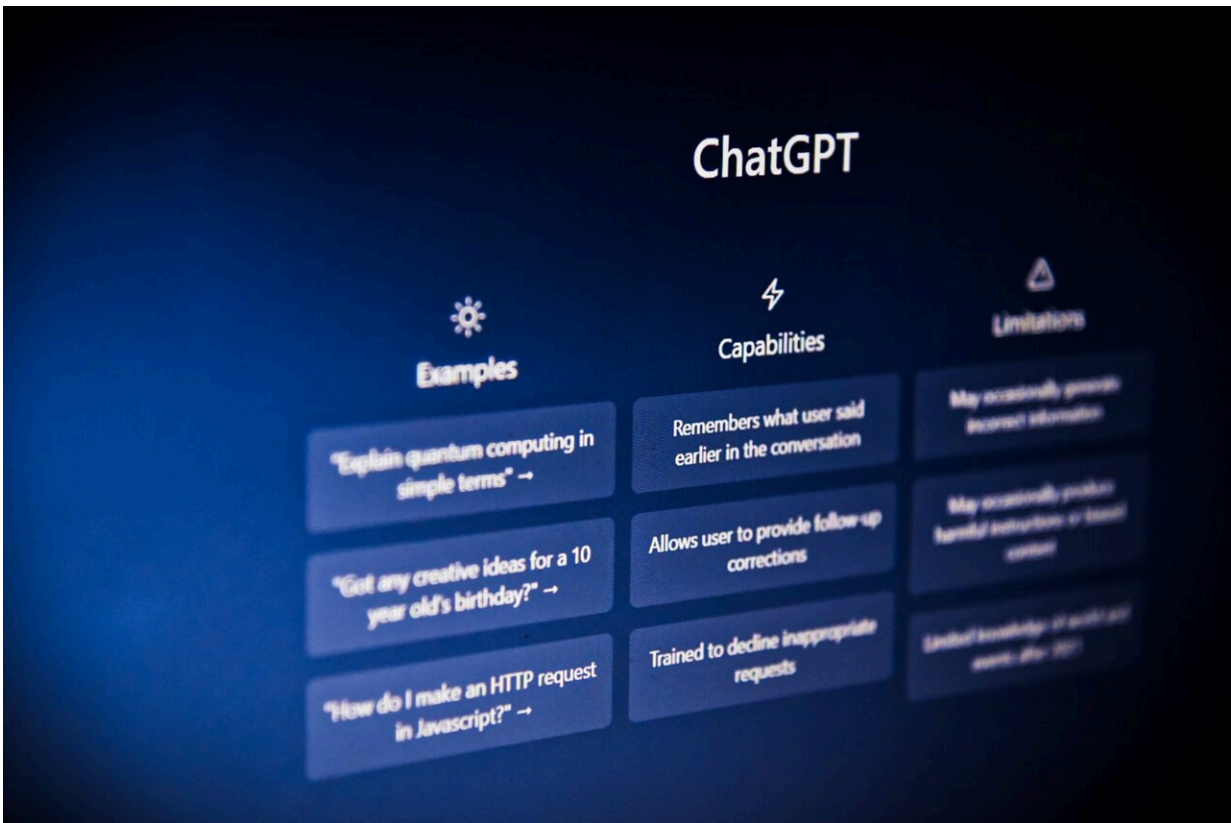


Germany launches data protection inquiry over ChatGPT

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Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Germany is joining other European countries in scrutinising the use of personal data by the popular AI chatbot ChatGPT and demanding answers from its US maker OpenAI, a regulator said Monday.

Regional data protection authorities in Europe's top economy have compiled a questionnaire for OpenAI and expect a response by June 11, said Marit Hansen, commissioner for the northern state of Schleswig-Holstein.

"We want to know if a data protection impact assessment has been carried out and if the data protection risks are under control," Hansen told AFP.

"We are asking OpenAI for information on issues that stem from the European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)."

German authorities want to verify whether OpenAI under EU law sufficiently informs people whose data is used by ChatGPT that they "have rights, for example to access, correct or even delete their data," she said.

It is also necessary to "clarify how these rights can be exercised", she said, adding that regulators were particularly concerned about the processing of data relating to minors.

"As soon as personal data of European citizens is processed, European data protection law must be respected," she said.

Italy temporarily banned the programme last month over allegations its data-gathering broke privacy laws. It has since asked OpenAI to adjust its chatbot so it could be back online in the country at the end of April.

France's [regulator](#) said earlier this month that it had opened a formal procedure after receiving five complaints, while Spain's AEPD data protection agency also said it had opened an inquiry into the software and its US owner.

The European Union's central data regulator has formed a [task force](#) to help countries harmonise their policies and address privacy concerns.

ChatGPT can generate essays, poems and conversations from the briefest of prompts, and has proved itself capable of passing some tough exams.

But it has been dogged by concerns that its talents could lead to widespread cheating in schools, supercharge disinformation on the web and replace human workers.

And the [chatbot](#) can only function if it is trained on vast datasets, raising concerns about where OpenAI gets its data and how that information is handled.

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