BILL'S HOME TECH

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Keep AI From Learning Your Private Information

A few settings and habits that keep your chats private — set up once in about ten minutes

Plain-English tech help from:
Bill's Home Tech
Portage County, Ohio

Tech Made Simple. Service Made Personal.

Bill Davis — Bill's Home Tech
(330) 200-8042 · bill@billshometech.com · Atwater, Ohio

Book a visit · billshometech.com/book

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SUMMARY

The 60-Second Version

AI chats are often stored and used to improve the company's systems, but you can change that. Two moves do most of the work: turn off the setting that lets your chats train the AI (in ChatGPT's Data Controls, Gemini's Apps Activity, or Copilot's Microsoft privacy dashboard), and use "temporary" or "incognito" chat mode for anything personal so it isn't saved.

Also delete old history, turn on auto-delete where offered, and review any "memory" feature that builds a profile of you. But the habits matter most: never type true secrets — passwords, account or card numbers, Social Security numbers, or texted codes — because no setting fully undoes a secret you've already sent. Setting this up takes about ten minutes, once per tool.

- Turn off training and use temporary chats — the two big moves.
- Delete history, turn on auto-delete, review the "memory" feature.
- No setting undoes a typed secret — keep them out of the box.

1 The Short Version

When you chat with an AI tool, your conversations are often stored, and many companies use them to improve their systems — which can mean people reviewing snippets, and your words feeding the AI's future learning. The good news is that you're not stuck with that. A few settings, flipped once, keep AI from learning and keeping your private information, while you go on using it exactly as before.

This guide walks you through those settings for the main tools, plus the everyday habits that matter even more than any setting. You don't need to understand the technology — just follow the steps to turn off training, delete old chats, and use the private modes built in for exactly this purpose. It takes about ten minutes, once.

- Your AI chats are often stored and used to improve the company's systems.
- You can turn that off, delete your history, and use private "temporary" chats.

- The habits matter most: don't type secrets in the first place.
- Setting this up takes about ten minutes, once, per tool you use.

> **TIP**
> Two moves do most of the work: turn off the setting that lets your chats train the AI, and use the "temporary" or "incognito" chat mode for anything even slightly personal. Everything else in this guide is a helpful extra on top of those two.

2 What Actually Happens to Your Chats

Let's demystify this, because the reality is less alarming than the worry. When you type into an AI tool, your message goes to the company's computers to be answered. Many companies then keep that conversation for a time, and — unless you opt out — may use it to train and improve their AI. In some cases, small numbers of conversations are reviewed by staff to check quality.

None of this means a person is reading your every word, and it doesn't mean your chats are published anywhere. But it does mean the AI chat box isn't a private, sealed space by default. Knowing that lets you make two sensible choices: change the settings so less is kept, and keep genuinely private things out of the box entirely.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> "Training the AI" means your words might become part of the vast pool of text the system learns from. It's not that the AI memorizes your name — but it's still wise to keep personal details out of that pool, which is exactly what the settings in this guide let you do.

3 The Two Habits That Matter Most

Before any settings, know that your own habits protect you more than any switch ever could. A setting reduces what's kept; a habit prevents the problem in the first place. These two come first for a reason.

- Don't type true secrets: passwords, full account or card numbers, Social Security or Medicare numbers, texted codes.
- Ask about sensitive topics without the actual detail: "How do I spot a strong password?" not your password.

WATCH OUT

No privacy setting fully undoes a secret you typed and sent. The setting limits storage and training going forward; it can't guarantee a sent message was never processed. That's why keeping secrets out of the box is the real protection, and the settings are the valuable backup. There's a full companion guide, "The Safe Way to Use AI," on exactly what to keep out.

4 Turning Off Training in ChatGPT

ChatGPT lets you tell it not to use your conversations to train its models, and to control how long chats are kept. It's a quick trip into the settings.

1. Open ChatGPT and go to Settings (often under your name or a gear icon).
2. Look for a Data Controls or Data section.
3. Find the option about improving the model for everyone (sometimes "Improve the model" or "Chat history & training") and turn it off.
4. While you're there, you can also delete past conversations you no longer want kept.

GOOD TO KNOW

Turning off training doesn't make ChatGPT any less useful to you — it still answers exactly the same. It just means your conversations aren't fed into its future learning. There's no downside to flipping this off if privacy matters to you.

5 Turning Off Training in Gemini

Gemini, being Google's, ties into your Google account's activity settings. You can stop it from saving your activity and from using it to improve the service.

1. Open Gemini's settings, or go to your Google Account's Activity controls.
2. Look for "Gemini Apps Activity" (the wording may vary) and turn it off.
3. Choose to delete existing activity, or set it to auto-delete after a chosen period.
4. Confirm your choice when prompted.

WATCH OUT

With Gemini especially, turning off activity may also turn off some conveniences that rely on remembering past chats. That's a fair trade for privacy, but it's worth knowing so you're not surprised that it "forgets" more afterward. You can always turn it back on if you miss a feature.

6 Managing Privacy in Copilot

Copilot, from Microsoft, keeps its privacy controls with your Microsoft account. You can review and clear your Copilot history and manage how your data is used.

1. Open Copilot's settings, or sign in to your Microsoft account's privacy dashboard.
2. Look for Copilot or AI activity and the options to view and clear your history.
3. Clear past conversations you don't want kept.
4. Review any setting about using your interactions to improve the service and adjust it to your comfort.

GOOD TO KNOW

Because Copilot is tied to your Microsoft account, the same privacy dashboard controls other Microsoft services too. It's a good place to have a wider tidy-up of what Microsoft keeps about you while you're there.

Rather not do this yourself? I'll come to your home and set it up for you — a flat $99 first visit across Portage County, Ohio and nearby communities. Outside the area? I also help remotely by phone or screen-share. Book at billshometech.com/book or call (330) 200-8042.

7 Use Temporary or Incognito Chats

The simplest privacy tool of all is the "temporary" chat — a mode built into most AI tools specifically so a conversation isn't saved or used for training. It's perfect for anything even slightly personal that you want to vanish when you're done.

1. Look for a "Temporary chat," "Incognito," or similar option, often near where you start a new chat.
2. Turn it on, then have your conversation as normal.
3. When you close it, that chat isn't kept in your history or used to train the AI.
4. Switch back to a normal chat when you want the AI to remember the conversation.

WATCH OUT

Make temporary chat your default for anything personal — a health question, a family matter, a money topic. It gives you the AI's help with none of the storage, and you don't have to remember to delete anything afterward.

8 Deleting Your History

Whatever your settings, it's worth clearing out old conversations now and then, the way you'd empty a wastebasket. It keeps less of your information sitting on the company's computers over time.

1. In each AI tool, find the list of your past conversations.
2. Delete individual chats you no longer need, or look for a "delete all" option.
3. Check the settings for an "auto-delete after 30 days" (or similar) option and turn it on if offered.

4. Repeat occasionally — once a month is plenty.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
> Auto-delete is the lazy person's best friend here: set it once to clear chats after a month, and your history keeps itself tidy forever with no further effort. It's the single most convenient privacy setting there is.

9 Be Careful With Memory Features

Some AI tools now offer a "memory" feature, where the AI remembers details about you across conversations — your name, your preferences, things you've told it — to be more helpful. It's genuinely convenient, but it means the tool is deliberately building a profile of you, so it's worth using with awareness.

- Check whether your AI's memory feature is on, usually in settings.
- You can review what it has remembered about you and delete specific items.
- You can turn memory off entirely if you'd rather it kept nothing between chats.
- Avoid letting it remember sensitive details — review the list now and then.

> **WATCH OUT**
> If you've used an AI for a while with memory on, take a moment to read what it has stored about you. People are sometimes surprised by how much it has quietly noted. Delete anything you'd rather it didn't keep — you're fully in control of that list.

10 Photos, Files, and Voice

Privacy isn't only about typed words. Photos, documents, and voice recordings you share carry information too, and the same care applies. A photo of a letter or a spoken question can reveal more than you intend.

- Before sharing a photo, make sure it doesn't show account numbers, addresses, or faces you'd rather keep private.

- Don't upload documents full of personal data unless you truly need to — describe them instead.
- For voice assistants, review and delete voice recordings in their settings, and turn off saving if you prefer.
- Never share a photo of an ID, card, check, or medical record.

> **GOOD TO KNOW**
>
> A check or an ID photo is among the most sensitive things you can share anywhere, AI included, because of the account and identity numbers on them. When in doubt, type a description of what you need help with rather than sharing the image itself.

11 A Sensible Privacy Routine

You don't need to fuss over this constantly. A one-time setup and a brief occasional check keep your AI use private with very little effort. Here's the whole routine.

1. Once, per tool: turn off training, turn on auto-delete, and find the temporary-chat option.
2. Every day: keep secrets out of the box, and use temporary chat for anything personal.
3. Once a month: glance at your history and memory, and clear anything you don't want kept.
4. Any time: if a tool updates and you're unsure what changed, re-check these settings.

> *Set the privacy switches once, keep secrets out of the box always, and tidy your history now and then. That's the whole of private AI use — modest effort, real peace of mind.*

12 Privacy on Shared and Family Devices

A little extra care helps when a device isn't yours alone — a tablet the whole family uses, a computer at the library, or a phone you've handed to a grandchild. In those cases your AI chats could be seen by whoever uses the device next, quite apart from any company setting.

- On a shared computer, use the AI in your web browser's private or "incognito" window, and sign out when done.
- On a borrowed or public device, never stay signed in — log out of the AI and the browser.
- At home, if family shares a tablet, consider separate sign-ins so chats don't mix.
- Use temporary chat on any device that isn't just yours.

WATCH OUT

The biggest everyday privacy leak isn't the company — it's simply staying signed in on a device someone else then uses. Signing out, and using a private browser window on anything shared, closes that gap completely. Make logging out a habit on any device that isn't yours alone.

13 When to Call Bill

The privacy settings differ from tool to tool and move around as apps update, so finding them on your own screen — and being sure you've got them where you want them — is quicker and more reassuring with someone beside you. This is a very common thing to want set up properly, once, so you can stop worrying about it.

I come to you, go through each AI tool you use, and set the privacy options the way you want — training off, auto-delete on, temporary chats ready, memory reviewed. We'll clear out any old history and check what the tools have quietly remembered about you. I'll also go over the handful of habits that protect you even more than the settings do, and leave you a simple card so you can keep it tidy yourself.

- You want your AI privacy settings found and set up properly, once.
- You'd like old chat history and stored "memory" cleared out.
- You're unsure what a tool is keeping about you and want it checked.
- You want the privacy habits explained alongside the settings.

CHEAT SHEET

Everyday Cheat Sheet

Keep this handy. Two moves do most of the work: turn off training, use temporary chats.

I want to...	Do this...
Stop chats training the AI	ChatGPT: Settings Data Controls turn off model improvement
Stop Gemini saving activity	Gemini/Google Account turn off Gemini Apps Activity
Clear Copilot history	Microsoft account privacy dashboard clear Copilot activity
Keep a chat unsaved	Use "Temporary" or "Incognito" chat for anything personal
Tidy automatically	Turn on auto-delete (e.g. after 30 days) where offered
Protect yourself most	Never type passwords, account/card numbers, SSN, or codes
Get help	Call Bill: (330) 200-8042

BEFORE YOU GO

A Note From Bill

A quick note from Bill. I write these guides to make home tech a little less frustrating, and I do my best to keep every step accurate and up to date. Still, every home, device, and setup is a bit different, so I can't promise a guide will match yours exactly or fix your particular problem. These guides are for general information only — they're not professional, legal, or financial advice, and they don't replace your device's own manual or the manufacturer's instructions. Please go slow, use your own good judgment, and use everything here at your own risk. If a step involves electrical wiring, a gas appliance, a water heater, plumbing, or climbing a ladder — or if anything just doesn't feel safe — please stop and call a licensed professional (or give me a call at 330-200-8042). Bill's Home Tech and Bill Davis can't be responsible for any damage, data loss, or injury that results.

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GOOD TO KNOW

My promise — If you're not 100% satisfied with your visit, I'll come back at no charge, or refund the full $99. No questions, no awkwardness. That's how I'd want to be treated.

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