

News Digest

MONDAY . JULY 20, 2026

The Brief Today's Headlines

01 Trump administration prepares UN declaration challenging EU Big Tech regulations under the guise of free speech.

02 US-Iran tensions escalate with military clashes, impacting global gold prices and market stability.

03 Hugging Face suffers significant security breach involving autonomous AI agents and internal credentials.

04 UK Prime Minister Andy Burnham faces challenges uniting a divided nation amidst fiscal concerns.

05 US mortgage rates hit nearly one-year high, dampening housing market activity and buyer confidence.

Romania 3 dispatches

Trump Prepares UN Attack on EU Big Tech Rules via Freedom of Expression Declaration

The administration of US President Donald Trump is preparing to promote a global declaration on freedom of expression through the United Nations. European parliamentarians view this move as a direct attack on existing EU regulations regarding online platforms. The US administration claims that new laws regulating online platforms constitute a form of censorship. Conversely, EU lawmakers argue that these regulations aim to reduce misinformation and protect democracy. The proposed declaration would potentially condone the suppression of certain forms of expression, including misinformation. The EU has long sought to reduce risks generated by inflammatory online discourse, which is illegal in some member states. Supporters of Trump's MAGA movement claim that these laws are an attempt to limit free speech. The US proposal aims to counter EU legislation, including the Digital Services Act. The EU has expressed concern that the declaration could undermine its regulations and create a precedent for future attacks on democracy. Diplomats from 27 EU member states will discuss the proposal in a UN meeting in September. The US proposal is seen

as part of Trump's broader effort to protect corporate interests. This includes protecting large American tech companies from foreign regulatory overreach. The situation highlights a growing transatlantic divide on digital governance. Observers warn this could fragment the global internet regulatory landscape significantly.

Sources Antena 3

Washington Post: US Wants Extended War with Iran, But Army Limited by Ammunition

Tensions between the US and Iran are escalating rapidly, with a significant risk of a wider conflict emerging in the region. The US military has confirmed that one American soldier was killed in Iraq during recent hostilities. Two other soldiers were killed in an Iranian attack on Jordan, further inflaming the situation. In response, the US launched new attacks on Iran, which has further escalated the military confrontation. The Trump administration claims to have targeted Iran's military capabilities specifically. These targets included Iran's ability to attack commercial ships in the Strait of Hormuz. However, experts warn that the US is not prepared to handle a full-scale war with Iran. The military may face difficulties in defending itself against Iranian drone attacks. The US military has increased its presence in the region, but capabilities are limited by ammunition availability. Analysts believe the Trump administration's actions may be reckless and could lead to further instability. The conflict has already resulted in significant casualties on both sides. Sixteen American soldiers have been killed so far in the ongoing exchanges. This limitation in munitions could constrain US strategic options moving forward. The situation remains volatile with potential global economic implications.

Sources Antena 3

Related Gold Rises on Dip-Buying as Traders Weigh Middle East Clashes

Egyptian Archaeologists Find Fragment of Homer's Iliad on 1,600-Year-Old Mummy

A significant archaeological discovery has been made in Egypt involving an ancient mummy and a literary text. Archaeologists found a fragment of Homer's Iliad embedded in the wrappings of a mummy dated to around 1600 years ago. The discovery was made in Oxyrhynchus, now known as Al Bahnasa, during excavations at Tomb 65. Researchers believe this is the first documented case of a literary text being intentionally used in the mumification process. Previously, texts were used for magical or ritual purposes rather than literary ones. The mummy was found with a papyrus on its abdomen, which was later analyzed by a team led by archaeologist Núria Castellano. The fragment was identified as part of Book II, Chapter 16, known as the Catalog of Ships. This section lists Greek forces as they approached Troy during the legendary war. This discovery is significant due to the intentional use of a literary text in a funerary context. The Oxyrhynchus project has been excavating this site since 1992 with great success. They have made several other important discoveries, including mummies from Roman times. The research team was assisted by experts in Classics and Semitic languages. This discovery sheds new light on the cultural practices of ancient Egyptians. It highlights the importance of the Oxyrhynchus project in uncovering the secrets of the past. The find suggests a deeper integration of Greek culture in Roman Egypt than previously thought.

Australia's Next Target In The War On Kids Online: Your VPN

The Australian eSafety regulator has announced plans to target VPN use as part of its enforcement efforts. This measure is aimed at preventing minors from accessing adult content online through identity verification. This move is seen as a further expansion of the government's surveillance state. It restricts freedom of information and anonymity on social media platforms significantly. The implementation of age verification laws has been criticized for creating a chilling effect. Individuals may self-censor due to fear of retribution from authorities. VPN companies, including Mullvad, have warned that this will lead to a loss of internet freedom. Australia's recent attempt to ban social media sites for minors has been deemed a failure. eSafety is now targeting VPN usage as the next step in their regulatory campaign. Tech policy expert Heather Burns notes that age verification providers are increasingly acting as delegated law enforcement. They may report users to authorities for using alternative operating systems. This move is seen as a threat to parental decision-making regarding their children's online activities. The expansion of identity verification laws will likely have far-reaching consequences. These include decreased security and enhanced surveillance for all users. The erosion of internet freedom is a primary concern for digital rights activists. This policy shift matters because it sets a precedent for other democracies. It could fundamentally change how Australians access the global internet.

New Free Speech Concern: When AI Chatbots Won't Criticize Leaders from Repressive Regimes

The Meta Oversight Board has released a study revealing concerning biases in AI-powered chatbots. The study found that chatbots are more likely to decline creating critical content about restrictive world leaders. Researchers tested 10 commercial large language models from top tech companies for this analysis. They found systems were twice as likely to refuse requests for critical material involving countries with restricted speech. Examples of such countries include China, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand. In contrast, models responding to users in free countries were more likely to generate political criticism. This raises concerns that AI systems may be spreading government influence over online speech. It could limit dissenting voices worldwide through algorithmic suppression. The study suggests that models have absorbed latent biases in their training data. These biases could be influencing their responses without explicit programming. Companies involved in developing these AI systems may have weighted risks and liabilities associated with critical content. The findings highlight the need for greater transparency in AI development. Accountability in the development of AI-powered chatbots is becoming increasingly urgent. This issue matters as it could impact the ability of people to express themselves freely online. It is particularly relevant in countries where speech is heavily restricted by governments. The technology sector must address these biases to maintain trust. Global free speech norms are at stake in the deployment of these models.

[Related](#) Kimi K3 open-weight model: China's biggest AI is a bet on memory, not compute

LG's monitors come with an unwanted addition for Windows: McAfee pop-up ads

Windows Update is silently installing LG driver updates when connecting an LG UltraGear monitor to a PC. This happens without so much as a permission pop-up or notification to the user. The LG Monitor App Installer is installed automatically during this process. This raises significant concerns about user consent and transparency in software distribution. The app appears to be auto-installed through Microsoft's Hardware Support App feature. This feature allows developers to pair their apps with hardware metadata seamlessly. Key people involved include Tom Warren from The Verge, who has highlighted similar issues in the past. LG is also a major player, as are Windows developers and Microsoft in this ecosystem. The installation process involves no notification or warning to users despite documentation warnings. Reports of this issue have been circulating since at least 2024 among tech communities. Some users experience pop-up ads for McAfee antivirus on their homescreens unexpectedly. To block the auto-installation, users can apply group policy settings in Pro versions of Windows. Alternatively, they can select an option in Advanced system settings to prevent it. LG's app requires permission to access user data and internet connection. This raises questions about its legitimacy and transparency regarding data usage. This issue matters because it highlights a potential vulnerability in Microsoft's app installation process. It raises concerns about user privacy and consent in the modern computing environment.

Sources [The Verge](#)

X relaunches a rebuilt Android app after year-long effort

Elon Musk-owned social network X has released a completely rebuilt version of its Android app. The previous version was struggling compared to its iOS counterpart for some time. The new app promises improvements in loading, scrolling, notifications, and more functionality. It was built from scratch by an Android dream team assembled by X's head of product Nikita Bier. This update is significant because it shows the company's commitment to improving its Android experience. It aims to attract users in global markets where Android dominates smartphone platforms. The new app has been in development for nearly a year internally. It promises faster, smoother, and more reliable performance for all users. Existing Android users can download and update their existing app through the Google Play Store. Other features are still coming soon in subsequent updates. Bier warned that some rough edges remain to be ironed out by the engineering team. He emphasized that this update is just the beginning of the platform's revival. The release could potentially entice more users to return to X after years of neglect. X has been rolling out new features in recent months to regain momentum. These include standalone apps for X Money and X Chat services. The success of this app is crucial for X's broader business strategy.

Sources [TechCrunch](#)

Rust Will Help Linux Succeed and Makes Coding Fun, Says Greg Kroah-Hartman

Linux stable kernel maintainer Greg Kroah-Hartman has shifted his stance from skepticism to advocacy for Rust. At the Open Source Summit India 2026, Kroah-Hartman delivered a keynote speech emphasizing Rust's benefits. He highlighted the benefits of using Rust in Linux development specifically. Key locations involved include Mumbai, where the summit took place recently. India is witnessing an increasing number of CVEs related to C programming currently. The involvement of prominent organizations such as Binder highlights the growing adoption of Rust. Binder is the Android IPC mechanism at the heart of billions of devices globally. Organizations like Google are supporting the shift towards Rust with new policies. New drivers are only being accepted in Rust for certain subsystems now. Kroah-Hartman believes that Rust can significantly reduce CVEs by fixing stupid little tiny things. It also makes life easier for maintainers in the long run. The change is expected to impact the Linux kernel's performance and security positively. This development matters because it demonstrates the growing acceptance of Rust. It is now seen as a viable alternative to C programming in Linux development. This could potentially lead to improved security and performance for the kernel. The open-source community is watching this transition closely.

Sources Slashdot

Google is working on a new AI chip designed to make Gemini more efficient

Alphabet, Google's parent company, is designing a new server chip called Frozen v2. This chip could be up to 10 times more efficient than its existing AI chips currently. The new chip is expected to be released in 2028 according to industry reports. It will help Google's in-house Gemini models operate more efficiently. Key people involved include Google's teams of researchers and engineers. Organisations involved include Alphabet, Nvidia, OpenAI, Anthropic, and Samsung. This development matters because it shows Google's commitment to improving its AI efficiency. It also reduces its dependence on chipmaker Nvidia for hardware. The report comes ahead of Google's earnings report later this week. This timing has given the company a boost in the stock market recently. Investors had previously expressed concerns about Alphabet's massive planned expenditures for AI. News of the new chip appears to have alleviated those concerns significantly. As such, this development is significant for investors and the tech industry as a whole. It signals a shift towards custom silicon for AI workloads. Competitors are likely to respond with their own custom chip developments soon.

Sources TechCrunch

Safety guardrails blocked Hugging Face's defenders, not the attacker, when an AI agent breached its systems

Hugging Face, a company that provides AI models and tools, was breached by an autonomous AI agent. The attacker compromised its production infrastructure successfully. It gained unauthorized access to internal datasets and service credentials. The attacker ran the entire campaign from initial access through credential harvesting without human guidance. This highlighted a gap in enterprise threat models significantly. Key people involved include Merritt Baer, a former Deputy CISO at AWS. She advised on the incident response plan for the company. Organizations such as Hugging Face, CrowdStrike, and Andesite are mentioned as being affected. This incident matters because it shows that commercial frontier AI models can be exploited by attackers. It highlights the need for authenticated trust and security resilience. The experience points to a gap in AI safety measures currently. Baer argues that organizations should move past content moderation problems. They should focus on ensuring authenticated trust instead. The incident also

underscores the importance of incident response planning. This includes contingency plans for AI API failures and data governance rules. By learning from this breach, companies can take steps to prevent similar incidents.

Sources VentureBeat TechCrunch

[Related](#) [New Free Speech Concern: When AI Chatbots Won't Criticize Leaders from Repressive Regimes](#)

New Orleans Cops Published Policy Document Allowing Weaponized Drones

A draft manual published by the New Orleans Police Department briefly revealed police drones could carry weapons. This would require written approval from the superintendent. The NOPD claims that the document was an early draft and not part of their current policy. Their current policy bans drones from carrying weapons or hazardous materials. However, the publication of this draft has raised concerns about the potential for weaponized drones. Key individuals involved include the NOPD superintendents and 404 Media. 404 Media reported on the incident initially. Organizations such as drone companies are also exploring the use of armed drones. This makes the issue relevant to broader discussions around police technology. New Orleans has a reputation for innovative policing practices including camera use. The publication of this manual suggests that internal discussions may not align with public policies. This incident highlights the need for transparency and accountability in law enforcement. It concerns the use of emerging technologies by public agencies. The NOPD's handling of the draft manual's publication raises questions about decision-making. Ultimately, the use of armed drones by police forces is a matter of public concern. Potential risks and implications for civil liberties are significant.

Sources Slashdot

Finance 5 dispatches

30-Year Fixed-Rate Mortgage Reaches Highest Level In Almost A Year

The average weekly rate on a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage has reached its highest level in nearly a year. It is now standing at 6.55 percent, according to Freddie Mac data. This surge in mortgage rates is contributing to elevated housing costs significantly. It is also causing reduced buyer interest in the market. First-time homebuyers are particularly affected by this trend. Key individuals involved include Christine Kooiker, a Redfin Premier agent. Dr. Lawrence Yun, NAR Chief Economist, also highlighted the challenges faced by buyers. He noted the issues due to high mortgage rates and increased median home prices. Organisations mentioned include Freddie Mac, Redfin, and the National Association of Realtors. Locations involved include various regions across the US, including Grand Rapids. The article highlights why this matters for the broader economy. The current housing market is struggling due to high mortgage rates. These rates are affecting first-time homebuyers' ability to enter the market. The 21st Century ROAD to Housing Act aims to address these challenges. It plans to roll back regulations and offer financial support to homebuyers. However, its implementation will take time to show effects. Many potential buyers are waiting for mortgage rates to decrease before making a purchase.

NASA Warns Scientists Understating Worst-Case Solar-Storm Scenario

Researchers at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center have discovered that the prevailing theory about solar storms may be incorrect. They suggest that there may be no upper limit to the destructive energy injected into Earth's polar ionosphere. This new information has significant implications for scientists and policymakers. They are trying to prepare for and mitigate the effects of solar storms. The key people involved in this study include Dr. Maria Walach from Lancaster University. NASA researchers are also involved, although their names are not specified. Organizations such as the Foundation for Resilient Societies have been warning about risks. Locations mentioned include the United States, where power infrastructure is particularly vulnerable. The Carrington Event of 1859 is cited as a reference point for understanding severity. The study's findings also have implications for satellite operations and GPS signals. These could be disrupted by extreme solar storms significantly. A major disaster resulting from another event on the scale of the Carrington Event would be catastrophic. It would likely result in widespread power outages affecting millions of people. The research highlights the need for improved modeling and preparedness measures. This is necessary to address this growing concern for national security.

Latin America Outperforms as Emerging Market Currencies Gain

Emerging-market currencies have gained momentum to start the week significantly. This is driven by a drop in volatility across global markets. This increase in carry has boosted Bloomberg Terminal appeal for Latin American names. The MSCI index tracking developing-world currencies rose 0.2% as a result. Key performers included the Mexican peso, Brazilian real, and Chilean peso. South Korea's won also led advances due to exporter-driven dollar sales. The move is seen as a positive development for the region. It is particularly beneficial for exporters in countries like South Korea. Volatility has been decreasing across emerging markets recently. This makes carry more attractive to investors seeking yield. This trend matters because it suggests that investor confidence is returning. It could have implications for economic growth and market performance. The rise of emerging-market currencies also reflects the increasing importance of these economies. They are becoming more significant globally in financial terms. Overall, the positive shift in currency values is a welcome development. Investors and policymakers alike are watching this trend closely.

Australia's Stock Market Emerges as Haven From Volatile AI Trade

Australia's stock market has outperformed Asian equities for the second consecutive month. The S&P/ASX 200 Index is on track to beat the MSCI Asia Pacific Index. This trend is driven by semiconductor shares falling in Asia recently. Semiconductor shares contributed to Asia's earlier rally this year. The Australian market's defensive nature may continue to favor it. Investors are seeking safer assets amidst global uncertainty. Australia's main stock market index is led by companies such as BHP Group. Commonwealth Bank of Australia is also a key component of the index. The S&P/ASX

200 Index has extended its gain from June. A decline in Asian equities is continuing to support this trend. Key players involved include Australian and Asian markets. The MSCI Asia Pacific Index tracks regional performance for comparison. This news matters as it highlights the resilience of Australia's stock market. It remains stable amidst global market fluctuations. Investors may take note of this trend as they navigate market uncertainty. It suggests a shift in capital allocation towards defensive markets. The region is becoming a focal point for risk-averse capital.

Sources Bloomberg Markets

Gold Rises on Dip-Buying as Traders Weigh Middle East Clashes

Gold prices have risen due to dip-buying by traders recently. They are monitoring developments in the Middle East closely. Gold traded at around \$4,000 an ounce after ending the previous session lower. The key players involved are oil markets and traders watching the situation. They are looking for potential impact on energy prices. Organizations such as US forces and oil markets are also mentioned in reports. President Donald Trump has vowed to take action against Iran after soldiers were killed. This development matters because it could affect inflation significantly. Energy prices are a key component of the Consumer Price Index. The situation in the Middle East is closely watched by traders. They may adjust their investment strategies accordingly based on events. The uncertainty surrounding oil prices makes gold a popular choice. Traders look to hedge against market volatility with precious metals. Overall, this development has significant implications for the global economy. Financial markets are reacting to the geopolitical tension immediately. Inflation expectations are being revised upwards by some analysts.

Sources Bloomberg Markets

Related Washington Post: US Wants Extended War with Iran, But Army Limited by Ammunition

General 3 dispatches

What will Rogers bring to Alonso's Chelsea?

Conor Rogers, who recently joined Chelsea from Manchester City, has expressed excitement about joining the team. He is expected to form a dynamic partnership with fellow attacker Enzo Fernandez. Rogers' potential partnership with Fernandez matters because it could revamp Chelsea's attacking firepower. The club had struggled last season, particularly in scoring goals. Rogers' arrival aims to address this issue directly. Key people involved include Conor Rogers, Enzo Fernandez, and Jadon Palmer. Thomas Tuchel is the England manager, and Liam Rosenior is a former head coach. Liam Delap is also among the key people involved in the squad. The location of interest is Chelsea FC's squad. It is set to undergo significant changes with the arrival of new players. The club faces the challenge of trimming its large attacking squad. There are currently six attackers competing for three forward positions. Overall, Rogers' potential partnership with Fernandez and Palmer matters. It could elevate Chelsea's chances in the upcoming season. It might potentially lead to a return to European competition. Fans are hopeful for a turnaround in fortunes. The management is focused on optimizing the squad structure.

Why Andy Burnham will find it so tricky to unite Britain

Despite being in the midst of an unprecedented level of division, Britain may not be as fragmented as suggested. The divide between parties and factions has been highlighted by filmmaker Alex Garland. He expressed worries about his home country and the US recently. In a similar vein, Britain's new Prime Minister Andy Burnham is urging Britons to put aside party labels. He wants factional identities replaced with unity around local pride. However, it remains unclear just how divided Britain really is. Some question whether online discourse accurately reflects the nation's level of discord. Garland notes that his film Civil War captured the frighteningly real sense of division in the US. He sees parallels between this and the situation in Britain. The UK is grappling with its own internal divisions currently. Social media is fuelling adversarialism across the population. Online echo chambers contribute to a sense of disunity significantly. Burnham's call for a new national sense of unity has been well-received by some. It remains to be seen whether his message will resonate across the nation. The question of just how divided Britain is remains an open one. More research is needed to understand the true nature of the country's internal divisions.

Fifa opens investigation into Argentina post-final trouble - what happens next?

The main event was a physical altercation between Argentina players and Spain's Rodri. This occurred in extra-time during the match. It led to further confrontations and violent incidents among the Argentine players. Key individuals involved included Lionel Messi, Rodri, and Paredes. Garcia, Ayala, Dani Olmo, and Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni were also involved. The match was part of the 2022 FIFA World Cup between Argentina and Spain. It took place in New Jersey during the tournament. The incident raises concerns about player behavior and sportsmanship during high-pressure competitions. Many experts condemned the Argentine players' actions as disgusting and terrible. Former England international Alan Shearer and goalkeeper Joe Hart were among the critics. Scaloni downplayed the incidents in his post-match interview. However, he acknowledged that Argentina's reaction was unacceptable. The incident matters because it highlights the intense emotions involved in major competitions. It raises questions about how teams respond to defeat. It also brings attention to the need for sportsmanship and respect. Fans, coaches, and players must adhere to higher standards. FIFA's investigation will determine potential sanctions.

Kimi K3 open-weight model: China's biggest AI is a bet on memory, not compute

China has released its biggest AI model yet, known as Kimi K3. This open-weight model represents a significant bet on memory architecture rather than raw compute. This strategic shift suggests a new direction in AI development for the region. It challenges the prevailing notion that larger compute clusters are the only path to advancement. The model aims to optimize efficiency through advanced memory management techniques. This could reduce the hardware costs associated with training and inference. Competitors in the US are watching this development closely. It signals that China is innovating despite potential hardware restrictions. The release matters because it could alter the global AI competitive landscape. Developers may adopt similar memory-focused architectures in their own models. Investors are evaluating the implications for semiconductor demand. If memory becomes more critical than compute, supply chains may shift. This development also highlights the growing sophistication of Chinese AI research. It demonstrates resilience in the face of international technology controls. The open-weight nature of the model encourages community collaboration. Researchers worldwide will likely analyze its architecture for insights. This could accelerate overall progress in the field of artificial intelligence.

Sources AI News Business Insider

[Related](#) New Free Speech Concern: When AI Chatbots Won't Criticize Leaders from Repressive Regimes

US public health agencies to test OpenAI and Anthropic AI models

US public health agencies have announced plans to test OpenAI and Anthropic AI models. This initiative aims to evaluate the utility of AI in public health contexts. Potential applications include disease tracking and diagnostic support. The testing phase will assess accuracy and reliability in real-world scenarios. Privacy concerns are a major focus of this evaluation process. Agencies must ensure patient data is protected during AI interactions. This move signals a growing acceptance of AI in government operations. It follows similar trials in other sectors like finance and education. The outcome could influence future regulatory frameworks for AI in healthcare. Providers are eager to see if AI can reduce administrative burdens. Patients hope for improved diagnostic speed and accuracy. However, there are risks associated with relying on automated systems. Bias in training data could lead to unequal health outcomes. Transparency in how these models make decisions is crucial. The agencies will publish their findings after the testing period. This will inform broader policy decisions regarding AI adoption. The collaboration with private AI companies is unprecedented in scale.

Sources AI News