A backdoored AI coding extension: treating your editor as part of the supply chain

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Ars Technica reports that an official Claude extension for VS Code, published through the Cursor marketplace, was backdoored for nearly 12 hours at the end of October. The story is about developer tooling, not about any one vendor.

TL;DR The short version

- Ars Technica reports that an official Claude extension for VS Code on the Cursor marketplace was backdoored for nearly 12 hours in late October.
- Version 2.1.313 put up to 5,000 developers' machines at risk, and an editor extension runs with the developer's access to code, credentials and keys.
- Treat the editor as supply chain: allowlist approved extensions and pin versions or delay auto-updates.

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What was reported

- Ars says the malicious version, 2.1.313, put as many as 5,000 developers' machines at risk, according to multiple sources and Cursor's own statement.
- A fixed version, 2.1.314, was pushed several hours after the bad one, according to researcher Kevin Beaumont.
- It was distributed through the vendor's official, verified publisher account, and Ars says it was still unknown how attackers got access to that account.

Why this matters more than it looks

An editor extension runs on a developer's machine with that developer's access: source code, cloud credentials, SSH keys, tokens. Auto-update means a bad release reaches machines without anyone choosing it. A verified publisher badge tells you who published, not that the publisher's account was not taken over.

Controls worth having

- An allowlist of approved extensions for company machines, instead of an open marketplace.
- Pinned versions, or a short delay before auto-updates apply, so a bad release is caught before it spreads.
- Keep long-lived secrets off developer laptops where possible; use short-lived credentials.
- Know how to find who installed which version, and how to roll it back across the team.

Software supply chain risk is usually discussed for libraries. This incident is a reminder that your own tools are dependencies too.

> Facts in this post were read from the sources listed below on 10 November 2026; this is a developing story or product and details may have changed since.

Sources and further reading

1. Ars Technica. Anthropic VS code extension on Cursor backdoored for nearly 12 hours. 30 October 2026. arstechnica.com/security/2026/10/anthropic-vs-code-extension-on-cursor-backdoored-for-nearly-12-hours/

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