

OpenAI: ChatGPT back in Italy after meeting watchdog demands

April 28 2023, by Kelvin Chan



The OpenAI logo is seen on a mobile phone in front of a computer screen which displays the ChatGPT home Screen, on March 17, 2023, in Boston. ChatGPT's maker said Friday April 28, 2023 that the artificial intelligence chatbot is available again in Italy after the company met the demands of regulators who temporarily blocked it over privacy concerns. Credit: AP Photo/Michael Dwyer, File

ChatGPT's maker said Friday that the artificial intelligence chatbot is available again in Italy after the company [met the demands of regulators](#) who temporarily blocked it over privacy concerns.

OpenAI said it fulfilled a raft of conditions that the Italian data protection authority [wanted satisfied by an April 30](#) deadline to have the ban on the AI software lifted.

"ChatGPT is available again to our [users](#) in Italy," San Francisco-based OpenAI said by email. "We are excited to welcome them back, and we remain dedicated to protecting their privacy."

[Generative AI systems like ChatGPT](#), which use vast pools of online data like digital books, blog posts and other media to generate text, [images](#) and other content mimicking human work, have created buzz in the tech world and beyond.

But their rapid development has stirred fears among officials and [even tech leaders](#) about possible [ethical and societal risks](#), with European Union negotiators scrambling to update draft artificial intelligence regulations that have been years in the making.

Last month, the Italian watchdog, known as Garante, ordered OpenAI to temporarily stop processing Italian users' personal information while it investigated a possible data breach. The authority said it didn't want to hamper AI's development but emphasized the importance of following the EU's strict data privacy rules.

OpenAI said it "addressed or clarified the issues" raised by the watchdog.

The measures include adding information on its website about how it collects and uses data that [trains the algorithms powering ChatGPT](#),

providing EU users with a new form for objecting to having their data used for training, and adding a tool to verify users' ages when signing up.

Some Italian users shared what appeared to be screenshots of the changes, including a menu button asking users to confirm their age and links to the updated privacy policy and training data help page.

The Garante said in a statement that it "welcomes the measures OpenAI implemented" and urged the company to comply with two other demands for an age-verification system and a publicity campaign informing Italians about the backstory and their right to opt out of [data processing](#).

The watchdog imposed the ban last month after finding that some users' messages and payment information were exposed to others. It also questioned whether there was a legal basis for OpenAI to collect massive amounts of data used to train ChatGPT's algorithms and raised concerns that the system could sometimes generate false information about individuals.

Infrastructure Minister Matteo Salvini on Instagram, wrote approvingly of the return of ChatGPT and said that his League party "is committed to help [start-ups](#) and development in Italy."

Other regulators are now looking closer at such AI systems, with France's data privacy regulator and Canada's [privacy](#) commissioner investigating after receiving complaints about ChatGPT.

The head of the Federal Trade Commission, Lina Khan, warned this week that the [U.S. government will "not hesitate to crack down"](#) on harmful business practices involving artificial intelligence.

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