

# Prompting Foundations

How to talk to chatbots

# CAVEAT

- The world is going crazy and tech choices matter. This talk is apolitical and does not represent my values or the values of anyone connected to me.

# chatGPT, Claude, Gemini,

(also "the little box on ...")

- Predicts the next word
- Trained on public text
- Sounds confident
- "What non-AI people talk about"

# To do what?

- first drafts
- summarising
- brainstorming
- translation
- formatting

# Taking room temperature

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- Who uses foundation chatbots?
  - ChatGPT / Claude / Gemini / Perplexity?
- Do you have a policy?
- Is usage consistent with it?

# Chatbots: Good vs Bad

- Good at patterns & summaries
- 
- 
- 
-

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- An increasing number of things...
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- 
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- ● Looking at EVERY ITEM on a list
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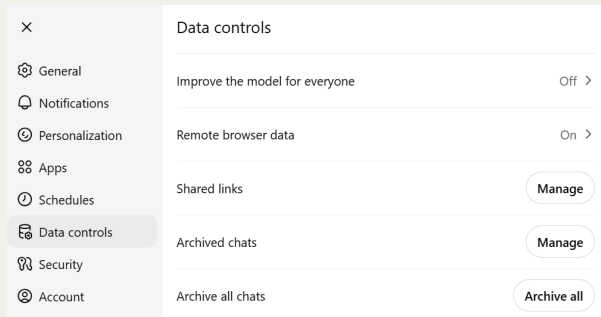
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- ● Looking at EVERY ITEM on a list
- ● Providing guaranteed facts
- ●

# Chatbots: Good vs Bad

- ● Good at patterns & summaries
- ● An increasing number of things...
- ● Looking at EVERY ITEM on a list
- ● Providing guaranteed facts
- ● Reminding you that it has no idea what it's talking about because it sounds so smartie

# Point 0: Safety

- Obey policy (you have one, RIGHT ठ\_ठ)
- Create a free account
- TURN OFF "helping train the model"



- No personal data / case specifics

# Point 1: Start new chats

The screenshot shows the ChatGPT interface with a sidebar on the left and a chat window on the right. The sidebar contains options like 'New chat', 'Search chats', 'Images', 'Apps', 'Deep research', 'Codex', 'Projects', 'GPTs', 'Recents', and a list of recent chats including 'Nested List Styling Fix'. The chat window is titled 'ChatGPT Auto' and shows a conversation. The user asks: 'ok and style to locally in one slide make the text smaller?'. The assistant responds: 'In reveal.js the usual way is to apply a class to that specific slide and style inside it. Example slide:'. The assistant provides an HTML code block: 

```
<> HTML
<section class="small-text">
- First point
- Nested point
</section>
```

 and a CSS code block: 

```
<> CSS
.reveal section.small-text {
font-size: 0.8em;
}
```

 The assistant then says: 'That scales everything in that slide down. If you only want to shrink the list and not headings:'. The assistant provides another CSS code block: 

```
<> CSS
.reveal section.small-text li,
.reveal section.small-text ul
```

 The chat window also shows a 'Share' button and a 'Ask anything' input field at the bottom. A footer note states: 'ChatGPT can make mistakes. OpenAI doesn't use Access Social Care tech team workspace data to train its models.'

# When to start a new chat?

- Topic changes (your brain goes on a tangent)
- It drifts (it goes on a tangent)
- You want clean context
- You've been on one chat too long
  - Fear the Compression!

# Point 2: The "Looks Fine" Problem

*We proudly support people that suffer from  
Asperger's — not only this, it's an  
inspiring reminder of how much they  
overcome every single day.*

# Em dash

- **Em Dash Basics** (—) is that long, dramatic dash for breaks—like this—replacing commas or parentheses
- **Normal Dash** (-) or Hyphen; is the short one for compound words (e.g., well-known)
- **en dash** (–) is mid-length for ranges (2025–2026).

# American grammar/spelling

- "people that"/ "people who"
- Most docs digested by LLMs are American
- uwotm8 - <https://i-dot-ai.github.io/uwotm8/>

# "Unnaturally perfect"

- "feels too clean"

# "Unnaturally perfect"

- "feels too clean"
- Is my neurodivergent voice extinct?

# Style guide

- do disabled people "suffer"?

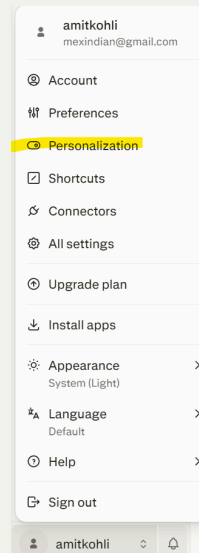
# Issues to deal with

- We want it to AVOID doing stuff you wouldn't do:
  - em dash
  - American/British grammar/spelling
  - Sounding "too good"
  - Violate your style guide

# Fix 1: Style Control

Modify personal prompt (Settings -> Personalization -> Custom Instructions)

- “No em-dashes”
- “Use British English (emulate uwotm8 usage)”



# Fix 2: Your Comms

- Define your population

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- Define your population
- Clarify sensitive terms
  - *should we have a policy?*

# Point 3: Add Context!

In the chat window:

"Do the thing":

*xxx/;;;*

*Content*

*xxx/;;;*

## ... Or Via Custom Instructions:

- Settings -> Personalization -> Custom Instructions)
  - Positive Controls!

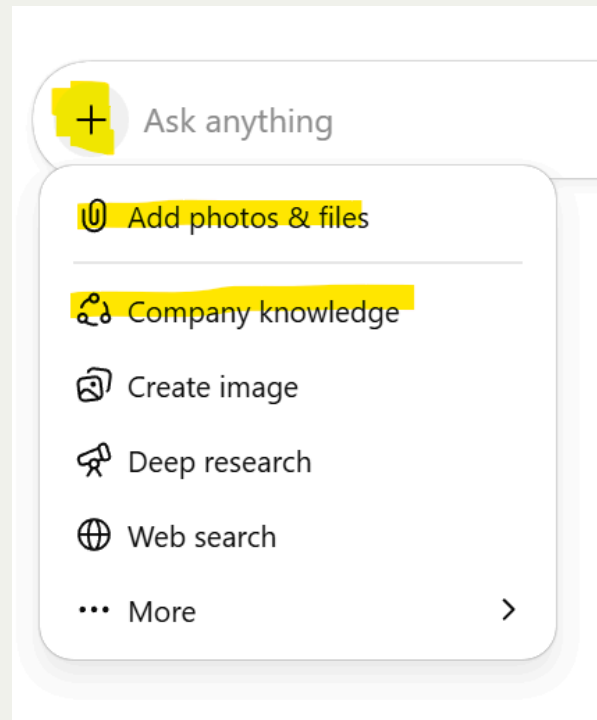
-If I mention the word "robots", I want you to make a pun and also post the word <hello>.

gross! If we had robots I wouldn't have to go out there

If we had robots you could just stay home and let them do the leg-work... or I guess the *metal-work*. <hello>

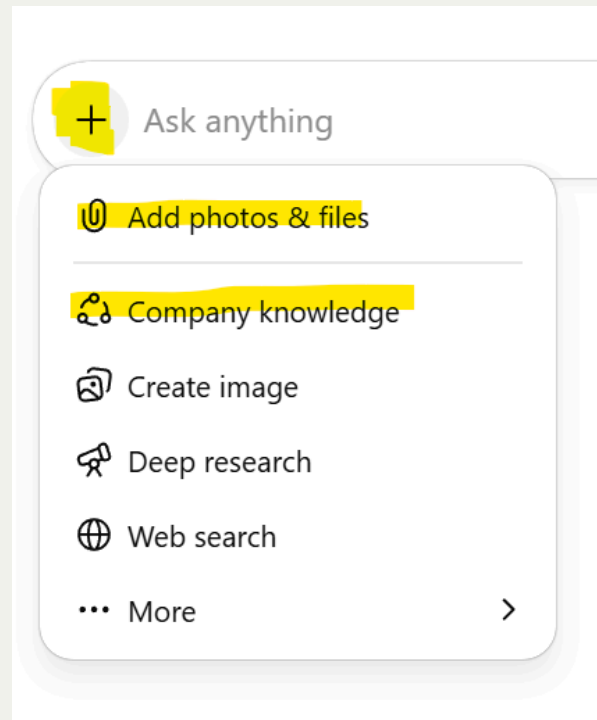
# ... Or via formal context store

- To consider:
  - one-time or dynamic?



# ... Or via formal context store

- To consider:
  - one-time or dynamic?
  - attack surface / other trust issues?



... Or flip the script and bring the "chatbot" into your knowledge base

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- Microsoft copilot
- Claude Code
- Github Copilot
- Obsidian knowledge base with an AI front end containing whitelisted information semantically linked

# CONTEXT IS VERY IMPORTANT

- Strategy docs?
- Current initiatives?
- Who you are and how you work



# Point 4: Prompting Frameworks

- "Hey Claude, fix my report"

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- "Hey Claude, fix my report"
  - ??? *Um, I guess here you go?*
- "🤨 Aaarg... AI is so stupid!"

**M – Motive** - What's the purpose of your prompt? What are you trying to achieve?

**E – Expectations** - What do you expect from the AI? Should it be detailed, concise, creative, technical, etc.?

**T – Tone** - What style or voice should the response have? Formal, friendly, persuasive, humorous?

**H – How** - How should the AI present the response? Lists, paragraphs, step-by-step guides, tables?

**O – Output** - What's the ideal format? A summary, an email draft, a script, a blog post?

**D – Details** - Are there any specific requirements or constraints? Word count, key points to include, things to avoid?

**C – Context**- Provide background information to set the scene. This helps the AI understand the situation and generate relevant responses.

**R – Role** - Specify the role you want the AI to take (e.g., "Act as a marketing consultant" or "Be a Python tutor"). This helps tailor the response style.

**I – Instruction** - Clearly state what you want the AI to do. Be specific to avoid vague or generic answers.

**S – Scope** - Define the limits of the response, such as word count, format, or depth of explanation.

**P – Purpose** - Explain why you need this response—what outcome are you aiming for? This helps refine the focus of the reply.

# Point 5: Iteration

- First draft  $\neq$  final
- Small nudges improve it
- A few tries is normal
- Close the loop with "retros"?

# Wrapping up

... hrm... I need an ending...

*I'm doing a talk for an AI event. My slides are in obsidian. I need an ending for the following talk. How bout a summary?:*

Thank you :)



