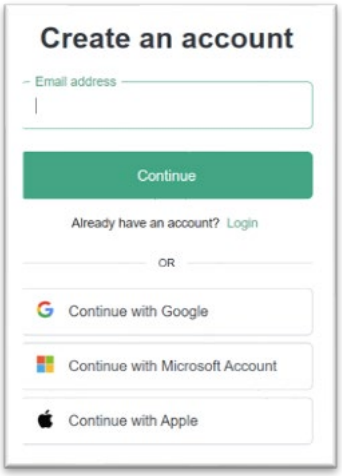
How to set up a ChatGPT account (free version)

CQSD, University of Reading – December 2024

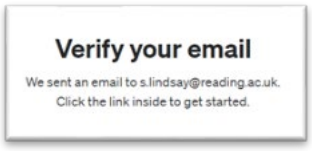
1. Go to https://chat.openai.com/

2. Click on

3. In the window that appears, you'll be able to create an account by simply providing your email address. Alternatively, you can create an account by continuing through with an existing Google, Microsoft or Apple account that you may have:

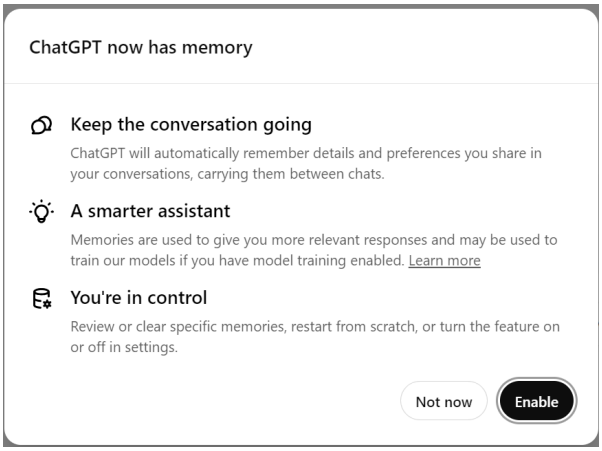


You will then be asked to provide a password and then continue. You may be asked to verify your email, e.g.



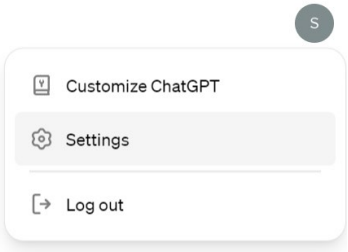
An additional 'Tell us about you' screen may appear – please provide your name and your date of birth and then click on **Agree** if you agree to OpenAI's Terms and Privacy Policy.

4. You should then be taken straight into the ChatGPT interface. Note the following dialogue box:

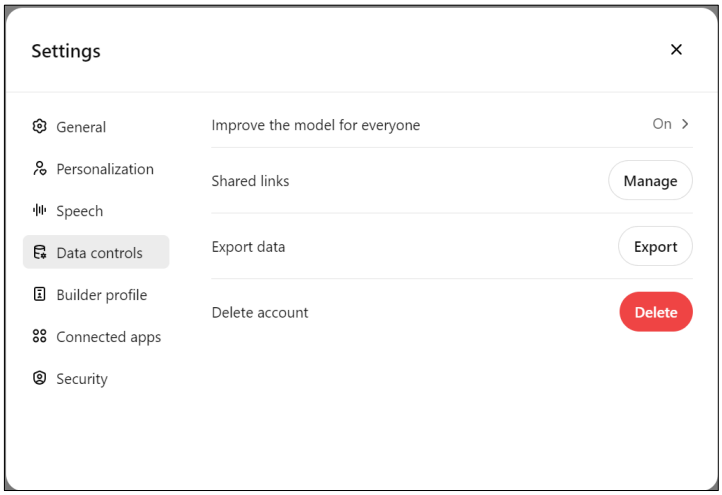


To begin with, please select Not now to the option of allowing ChatGPT to remember previous chats and develop a 'memory' of you and your personal preferences. Memories can be switched on or off at any time by accessing the Settings dialogue box (please see below), however the University's approach is to maintain caution with such rapidly evolving technology. Open AI provides more information and context about ChatGPT's memory and we would direct users to the section under the heading Does memory remember sensitive information?

5. If you are using your University of Reading email address for your ChatGPT account, **the following is a mandatory step** to help you stay in control in relation to how the data you type into ChatGPT is used for the training of OpenAI's Large Language Models (LLMs):
    a. In the top-right corner, select your account name or initial and from the drop-down menu that appears, select '**Settings**'

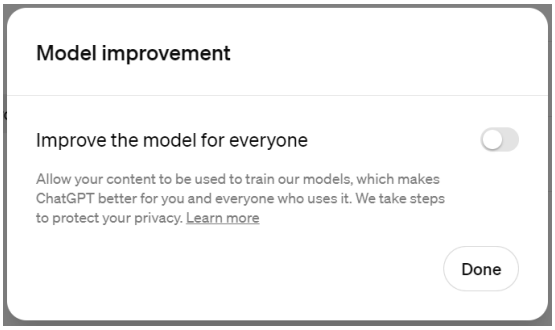


    b. In the **Settings** window, select **Data controls** and toggle the option that relates to **Improve the model for everyone** – note the default option is switched On. Click on On >



Then *uncheck* the **Improve the model for everyone** option so it goes from being on to being off

Then select **Done**



Ensure that the **Improve the model for everyone** option is **Off** and then close the Settings window

6. Please be mindful of anything you type into ChatGPT, essentially:

    a. Do not input sensitive personal data, such as names, addresses, phone numbers, student numbers, usernames, email addresses or any other identifiable information. Anonymise where necessary, using pseudonyms or general terms instead of real names and specific details.
    b. Do not input student assignments, confidential business, commercial, research, R&D information or proprietary data.
    c. Ensure that you are using a secure connection (HTTPS) when accessing ChatGPT to prevent data interception.

Useful resources related to maintaining privacy and compliance with data protection regulations:

University of Reading guidelines (produced by IMPS, May 2024): Data Protection and AI (reading.ac.uk)

OpenAI Usage Policies: These policies provide guidelines on what is permissible when using OpenAI's models, including data protection practices: Usage policies | OpenAI

OpenAI Privacy Policy: Details on how OpenAI handles user data and what measures are in place to protect it: openai.com/en-GB/policies/privacy-policy/

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR): General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) Compliance Guidelines

UK ICO Data Protection Principles: A guide to the data protection principles | ICO