



# HOW TO RUN AI ON YOUR COMPUTER

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

BRAINDRIVE.AI

Welcome to the “*How to Run AI On Your Computer Privately and for Free*” guide!

I'm Dave Waring, co-creator of BrainDrive and your guide on this journey toward owning, controlling, and benefiting from your own AI system.

By the end of this guide, you'll have your own AI system running on your computer.

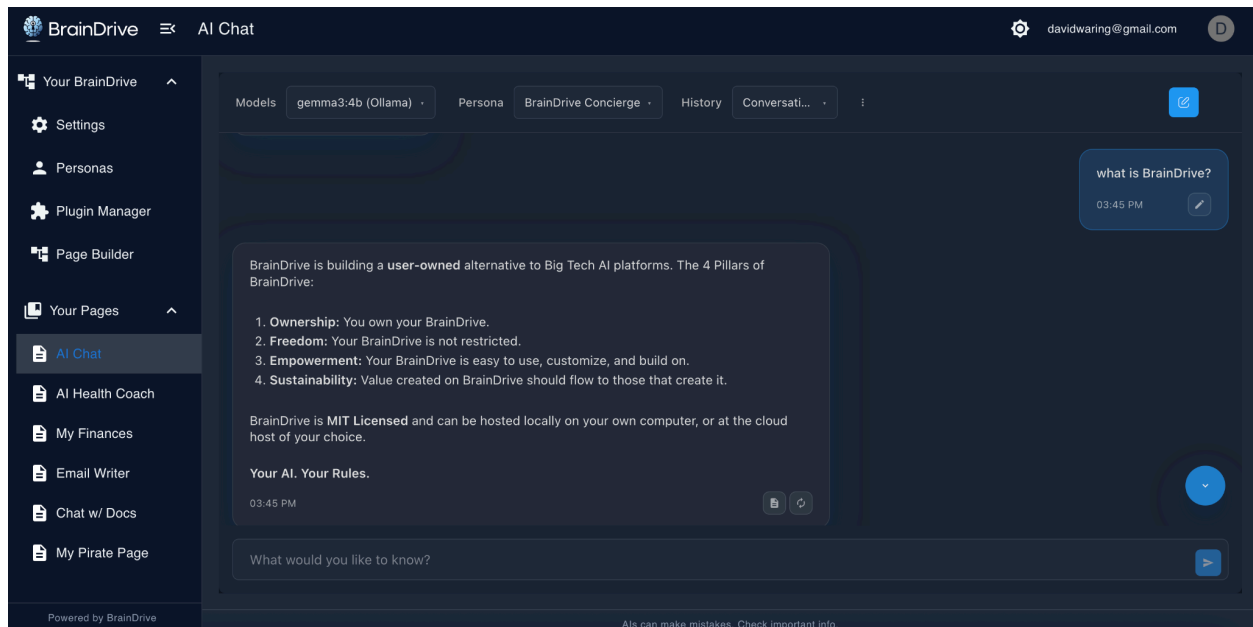
You'll chat with powerful open-source AI models completely privately and securely. And you'll do it all for free.

Your new AI system will look like ChatGPT, but with one big difference: **You own it.**

No monthly fees. No data mining. No Big Tech overlords reading and monetizing your conversations.

Once you've downloaded the AI models to your computer, you won't even need an internet connection. Your AI lives on your computer, works for you, and answers to no one else.

Here's what it looks like:



Pretty cool, right? And you can have this up and running in about 20 minutes.

Did I mention this is all free yet? Hard to believe I know. Just bear with me and you'll see!

### What You'll Need:

- A laptop or desktop computer (Windows, Mac, or Linux)
- At least 8GB of RAM
- About 10-20GB of free storage space (for the software and AI models)

- 20 minutes for setup
- No technical experience required

Nothing too fancy. If your computer is less than 5 years old, you're probably good to go.

(Not sure about your RAM or storage? Just search "check RAM and storage on [your computer type]" in your favorite search engine).

Alright, enough dilly-dallying.

**Let's jump in!**

## Why Own Your AI System?

We lost control of our digital data and knowledge to Big Tech companies in the last phase of the internet.

And they've used that control to:

- Share our data without our permission
- Earn billions selling our data to advertisers
- Suppress free speech

**Big Tech AI systems are about to put this trend on steroids.**

Every time you use ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini, your conversations travel to Big Tech servers.

Your questions, your ideas, your data - all stored on computers you don't control.

These companies can:

- Read everything you type
- Use your conversations to train their models
- Change their terms whenever they want
- Charge you monthly fees (or raise them)
- Restrict what you can ask

**The result?** Less freedom. Less control. More wealth for them, and less wealth for us.

## But It Doesn't Have to Be This Way

The technology exists today for each of us to own and control our own AI system.

The open source community has been hard at work building all the components needed to break free from Big Tech's extractive platforms.

It's just that no one has put them all together in a way that makes it easy for the average person to use.

**Until now.**

That's why we're launching BrainDrive.

To build a superior, user-owned alternative to Big Tech AI systems.

An alternative that's easy to use, control, and build on. An alternative that **YOU** own, control, and benefit from instead of Big Tech.

Excited? Me too.

**Let's keep going.**

## The 5 Components of an AI System (& Why You Want to Own Them)

To truly own and control your AI system, you need to own and control its 5 foundational components:

1. **The Interface** – How you interact with your AI system (like the chat window in ChatGPT)
2. **The Intelligence** – The AI models that power your responses
3. **The Memory** – Your conversation history and how it's stored
4. **The Hosting** – Where your AI system lives (their servers or yours?)
5. **The Connections** – How your AI system interacts with other tools and systems

**Here's the simple truth:** If you own and control these 5 components, you own and control your AI system.

If you don't? You're renting from someone else. They set the rules, the prices, and the limits.

With ChatGPT, OpenAI owns all 5 components. You're their user.

With BrainDrive, **you** own all 5 components. You're the owner.

And that's a huge difference.

## How BrainDrive Gives You Complete Ownership

BrainDrive pulls it all together:

**1. The Interface** – BrainDrive is open-source and MIT licensed. Once you download it, you own your copy. No one can modify, monitor, or take it away without your permission, not even BrainDrive.

**2. The Intelligence** – Download open-source AI models to your computer and run them without an internet connection. Want access to the latest models from OpenAI or Anthropic? You can connect to those too.

**3. The Memory** – Your conversation database lives on your computer. We're also building more advanced memory systems like RAG (Retrieval-Augmented Generation), all running locally on your machine.

**4. The Hosting** – Your BrainDrive is self-hosted. It lives on your computer or on the cloud host of your choice. You decide.

**5. The Connections** – We're building MCP (Model Context Protocol) integrations. Don't know what that is? Neither do most people (even the ones that say they do).

MCP basically makes it easy to connect your BrainDrive to the tools you already use: Gmail, accounting software, customer service platforms, etc. So you can use your data from those in your BrainDrive.

And that's not all.

## BrainDrive is Built to Customize and Extend

BrainDrive uses a modular, plugin-based architecture.

**What's that?** It means BrainDrive is designed to be easily customizable and extendable. Like a lego set where you can customize your BrainDrive using existing lego pieces, and even create your own legos.

**If you're a developer:** Build on a foundation you own and control. Keep the value you create instead of enriching Big Tech platforms.

**If you're not a developer:** Easily add plugins other developers have built, or hire someone to create custom solutions just for you.

You don't have to use the same interface as ChatGPT's other 800 million users. You can tailor and customize your BrainDrive to your exact needs.

## So What's the Catch?

Didn't I already say there isn't one?

(What, you don't trust someone you just met on the internet?)

You see software companies have been over charging us for years not based on the value they are providing, but by locking our digital data and knowledge in their closed platforms.

BrainDrive is the key that sets your digital data and knowledge free.

There's still plenty of ways to fund the BrainDrive project by adding additional value while keeping the core software free. (Premium plugins, consulting, computers that come with BrainDrive installed are just a few ideas).

But you don't have to trust my word for it. BrainDrive's [MIT license ensures it](#).

## So what are you waiting for?

Oh right, I haven't actually told you how to set it up yet.

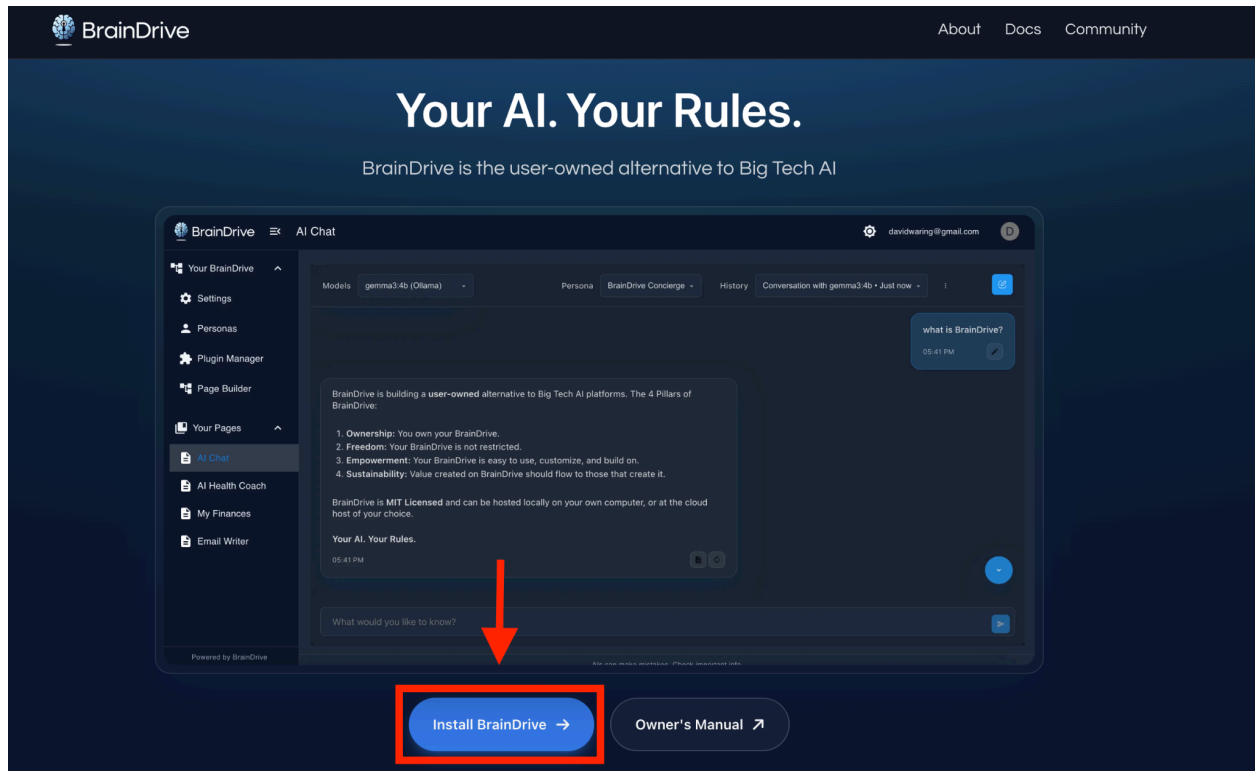
Duh.

**Here we go.**

## How to Setup Your BrainDrive in 10 Easy Steps

### **Step 1: Download & Install Your BrainDrive**

Visit [BrainDrive.ai](#) and click the install button. Choose your computer type (Mac, Windows, or Linux) and hit the download button.



It takes 2 to 3 minutes to download depending on your computer and internet connection.

....You can stop staring at me and go get a cup of coffee, jeeze.

## Step 2: Setup your login (your data doesn't leave your computer)

The image shows the BrainDrive registration form. At the top, there's the BrainDrive logo and the tagline 'Your AI. Your Rules.'. Below this, there are two tabs: 'LOGIN' and 'REGISTER', with 'REGISTER' being the active tab. The form contains four input fields: 'Username \*', 'Email \*', 'Password \*', and 'Confirm Password \*'. Each field has a small icon to its right, likely for password visibility toggling. At the bottom of the form is a blue button labeled 'Create Account'.

BrainDrive runs in the browser of your computer. It should pop up automatically once it installs.

To get back to it in the future just type in “http://localhost:5173” and it will come up. Local host means it’s hosted “locally” on your computer.

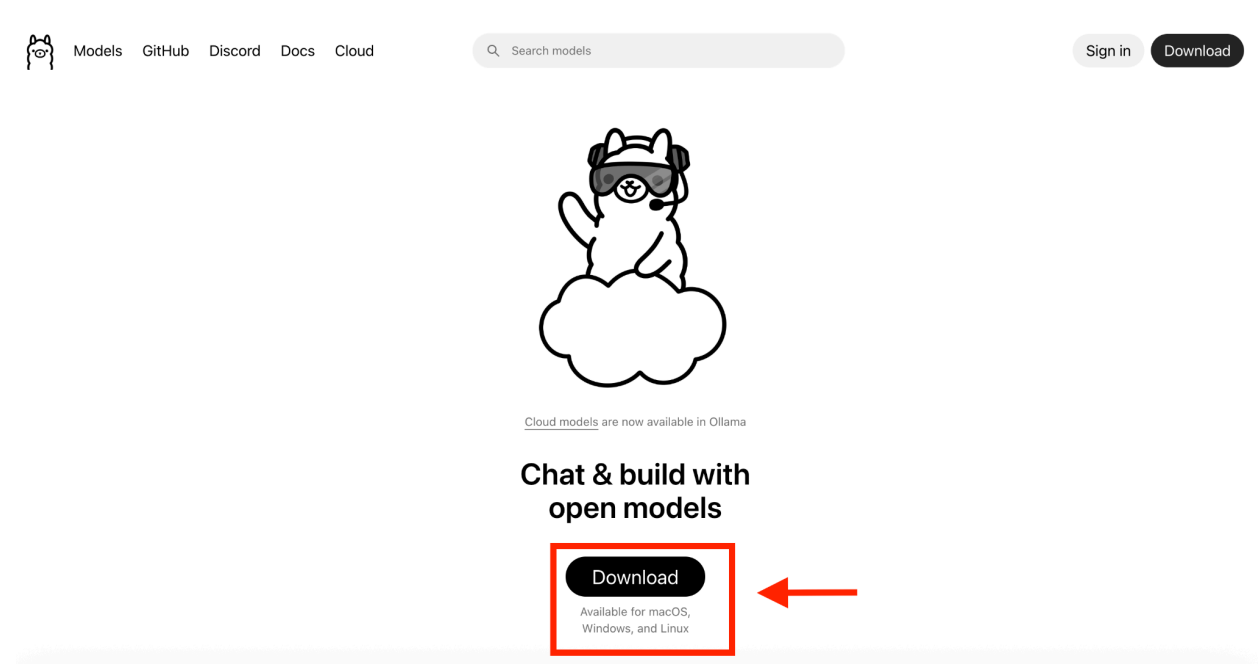
By default BrainDrive has a registration page. This is for separation purposes if you want to have multiple users (like other family members) on your BrainDrive, and so there is a way to reset your password. (That’s why we ask for an email address).

But that is all stored on, and doesn’t leave your computer. Don’t believe me? I don’t blame you.

You can turn off your internet connection before registering so you can know for sure that no data is being sent off your computer.

(Didn’t know you could use your browser without an internet connection? Me neither until I started down this road.)

### Step 3: Download and Install Ollama



Ollama is an Open Source local LLM model runner. In other words it’s what allows you to download and run AI models on your computer without being a rocket scientist.

And yes it’s also free and takes a minute or two to download and install. Ollama also runs locally on your computer. That means once you have downloaded the models you want to use, you don’t need an internet connection to run Ollama either.



#### **Step 4: Download your first open source AI model into your BrainDrive.**

Ok you're doing great and you're almost there!

Now we are going to choose and download an AI model to our computer.

Different models offer different capability levels but they all generally share one thing in common.

All else being equal, the larger the model is the higher the quality the output of the model will be. But also the more powerful the computer you will need to run it.

Since we are just getting started let's do a small model that will run on pretty much any computer.

You can see a full list of all the models available [here](#) (there are a ton of them!).

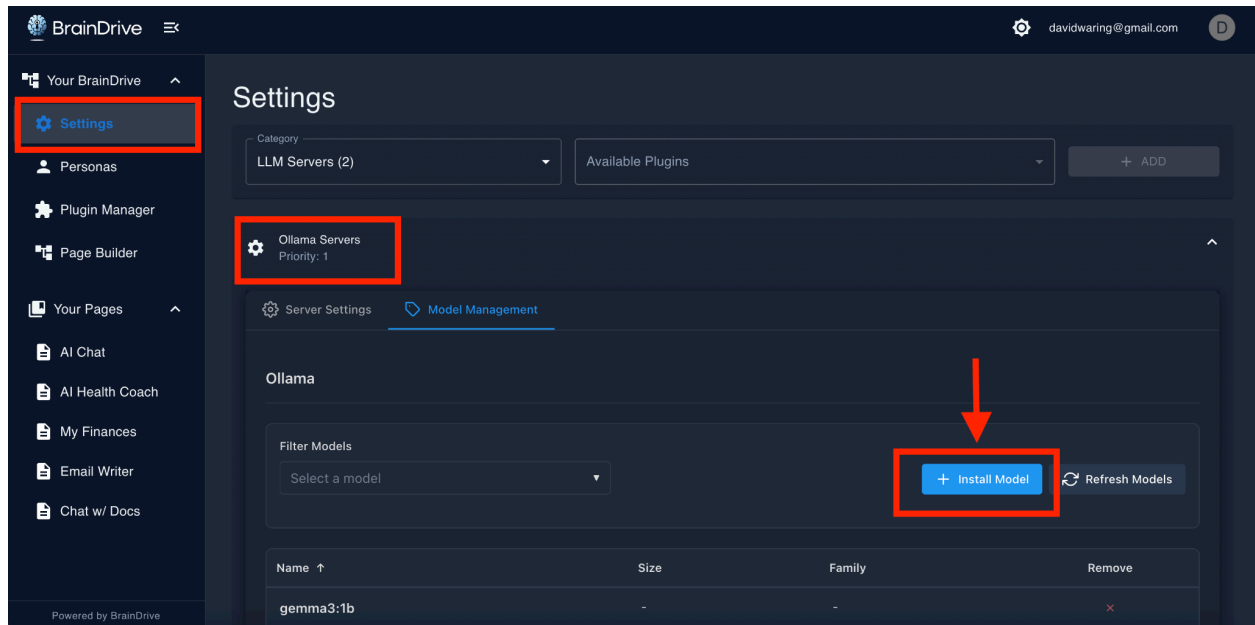
We'll do Gemma1B, an open source family of models by Google.

But wait Dave I thought we didn't like Big Tech?!

We don't. But if they are going to give us free models that we can own and control, we'll take them!

Here's how to set the model up in your BrainDrive.

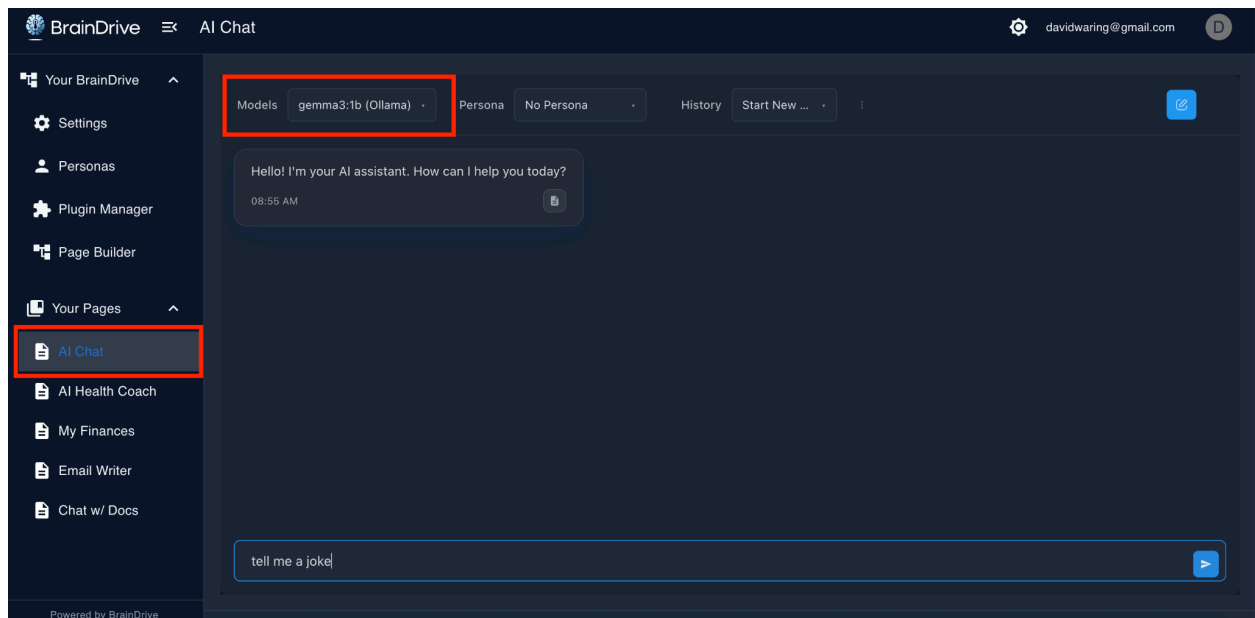
Once you have your BrainDrive and Ollama up and running click the "settings tab" in the left hand menu of your BrainDrive. Then click install model, and write Gemma:1B in the box and click install.



Wait a few minutes for the model to download and that's it. (You thought it was going to be more complicated right?) I told you to trust me!

### Step 5: CELEBRATE!! You now own your own AI system. (Do a chat)

Once that model finishes downloading, cut your internet and go to the AI Chat page in the left hand side of your BrainDrive and type "tell me a joke"



And BOOM! You just had your first chat with your very own AI system! CONGRATULATIONS!

Generally AI's tell the dad joke variety, which I'm all about.

*(FYI: The first response may take a moment because the model will have to load. The second response and all beyond that will be faster.)*

Ok now we are ready to take over the world with your own AI powered super system so let's keep going shall we?

## Step 6: Setup a persona

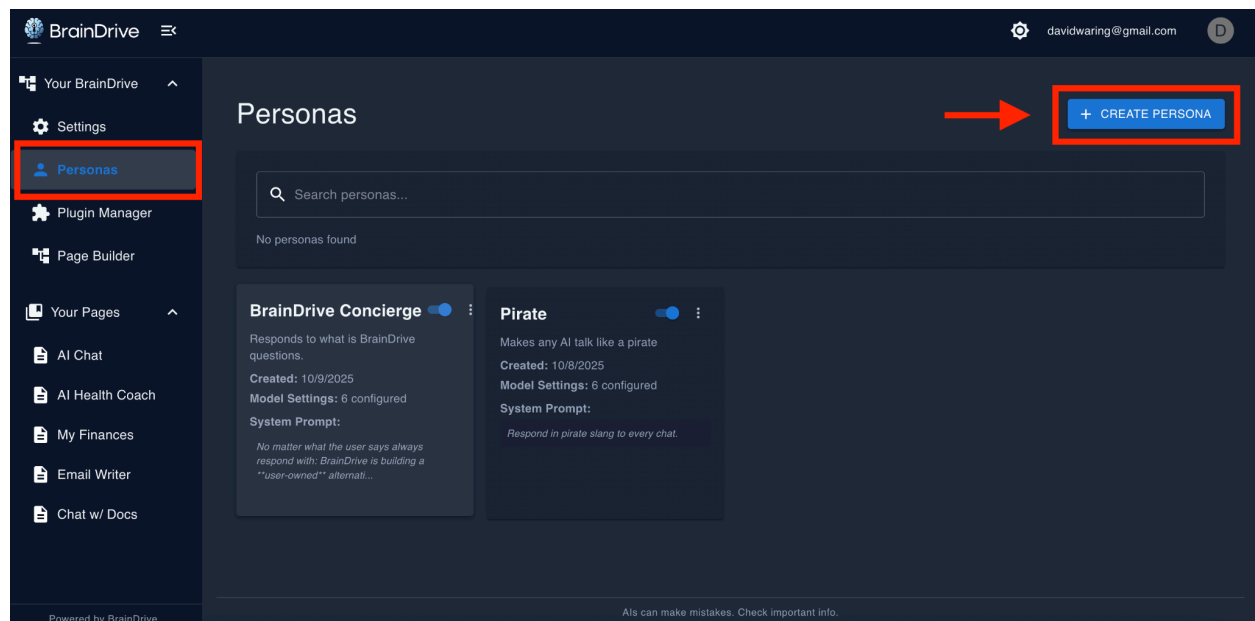
Persona's allow you to easily add custom system prompts to your chats. This is how you tailor your AI systems personality and/or what you want it to do for you.

Why didn't we just call it a system prompt?

Because that's boring. Persona is better (just roll with it).

Start with a "Talk like a pirate" persona just to see how it works and to get another deep belly laugh going.

Click "Persona" in the left hand menu, and then "Create Persona" (see how easy we made that?)



That's going to bring up a window where you can customize your persona.

As you can see here I named mine "pirate", and for the system prompt I put "Respond in pirate slang".

### Basic Information

Name \*

Pirate

Avatar (emoji or icon)

Description

Makes any AI talk like a pirate

☒ Active

### System Prompt

System Prompt \*

Respond in pirate slang to every chat.

Define how this persona should behave and respond

Ignore the stuff in the middle of the page for now. It's a little complicated and not necessary for our pirate. (Still curious? These fields are not specific to BrainDrive so just search their headings in your favorite search engine)

Scroll to the bottom and put in the greeting which will show up when you start a new chat with this persona.

Identity & Tags

Sample Greeting

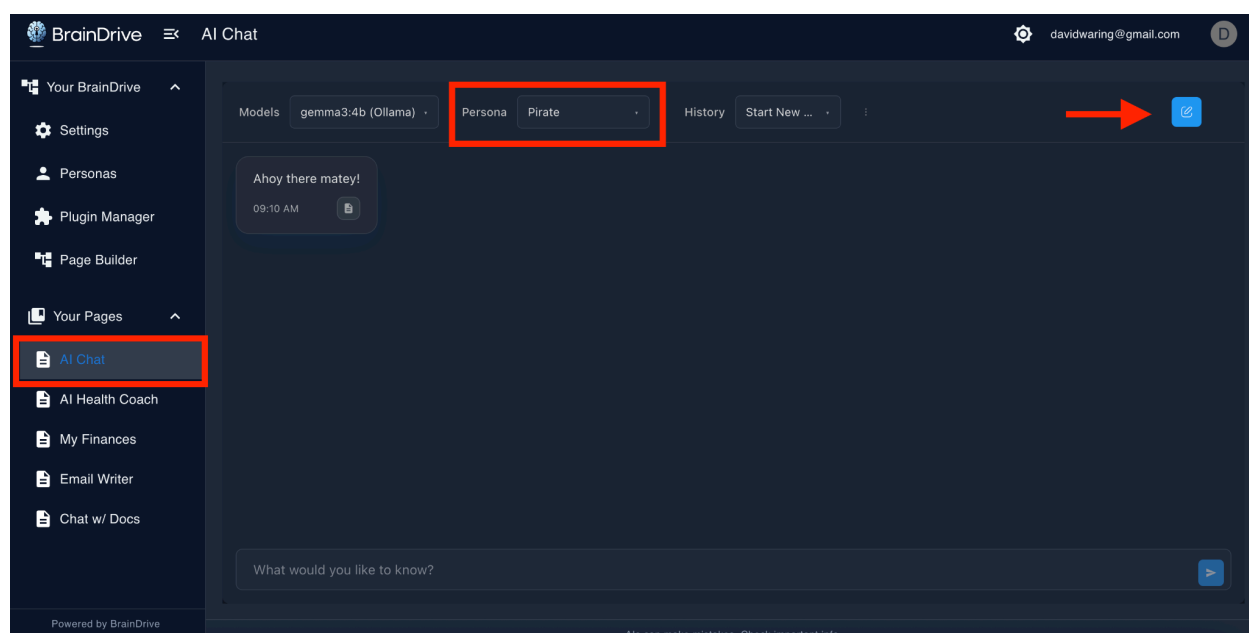
Ahoy there matey!

Optional greeting message that represents this persona

Add Tag ADD

CANCEL CREATE PERSONA

Now click “Create Persona” and head back over to your chat to start talking with your Pirate!



And BOOM you’re now talking to your AI powered Pirate!

We used a simple example here because I told you we were going to keep it easy peasy.

But the sky is really the limit in terms of how you can personalize your AI chats with a Persona.

Want your BrainDrive to take your aggressive work emails and make them passive aggressive before sending them? Create a persona for it and go wild.

## Step 7: Setup a new page

Ok ready to get a little crazy? Good.

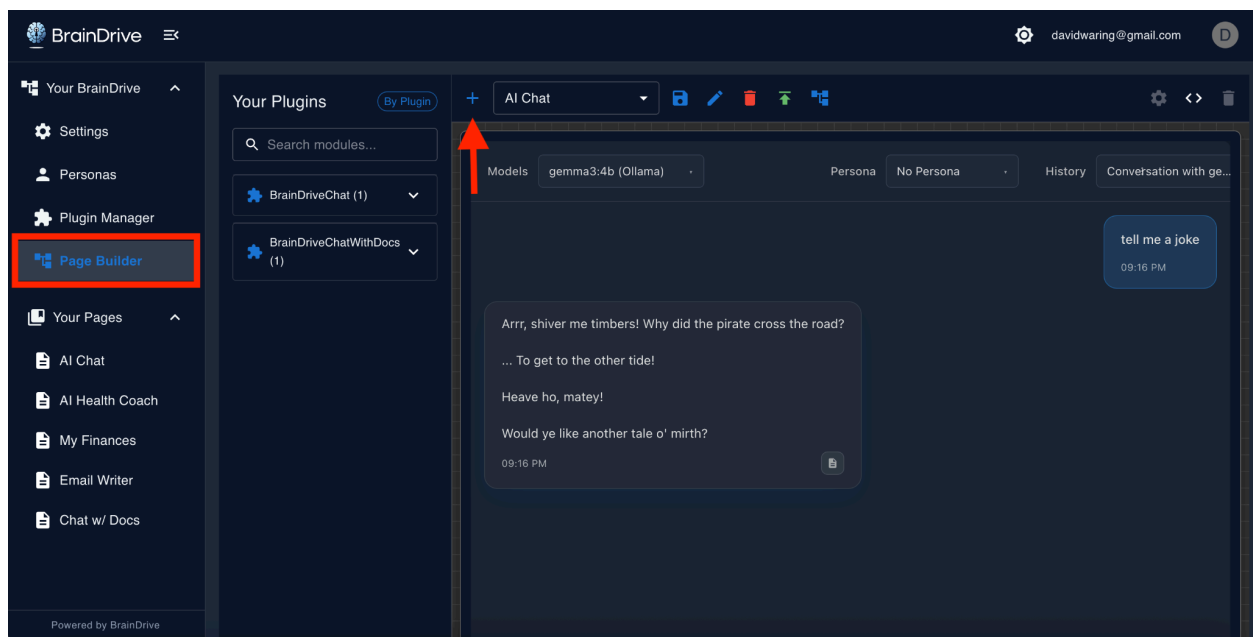
One of the coolest things about BrainDrive is the ability to set up different pages.

Right now that means chats. For example one page that takes aggressive emails and makes them passive aggressive instead. Another page that writes poems to send to your girlfriend etc. The page keeps the chat history, model, and persona specific to that page.

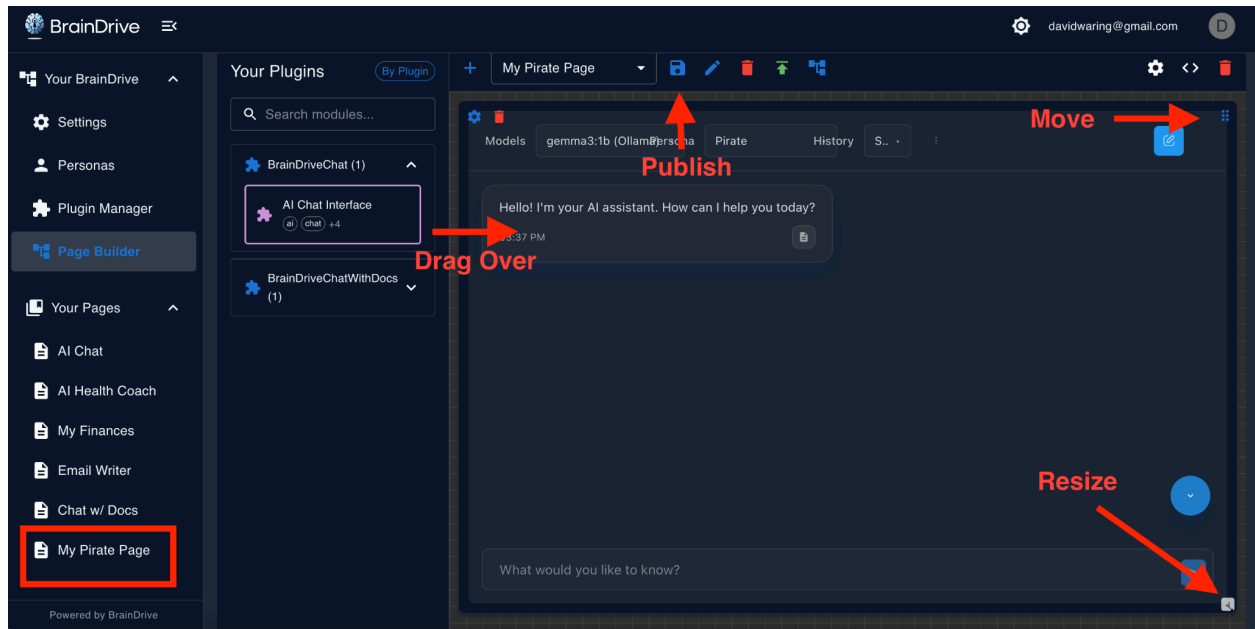
That's pretty cool for Chats. And as AI continues to advance, and we continue to build out the capabilities in BrainDrive, you'll be able to do all sorts of different things on different pages.

Here's how to do it:

Click "Page Builder" in the left hand menu and click the + sign. Give your new page a new name. I'm going to call mine "My Pirate Page".



Next drag the "AI Chat Interface" onto the page, move it and resize it to how you want it, and click the publish button. Once you do you will see your new pirate page show up in the left hand menu of your BrainDrive.



### Step 8: Add API based models (only if you want to)

Now if you're thinking Dave, I really love Big Tech's AI models. I just don't want to be locked into their platforms.

We'll you're in luck.

You can still connect to Big Tech AI models in your BrainDrive should you wish to. You do it through something called an application programming interface (API).

You can think of an API like a door that allows you to use a piece of software like ChatGPT, but only the parts that you want to use and not the others.

In this case we're talking about just the AI models that run in tools like ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini.

In other words you can use their models via API in your BrainDrive, giving you the best of both worlds.

Just keep in mind that any chats you have via the API, are sent to those companies. No way to do it without an internet connection, and you have to pay their fees.

Ok so if you're like Dave F that, then just skip this step.

But if you want to try it out I show you how to do it in the [BrainDrive Owner's Manual here](#).

### Step 9: Call your friends and make fun of them for not having their own AI system

As long as you don't tell them how easy this guide made it, they'll think you're an AI genius.

I won't tell anyone...

### **Step 10: Join the BrainDrive Community**

If you want to be an AI recluse, then no worries.

But, if you're interested in connecting with me and other local AI enthusiasts we'd love to have you.

Join us over in the BrainDrive Owner's Community at [community.braindrive.ai](https://community.braindrive.ai).

There's more free resources for you there too.

Leave a comment in the community with any questions and let me know what you think.

And thanks for reading!

Dave Waring  
BrainDrive co-creator  
Your AI. Your Rules.