

PRACTICAL COURSE • SESSIONS 1 AND 2

# AI for humanitarian practitioners

From a chat window to an assistant that knows your work

Project management • Reports • Evaluations • Training

## THE COURSE

# What we will do together

Today • 2 h

## Understand

How it works, who is behind it, the tools and their prices, limits and rules, your project and plan

Session 2 • 2 h

## Set up

Your account, privacy, projects and folders, about-me file, first task on your files

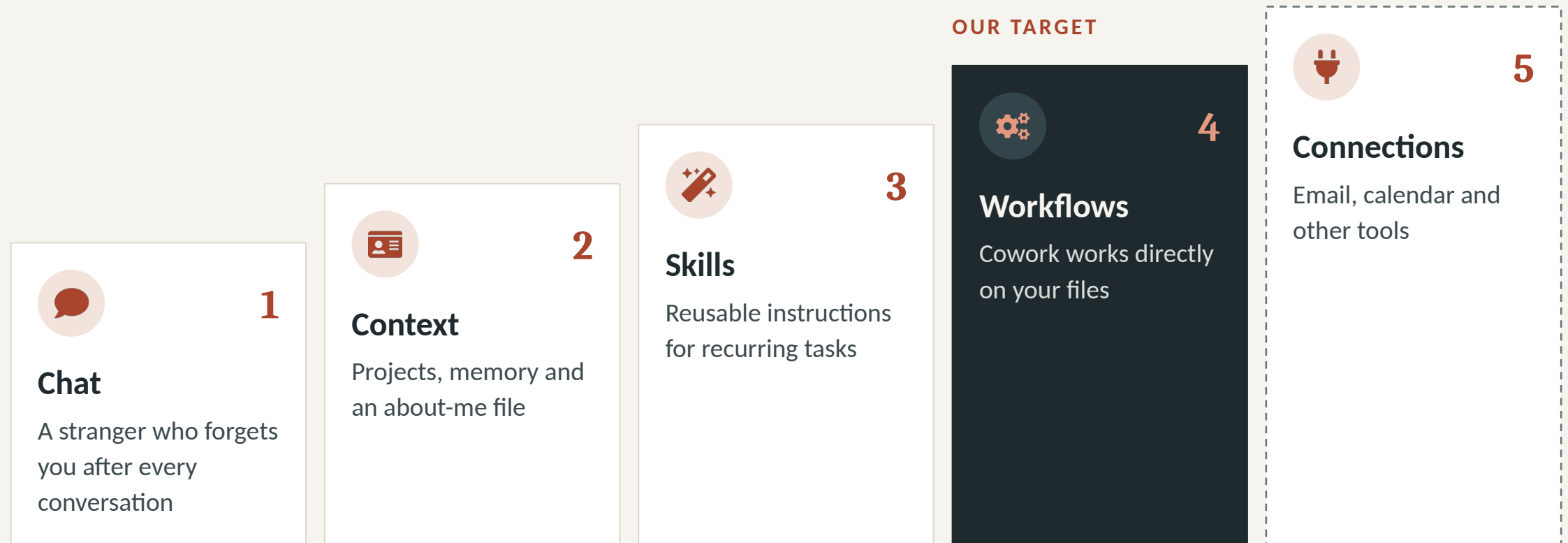
Sessions 3-5 • about 5 h

## Deepen and apply

Skills, Word and Excel, research, your real project, your playbook

WHERE WE ARE GOING

# Five layers of use



## HOW IT WORKS

# What is behind the chat window

|                                |                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Trained on text</b>         | Huge amounts of text read once, months before you use it: patterns, not a database |
| <b>Predicts the next words</b> | It writes the most likely continuation, one small piece (token) at a time          |
| <b>A cut-off date</b>          | It knows nothing recent unless it searches the web or reads your files             |
| <b>A working memory</b>        | The context window: what it can see at once in one conversation                    |

So it can be fluent and wrong at the same time.

## A SHORT HISTORY

# From a research paper to your desk in nine years

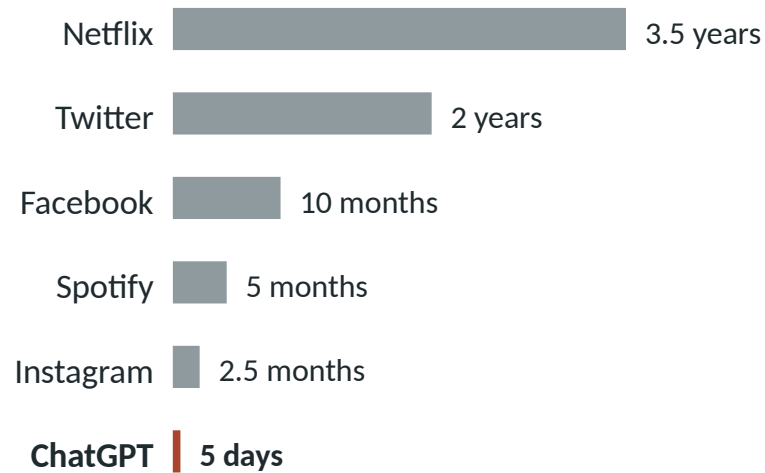
|                 |                                                                                 |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2017</b>     | Google researchers publish the "transformer", the design behind all these tools |
| <b>2020</b>     | OpenAI's GPT-3 shows a model can write fluent text on almost anything           |
| <b>Nov 2022</b> | ChatGPT launches; the public discovers it                                       |
| <b>Mar 2023</b> | GPT-4 and Claude launch the same day; Google's Gemini follows in December       |
| <b>Feb 2024</b> | Mistral launches Le Chat, a European alternative                                |
| <b>Jan 2025</b> | DeepSeek R1, a cheap open model from China, shakes the market                   |
| <b>2026</b>     | Agents that work on your files: Claude Cowork (January), ChatGPT Work (July)    |
| <b>2026</b>     | Record funding, IPO filings, renamed products                                   |

## A SHORT HISTORY

# Adoption has never been this fast

### Time to 1 million users

Online services, from launch



### Years until half of US households had it

Earlier technologies were counted in households, not users



## WHO IS BEHIND THE TOOLS

# A few companies, a lot of money



### OpenAI • ChatGPT

**Sam Altman, CEO**

Since 2015. A nonprofit foundation appoints the board (26% of shares); Microsoft holds about 27%

**\$852bn (Mar 2026)**



### Anthropic • Claude

**Dario Amodei, CEO**

Since 2021. Public benefit company; Amazon and Google invest

**\$965bn (May 2026)**



### Google • Gemini

**Sundar Pichai, CEO**

Since 1998, listed on Nasdaq. Gemini is built by Google DeepMind, led by Demis Hassabis

**Listed company**



### Microsoft • Copilot

**Satya Nadella, CEO**

Since 1975, listed on Nasdaq. Holds about 27% of OpenAI

**Listed company**



### Mistral AI • Vibe

**Arthur Mensch, CEO**

Since 2023, Paris. ASML, Samsung, Bpifrance and Nvidia among investors

**Over €21bn (Sep 2026)**



### Perplexity

**Aravind Srinivas, CEO**

Since 2022. Nvidia and Jeff Bezos among investors

**About \$20bn (2025, press)**

WHAT CHANGED IN TWO YEARS

# Three shifts matter more than any model name

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1

From a chat window to an assistant that works on your files

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2

From no memory to tools that know your context

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3

From plausible answers to sourced answers

## SHIFT 1

# From a chat window to your files

### BEFORE

Copy a paragraph into a chat, get a paragraph back, paste it into Word

### NOW

Point it to a folder of project documents and get a summary, a table or a first draft, as files

## SHIFT 2

# From no memory to your context

### BEFORE

Re-explain who you are, the client and the format in every conversation

### NOW

A project holds the terms of reference and template; an about-me file sets your style

### SHIFT 3

# From plausible to sourced

## BEFORE

Fluent answers from memory, with no way to check where they came from

## NOW

Web search with links, and answers grounded in your own documents, with citations

## HOW FAST IT MOVES

# Capability doubles in months, reliability lags

**~7 months**

2019–2023: the length of tasks an AI agent can complete doubled about every seven months

**~4 months**

Since 2023, the doubling has sped up to about every 4.3 months (METR update, January 2026)

**12 h vs 1 h**

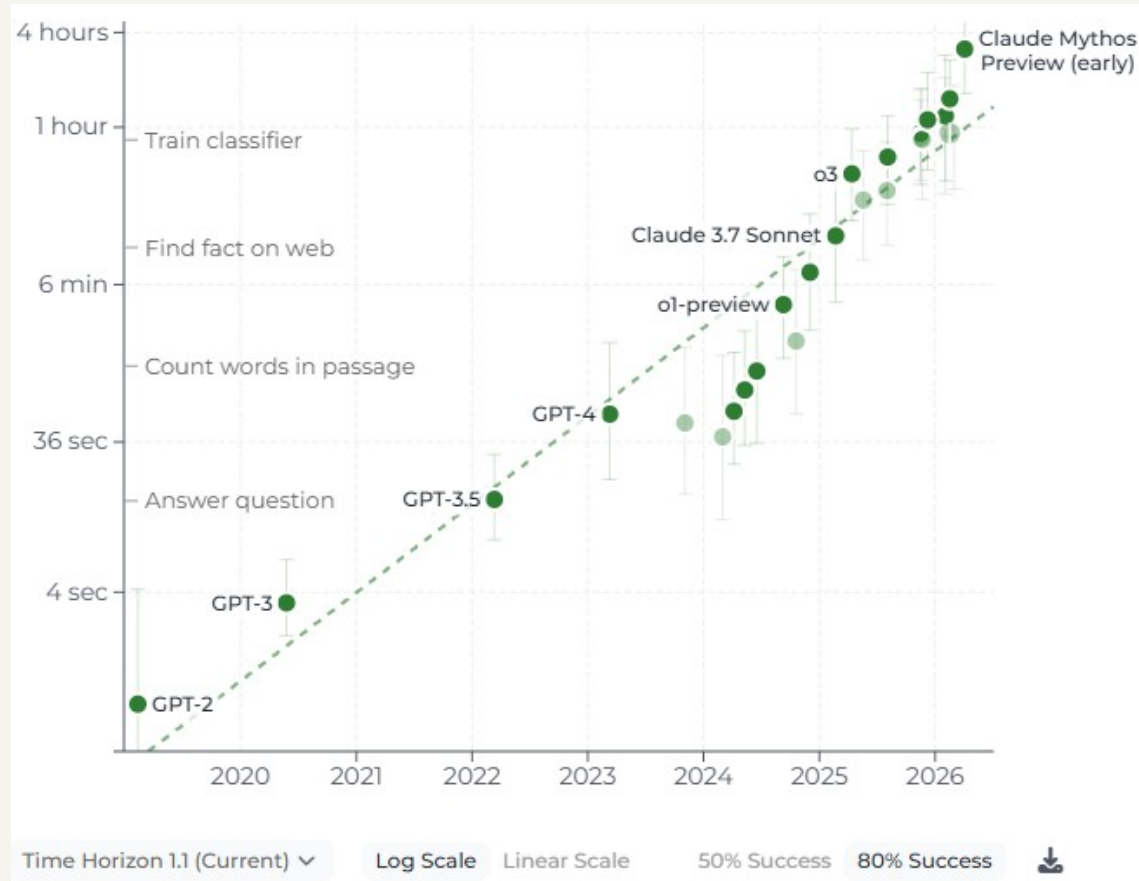
February 2026: a leading model succeeds half the time on 12-hour tasks, but is 80% reliable only up to about 1 hour



See it live: [metr.org](https://metr.org) (task length) · [artificialanalysis.ai](https://artificialanalysis.ai) (models compared by lab)

## HOW FAST IT MOVES

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## 12 h vs 1 h

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WHEN IT REACHES A PROFESSION

# Mathematics, October 2026

6 October 2026

## 372 problems

OpenAI says its unreleased model solved them, in 722 papers. It had tried about 4,000

The next day

## 3 papers withdrawn

A sign error broke one proof and two papers built on it. Experts are still checking the rest

The reaction

## Shock and questions

Thesis problems solved overnight, journals swamped, young researchers worried. What is a mathematician for?

*“Nobody will be impressed by the result of whoever simply pressed a button first.”*

Ravi Vakil, president of the American Mathematical Society

## WHAT IT DOES TO WORK

# First effects on jobs and on consulting

Jobs • US payroll data

**–19%**

Fewer jobs for 22 to 25 year-olds in the most AI-exposed occupations than for their peers. No economy-wide displacement so far

Work • 758 consultants

**25% faster**

12% more tasks, better quality. On a task beyond the tool's reach, more wrong answers

Consulting • Australia

**A\$440,000**

A government report Deloitte partly refunded: invented references, a made-up court quote

Our sector • 2,539 people

**70% vs 8%**

Humanitarians using AI daily or weekly, against those whose organisation has adopted it widely

## PERSPECTIVES

# Our work in one year, in five years

Hypotheses to debate, not forecasts. In every scenario: field access, judgement, trust, checking.

In one year • likely

### Desk work in minutes

Agents on your files for hours. AI rules in ToRs. Fewer days paid for desk work

2031 • scenario 1

### A better tool

Progress slows. The job stays, faster; checking becomes the core skill

2031 • scenario 2

### A new division of labour

AI does most desk work. Consultants frame, go to the field, judge and sign

2031 • scenario 3

### Agents run assignments

AI-led studies with a human sign-off. Fewer, more senior consultants

## THE TOOLS

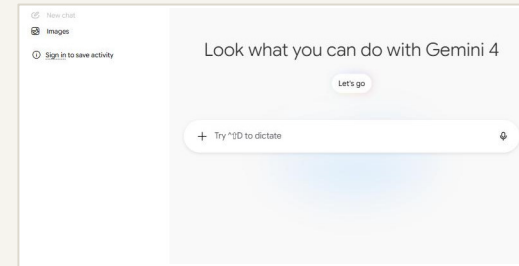
# Seven tools you will meet



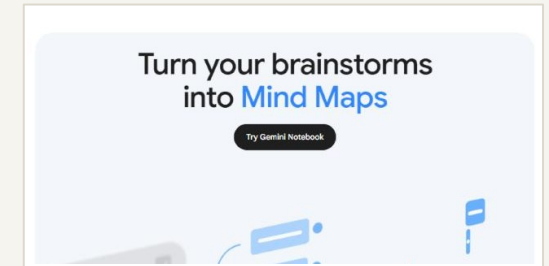
**Claude**  
[claude.ai](https://claude.ai)



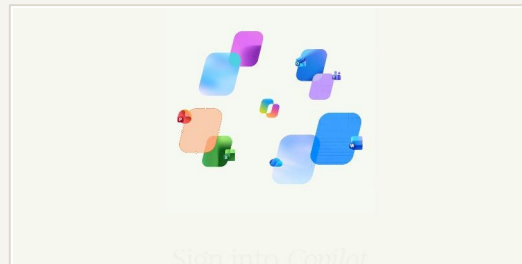
**ChatGPT**  
[chatgpt.com](https://chatgpt.com)



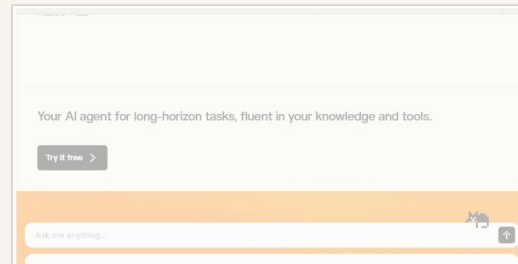
**Gemini**  
[gemini.google.com](https://gemini.google.com)



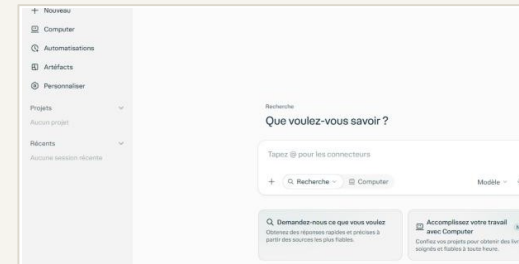
**Gemini Notebook (ex NotebookLM)**  
[notebook.google](https://notebook.google)



**Microsoft Copilot**  
[copilot.com](https://copilot.com)



**Mistral Vibe (ex Le Chat)**  
[chat.mistral.ai](https://chat.mistral.ai)



**Perplexity**  
[perplexity.ai](https://perplexity.ai)

THE TOOLS

# What the subscriptions cost

| Tool              | Free | Main paid plan                  | Top plan                      |
|-------------------|------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Claude            | Yes  | Pro \$20 (\$17 billed yearly)   | Max \$100 or \$200            |
| ChatGPT           | Yes  | Go \$8 · Plus \$20              | Pro from \$100                |
| Gemini            | Yes  | AI Plus \$4.99 · AI Pro \$19.99 | AI Ultra from \$99.99         |
| Microsoft Copilot | Yes  | Microsoft 365 Personal \$9.99   | Microsoft 365 Premium \$19.99 |
| Mistral Vibe      | Yes  | Pro \$14.99                     | Team \$24.99 per user         |
| Perplexity        | Yes  | Pro \$17 billed yearly          | Max \$200                     |

## THE TOOLS

# Agents that work on your files

Same idea everywhere: you give a folder and a goal; it plans, acts, and asks before risky steps.

### Anthropic

## Claude (Cowork)

Since January 2026, part of every Claude conversation since September. Folders you choose, scheduled tasks. Pro and above

### OpenAI

## ChatGPT Work

Since July 2026, in the ChatGPT desktop app with Codex. Local files with permission. All plans, limited on Free

### Others

## Catching up

Perplexity Computer, Mistral Vibe agents, Gemini Agent Mode (Ultra), Copilot in Microsoft 365 Premium

## OUR COMPASS

# Four skills for working with AI



### Delegation

What to hand over, and what to keep



### Description

Saying clearly what you want



### Discernment

Judging what comes back



### Diligence

Using it responsibly, and saying so

DELEGATION

# Which tool for which job

| Task                                  | Tool                                |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Desk review on a set of documents     | Gemini Notebook or a Claude project |
| Interview notes, qualitative coding   | Claude project or Cowork            |
| Proposals, terms of reference, slides | Claude project with past examples   |
| Drafting and reviewing reports        | Claude                              |
| Recent information, monitoring        | Claude web search or Perplexity     |
| Inside the client's Microsoft setup   | Copilot                             |
| Batch work on files and folders       | Cowork                              |

THE ONE RULE

# Fluency is not accuracy.

Check every figure and quote, and three statements at random in anything you use.

## LIMITS

# Four limits to keep in mind



### Inventions

Quotes, figures and references that do not exist



### Bias

Western, English-language sources over local knowledge



### Context

Confident about places and politics it barely knows



### Confidentiality

What you upload may be stored, depending on settings

## DILIGENCE

# What never goes into a consumer AI tool

- Beneficiary or patient data
- Protection information
- Interview notes before anonymisation
- Client documents marked confidential, without permission

### Instead

Anonymise first, use codes for people and places, and keep the key outside the tool

# The footprint question

## A text prompt $\approx$ a web search

Google search 0.3 Wh (2009). Gemini prompt 0.24 Wh (2025). ChatGPT query about 0.34 Wh (2025, no method published)

## Images and video cost far more

An image about 60 times a text answer (2024 study). A 5-second video over 700 times an image (2025)

## The total is growing fast

Data centres: 415 TWh in 2024, about 1.5% of world electricity; more than double by 2030 (IEA)

## What you control

Use AI where it adds value, the smaller model for simple tasks, short conversations, few images

DILIGENCE

# Turn AI off where you don't want it

| Where                   | What you can do                         | How                                                          |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Google Search           | Hide AI Overviews (not switch them off) | After a search, choose the Web tab                           |
| Gmail (personal)        | Turn off smart features and Gemini      | Settings › See all settings › General                        |
| Word, Excel, PowerPoint | Untick Enable Copilot, app by app       | File › Options › Copilot                                     |
| Android phone           | No AI assistant by default              | Settings › Apps › Default apps › Digital assistant           |
| iPhone                  | Turn off Apple Intelligence             | Settings › Apple Intelligence & Siri                         |
| WhatsApp, Instagram     | Mute Meta AI (it can't be removed)      | Meta AI chat › Notifications › Mute                          |
| LinkedIn                | Stop training on your data              | Settings › Data privacy › Data for Generative AI Improvement |

TO KEEP IN MIND

# You sign the report, not the tool.

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## Know the rules

More and more agencies have an AI policy for deliverables

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## Say how you used it

Drafting, synthesis, translation, and that you checked everything

## YOUR DECISIONS

# Your project, your tool, your plan

|                     |                                                                            |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Your project</b> | The assignment from your questionnaire: confirm it, or pick another        |
| <b>Your tool</b>    | Claude for this course. Keep ChatGPT or Copilot if you or a client need it |
| <b>Your plan</b>    | Free account for now. Before session 2: Pro, or your organisation's plan   |

## BEFORE SESSION 2

# Four things to bring



One small real task tried with Claude



The about-me interview with Claude,  
about 20 minutes



The Claude app installed, on the plan  
you chose



Your Claude folder, with two or three  
anonymised documents