

All About Perplexity AI: 'The Universal Answering Machine'

Here's how this AI-generated 'answer machine' works, and how you can start experimenting.

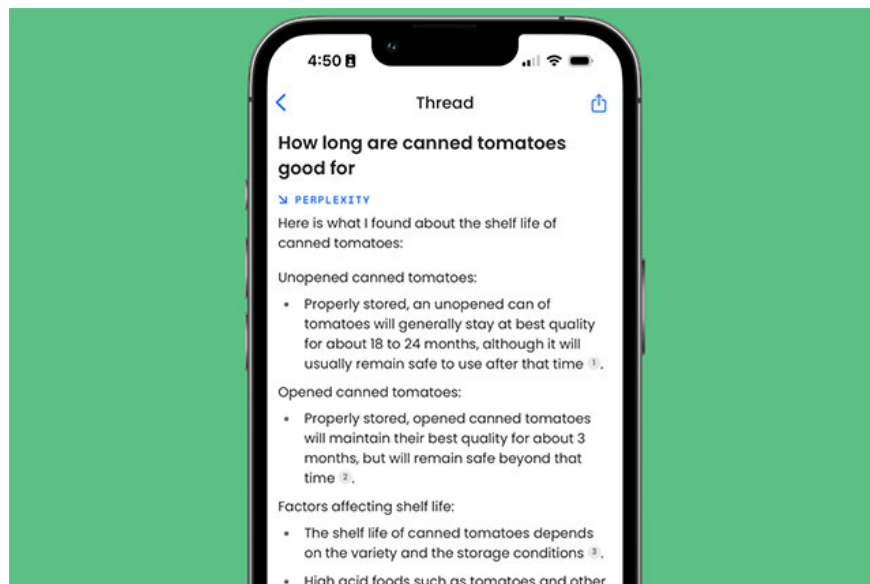
Launched in 2023, Perplexity AI quickly gained traction with users — and caused quite a few headaches for the sources it cites. Today, it's considered one of the most exciting new AI tools around, second only to ChatGPT (which, in fact, is powered by ChatGPT).

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What is Perplexity AI?

Perplexity is an AI search engine that crawls the internet and aggregates answers to user questions through a chat interface. You can ask it almost anything, and it will respond with sourced information, presented in a conversational format.

Unlike traditional search engines like Google, Perplexity doesn't just provide a list of relevant websites, but directly pulls content from those sources to answer you. Also, unlike many other AI chatbots, Perplexity isn't bound by a fixed 'knowledge base', so the information is always fresh. However, the quality of the answers still depends on the reliability of the sources it pulls from — if the source is inaccurate, the answer may be inaccurate.



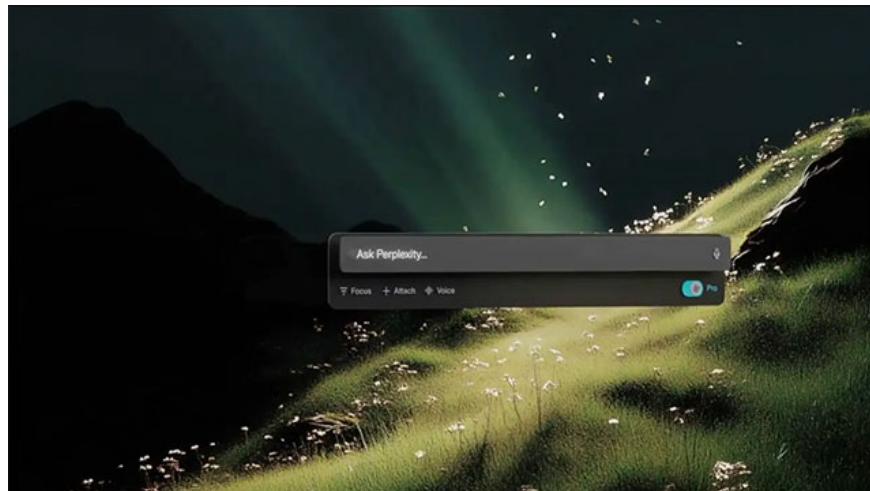
In October 2024, Perplexity added two new features: **Internal Knowledge Search** and **Spaces**. Internal Knowledge Search allows AI to search not only the web, but also a user's or organization's personal files to provide more accurate and personalized answers. Spaces acts as a collaboration space (similar to Anthropic's Artifacts or ChatGPT's Canvas), allowing you to preview content or code created in a separate window, separate from the chat.

In November 2024, the company began testing the integration of 'sponsored suggested questions' and ads that appear next to answers. At the same time, Perplexity also introduced a 'one-touch' shopping tool — where users can both research and buy products right on the platform.

The success of Perplexity also led ChatGPT to launch ChatGPT Search in October 2024, which works much the same way: it pulls information from the internet and generates conversational responses, always up to date. Perplexity is now available via its website, Mac, iOS, and Android apps.

When was Perplexity born?

Perplexity was founded in August 2022 by Aravind Srinivas (CEO), Denis Yarats (CTO), and Andy Konwinski. In December of that year, they launched their first commercial product, **Perplexity Ask**. In January 2023, Perplexity added new features such as direct citation of sources in answers and the ability to ask follow-up questions.

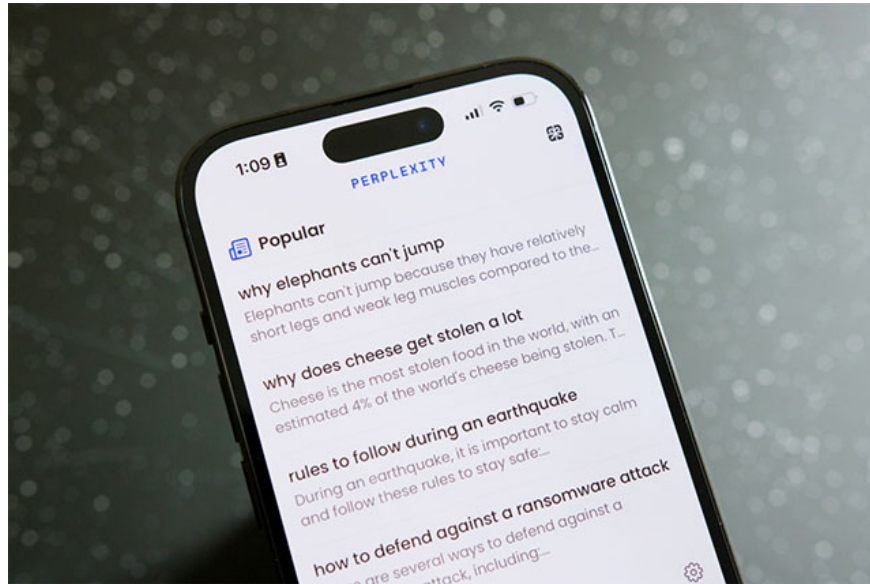


On February 8, 2023, the company renamed its chatbot system **Perplexity** and launched a Chrome extension. By March 2023, the platform had reached 2 million monthly active users. That number had grown to around 15 million by October 2024.

Get Started with Perplexity

You can try Perplexity for free at **perplexity.ai** without logging in. However, if you want to save your chat history for future reference, you'll need to create a free account using Google, Apple, or your corporate email. When you first log in, you'll see a series of introductory screens that introduce you to the tool, along with promotions for the Pro plan and mobile apps.

The left navigation bar includes: **Home** (live chat with the AI), **Discover** (a roundup of breaking news), **Spaces** (download documents and set behavioral instructions for the AI), and **Library** (manage the entire conversation thread, including the initial question, follow-up questions, and Perplexity's responses).



Just below the command input box is a Focus menu, which lets you choose your search scope: the entire web, academic publications, or video and social media platforms. There's also a dedicated math or document generation mode. The attachment button on the right lets you upload files/PDFs to supplement your questions (free users are limited to three per day). The Pro Search toggle lets you run up to three advanced searches per day, scanning twice as many websites as a regular search.

What is Perplexity Pro?

This is a premium plan for \$20/month, which offers unlimited quick searches, 300 Pro Searches/day, choice of platform models (GPT-4o, Claude-3, Sonar Large - LLaMA 3.1), unlimited file uploads, access to imaging tools (Playground AI, DALL-E, SDXL), and \$5 monthly API credit.

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