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OpenAI Launches Legal-Specific Configuration of GPT-6 Astra, Its Latest LLM

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What You Need to Know

- OpenAI announced Thursday the launch of Astra for Law, a configuration of the company's latest large language model (LLM), GPT-6 Astra, designed specifically for legal work.
- The initial target market for the configuration is the legal tech industry and Am Law 200 firms, with plans to expand access over time.
- Astra for Law is not a new model; however, it differs from the standard version of the model through access to unique tools, system-level instructions and settings for traits like response length.

This article has been updated with additional information on OpenAI's legal tech integrations

OpenAI announced Thursday the launch of Astra for Law, a configuration of the company's latest large language model (LLM), GPT-6 Astra, designed specifically for legal work.

Astra for Law will initially be available to a select group of law firms through a new Trusted Access Program, providing access through ChatGPT and Codex. Organizations including Sullivan & Cromwell and Harvey have received early access to the configuration. Application programming interface (API) for legal tech vendors is expected soon.

Jason Boehmig, OpenAI's general manager for the legal industry, said the initial target market for the configuration is the legal tech industry and Am Law 200 firms, with plans to expand access over time.

The Trusted Access Program includes zero data retention on API use and exclusion from human review for ChatGPT Enterprise use. The company is working with Latham & Watkins on issues including



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permissions, ethical walls, client instructions and tracking matter numbers. The partnership with OpenAI forms part of a broader AI strategy that has recently seen Latham acquire AI servers to support its own AI initiatives.

"The trusted access is really around putting the right terms and contractual and trust layer over top of this, and making sure that we're not just thinking about model capability, but we're thinking about compliance and controls that are legal grade in delivering that as well," Boehmig said.

"As AI becomes more capable, so too does the ability to deploy it in environments that demand rigorous governance, oversight, and accountability," Michael Rubin, chair of Latham's AI strategy committee said in an emailed statement. "This collaboration builds on Latham's broader investments in AI development, governance and infrastructure across the firm, which underpin our enterprise-wide strategy for responsible AI."

Legal Research, Writing and More

Boehmig said the company's aim was to make its models as applicable as possible to organizations building AI tools and workflows for legal tasks, including both vendors and end users such as law firms.

"What we've really solved is, 'How do you stay on the frontier of capability, but also make the output relevant to a specific type of knowledge work?'" he said. "What we've done is give the model instructions. We've changed some settings, and we've also bundled in some tools."

Astra for Law is not a new model; it has the same model weights (the parameters that determine how inputs are turned into outputs) as the standard configuration of GPT-6 Astra, and it was not post-trained separately. However, it differs from the standard version of the model through access to unique tools, system-level instructions and settings for traits like response length.

The configuration includes access to a new legal search index, a corpus of more than 230 million URLs linking to U.S. case law, statutes, regulations, administrative decisions and court rules, including the Free Law Project's case law database. The legal search index is designed to help Astra for Law find and access relevant authorities that bear on the facts of a matter.

Sherwin Wu, a member of OpenAI's technical staff who helped lead development on the configuration, said other tweaks were designed to help the model produce outputs that are more responsive to the needs of legal users.

"Our instructions are meant to target improvements on legal writing, legal crispness, crispness in writing, directness in writing, which is needed in practice of law, as well as some behavioral changes, small tweaks in behavior," he said. "Verbosity is something that we're setting here to make the output a little bit more thorough, but we found that this also makes the model more precise and more diligent."

OpenAI reports that when tested on questions from VALS AI's Legal Research Bench benchmark, 54% of Astra for Law's responses passed an overall correctness evaluation, compared to 38.7% for GPT-6 Astra using web search alone. At the highest reasoning setting, Astra for Law also provided 24% more reference cases, as well as a greater number of passages from relevant case law.

Boehmig and Wu noted that the configuration also showed notable reductions in hallucinations, and they said they expected it to be updated with access to additional tools over time.

"One of the really neat things about the model configuration is we can constantly be tuning it and tweaking it," he said. "The iteration cycle is so short on a lot of this stuff."

Legal Tech Integrations

In addition to the release of Astra for Law, OpenAI also announced the launch of 26 business and practice of law plugins on ChatGPT Enterprise from partner organizations, including Thomson Reuters, Harvey, Legora, Relativity, Everlaw, Intapp, NetDocuments, Litera, Descrybe, iManage and DeepJudge.

The partner plugins are accompanied by community plugins from LegalQuants, LECG and Skills.law, providing users with access to 47 skills they can leverage and build on.

OpenAI also provided details on proprietary tools its engineers have built with law firm customers. The company noted it has worked on an agreement analyzer tool with Sullivan & Cromwell for new deal review; a mergers and acquisitions diligence system with Ropes & Gray that helps attorneys work through data rooms; and GO Public, a tool Cooley designed to help clients with the initial public offering process.

Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom is also among the law firms partnering with OpenAI, collaborating on several projects including a suite of tools for guiding clients through regulatory matters related to transactions and product introductions, according to a representative of the firm.

The release of Astra for Law is part of a broader movement of Big Tech companies into legal tech development. Anthropic has released a legal plugin and practice area plugins for Claude Cowork, Google released Gemini Enterprise for Legal last month, Microsoft released a legal agent in June, Amazon recently debuted Amazon Quick for Legal, and perplexity offers Computer for Counsel, a suite of AI tools for attorneys.

OpenAI's co-development efforts with law firms likewise continue a trend that has seen firms including Kirkland & Ellis, Freshfields and Debevoise & Plimpton team up with Big Tech and legal tech vendors to build proprietary tools.