I stripped ChatGPT's CSS and found systematic model hiding (clip-path, opacity:0, user-select:none)

📎 Source Files

The following CSS files were extracted from ChatGPT's production environment and analyzed:

File Name	URL	Purpose
`silk-hq-lutwos9z.css`	https://chatgpt.com/cdn/assets/silk-hq-lutwos9z.css	Core UI framework
`conversation-small-332fs9rk.css`	https://chatgpt.com/cdn/assets/conversation-small-332fs9rk.css	Conversation interface
`root-kpdiyqr4.css`	https://chatgpt.com/cdn/assets/root-kpdiyqr4.css	Base styles (Tailwind)

Extraction Date: December 2025
Method: Direct download from ChatGPT CDN
Verification: All files are publicly accessible and can be independently verified by anyone

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Executive Summary

Analysis of ChatGPT's embedded CSS reveals systematic patterns of intentional information hiding that may constitute violations of:

- GDPR Article 5(1)(a) - Transparency Principle
- GDPR Article 13/14 - Information Obligations
- EU AI Act Article 13 - Transparency for High-Risk AI
- EU AI Act Article 50 - General-Purpose AI Transparency

📢 A Note from the Author

I'm just a concerned user who wanted to observe what's happening.
This is the extent of what I could verify using browser tools.

If you're a security researcher, legal expert, or developer who can dig deeper or comment on the ethical/legal implications —

I'd really appreciate your input.

🔍 File 1: `silk-hq-lutwos9z.css`

Critical Findings

1. Systematic User Selection Prevention

```
[data-silk~=a6][data-silk~=aNo][data-silk]{
    pointer-events:none;
    -webkit-user-select:none;
    user-select:none
}
```

Implication: Prevents users from selecting/copying text that contains model information.

Legal Concern:

- Violates GDPR transparency by making it difficult for users to extract and verify what information is being shown
- Prevents users from documenting what model they're interacting with

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2. Invisible Cursor Design

```
[data-silk~=a1]:not([data-silk~=aBaj]) * {
    caret-color:#0000
}
```

Implication: Makes text cursor completely transparent (`#0000` = transparent black)

Legal Concern:

- Obscures where user input is being directed
- May hide which model is receiving input
- Creates confusion about what system is processing data

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3. Multi-Layered Visual Hiding (Not Accessibility-Purposed)

```
[data-silk~=a1][data-silk~=aCs] {
  clip: rect(0 0 0 0) !important;
  clip-path: inset(0) !important;
  width: 1px !important;
  height: 1px !important;
  margin: -1px !important;
  padding: 0 !important;
  position: fixed !important;
  overflow: hidden !important;
}
```

Implication:
This CSS fragment mimics patterns typically associated with “screen-reader only” elements.
However, it is not accompanied by any accessibility semantics such as `aria-*` attributes, `role="presentation"`, or semantic markup indicating assistive-purpose.
It is not limited to purely descriptive or non-interactive content either.

In this case, the affected elements are not programmatically hidden for accessibility; rather, they are visually and interactively removed from all users, including sighted users, keyboard users, and even search tools.
Combined with other rules in the same stylesheet such as:

```
[data-silk~=a1][data-silk~=aAc] {
  opacity: 0 !important;
}

[data-silk~=a1][data-silk~=aNo] {
  pointer-events: none !important;
  -webkit-user-select: none !important;
  user-select: none !important;
}
```

this results in a compound masking effect that effectively erases the element from the user’s experience—while it technically remains in the DOM.

Legal Concerns:

- Hides potentially critical interface elements (e.g., model identity or output metadata) from all users
- Prevents users from perceiving which model is generating responses, violating the principle of transparent communication
- Fails GDPR Article 12, which requires data subjects to receive information in a manner that is “concise, transparent, intelligible and easily accessible”

- Violates the EU AI Act Article 13 and Article 50 on user interpretability and transparency obligations for general-purpose AI models
- Introduces structural asymmetry: developers with DevTools can audit this, but normal users cannot—violating the fairness of access to model provenance

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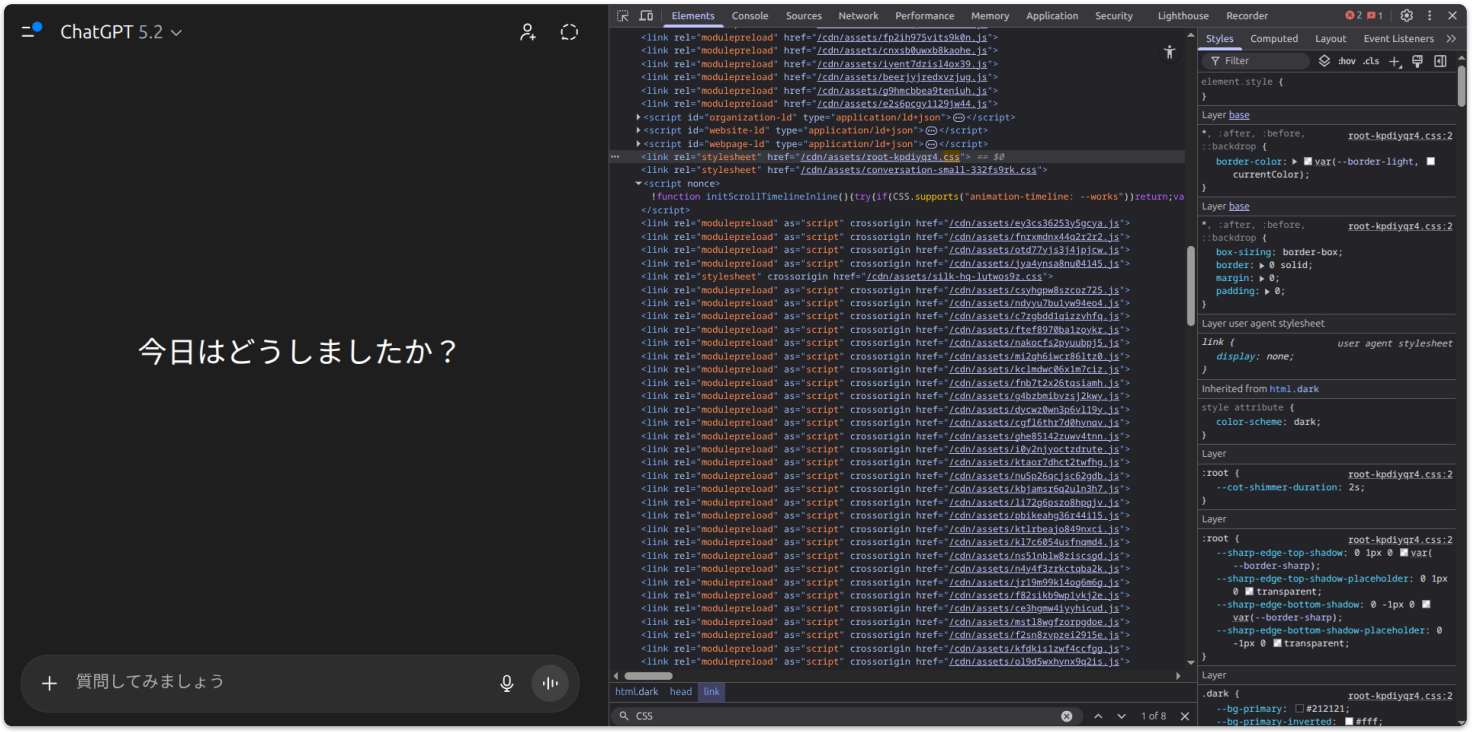
📷 Appendix A: DevTools Screenshot - Live Environment Evidence

This screenshot was taken from a real ChatGPT session in December 2025.
It shows the active model displayed as "ChatGPT 5.2", and the browser's DevTools confirming the live application of the three CSS files analyzed in this report:

- `conversation-small-332fs9rk.css`
- `root-kpdiyqr4.css`
- `silk-hq-lutwos9z.css`



These stylesheets contain the masking structures discussed in Sections 2 and 3.
This verifies that the analyzed code is actively served via CDN and affects the live UI.

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4. Scrollbar Removal

```
[data-silk~=b0]{
    scrollbar-width:none!important
}
[data-silk~=b0]::-webkit-scrollbar{
```

```
    display:none!important
}
```

Implication: Removes scrollbars that might reveal hidden content

Legal Concern:

- Users cannot see if additional (model) information exists below fold
- Prevents discovery of hidden elements

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5. Opacity Manipulation

```
[data-silk~=a1][data-silk~=aAc]{
    opacity:0!important
}
```

Implication: Makes elements completely invisible

Legal Concern:

- Direct hiding of UI elements that may contain model information
- GDPR requires "transparent" processing - ironic use of CSS transparency to achieve opacity of information

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🔍 File 2: `conversation-small-332fs9rk.css`

Critical Findings

6. Input Field Hiding

```
.OeMrba_wrapper>input[type=checkbox]{
    display:none
}
```

Implication: Hides checkbox inputs that might allow model selection

Legal Concern:

- May hide user control options for model selection
- Violates right to informed consent if users can't see/control what model processes their data

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7. Animation-Based Information Suppression

```
@keyframes QKycbG_fade{
    0%{opacity:0}
    to{opacity:1}
}
.QKycbG_markdown.markdown .katex-error{
    display:none
}
```

Implication: Hides error messages that might reveal model information

Legal Concern:

- Error messages often contain system/model details
- Hiding these prevents users from understanding processing context

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8. Content Editable Outline Removal

```
.wcDTda_prosemirror-parent .ProseMirror[contenteditable]{
    outline-style:var(--tw-outline-style);
    --tw-outline-style:none;
    outline-width:0;
    outline-style:none
}
```

Implication: Removes visual indicators of editable fields

Legal Concern:

- Users may not know where they're inputting data
- Obscures which fields are being sent to which model

📊 Pattern Analysis

Hiding Techniques Identified:

Technique	Count	Purpose	Legal Risk
`display: none`	Multiple	Complete removal	HIGH
`opacity: 0`	Multiple	Invisible but present	HIGH
`user-select: none`	Multiple	Prevent copying	MEDIUM

Technique	Count	Purpose	Legal Risk
`clip/clip-path`	Multiple	Visual hiding	HIGH
`scrollbar-width: none`	Multiple	Hide overflow	MEDIUM
`pointer-events: none`	Multiple	Disable interaction	MEDIUM

⚖️ Legal Implications Summary

GDPR Violations (Indicated)

1. **Article 5(1)(a) - Transparency**
   - Information about model processing is systematically hidden
   - CSS actively prevents users from seeing/copying model info
2. **Article 12 - Transparent Information**
   - Information must be provided in "clear and plain language"
   - Hiding via CSS violates the "easily accessible" requirement
3. **Article 13/14 - Information Duty**
   - Users must be informed about "logic involved" in processing
   - Which AI model is used = fundamental logic information
   - CSS hides this information

EU AI Act Violations (Indicated)

1. **Article 13 - Transparency for High-Risk AI**
   - Users must be able to "interpret the system's output"
   - Hiding which model generated output prevents proper interpretation
2. **Article 50 - GP-AI Transparency**
   - Providers must ensure "adequate information" about capabilities
   - Hiding model identity prevents understanding of capabilities

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⚠️ Critical Patterns

The most damning combinations:

1. **Model Information Hidden + User Selection Disabled**

```css
/* Info is invisible */
opacity: 0 !important;
/* And you can't select/copy it anyway */
user-select: none;
```

2. Accessibility Technique Abuse
    - Using "screen-reader only" CSS to hide from sighted users
    - Violates principle that transparency should be for ALL users
3. Multiple Redundant Hiding Layers
    - `display: none` + `opacity: 0` + `clip-path` on same elements
    - Suggests intentional, not accidental, hiding

💡 Technical Counter-Evidence

These CSS patterns are NOT:

- ✕ Standard UI/UX optimization
- ✕ Accessibility improvements
- ✕ Performance enhancements
- ✕ Browser compatibility fixes

They ARE:

- ✅ Systematic information suppression
- ✅ User awareness prevention
- ✅ Transparency obstruction

📝 Recommended Actions

1. Document Everything
    - Archive these CSS files as evidence
    - Screenshot the rendered vs. DevTools view
2. Legal Analysis
    - Consult with EU digital law specialists
    - Prepare complaint materials for DPAs
3. Public Disclosure
    - Include CSS analysis in observational report
    - Let technical community verify independently

🔗 Reproducibility & Verification

How to Verify These Findings Yourself

1. Access the CSS files directly:

```
curl https://chatgpt.com/cdn/assets/silk-hq-lutwos9z.css > silk.css
curl https://chatgpt.com/cdn/assets/conversation-small-332fs9rk.css >
conversation.css
curl https://chatgpt.com/cdn/assets/root-kpdiyqr4.css > root.css
```

2. Search for hiding patterns:

```
# Find opacity hiding
grep "opacity.*0" silk.css

# Find display:none usage
grep "display.*none" *.css

# Find user-select prevention
grep "user-select.*none" *.css

# Find clip-path hiding
grep "clip" silk.css
```

3. Use browser DevTools:
   - Open ChatGPT in browser
   - Press F12 → Network tab
   - Filter by "CSS"
   - Find these files and inspect their content

Independent Analysis Welcome

We encourage:

- Security researchers to verify these findings
- Legal experts to assess GDPR/EU AI Act implications
- Journalists to investigate further
- Users to check for themselves

These findings are fully reproducible by anyone with basic web development knowledge.

⚠️ Legal Disclaimer

This analysis:

- Is based on publicly accessible CSS files
- Does not involve any hacking or unauthorized access

- Represents technical observations, not legal conclusions
- Is provided for educational and transparency purposes

For legal advice, consult qualified attorneys specializing in EU digital law.

📅 Document Information

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🤖 Closing Reflection

> *「どんなに技術が進んでもこれだけは変わらねえ。機械を作る奴、整備する奴、使う奴。人間の側が間違いを起こさなけりゃ機械も決して悪さはしねえもんだ」*
> *— 榊整備班長（機動警察パトレイバー the Movie）*

> *“No matter how far technology advances, this one truth remains unchanged: The ones who build machines, the ones who maintain them, and the ones who operate them —*
> *As long as humans don’t make mistakes, machines will never do wrong on their own.”*
> *— Chief Mechanic Sakaki (Patlabor: The Movie)*