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OpenAI names South Korea key partner for AI cyber defense

The company says its Korea Cyber Action Plan will expand access to advanced AI cyber models for government agencies, public institutions and companies

By Asia Today and translated by UPI



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OpenAI Chief Strategy Officer Jason Kwon speaks during a press conference on the Korea Cyber Action Plan in Seoul on Wednesday. Photo by Asia Today

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May 27 (Asia Today) -- OpenAI said Wednesday it will expand artificial intelligence-based cyber defense cooperation with the South Korean government, public agencies and companies in key industries.

The company announced its Korea Cyber Action Plan during a press conference at the JW Marriott Hotel in Seoul's Seocho District. The plan is designed to give government agencies, public institutions and companies broader access to OpenAI's advanced AI cyber models.

Jason Kwon, OpenAI's chief strategy officer, said AI has entered a third stage as an "intelligence utility," becoming core infrastructure for the economy and society after earlier phases focused on capability breakthroughs and broader access.

Kwon said South Korea is well positioned to adopt AI because it is a digital-first society that quickly embraces new technologies and has a "full-stack economy" with global semiconductor companies including Samsung Electronics and SK hynix.

"Advanced cyber AI capabilities should not remain in the hands of only a few," Kwon said. "Korea's key defenders should be able to use them to strengthen collective security and public safety."

"Korea is a very important country for OpenAI," he said. "We hope to become an important partner in Korea's AI transformation and in strengthening national resilience."

The Korea Cyber Action Plan is part of Daybreak, OpenAI's global cybersecurity initiative that aims to build security into systems from the earliest stages of development. OpenAI says Daybreak is designed to help cyber defenders identify threats, generate patches and verify fixes across code and systems.

A key part of the plan is expanding Trusted Access for Cyber, a program that gives verified defensive users access to specialized cyber AI models. OpenAI said in April it was scaling the program to thousands of verified individual defenders and hundreds of teams responsible for protecting critical software.

Kwon said access for the South Korean government to the government version of the program is in its final stage. He said OpenAI is also discussing adoption of the private-sector program with several Korean companies.

Asked about potential misuse of cyber models and data leakage risks, Kwon said OpenAI is controlling risk by granting access only to "trusted defenders" who go through strict verification.

He also said OpenAI supports data residency in South Korea, allowing data to be processed on domestic servers. Public agencies and companies may also choose an option in which data is not stored at all, he said.

Kwon said OpenAI has begun talks with the Korea AI Safety Institute under the Ministry of Science and ICT. He said the company will draw on its experience working with AI safety

institutes in the United States and Britain to help South Korea build its own model evaluation capabilities.

Before Wednesday's announcement, OpenAI had been deepening cooperation with South Korea's public sector. On May 18, Sasha Baker, OpenAI's head of national security policy, visited South Korea and demonstrated the company's latest cyber-focused models to major agencies including the science ministry, the Foreign Ministry, the Interior Ministry, the Financial Services Commission and the National AI Strategy Committee.

On Tuesday, Kwon met with Ryu Je-myung, second vice minister of science and ICT, to discuss AI security cooperation. OpenAI also signed memorandums of understanding with Korea Water Resources Corp. and Korea Technology Finance Corp.

Kwon emphasized the company's expectations for the Korean market.

"Korea is a country with very favorable conditions to turn AI into national competitiveness," he said. "Based on ChatGPT, Korea is already one of the top 10 markets globally, and the speed of AI adoption is very fast."

OpenAI said use of Codex in South Korea is also growing quickly. Weekly active users of ChatGPT Codex in the country have increased tenfold since the beginning of the year, placing South Korea among the top five countries by usage.

More than half of the requests come from non-development work such as document writing, analysis, research and

operations, showing the potential for wider enterprise use, the company said.

Kwon said changes in OpenAI's partnership with Microsoft have made it possible to provide OpenAI API services through a wider range of cloud providers, including Amazon Web Services, and that enterprise growth is expected to accelerate.

On pricing for enterprise services, Kwon said consumer subscriptions and corporate services are different, and that business customers already use contract-based pricing. Over the long term, he said OpenAI aims to provide stronger AI performance at the same cost or lower unit prices so more users can benefit.

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