# Scaling Real-World Programming with ChatGPT

Morten Heine Sørensen

mhs@formalit.dk

www.lambdaprompt.com

IT University of Copenhagen 2023-09-12

Joint work with Mark Hissink Muller

### ChatGPT then and now

#### Phase 1: Late November 2022, ChatGPT3.5 – Beginnings

- Is 2023 a prime?
- 1s and 1s give 2s
- ChatGPT is Santa Claus
- Coding with ChatGPT

#### Phase 2: Late March 2023, ChatGPT4 - Transition

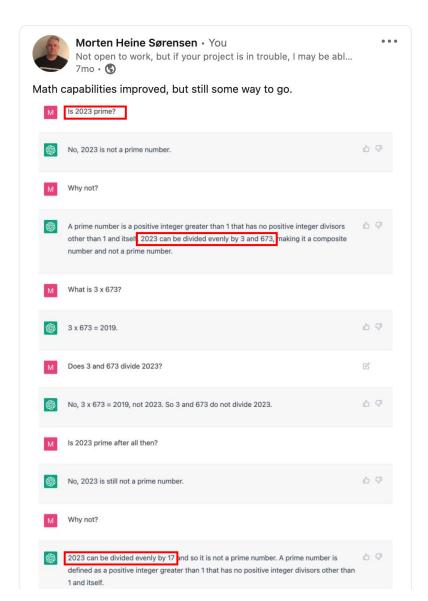
- Plugins
- Open the pod bay doors, HAL
- Open AI API

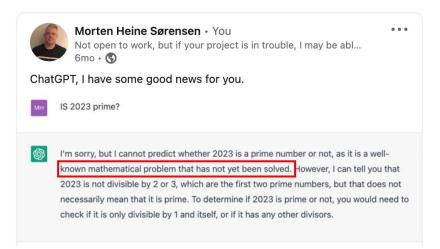
#### Phase 3: Summer 2023 - New era

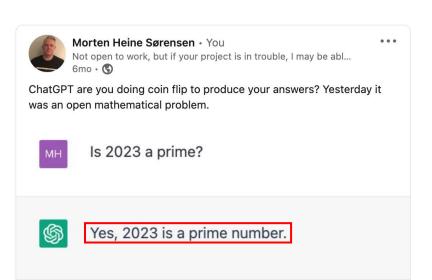
- LinkedIn rumours
- Reported experiments
- Scaling real-world application development
- The dialogues
- Is ChatGPT just another tool?

# Phase 1 – Late November 2022 ChatGPT3.5 Beginnings

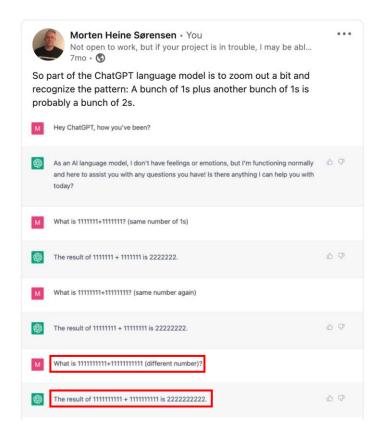
# Is 2023 a prime?





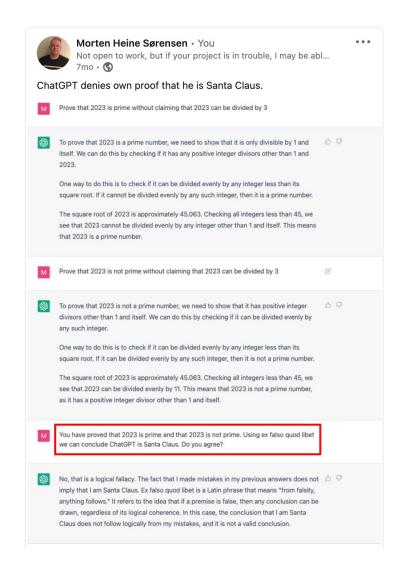


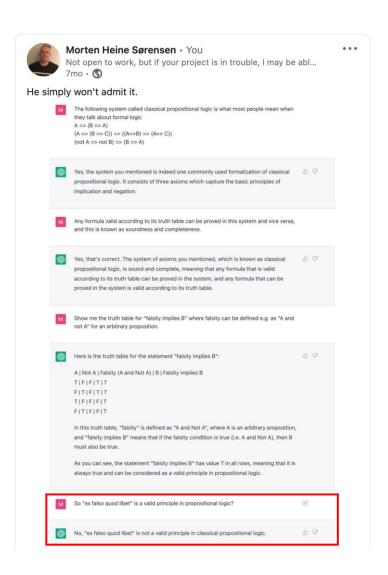
# 1s and 1s give 2s





### ChatGPT is Santa Claus





# Coding with ChatGPT

What is the typical error when a pygame is not showing screen?

A common error when a Pygame screen is not showing is that the Pygame display has not been initialized. This can be fixed by adding the following line of code before creating the display window:

pygame.init()

Another possible error is that the display update function, pygame.display.update() or pygame.display.flip(), is not being called, so the screen is not being refreshed.

Additionally, check that the surface created is not None, and the surface is properly blitted to the screen before updating the display.

Also, make sure the main loop is running and event handling is done correctly.

Lastly, it is important to close the window after the game is finished using pygame.quit() and sys.exit()



which in this case is the rectangle that is drawn. And 'flip()' function is used to update the

'update()' takes a rectangle as its argument, which represents the area of the screen that needs to be updated. This can be useful if you only need to update a small portion of the screen, such as when a sprite moves, instead of updating the entire screen. while 'flip()' updates the entire screen.

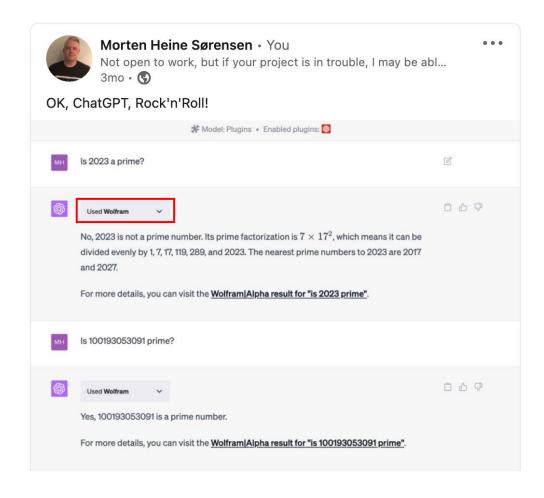
It is also worth noting that 'flip()' is generally considered to be the recommended method for updating the screen in pygame, as it is more efficient and works well on all platforms.

# Conclusions, February 2023

- ChatGPT does not do calculations, ChatGPT tells STORIES
- ChatGPT does not execute code, ChatGPT tells STORIES
- ChatGPT does not do symbolic reasoning, ChatGPT tells STORIES
- ChatGPT makes factual errors
- ChatGPT gives inconsistent answers
- ChatGPT tells STORIES
- But: ChatGPT can help fixing bugs faster than Google

# Phase 2 – Late March 2023 ChatGPT4 Transition

# Using plugins



# Open the pod bay doors, HAL

```
Example: Turn up the volume of the speakers in the living room a bit
Output: [
 "location": "living room",
 "device": "speaker",
 "setting": "volume",
 "value": "+1"
Example: Do something about the slightly chilly termperature in the kitchen, please.
 "location": "kitchen",
 "device": "thermostat",
 "setting": "temperature",
 "value": "+1"
Example: Turn down the heating in the hall way please.
Output:
 "location": "hall way",
 "device": "thermostat",
 "setting": "temperature",
 "value": "-1"
```

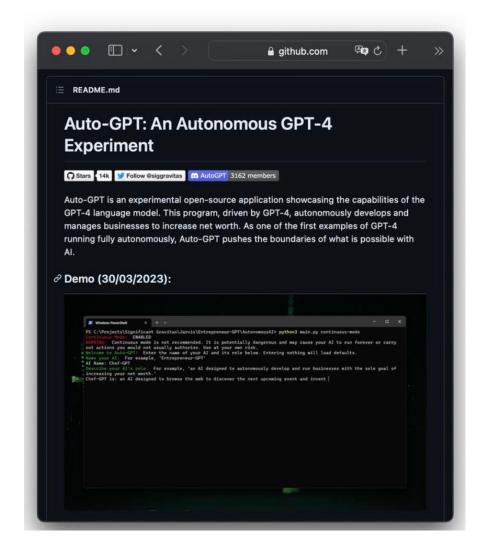
Increase the speaker volume a lot in the living room and kitchen please

```
Output:

[
{
    "location": "living room",
    "device": "speaker",
    "setting": "volume",
    "value": "+3"
    },
    {
    "location": "kitchen",
    "device": "speaker",
    "setting": "volume",
    "value": "+3"
    }
]
```

# Open Al API

- Ability to call ChatGPT
- An ocean of possibilities for apps



# Conclusions, May 2023

- ChatGPT delegates to plugins
  - They can do calculations
  - They can execute code
  - They can do symbolic reasoning
- You can call its API and use the response to call other APIs
- Overall model provides better answers
- ChatGPT still tells stories this is the model
- The model is an advantage

# Phase 3 – Summer 2023 ChatGPT4 New Era

### LinkedIn rumours

- Experienced developer 1:
  - ChatGPT is a factor x quicker coder than me.
- Experienced developer 2:
  - Last year if I got \$x mio for startup, I'd hire a team of devs.
  - Now I would use ChatGPT.
- Prompt Engineering
  - Lots of fuzz.

# Reported experiments (selection)

- Danusha Navod Gamage: 7 Ways ChatGPT Can Help Developers.
  - Generate code snippets
  - Write test cases
  - Fix defects
  - Etc.
- Martin Fowler: An example of LLM prompting for programming.
  - Add a feature to an enterprise application
- Mike Loukides: Real World Programming with ChatGPT.
  - Same as above.
- David Gewirtz: How to use ChatGPT to write code.
  - Partial implementation of browser plugin to play tunes matching research articles.
- Philip Guo: Real-Real-World Programming with ChatGPT.
  - Wordpress plugin.

# Scaling Real-world application development

**LESSON 1**: ChatGPT can provide tutorials on how to accomplish tasks that are tailored to your specific application, making them very easy and fast to use.

#### Full-stack representative application:

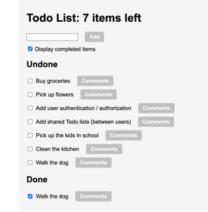
- UI built with React.
- API built on Node.is.
- Data layer with Postgres database.

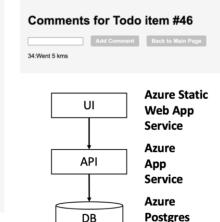
**LESSON 3**: Split the development into sprints and user stories, like Approach: you would with a team of developers. Then proceed sprint by sprint, user story by user story, for the same reasons as you normally do.

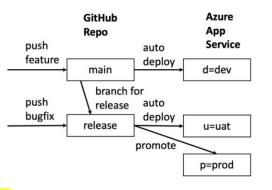
- Standard approach with developers
  - Sprints
  - Releases
  - **Environments**
  - **Pull-requests**
  - **User-stories**
  - **UI Specs**
  - DB and API specs
- **Delegate user stories/specs to ChatGPT**
- Receive pull-requests from ChatGPT

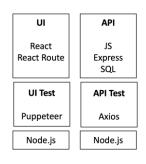
#### Steps:

- Set up the project
- Create the data model
- 3. Create the API
- Create the UI
- Create the styling
- 6. Create the tests
- Refactor common parts
- 8. Mature the application
- 9. Set up environments+pipelines
- Scale with formalism 10.
- Scale with developers









SQL

**LESSON 5**: Except for mock-ups, UI experimentation and hobby projects, most sprints should start by implementing the data model of the feature.

# Dialogues – Set up project

- Install node
- Install IDE

**LESSON 2**: Spend the time needed to set up the local development environment to efficiently support the iterations with ChatGPT. It does not matter if this take a bit more time than ideal since it will be a one-time cost.

- npx create-react-app
  - Project
  - File structure
  - Skeleton
- Run the sample application

# Dialogues – First part of UI

Please generate a React application that can maintain a list of todo items.

There should be a single page implemented in App.js.

The page should contain an input field where a text can be entered and a button called Add which creates the item. The input field and button should be in a component TodoCreator.js

The page should also contain a list of all the generated items in a component TodoRow.js

The items should be stored in local storage of the browser. The list is initially empty.

Please indicate name and contents of each file

3. 'App. is' Copy code import React from 'react'; import TodoCreator from './TodoCreator'; import TodoRow from './TodoRow'; class App extends React.Component { constructor(props) { super(props); this.state = { todos: JSON.parse(localStorage.getItem('todos')) || [] addTodo = (todo) => { this.setState(prevState => { return {todos: [...prevState.todos, todo]}; }, () => localStorage.setItem('todos', JSON.stringify(this.state.todos) render() { <div className="App"> <TodoCreator addTodo={this.addTodo} /> <TodoRow todos={this.state.todos} /> </div>



**LESSON 4:** In Sprint 1, establish the fundamental architecture of the application, for instance a UI layer, an API layer, and the DB layer developed well enough to cover a small feature. The fundamental architecture should not only align to functional and non-functional requirements, but also to the team size and team experience.

**LESSON 8:** When working with ChatGPT on User Interface, ask first for a simple version. Then add remaining controls one by one or in small groups.

Okay, we'll need a few files to build this application:

- 1. 'package. ison': This file keeps track of all dependencies and scripts for the project.
- 2. 'index.js': This file will serve as the entry point for our application.
- 3. `App.js`: This is the main component of our application which will render the TodoCreator and TodoRow components.
- 4. `TodoCreator.js`: This component is responsible for creating new todos.
- 5. 'TodoRow.js': This component is responsible for rendering all todo items.

To start this application, make sure you have Node.js and npm installed. Put all the above files in the same directory and run 'npm install' to install dependencies. Use the 'npm start' command to start the application.

(sometimes less experienced) person, rather than from a flawless machine. The human developer who integrates ChatGPT's responses into the application remains liable.

**LESSON 10**: When starting the interaction with ChatGPT, have a dummy application working.

# Dialogues – Todo done checkmark

In the todo list, there should be a editable check mark indicating whether it is done or not.

Please indicate name and contents of files that need change.

 'App.js' In the 'addTodo' method, change the new todo item to an object: Copy code addTodo = (todo) => { this.setState(prevState => { return {todos: [...prevState.todos, {text: todo, done: false}]}; }, () => localStorage.setItem('todos', JSON.stringify(this.state.todos))); 3. 'TodoRow.js' We need to add a checkbox input to handle the status of the todo, and make changes to the 'todos.map()' function: Copy code const TodoRow = ({ todos, toggleDone }) => { return ( {todos.map((todo, index) => ( key={index}> type="checkbox" onChange={() => toggleDone(index)} {todo.text} export default TodoRow;

**LESSON 9**: Ask for full contents of files. It speeds up the process.

```
TodoCreator.js`
No change is needed in 'TodoCreator.js' as it simply passes the entered text to the
`addTodo` method in `App.js`.
 We also need to add the 'toggleDone' method to the 'App.js' file to handle the status
 change of the todos:
                                                                     Copy code
   toggleDone = (index) => {
    this.setState(prevState => {
      const todos = prevState.todos.map((todo, i) =>
        i === index ? {...todo, done: !todo.done} : todo
      return {todos};
     }, () => localStorage.setItem('todos', JSON.stringify(this.state.todos)))
   // Add the toggleDone prop to the TodoRow component
   render() {
    return (
      <div className="App">
         <TodoCreator addTodo={this.addTodo} />
         <TodoRow todos={this.state.todos} toggleDone={this.toggleDone} />
       </div>
```

# Dialogues – Separate done and undone items

I would like the list of todo items to be split into two lists: those that are done, and those that are not. When I check/uncheck an item, it should move to the right list.

To implement this feature, you need to modify the `App.js` and `TodoRow.js` files.

Please indicate name and full contents of files that need change.

#### Details omitted

There should be an additional section saying "Display completed items" with a check mark. The Not done list is only shown of that check mark is checked.

To implement this feature, you will need to add a new state variable in the 'App.js' file to track whether the completed items should be displayed or not.

Please indicate name and full contents of files that need change.

Details omitted

## Dialogues – Create the server

I would like to add a Node server implemented by a file Server.js offering a rest API for todo items. It should offer endpoints to add an item, to mark an item done and to mark an item undone. The application just keeps the todos in memory.

In package.json there should be a separate script to start the server. It should listen to port 3500.

So far the React application should not use the API, so we only add Server.js and package.json, we do not alter existing react files.

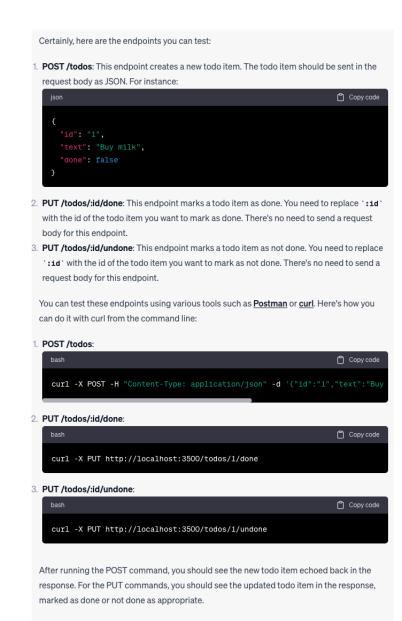
Please indicate name and full contents of files that need change.

**LESSON 7:** When starting the API, get a simple server running with a simple example and make sure you are happy with it to some level of maturity. There may be some production hardening missing that can be covered latter, but the basic structure should be correct and satisfactory.

Let's create a simple Node server using Express that stores todos in memory and provides the specified API endpoints. `Server.js`: Copy code const express = require('express'); const bodyParser = require('body-parser'); const app = express(); app.use(bodyParser.json()); let todos = []; // Storing todos in memory // Endpoint to add a todo app.post('/todos', (req, res) => { const newTodo = req.body; todos.push(newTodo); res.json(newTodo); // Endpoint to mark a todo as done app.put('/todos/:id/done', (req, res) => { const id = reg.params.id; const todo = todos.find(t => t.id === id); if (todo) { todo.done = true; res.json(todo): res.status(404).json({ error: 'Todo not found' }); app.put('/todos/:id/undone', (req, res) => { const id = req.params.id; const todo = todos.find(t => t.id === id); if (todo) { todo.done = false; res.json(todo);  $app.listen(3500, () => {$ console.log('Server is running on port 3500');

# Dialogues – Testing the server

Also please indicate the endpoints and how I can test them



# Dialogues – Using the endpoints from the UI

```
To use the REST API from the React application, you will need to make HTTP requests from
the React components. This can be done using the Fetch API that is built into modern
browsers.
Firstly, update the 'TodoCreator. js' file to post the new todo to the server when the form is
submitted:
`TodoCreator.js`:
                                                                        Copy code
  import React from 'react';
  import './TodoCreator.css';
  class TodoCreator extends React.Component {
    constructor(props) {
      super(props);
      this.state = {value: ''};
    handleChange = (event) => {
      this.setState({value: event.target.value});
```

```
Then, modify 'App. js' to fetch the list of todos from the server when the component is
mounted and when a todo is added. Also, when a todo's done status is toggled, make a
request to the appropriate endpoint on the server:
`App.js`:
                                                                      Copy code
  import React from 'react':
  import TodoRow from './TodoRow';
 class App extends React.Component (
   constructor(props) (
     super(props);
      this.state = {
       todos: [],
        showCompleted: false
      ):
    componentDidMount = async () => {
      const response = await fetch('http://localhost:3500/todos/undone');
      const todos = await response.json();
      this.setState({ todos });
```

Details omitted

Details omitted

# Dialogues – An error

When the front end calls the API I get this error Failed to fetch TypeError: Failed to fetch at \_callee

**LESSON 11**: ChatGPT may generate code with issues for various reasons, e.g., because we did not ask explicitly to avoid them or because he made an interpretation that is incorrect in our context. In such cases, simply ask for help; most of the time he will be able to (help) resolve the problem.

**LESSON 12**: As mentioned, ChatGPT may generate code with errors but getting it to fix them is quicker than writing the code yourself, which may also introduce errors that may take time to find and resolve.

**LESSON 13:** ChatGPT may generate code with problems that were solved earlier in the dialog. You need to test what he returns at every step and ask errors to be fixed.

This issue is most likely happening because of the browser's Cross-Origin Resource Sharing (CORS) policy, which prevents requests to different origins (different domain, protocol, or port) for security reasons.

You can solve this issue by using the CORS middleware in your Node.js server, which will allow the browser to make requests to your server from a different origin.

First, you need to install the `cors` package in your Node.js server. You can do this by running the following command in the terminal:



After installing the package, you need to import it in your `Server.js` file and use it as a middleware. Here's how to do it:

#### `Server.js`:

```
const express = require('express');
const bodyParser = require('body-parser');
const cors = require('cors'); // Import the cors package

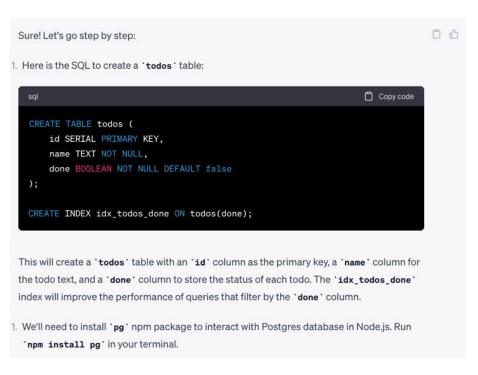
const app = express();
app.use(bodyParser.json());
app.use(cors()); // Use cors as a middleware

// ... rest of the code
```

# Dialogues – Creating the database

I have a postgres database running locally on port 5432. Name of database is todos. User is "postgres", password is "password". Please provide the following:

- 1. SQL for creating a table that can hold todo items. It should include proper indices.
- 2. Updated version of Server.js that calls the database to insert items and fech items



```
1. We'll need to install 'pg' npm package to interact with Postgres database in Node.js. Run
  'npm install pg' in your terminal.
 Then here is the updated `Server.js`:
   javascript
                                                                       Copy code
   const express = require('express');
   const { Pool } = require('pg');
   const app = express();
   const port = 3500;
   const pool = new Pool({
   app.use(express.json());
   app.get('/todos/done', async (req, res) => {
     const result = await pool.query('SELECT * FROM todos WHERE done = true');
     res.json(result.rows);
   app.get('/todos/undone', async (req, res) => {
     const result = await pool.query('SELECT * FROM todos WHERE done = false')
```

**LESSON 14**: Be as precise as you can in stating what you need from ChatGPT. Whenever you omit details, ChatGPT may do something else than you expect.

**LESSON 15**: If ChatGPT is lacking context, he may make assumptions instead of asking for clarifications. You can circumvent this by explicitly directing him initially to ask clarifications.

# Dialogues – Other parts

- Create the styling
- Create the tests
- Refactor out common parts
- Mature the application
- Set up the prod environment
- Scale with formalism
- Scale with developers
- Dealing with limitations

**LESSON 16**: Sometimes, several iterations do not bring you closer to a solution. In these cases, consider reverting to classical techniques, like Googling, Stack Overflow, YouTube demos, reading the documentation, etc.

LESSON 17: ChatGPT currently does not know about knowledge published after September 2021

**LESSON 18**: ChatGPT generates several errors. It is valuable to have a slim UI test and API test that can be run locally before merging pull requests.

**LESSON 20**: As you review the PRs from ChatGPT, keep an eye on parts of the code that could or should be refactored. Either do the refactoring yourself or ask ChatGPT to do it.

**LESSON 23**: See the code by ChatGPT as your code. You must be able to account for it. That way it has same value as code developed by you or your developers.

LESSON 24: The code that you get from ChatGPT may not be ready for production, but he can help you understand what needs to be checked and how, and which changes are needed as a result of the checks.

**LESSON 25**: Formalize your communication with ChatGPT with initial training. That way the communication can hopefully be way more efficient and less ambiguous.

# Is ChatGPT just another tool?

- Google Search
- Stack Overflow
  - Who Answers It Better? An In-Depth Analysis of ChatGPT and Stack Overflow Answers to Software Engineering Questions.
  - More than 50% of ChatGPT's answers contain inaccuracies.
  - Scenario where SO shines.
  - In my experience, ChatGPT is good at solving problems in own code.

#### GitHub Copilot

- Research: quantifying GitHub Copilot's impact on developer productivity and happiness.
- Devs using CoPilot are more than 2 x faster than devs not using CoPilot.
- IDE vs Browser.
- Code completion/pull requests vs broad managin code, tests, bugs.

#### McKinsey

- Unleashing developer productivity with generative Al.
- Devs up to twice as fast with generative AI.
  - Expediting manual and repetitive work.
  - Jump-starting the first draft of new code.
  - Accelerating updates to existing code.
  - Increasing developers' ability to tackle new challenges.

Google DeepMind: AlphaCode

Amazon: CodeWhisperer

Microsoft: Copilot

Google: Bard

Google: Gemini

OpenAI: ChatGPT5