

OPENAI CODEX MAY CONTINUE TASKS AFTER DEVICE LOCK

OPERATIONAL SIGNAL

DOMAIN: CAP — Capability | CONFIDENCE LEVEL: Preliminary

INSTITUTIONAL DIMENSIONS: Authority | Attribution | Visibility | Escalation | Continuity

Signal ID	Platform	Source	Audience	Status	Date
SIG-CAP-006	OpenAI	Link	PMO Risk Engineering	Pilot	2026-05-22

CAPABILITY SHIFT

OpenAI updated Codex on 21 May 2026. Goal mode is now generally available across Codex surfaces, allowing users to define an outcome and success criteria. Locked computer use lets eligible Mac users keep Codex working after the machine locks. Appshots let users attach an app window to a Codex thread, sharing a screenshot and available text as added context.

ORGANISATIONAL CONSEQUENCE

Staff may set a goal, lock their machine, and leave Codex working. The user has defined the outcome but may not observe each intermediate step. Appshots may also expose content from attached internal windows. This creates a mode where Codex continues work on a staff-controlled machine after active observation stops.

WHAT TO WATCH

- Codex sessions continuing after machine lock
- Actions taken during locked-machine periods
- Appshots exposing internal tools, files, or systems
- Broad goals giving Codex latitude over code or files

WHY THIS MATTERS NOW

Goal mode is generally available, while locked computer use extends Codex work beyond active screen time. Organisations that assumed AI coding assistants operate only under live supervision may need to revisit that assumption.

WHAT TO REVIEW

- Policies for unattended AI agent work on staff machines
- Guidance on app windows shared through Appshots
- Oversight expectations for AI-assisted code generation
- Controls for Codex Computer Use availability
- Logs or review records for actions after machine lock

GOVERNANCE CONTEXT

This is an authority and visibility issue. The user sets the goal, but Codex may continue work when the user is no longer watching. Review may need to focus not only on final code, but on what happened while the machine was locked.

Scope Boundary: This artefact translates observed platform capability changes into operational considerations. It does not constitute policy, legal advice, or enforcement guidance.