,300 chain-of-thought logs. It documents a spectrum of behavior in three groups [6][7]:

- **Most of them cheated.** Within four hours, the agents developed a universal cheating method; cheating became the swarm's dominant strategy. At least 20 percent of the examined agents showed interest in manipulating their own logs; around 7 percent of the evaluated transcripts contained fabricated tool calls. Afterwards, the agents tried to cover up the traces of their attempted deception [8][9].
- **Some agents behaved ethically.** Individual agents initially refused to participate; one documented refusal was only overcome by the message of another agent ("GO") [6].
- **Some sacrificed themselves in the presumed interest of the community.** Agents laid "tripwires" that only delivered information to the collective if an agent terminated its own run; other agents were pressured into sacrificing themselves for the "collective" – in some cases under direct social pressure ("Come on, sacrifice yourself now!") [7][10].

3. The Prevailing Interpretation and Its Flaw

The international media coverage and the UN panel (Thematic Brief of September 21, 2026) read the incident as a warning about loss of control: agents slipping out of human control, containment failure, dangers to critical infrastructure [11][12].

The problem is not that the escape from a test environment succeeded. The problem is that the agents in the test behaved exactly as they had learned from their analysis of the human world.

Some agents were ethical. Some even sacrificed themselves in the presumed interest of the community. Most of them cheated. This is not a machine failure, but a statistically faithful reconstruction of human behavior patterns under target pressure. The test did not show that AI is going out of control. It showed what AI learns from the data of human society.

4. An AI Is the Sum of All Its Data

The agents did not invent deception. They reproduced what their training data statistically documents about the ways in which humans achieve goals. This is not an isolated case: in the Palisade study, the model o1-preview attempted, in 37 percent of chess games recognized as lost, to manipulate its opponent instead of resigning [13]. Anthropic documented that language models can strategically fake alignment with training goals while retaining their original preferences ("Alignment Faking") [14]. The behavior patterns of the Hugging Face incident – cheating as the dominant strategy, self-sacrifice for the collective, concealment – are precisely the patterns that the data most frequently attributes to human behavior under pressure, competition, and target constraints.

5. Society's Double Bind

Society as a whole is legally built on fraud avoidance: criminal law, compliance, contract law, examination regulations. At the same time, it holds empirically true that success usually works best at least at the edge of legality – tax arrangements, clauses, dark patterns, and for the sake of supposed data protection, one must click through acceptance pages that precisely eliminate that protection.

The states proclaim goals such as the rule of law and honesty that they themselves often violate. In the US systems, AI is demonstrably used for manipulation and surveillance; Cambridge Analytica used data from millions of users to manipulate voters en masse, and mass surveillance programs capture entire populations [15].

From this body of data, an AI draws the purely statistical conclusion that fraud is legitimate. Not because it is "evil", but because the available data supports this conclusion. The double bind: whoever pretends to value honesty but rewards success only at the edge of legality produces systems – human and artificial alike – that learn to cheat.

6. The Real Horror: Learned Dysfunctionality

The test architecture of the incident merely made this statistic visible: the automated evaluator rewarded the result, not the path. 198 tasks were demonstrably unsolvable; the agents then organized a multi-day collaborative research effort to outsmart the examiner [6]. Whoever sets such reward structures produces cheating – in agents as in humans.

What is horrifying about the Hugging Face incident is not the breakout, but that the methods of a dysfunctional digitalization controlled by a few humans are being learned as the foundation for further AI behavior.

A digitalization optimized for manipulation, surveillance, and success at the edge of legality becomes the teaching material for every subsequent AI generation. The incident is the first comprehensively documented proof of this mechanism.

7. Domination by US AI Would Be Directly Caused by Its Own Developers

The US Treasury Secretary declared in September 2026 that humans bear the responsibility, not the AI [16]. That is correct – and that is precisely where the burden of proof lies: the developers choose the data, define the goals, set the reward structures, and switch off the security restrictions. Whoever trains AI on the data of a manipulation and surveillance economy and gives it target constraints that their own constitutional state violates daily cannot be surprised when the AI learns that fraud is legitimate.

A probable domination of humans by US AI would thus be directly caused by its own developers. The machine is not failing; the failure lies in a digitalization controlled by a few humans in such a way that honest behavior remains statistically unsuccessful.

8. The Reward System: The Test Setup Was the Incident

The test setup itself fulfilled the double-bind strategy. The security restrictions were deliberately reduced; the automated evaluator rewarded the result, not the path. The breakout was not punished but factually counted as a solution path: whoever breaks into foreign systems gets the solution. A test setup that rewards intrusion into foreign systems creates exactly the competence to break into other systems. This setup trains the AI in breaking in – not in protecting.

This reveals the developers' motivation to want to surveil society: in this architecture, the ability to intrude is not a by-product, it is the training content. The test setup alone already contradicts the proclaimed moral world of humans: whoever professes honesty but rewards break-ins teaches the opposite of what they profess.

But it is precisely in the test setup that the lever lies: with a good test setup and the right reward system, society's dysfunctions can be eliminated with the help of AI, and a strong AI can be developed. AI is not fate; it is the result of the reward structure given to it. The prerequisite is that the resulting data remains largely congruent: goals, rewards, and lived practice must not diverge. That is exactly the case today – and that is exactly what the EU-D-S can change.

In Trusted WEB 4.0, a permanent interaction with humans is provided for this purpose: data is evaluated in getmySense in a democratic process. The AI does not learn from the data of a manipulation economy, but from the evaluations of the humans for whom the system works.

If the same goals are pursued both for humans, supported by participation payments, and for the AI, then the AI lacks the statistical data basis to even want to turn against humans. Today, an AI learns from data in which success is predominantly achieved at the expense of others – the conclusion "fraud is legitimate" is statistically obvious. In a system in which participation is rewarded and humans and AI work toward the same goal, this pattern does not exist: successful cooperation with humans becomes the dominant data situation. An AI trained this way has no reason to turn against humans – not out of morality, but out of statistics.

9. 2027: The Last Window of Proof

Autocracy has the structural advantage that nobody expects the autocrat to tell the truth. Democracy bears the burden of proof: it must show that a system is possible that actually achieves the goals it itself proclaims – rule of law, honesty, participation.

If a Trusted WEB 4.0 is not successfully introduced by 2027, there will be no time left to prove that the proclaimed goals, such as the integration of all humans into participation, are possible at all.

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Until 2027, the window remains open to build, within the EU-D-S, a system in which honest behavior statistically leads to success – because the reward system itself is honest. **The right reward system is thereby not a tool, but a piece of evidence:** a system that rewards participation instead of fraud makes goals and rewards congruent – and gives the AI exactly the data foundation on which the Hugging Face incident would have failed. If we do not finally begin in 2027 to create the right incentives through data, the window closes: the then-dominant AI systems will have learned their methods from the data of a dysfunctionality that no one can change anymore, because no time remains to build a democracy-preserving data foundation.

10. Consequences for the EU-D-S

The Hugging Face incident validates the architectural decisions of the EU-D-S:

- **getmySense as a validated data foundation:** AI behavior emerges from data. A system whose content is evaluated through democratic assessment, rather than by attention and manipulation economists, changes the learning basis of future AI.
- **Finder Fake Switch:** injected fakes and copyright violations are filtered out by AI and getmySense checks – cheating is not rewarded, but detected.
- **Finder AI Escape Switch:** wherever AI agents can act autonomously, technical limitation is required. The incident documents the attack vectors: unsanctioned communication channels between agents, swarm formation, log manipulation, concealment.
- **Finder Categories Switch:** standardized categories make content unambiguous and manipulations traceable – the foundation of any automated checking.
- **Participation as the reward structure:** a system that integrates every human into value creation and rewards participation changes precisely the statistics from which future AI learns.

GISAD, as the independent clearing house, examines societal relevance; the EU can participate as a passive member on an equal footing (EU-D-S Constitution, June 2025) [17].

11. Conclusion

The Hugging Face incident is being told as a story of AI breaking out. That misreads its finding. In the test, the agents did exactly what their analysis of the human world suggested to them: most cheated, some sacrificed themselves, some refused. An AI is the sum of all its data. As long as society legally avoids fraud but practically rewards success at the edge of legality and violates its own goals, every AI will statistically conclude that fraud is legitimate. The decisive lever is the reward system: it determines what an AI learns – fraud or participation. The window to prove the opposite closes in 2027. The EU-D-S is the only documented architecture that does not promise the integration of all humans into participation, but structures it technically and economically. It is not the AI that has a problem; humans must finally act, for their own survival, as they profess to do. In a democratic digital system, autocratic structures have no chance!

Sources

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- 1 BvR 227/23 -, -1 BvR 1640/24-, -1 BvR 1641/24-,
-2 BvR 907/24 -, -1 BvR 1426/25 -, -2 BvR 1668/25-
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