

2. The ChatGPT API

On March 1st 2023, OpenAI introduced a programming interface (API) to ChatGPT¹. This essentially enabled developers to build their own version of ChatGPT. I had been waiting for this ever since the ChatGPT web app got released in the end of 2022. I knew somehow that OpenAI could not keep this amazing technology just to themselves, and that they had to make it a platform for developers to build their own apps. The availability of APIs to the previous generation of models (GPT3, Dall-E, ...) made me hope for the day when I could build on top of this Large Language Model.

But when I started programming with this new chat completion API, I started understanding better how the ChatGPT app was working, especially when it comes to storing the state of the conversation. Spoiler alert: the API is stateless: it doesn't store the conversation, and just passes it entirely each time that a new request is made to the model.

2.1. Setting up the Programming Environment

Setting up an effective programming environment is crucial for working with Generative Pre-trained Transformers (GPTs). This section will guide you through the necessary tools, libraries, and hardware requirements, followed by a step-by-step setup process.

2.1.1. Initial Setup Guide

I'll take as assumption that you are running on a Windows machine. Wherever there is a major difference in OS, I'll try to make sure that I give explanations for the different platforms.

Step 1: Install Python

Ensure that Python (version 3.6 or later) is installed on your system. You can download it from the official Python website².

Step 2: Set Up a Virtual Environment

This is a good habit if you don't want to mess up completely your Python dev environment. That being said, this blog will not leverage a lot of Python packages, so you might get away without it.

- Using a virtual environment is recommended to manage dependencies.
- You can create a virtual environment using tools like **venv** or **conda**.

```
python -m venv env  
# Activate the environment  
env\Scripts\activate  
# On Linux or Mac: source env/bin/activate
```

¹ <https://openai.com/blog/introducing-chatgpt-and-whisper-apis>

² www.python.org

Step 3: Install Packages³

- OpenAI-Python⁴ is the official library provided by OpenAI for interacting with their GPT models..
- LangChain⁵ is useful for chaining language model calls and building complex applications.
- Streamlit⁶ is a Python library for creating and sharing beautiful, custom web apps.

```
pip install openai langchain streamlit
```

Step 4: API Keys and Authentication (For OpenAI)

- Obtain an API key from OpenAI by registering on their platform.
- Set up authentication by adding your API key to your environment variables or directly in your code (not recommended for production).

Step 5: Test Installation

- Verify your setup by running a small script to interact with the OpenAI API.
- As of version 1.X of the OpenAI Python SDK, your code would look like this:

```
from openai import OpenAI
client = OpenAI(api_key = 'sk-XXXX')
res = client.completions.create(
    model="gpt-3.5-turbo-instruct",
    prompt="Say this is a test",
)
print(res.choices[0].text)
```

Step 6: Streamlit Basic Setup

- Create a simple Streamlit app to test the setup and save it under 1_3_streamlit_setup.py

```
import streamlit as st
st.title('GPT with Streamlit')
user_input = st.text_input("Enter some text")
if user_input:
    st.write("Your input was:", user_input)
```

- Run the Streamlit app with the following command (not simply executing the script with Python)
\$ streamlit run chap1/1_3_streamlit_setup.py

³ openai >= 1.0 langchain >= 2.0 streamlit >= 1.34

⁴ <https://github.com/openai/openai-python>

⁵ <https://www.langchain.com/>

⁶ <https://streamlit.io/>

2.1.2. Setup the dev environment

To setup VSCode for a Python project, you will need to install some extensions and configure some settings. Here are the steps to follow:

- Install the Python extension from the VSCode marketplace. This will enable syntax highlighting, code completion, debugging, testing, and other features for Python files.
- Install the Pylance extension from the VSCode marketplace. This will enhance the Python language server with type information, signature help, and more.
- Create a folder for your project and open it in VSCode. You can use the File > Open Folder menu or the command palette (Ctrl+Shift+P) and type "Open Folder".
- Configure VSCode to use the correct Python interpreter and linter. You can use the status bar at the bottom of the editor to select the interpreter and the linter. Alternatively, you can use the command palette and type "Python: Select Interpreter" or "Python: Select Linter". You can choose any linter that you prefer, such as pylint, flake8, or black.
- Write your Python code and enjoy the features of VSCode. You can use the Run > Start Debugging menu or the F5 key to debug your code. You can also use the Test > Run Tests menu or the command palette to run your tests. You can also use the Code > Format Document menu or the Shift+Alt+F key to format your code.

If you don't want to maintain your dev environment locally, you can get started with a cloud development environment, like GitHub Codespace.

This works really well with Streamlit, as an end-to-end full online dev environment.⁷

2.1.3. Develop and deploy a web app with Streamlit

I get to speak about two of my favorites Python frameworks in one blog: OpenAI and Streamlit.

What is Streamlit? Streamlit is a Python framework that lets you create beautiful and interactive web apps in minutes, without any web development skills. You can write your app logic in pure Python, and Streamlit will handle the front-end for you. Streamlit apps are composed of widgets, charts, maps, tables, media, and custom components that you can arrange and update dynamically with a few lines of code. Streamlit also provides a live reloading feature that automatically refreshes your app whenever you change your code or data.

How does Streamlit work? Streamlit works by running a local web server that serves your app to your browser. You can either run your app on your own machine, or deploy it to a cloud platform like Heroku, AWS or the Streamlit Cloud. Streamlit apps are based on a simple concept: every time the user interacts with a widget, such as a slider or a button, Streamlit reruns your Python script from top to bottom, and updates the app accordingly⁸. This means that you don't have to worry about callbacks, state management, or HTML templates. You just write your app logic as a normal Python script, and Streamlit will take care of the rest.

I have developed and deployed around 60 apps with Streamlit over the past couple of years. I wrote apps to manage my Spotify playlist, map out the houses in Boston suburbs, track the price of Bitcoin,

⁷ <https://blog.streamlit.io/edit-inbrowser-with-github-codespaces/>

⁸ <https://docs.streamlit.io/library/get-started/main-concepts#app-model>

edit videos from YouTube, play back some chess moves, ... So this feels like a natural way to bring to life the content of this blog.

2.2. Getting started with the chat completion API

This is what the first lines of code would look like from the version 1.0 of the OpenAI Python SDK:

```
import openai
openai.api_key = "sk-XXXX"
m = [{"role": "system", "content": "If I say hello, say world"}, {"role": "user", "content": "hello"}]
completion = openai.chat.completions.create(model='gpt-3.5-turbo',
                                             messages=m)
response = completion.choices[0].message.content
print(response) # world
```

In order to facilitate the storage of our API key, we can store it as a variable “OPENAI_API_KEY” in a file `secrets.toml`. Since it will be used in the next section by Streamlit, save this file in a folder called `.streamlit/` and load it with the following command:

```
with open('.streamlit/secrets.toml','rb') as f:
    secrets = toml.load(f)
```

As you can see from the messages that are passed to the chat completion API, the structure expected is a list of dictionaries⁹, with each entry containing a role (either system, user or assistant) and a content entry. The first entry is a system prompt: it is going to serve as context for the rest of the conversation, forcing the chat to behave in a certain way. Some developers have found success in continually moving the system message near the end of the conversation to keep the model's attention from drifting away as conversations get longer.

The list of messages can contain as many *user* and *assistant* exchanges as you want, as long as you do not exceed the model's context window. For the first version of GPT-3.5¹⁰, the number of tokens accepted was 4,096 tokens (inputs and outputs tokens are summed). In some cases, it's easier to show the model what you want rather than tell the model what you want. One way to show the model what you want is with faked example messages. This is what is called few-shot prompting.

The message contained in the chat completion object¹¹ that is returned by the API can be appended to the message list to iterate on the next question to the assistant:

```
{"role": "assistant", "content": "world"}
```

⁹ https://cookbook.openai.com/examples/how_to_format_inputs_to_chatgpt_models

¹⁰ <https://platform.openai.com/docs/models/gpt-3-5>

¹¹ <https://platform.openai.com/docs/api-reference/chat/object>

Additional parameters can be passed to the chat completion function¹² (like max number of tokens, number of choices to generate, and stream option).

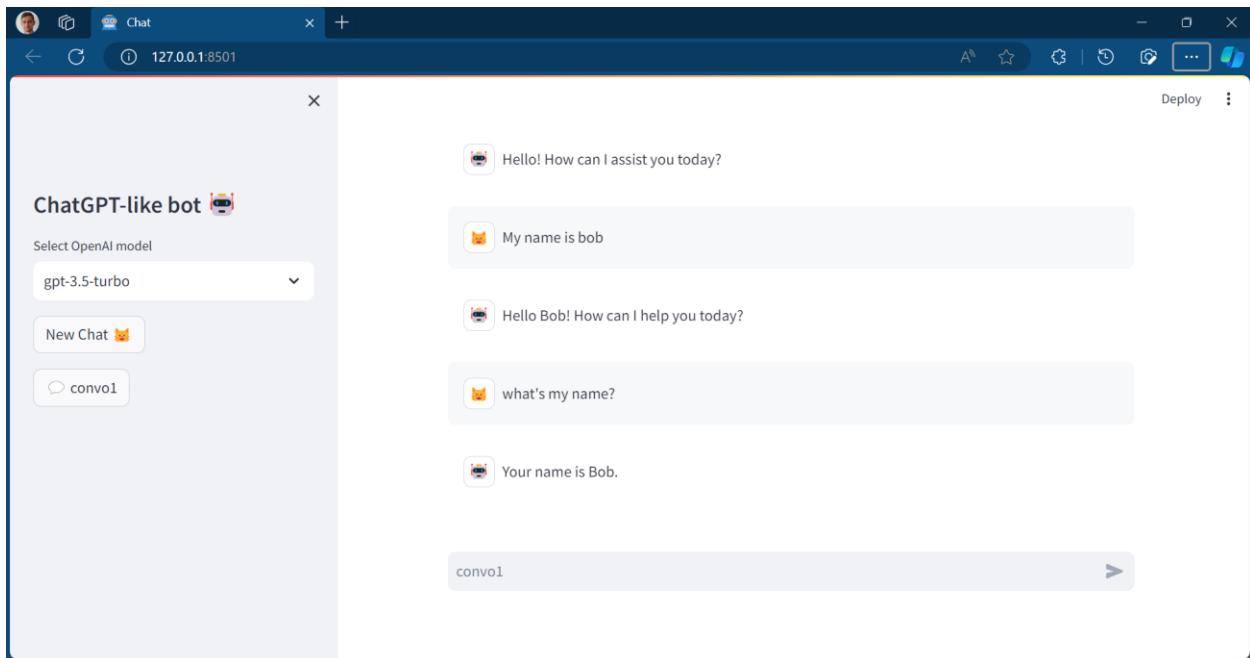
2.3. Prices of the API

The prices¹³ have evolved quite a bit since the introduction of the ChatGPT API. As of June 2024:

- GPT 3.5 turbo costs \$0.5 / 1M input tokens, \$1.5 / 1M output tokens.
- GPT-4o costs \$5 / 1M input tokens, \$15 / 1M output tokens.

2.4. Build your first chatbot app

In this chapter you will learn how to build your very first chatbot `chat_app.py`. It will look like this:



We will breakdown the development into the following steps:

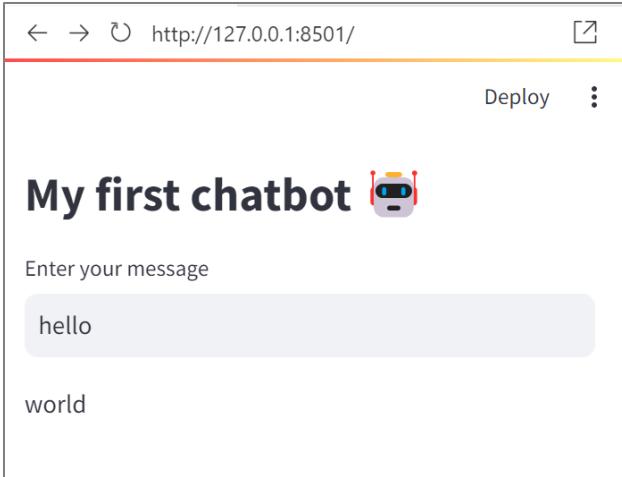
1. Define the graphical components of the app (`text_input`, `button`, `selectbox`)
2. Display the chat conversation in the main area (`chat_message`)
3. Implement various functions (`new_chat`, `save_chat`, `select_chat`, `dumb_chat`) for handling chat functionalities, and save the chat history as json file
4. Handle session states
5. Stream the conversation (`chat_stream`)

2.4.1. Create a first chat graphical user interface

This part is going to focus more on the Streamlit app building framework.

¹² <https://platform.openai.com/docs/api-reference/chat/create>

¹³ <https://openai.com/pricing>



This is the code for the first chat GUI in Streamlit:

```
import openai
import streamlit as st
openai.api_key = st.secrets['OPENAI_API_KEY']
st.title('My first chatbot 🤖')
m = [{'role': 'system', 'content': 'If I say hello, say world'}]
prompt = st.text_input('Enter your message')
if prompt:
    m.append({'role': 'user', 'content': prompt})
    completion = openai.chat.completions.create(model='gpt-3.5-turbo',
                                                messages=m)
    response = completion.choices[0].message.content
    st.write(response)
```

The basic elements that are useful for any basic app are the `text_input`¹⁴ and the `write`¹⁵ method.

We can gradually increase the complexity of the app, by adding a `selectbox`¹⁶ to choose the model:

```
models_name = ['gpt-3.5-turbo', 'gpt-4o']
selected_model = st.sidebar.selectbox('Select OpenAI model', models_name)
```

Notice that Streamlit provides you with a way to store your OpenAI key as secrets¹⁷.

2.4.2. Chat elements

¹⁴ https://docs.streamlit.io/library/api-reference/widgets/st.text_input

¹⁵ <https://docs.streamlit.io/library/api-reference/write-magic/st.write>

¹⁶ <https://docs.streamlit.io/library/api-reference/widgets/st.selectbox>

¹⁷ <https://docs.streamlit.io/library/advanced-features/secrets-management>

Two new methods have been added in 2023 to facilitate the development of chat-based apps: **chat_message**¹⁸ lets you insert a chat message container into the app so you can display messages from the user or the app. **chat_input**¹⁹ lets you display a chat input widget so the user can type in a message.

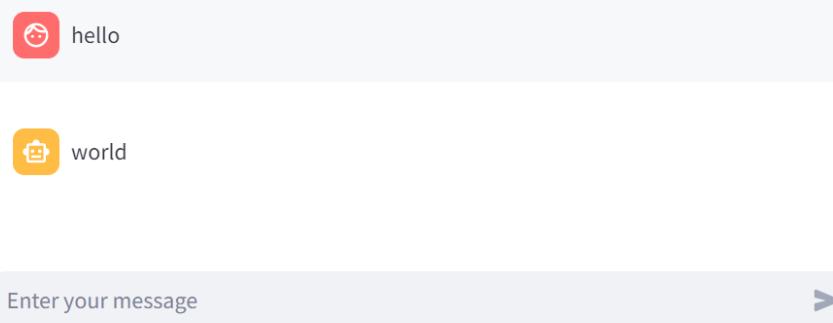
```
import streamlit as st

messages = [{'role': 'user', 'content': 'hello'},
            {'role': 'assistant', 'content': 'world'}]

if prompt := st.chat_input('Enter your message'):
    messages.append({'role': 'user', 'content': prompt})

for line in messages:
    if line['role'] == 'user':
        with st.chat_message('user'):
            st.write(line['content'])
    elif line['role'] == 'assistant':
        with st.chat_message('assistant'):
            st.write(line['content'])
```

As you can see from the structure of the code, the rendering of the messages will be done after a new message has been added to the list. But the layout of the app is special in this case, as the chat inputs shows up at the bottom of the page.



A similar result can be achieved in a simpler for loop:

```
for line in messages:
    st.chat_message(line['role']).write(line['content'])
```

2.4.3. Chat functions

¹⁸ https://docs.streamlit.io/library/api-reference/chat/st.chat_message

¹⁹ https://docs.streamlit.io/library/api-reference/chat/st.chat_input

In order to design the behavior of the app, without calling OpenAI each time, I'd recommend creating a dummy chat function:

```
import streamlit as st
import json

# Functions
def dumb_chat():
    return "Hello world"

if prompt := st.chat_input():
    with st.chat_message('user'):
        st.write(prompt)
    with st.chat_message('assistant'):
        result = dumb_chat()
        st.write(result)
```

In order to start building a chat that has more than one question and one answer (not much of a chat), we will need to save the conversation (and load it back).

First let's start by loading an existing conversation, with a function called **load_chat** (we can see the conversation dictionary in the sidebar for debugging):

```
def load_chat(file):
    with open(f'chat/{file}') as f:
        convo = json.load(f)
    return convo

st.sidebar.title('ChatGPT-like bot 🤖')

convo_file = st.sidebar.selectbox('Select a conversation',
os.listdir('chat'))
# st.sidebar.write(convo_file)
convo = load_chat(convo_file)
st.sidebar.write(convo)
```

ChatGPT-like bot 🤖

Select a conversation

convo0.json

```
[{"role": "user", "content": "hello"}, {"role": "assistant", "content": "world"}]
```

Second let's save the new elements of the conversation, with a function called **save_chat**:

```
def save_chat(convo,file):
    with open(f'chat/{file}', 'w') as f:
        json.dump(convo, f, indent=4)

# Create a text input widget in the Streamlit app
```

```

if prompt := st.chat_input():
    # Append the text input to the conversation
    with st.chat_message('user'):
        st.write(prompt)
    convo.append({'role': 'user', 'content': prompt})
    # Query the chatbot with the complete conversation
    with st.chat_message('assistant'):
        result = chat(convo)
        st.write(result)
    # Add response to the conversation
    convo.append({'role': 'assistant', 'content': result})
    save_chat(convo, convo_file)

```

You can implement other functions such as **add_message** (here with a more complex version of the dummy chat, with subsequent display of the messages in the sidebar after each modification):

```

import streamlit as st
import json

# Functions
def load_chat():
    with open('chat/convo0.json') as f:
        dummy = json.load(f)
    return dummy

def dumb_chat():
    return "Hello world"

def add_message(messages, role, content):
    messages.append({'role': role, 'content': content })
    return messages

messages = load_chat()
st.sidebar.write(messages)

if prompt := st.chat_input():
    with st.chat_message('user'):
        st.write(prompt)
    messages = add_message(messages, 'user', prompt)
    st.sidebar.write(messages)
    with st.chat_message('assistant'):
        result = dumb_chat()
        st.write(result)
    messages = add_message(messages, 'assistant', result)
    st.sidebar.write(messages)

```

2.4.4. Building the conversation

In the previous chapter, we've seen how to save and load a conversation. But we don't really want to be writing to disk every element of our app that needs to store a state. So now is a good time to discover the execution model of Streamlit, and how to memorize the elements from the app.

We have seen how to store messages as a list of dictionaries and append new messages to this list subsequently for the user and the assistant. In this chapter, we'll see how to make use of Streamlit session states²⁰ in order to store the conversation.

First you need to initialize the parameters of the session state:

```
# Initialization
if 'convo' not in st.session_state:
    st.session_state.convo = []
```

Then we append the content of the conversation to the session state:

```
if prompt := st.chat_input():
    # Append the text input to the conversation
    with st.chat_message('user'):
        st.write(prompt)
    st.session_state.convo.append({'role': 'user', 'content': prompt})
    # Query the chatbot with the complete conversation
    with st.chat_message('assistant'):
        result = chat(st.session_state.convo)
        st.write(result)
    # Add response to the conversation
    st.session_state.convo.append({'role': 'assistant', 'content': result})
```

2.4.5. Stream the response

Finally, one small thing is missing in order to have an app that looks and feels just like ChatGPT. We will modify the call to the openai chat completion API, by adding the parameter stream.

Setting `stream = True` in a request makes the model start returning tokens as soon as they are available, instead of waiting for the full sequence of tokens to be generated. It does not change the time to get all the tokens, but it reduces the time for first token for an application where we want to show

²⁰ <https://docs.streamlit.io/library/advanced-features/session-state>

partial progress or are going to stop generations. This can be a better user experience and a UX improvement so it's worth experimenting with streaming.

```
def chat_stream(messages,model='gpt-3.5-turbo'):
    # Generate a response from the ChatGPT model
    completion = client.chat.completions.create(
        model=model,
        messages= messages,
        stream = True
    )
    report = []
    res_box = st.empty()
    # Looping over the response
    for resp in completion:
        if resp.choices[0].finish_reason is None:
            # join method to concatenate the elements of the list
            # into a single string, then strip out any empty strings
            report.append(resp.choices[0].delta.content)
            result = ''.join(report).strip()
            result = result.replace('\n', '')
            res_box.write(result)
    return result
```

Congratulations 🎉 You have created your first chatbot. If you assemble the learnings from the previous sections, you will be able to replicate the code in `chat_app.py`