

ResearchChatAI Introduction

Introduction

ResearchChatAI is an online tool developed by Maastricht University to support academic research of human-to-AI conversations. The platform allows researchers to create custom chatbot environments, interact with AI models, and collect data for scientific studies.

ResearchChatAI is a secure, research-focused, non-commercial platform developed by Maastricht University that enables researchers to create and deploy conversational AI experiments without requiring researchers to write code. It offers a streamlined way to explore how humans interact with large language models (LLMs) in a controlled, customizable environment. It offers, among others, the following features:

- Create custom chat environments using large language models (LLMs) such as those provided by OpenAI or OpenRouter. Define AI prompts, chatbot instructions, and interface elements without coding.
- Share chat links with participants and collect interaction data, including message content and timestamps.
- Export interaction logs in CSV format for further analysis.
- Manage researcher accounts and project configurations securely within a web-based interface.

Contact details

For any questions or further information, please get in touch with Marc Becker (m.becker@maastrichtuniversity.nl) or Jonas Heller (j.heller@maastrichtuniversity.nl).

Privacy statement – ResearchChatAI

Your privacy is important to Maastricht University (UM), and we therefore treat your data with care. In this privacy statement, information is provided on how your personal data will be handled when making use of ResearchChatAI provided by Maastricht University. Maastricht University also has a general privacy statement, which can be found at <https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/>. The general UM privacy statement regulates the processing operations that are not specifically mentioned in the current privacy statement.

Scope

ResearchChatAI is a service that processes personal data as part of its research-focused services.

Personal data

In the context of using the ResearchChatAI platform, the following personal data are processed:

- **Researcher account data** (Name, email, hashed password)
- **Researcher API Key** (stored encrypted on UM server, only viewable by researcher)
- **Participant ID** (either assigned by researchers before hand or randomly assigned by ResearchChatAI)
- **Messages sent to AI** (stored encrypted on UM server, only viewable by researcher)
- **Solutions provided by participants** (i.e., text output written by participants for a task given by researchers)

Purpose

VirtualSpeech uses your personal data for the purpose of:

- Analyzing user performance in speech and presentation exercises
- Receiving user feedback on speaking performance and presentation skills
- Facilitate AI-powered roleplay conversations for communication practice
- **Purposes of processing:** The goals of the processing in the project are:
 - **To facilitate controlled, research-driven interactions** between participants and conversational AI models created by researchers, allowing researchers to embed specific task instructions, experimental manipulations, or prompts into the chat environment.
 - **To facilitate studying the content, structure, and outcomes of AI-human dialogues** for scientific purposes, including but not limited to behavioral science, linguistics, human-computer interaction, communication, and education research.
 - **To facilitate analyzing the effects of prompt design, task framing, or interface variables** (chatbot interface) on participant responses, engagement, accuracy, or interpretation

Lawful basis

Maastricht University processes the personal data handled in ResearchChatAI because this is necessary for the performance of a task carried out in the public interest: scientific research and education (GDPR Article 6 (1)(e) in conjunction with Article 89).

- **Researchers' account details and project configurations** are processed so the University can provide and secure the research infrastructure it is legally obliged to offer as a public research institution.
- **Participant data and chat contents** are processed solely to enable and analyse the research that researchers conduct on the platform in accordance with recognised ethical and scientific standards.

If a study requires the collection of special-category data, or if national legislation or the study design demands it, Maastricht University requests researchers to provide explicit consent from participants before that data is processed (GDPR Article 9 (2)(a)). Participants remain free to withdraw that consent at any time without negative consequences.

All processing is carried out under strict safeguards (pseudonymisation, encryption, access controls) to protect your rights and freedoms, as required by GDPR Article 89 (1).

Retention period

Researcher accounts & project settings (stored on UM servers): retained for up to **10 years** after the project ends, or deleted sooner at the researcher's request.

Chat interaction logs (messages, timestamps, session metadata): retained according to each study's data-management plan, with an absolute maximum of **10 years**.

Transient LLM processing data routed through OpenRouter / OpenAI: automatically deleted after **30 days**.

Images and other files uploaded by participants are deleted 30 days after upload.

Recipients of personal data

The processing of data is carried out on the ResearchChatAI platform, which is hosted on secure Maastricht University servers located in the Netherlands (within the EEA). Chat messages are

temporarily routed through OpenRouter to OpenAI solely for large-language-model processing. Where OpenAI's infrastructure is situated outside the EEA, the transfer is governed by Standard Contractual Clauses (SCCs) approved by the European Commission.

Access to data stored on ResearchChatAI is limited to a small number of system administrators at Maastricht University, while exported study data is accessible only to the individual researchers that created the respective projects.

Exercising rights under the GDPR

Privacy legislation gives you several rights in relation to your personal data. Under the GDPR, you have the following rights that you may exercise: right to be informed about data processing; right of access to personal data; right to rectification; right of erasure ('right to be forgotten'); right to restriction of processing; right to object; right to data portability; right to not be subjected to automated decision-making.

If you wish to exercise one of the rights, or you want to withdraw your consent, you can fill out the Maastricht University [GDPR request form](#). You can also send an email to privacy@maastrichtuniversity.nl, or contact the Data Protection Officer of Maastricht University directly at fg@maastrichtuniversity.nl.