

The Compound Effect of Guardrails

in the Era of AI

John Adib

JavaScript London × NewDay · 29 April 2026
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Sam Altman



@sama



today we launched ChatGPT. try talking with it here:

chat.openai.com

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The dominoes of AI

ChatGPT launches

OpenAI launches ChatGPT,
and AI becomes a consumer
product overnight.

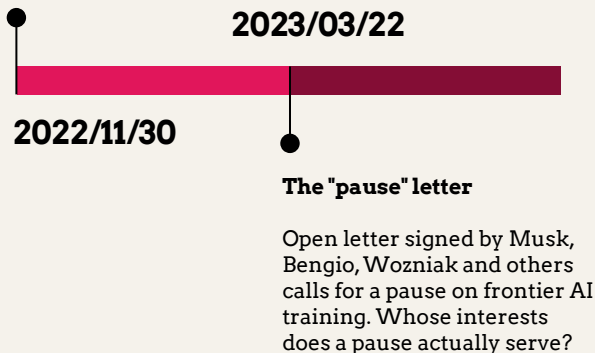


2022/11/30

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2023/03/22

2022/11/30

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The "pause" letter

Open letter signed by Musk, Bengio, Wozniak and others calls for a pause on frontier AI training. Whose interests does a pause actually serve?

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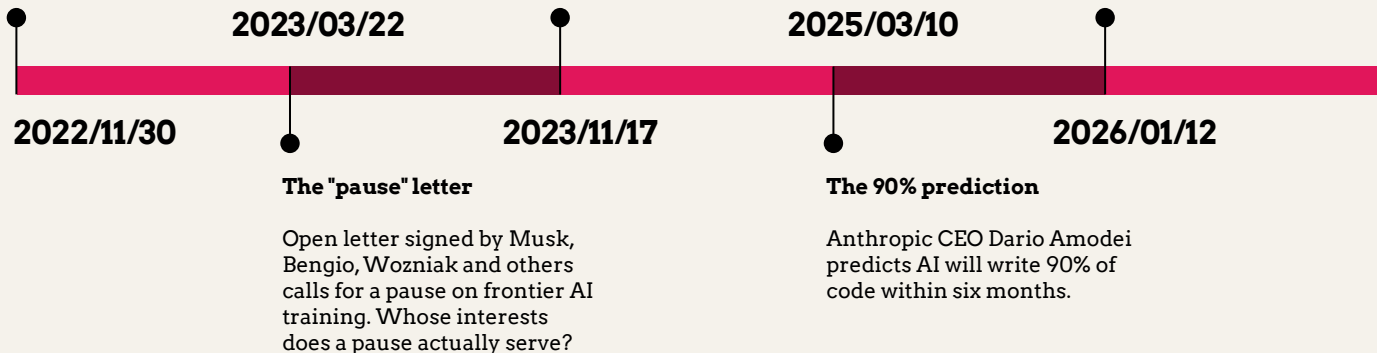
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2026/01/12

2026/04/07

2022/11/30

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The 90% prediction

Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei predicts AI will write 90% of code within six months.

The lab becomes the guardrail

Anthropic withholds Claude Mythos from general release, the first time a frontier lab publicly says "we built it but you cannot have it."



29 April 2026

Here we are.

4,432 contributions in the last year



**I ship more than ever,
But I write less than ever**

I manage the agents.

They write. **We ship.**

John Adib

MrAdib.com

Engineering Manager at Zapp
Solution Architect, Lifelong Learner
and maker of what lasts.

AI didn't join the team.

They joined the loop.

It starts in Slack

Workflow → Linear → AI Agent

AI reads the codebase

Read ticket → Ask back → Read files
small = ship / big = document

The PR opens itself

PR → CodeRabbit + Qodo + CI

AI fixes → loop until green

The humans get a turn

Slack Ping → Engineers Review
last gate, not first

And it ships

Merge → Auto Deploy + OTA

**This isn't a
dream anymore**



The old math

One weak pattern. One bad PR.

Linear cost.

The new math

One weak pattern. 10,000 AI generations.
Exponential cost.

The quiet truth

The loop runs on top of guardrails
The magic is in the floor.

The Principle

Every guardrail is a prompt

AI reads them forever.

Today's code

Teaches tomorrow's AI.

Day 1

One lint rule.

Five seconds saved.

Month 6

That rule shaped 10,000 AI generations.
Quietly.

Year 1

Same team. Same AI. Different guardrails.

One team ships. The other refactors.

Seven Guardrails

1. Instructions

The prompt before the prompt

AGENTS.md CLAUDE.md README.md Docs for AI.

2. Context

What the AI can see

Your codebase already has 17 button components.

3. Types

Compile-time shapes

TypeScript isn't ergonomics. It's a guardrail.

4. Lint Lint Lint...

Rules

What **wrong** looks like.

The most underestimated guardrail

First to be silenced.

Last to be appreciated.

Why lint compounds

One rule. A million runs.

Silently. Correctly. Free.

The speed problem

Slow lint gets disabled locally.

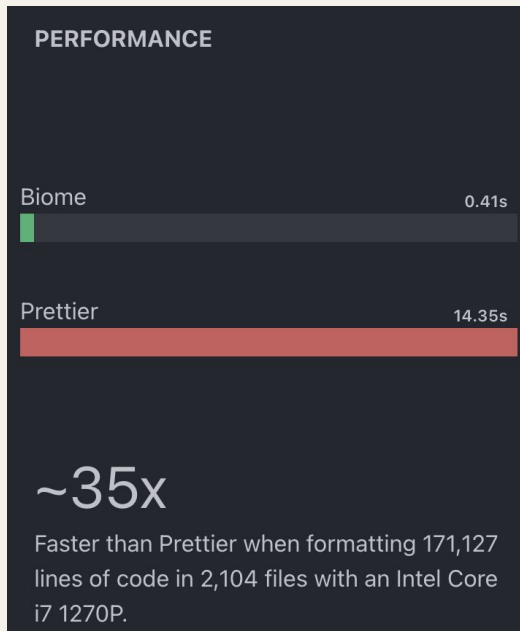
Game over.

Enter Biome

Rust. One binary. Linter + formatter.

10–35x faster.

Biome vs ESLint + Prettier?



Comparison

Task	Biome	ESLint + Prettier	Speedup
Lint only	<code>biome lint</code> 5.35 s	<code>eslint</code> 203.0 s	~38x
Formatter only	<code>biome format</code> 1.45 s	<code>prettier --check</code> 12.0 s	~8x
Lint + format combined	<code>biome check</code> 5.55 s	<code>eslint + prettier</code> 215.0 s	~39x

On My Real Codebase

+164K LOC

Start small

Biome recommended preset.

Zero config. Day one.

Then expand

One category a week.

correctness → suspicious → complexity → style
ally → performance → security

Don't fix the world on day one

Strict on new code.

Legacy, leave it.

Override per folder.

Your conventions become rules

Every house rule you write
is a prompt the AI inherits.

Fail the build

Warning in editor. Error in CI.

No exceptions.

5. Format

Style

The first thing AI mimics.

Format rules matter too

Whitespace is the first thing AI mimics.

6. Schemas

Runtime contracts

What crosses the boundary.

7. Tests

Behaviors

Does it actually work?

Tests as the floor

Lock today's coverage

Whatever it is, make it the CI floor.

Now.

Never regress

Every PR holds the floor or raises it.

Raise the floor quarterly

Predictable pressure.

Force AI to carry its weight

New code without tests?

CI rejects it.

The seven layers

Each is small. Together they compound.

1	Instructions	Docs the AI reads first
2	Context	What AI can see
3	Types	Compile-time shapes
4	Lint	Rules
5	Format	Style
6	Schemas	Runtime contracts
7	Tests	Behaviors

The choice

AI makes a bad codebase worse, faster.

A good codebase better, faster.

What are you compounding?

Guardrails don't slow us down.

They compound beneath us.

Thank you.

MrAdib.com

Let's connect!