

M A V E R I C K A I

CHATGPT PRIVACY LOCKDOWN

STOP IT TRAINING ON YOUR DATA IN 30 SECONDS

Every setting that controls what ChatGPT keeps about you, what OpenAI can do with it, and how to shut the door. Verified click by click on a real account in September 2026.

The one switch that stops your chats becoming training data
How to read, edit and wipe everything ChatGPT remembers about you
Temporary chat, the incognito mode nobody uses
Every other Data controls setting, explained in plain English
What plugins and connectors can actually see
What you should never paste into ChatGPT (and how to paste it safely)
Five copy-paste prompts to audit and clean your own account

2026 Edition

What ChatGPT Actually Keeps

Unless you have changed a setting you have probably never looked at, everything you type into ChatGPT can be used to train the model. That is the default on a personal account. Your work drafts, your health questions, the message you rewrote four times at 2am, the client email you pasted in to fix the tone. All of it is eligible.

1

switch turns training off

30 sec

to do the whole lockdown

3

settings that matter most

This guide is not an argument for using ChatGPT less. I use it every single day and I am not stopping. It is an argument for knowing exactly what you are handing over, and taking back the parts you never meant to give. There are three settings that do almost all of the work, and a handful more worth ten seconds each. I went through every one of them on my own account the week I wrote this, so the buttons are where I say they are.

The four things it holds onto

What	Where it lives	Who can see it	What you can do
Your chats	Chat history in the sidebar	You, and OpenAI for training if the switch is on	Turn training off. Delete or archive chats
Memory	Personalization, then Memory	ChatGPT uses it in every new chat	Read it, edit it, or turn it off
Shared links	Data controls, then Shared links	Anyone with the link	Delete old ones
Plugin access	Data controls, then Information shared with apps	Each plugin you connected	Remove what you don't use

WHY THE DEFAULT IS ON

Training on real conversations is how the model gets better at the things people actually ask. OpenAI says it takes steps to protect privacy before anything is used. The point is not that this is sinister. The point is that it is a choice, and right now it is being made for you.

The 30-Second Lockdown

Three settings. Do them in this order. Everything else in this guide is a bonus on top of these.

STEP 1: Turn off training

Open ChatGPT on the web or in the desktop app. Click your name in the bottom left corner, then choose **Settings**, then **Data controls** in the left-hand list. The very first line says **Improve the model for everyone**. Click it.

A small panel opens called Model improvement. The first switch is the one you want. Turn it off. Underneath it are two more switches, one for your audio recordings and one for your video recordings from Voice Mode. Turn those off as well. Click Done.

TIP

On the phone app the path is the same idea: tap your name or the two lines in the corner, then Settings, then Data controls, then Improve the model for everyone. The switch looks identical.

That is the big one. From this moment on your conversations stop being training data. It does not change what ChatGPT can do for you, it only changes what OpenAI can do with it. You will not notice any difference in the answers.

HEADS UP

This does not reach back in time. Anything already used before you flipped the switch stays used. And a chat you delete can take up to thirty days to fully disappear from OpenAI's systems. Everything from today forward is yours, and that is the part you control.

STEP 2: Read and clean out what it remembers

Click your name again and choose **Personalization**. Scroll down until you reach the section called **Memory**. Next to **Memory summary** there is a Manage button. Click it.

What opens is a written overview of you. Not a list of bullet points, an actual page of prose: who you are, what you do, how you like things written, what you have been dealing with lately. Read the whole thing once. Most people find at least one line they did not remember telling it.

At the bottom of that page is a box that says **Ask or update**. That is how you edit it. You type an instruction and it changes the summary. Some things worth typing:

EDIT YOUR MEMORY (type these into the Ask or update box)

Forget everything you know about my health.

Forget that I mentioned [client name] and anything about their business.

Remove my home address and my kids' names from what you remember.

Keep only what's about how I like my writing and my work. Drop everything personal.

If you want the nuclear option, click the three dots next to the Memory summary title and choose **Delete and turn off memory**. ChatGPT will treat every chat as if it has never met you. The trade-off is real though: memory is what makes it good at your writing style and your recurring tasks. My advice is to prune it, not kill it.

STEP 3: Use Temporary chat when it matters

In the top right corner of any chat there is a small dotted speech bubble icon. Hover over it and it says **Temporary chat**. Click it and the chat opens in a mode where nothing is saved to your history and nothing is added to your memory. When you close it, it is gone.

Think of it as incognito mode for ChatGPT. Use it for anything you would rather not have sitting on a record: a medical question, a legal problem, a money situation, a conversation about someone else, the argument you are trying to win with your partner. It is the same ChatGPT with the same abilities. It just forgets you afterwards.

DO THIS RIGHT NOW

Open ChatGPT, do Step 1, and come back. It takes thirty seconds and you will never think about it again. Then read your memory summary tonight when you have five minutes. That one is worth doing slowly.

Every Other Data Controls Setting

Once training is off, the rest of the Data controls page is worth a look. None of these take more than ten seconds and most people have never scrolled down far enough to see them.

Setting	What it does	My call
Location	Lets ChatGPT use where you are for local answers	Leave off unless you use it for restaurants and weather
Information shared with apps	Lists every plugin that can read your data	Open it. Remove anything you don't recognize or don't use
Shared links	Every chat you've ever turned into a public link, still live	Delete the old ones. People forget these exist
Archived chats	Chats you hid from the sidebar. Still stored	Fine to keep, but know they're there
Archive all / Delete all	One button for the whole history	Export first (below), then decide
Export data	Emails you a full copy of everything	Do this once a year. It's your record
Marketing privacy	Two switches for ad measurement and personalized marketing	Both off

Shared links, the one people forget

Every time you have hit Share on a chat and sent someone a link, that link is still live unless you deleted it. Go to Data controls, find Shared links, click Manage, and look at the list. If there is a chat in there from a year ago that had your address or a client's details in it, anyone who still has the link can still read it. Delete the ones you don't need.

Export before you delete

If you are tempted by Delete all, hit Export first. OpenAI emails you a file with every conversation you have ever had. Keep it somewhere safe. Then delete with a clear conscience, because the good prompts you wrote eight months ago are not gone, they are just not on OpenAI's servers anymore.

What Plugins and Connectors Can See

The moment you connect ChatGPT to Gmail, Google Drive, your calendar, Slack or any other app, you have given it a second door into your life. This is where most of the genuinely useful things ChatGPT does come from, so the answer is not to avoid connectors. The answer is to know what each one can reach.

Go to Settings, then Data controls, then **Information shared with apps**. This is the list of everything you have ever connected, with what each one has permission to do. Read it the way you would read the permissions screen on a new phone app.

The least-access rule

Connect the smallest thing that does the job. If you want ChatGPT to summarize one folder of documents, connect that folder, not your whole Drive. If you want it to draft replies, give it read access to your inbox and send the emails yourself. Every connector you add is one more place your data flows, and one more thing to remember when you eventually want to clean up.

AUDIT YOUR CONNECTORS

```
List every app, plugin and connector you
currently have access to on my account,
what each one can read or do, and when I
last used it. Flag anything I haven't
touched in 60 days.
```

TIP

ChatGPT can only report on what it can see from inside a chat, so treat the answer as a starting point and check it against the Information shared with apps list yourself. The setting is the truth. The prompt is the reminder.

Business accounts are different

If you use ChatGPT through a Business or Enterprise workspace at work, OpenAI does not train on that data by default, and your admin controls most of these settings for you. The personal account you use at home is a different story. That is the one this guide is about, and it is usually the one with the more personal stuff in it.

What You Should Never Paste In

Turning training off fixes the biggest problem, but it does not make ChatGPT a vault. Your chats are still stored on OpenAI's servers, still visible to you on every device, and still subject to the usual things that happen to accounts, like someone guessing your password. So there is a short list of things I do not put into a regular ChatGPT chat, ever, regardless of settings.

Never paste this	Why	Do this instead
Passwords, API keys, bank logins	Stored in plain text in your history	There is no reason to. Ever
Card numbers, ID numbers, passport details	Same. And they live in your export forever	Describe the situation without the number
Other people's private details	It's their data, not yours to hand over	Swap names for Client A, my sister, my landlord
Contracts with names and amounts	Business confidentiality, and often your own NDA	Redact first (prompt below), then paste
Medical records with your name on them	The most sensitive category there is	Temporary chat, and strip the name and date of birth
Anything you'd be uncomfortable seeing in a leak	Because that is the honest test	Temporary chat, or don't

The redaction trick

Most of the time the useful part of a document is the structure, not the names. A contract review works just as well with the parties called Company A and Company B. Here is how I strip a document before it goes anywhere near a chat that gets saved:

REDACT BEFORE YOU PASTE (run this in a Temporary chat)

Rewrite the text below with every name,
email address, phone number, street address,
account number and dollar amount replaced by
a placeholder in square brackets, like
[CLIENT NAME] or [AMOUNT]. Keep everything
else word for word. Then give me a key of
what each placeholder replaced so I can put
them back myself.

[PASTE THE DOCUMENT]

Run that in a Temporary chat, copy the clean version out, and use that in your normal chat. The placeholder key stays with you. ChatGPT gets the shape of the problem without any of the details that could identify anyone. And because the redaction ran in a Temporary chat, the original with the real names never lands in your history. Run it in a normal chat and you have defeated the point.

Five Prompts to Audit Your Own Account

Settings tell you what is allowed. These prompts tell you what is actually in there. Run them in a normal chat, because you want ChatGPT to use its memory to answer.

1. THE FULL PICTURE

Tell me everything you currently remember about me. Group it by category: work, family, health, money, location, habits, and anything else. Be complete, don't summarize.

2. THE REGRET CHECK

Looking at everything you know about me, what are the five things I'd least want a stranger to read? List them, and tell me which of them I should ask you to forget.

3. THE OTHER PEOPLE CHECK

List every other person you know something about from my conversations: family, friends, clients, coworkers. For each one, say what you know. I want to decide what to remove.

4. THE CLEAN SWEEP

Forget everything you know about [PERSON or TOPIC]. Confirm what you removed.

5. THE WORK-ONLY RESET

Keep only what you know about my job, my writing style and how I like to work. Forget everything personal: family, health, money, where I live, and my daily routine. Then show me what's left.

Common Mistakes

These are the ones I see over and over, including a couple I made myself.

1. Turning off memory instead of training

They are different switches in different places. Memory is what makes ChatGPT useful to you. Training is what makes your chats useful to OpenAI. Turn off training, keep memory, prune it.

2. Assuming Delete means gone

Deleted chats can take up to thirty days to fully clear. If something truly should not have gone in, deleting it now is still the right move, just don't assume it vanished the second you clicked.

3. Forgetting the phone

The settings are account-wide, so flipping the switch on your laptop covers your phone too. But the phone is where people paste the most personal stuff without thinking. Temporary chat exists there as well. Use it.

4. Leaving shared links live forever

A shared chat is a public web page. If you sent a colleague a link in March that had a client's name in it, that page is still up. Check the list twice a year.

5. Connecting everything at once

It is tempting to connect Gmail, Drive, Calendar and Slack on day one because the demos look amazing. Connect one, use it for a week, then decide. Every connector is a door.

6. Treating the audit prompts as the truth

The prompts in this guide are a fast way to see what is in your memory. The settings pages are what actually control it. Always check the setting.

The Quick Reference

Bookmark this page. Everything above, in the order you should do it.

#	Do this	Where	How often
1	Turn off Improve the model for everyone (plus the two voice switches)	Name, Settings, Data controls	Once
2	Read your Memory summary and prune it	Name, Personalization, Memory, Manage	Every couple of months
3	Use Temporary chat for anything sensitive	Dotted bubble, top right of any chat	Every time it matters
4	Turn off both Marketing privacy switches	Data controls, Marketing privacy	Once
5	Review Information shared with apps	Data controls	Whenever you add a connector
6	Delete old Shared links	Data controls, Shared links, Manage	Twice a year
7	Export your data	Data controls, Export	Once a year
8	Redact documents before pasting	Temporary chat, redaction prompt	Every time

THE WHOLE THING IN ONE LINE

Training off. Memory pruned. Temporary chat for the sensitive stuff. Nothing pasted that you wouldn't want to see in a leak. That is the entire lockdown, and steps one to three take under a minute.

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Use it every day. Just decide what it gets to keep.