

Which is better: Perplexity or ChatGPT?

How does Perplexity compare to ChatGPT, the world's most well-invested and widely used AI assistant?

Most AI chatbots feel pretty similar. Sure, they use different models internally, but whether you're using ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini, the experience is pretty much the same. You type in the question, and the AI ?? automatically generates the answer – that's why Perplexity is so interesting.

Instead of just another chatbot, Perplexity is touted as an alternative to traditional search engines and a versatile research assistant. Unlike competing AI chatbots, Perplexity focuses on real-time search results with reliable citations. And with the launch of Perplexity Computer, it now has the ability to function as an agent, meaning it can handle complex, multi-step research—and more—automatically. So how does Perplexity compare to ChatGPT, the world's most well-funded and widely used AI assistant?

An overview comparison of Perplexity and ChatGPT

Perplexity and ChatGPT are both excellent tools. You need to read the full comparison to better understand the capabilities of both, but here's a brief overview.

	Perplexity	ChatGPT
Model	There are several different AI models: GPT-5.4, Claude Sonnet 4.6, Gemini 3.1 Pro, Nemotron 3 Super, and Perplexity's internal sonar model (powered by Llama 3.1).	GPT-5.4 (strongest); GPT-5.3 (current default on lower packages); GPT-5 mini; GPT-5 nano
Model selection	You can choose any model you like for any query; Model Council (on the Max plan) can run your query on multiple models simultaneously and aggregate the answers.	By default, ChatGPT automatically selects a model based on your query; you can also specify the model manually.

Web search quality	The search results are consistently better, especially real-time searches; you can limit your search to certain sources (such as academic articles) and see transparent citations.	The search feature is quite good, but it's based on fewer sources and isn't entirely accurate; you need to actively click "search" (or ask ChatGPT to search) to ensure you get real-time results.
Multimodal support	Supports text, images, audio, and files; Pro and Max users can create short videos (up to 8 seconds); voice mode works well for queries, but there is no live video-based voice assistant.	Fully multimodal: import and export text, images, audio, plus upload and export files; Advanced Voice Mode can answer questions about anything you see.
Programming and data analysis	It has powerful programming and analysis capabilities, but the limited number of context windows and fewer specialized features make it less useful; Perplexity Computer can handle agentic programming.	ChatGPT can handle almost any data or programming task you assign it, especially if you use the latest models and the Codex for agentic programming.
Study	Specialized research tools for academic, patent, and travel searches; <i>Create Files and Apps</i> (formerly Perplexity Labs) aggregates entire multimedia research projects; Premium Sources provides paid data from Statista, CB Insights, and PitchBook.	Industry-leading in-depth research features; limited to publicly available web sources.
Custom chatbot	Provide "Space" with specialized functions for different tasks.	Advanced GPT tools with custom data, web browsing, and integration.
Agentic AI	Comet (a browser-based agent) and Perplexity Computer (a desktop agent, launching in February 2026) handle various types of automated tasks.	The ChatGPT agent uses a virtual browser to navigate websites, fill out forms, and complete tasks on your behalf; the Atlas browser directs ChatGPT to the websites you are currently browsing.
Foundation	Web, mobile, and desktop applications	Web, mobile, and desktop applications

Price

Free access with some restrictions; \$20/month for Perplexity Pro; \$200/month for Perplexity Max.

Free access with some restrictions; \$8/month for ChatGPT Go (including ads); \$20/month for ChatGPT Plus; \$200/month for ChatGPT Pro

ChatGPT is a versatile AI assistant capable of web searching.

ChatGPT is a prime example of what an AI chatbot can do. Since its launch in 2022, it has consistently pushed the limits of large language models (LLMs) and large multimodal models (LMMs). From an exciting novelty product, it has become a highly productive tool in a very short time.

With ChatGPT, you can collect data, perform analysis, and create interactive charts, all in seconds.

The screenshot shows the ChatGPT interface. The user's prompt is: "what are the most biodiverse countries in the world? please source data and create a chart". The AI's response includes a bar chart titled "Top 10 countries by biodiversity share" and a "Thinking" sidebar on the right.

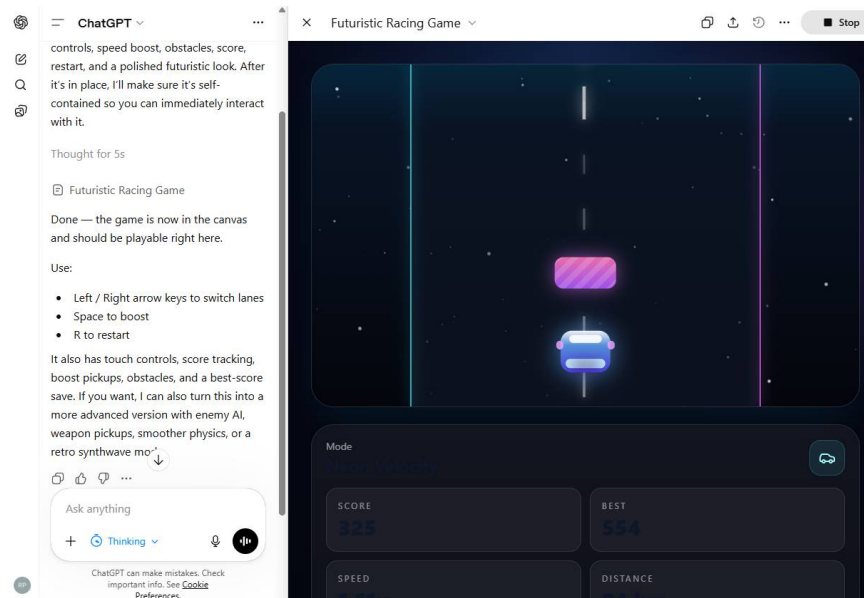
Top 10 countries by biodiversity share

Country	Biodiversity share (land-sea) %
Brazil	10.5
Indonesia	9.5
China	9.0
Colombia	8.5
Peru	8.0
Mexico	7.5
Australia	7.0
India	6.5
Canada	6.0
United States	5.5

Thinking

- Searching for sources and rankings of biodiverse countries
 - timesofindia.indiatimes.com
 - en.wikipedia.org
 - data360.worldbank.org
 - 15 more
- Considering data sources for biodiversity statistics
 - I'm thinking I might need to use a mega-diverse list and maybe even chart species richness from worldrainforests, but it's not the best source. It seems like the World Bank Global Biodiversity Database could have more reliable data. I'll look up country-specific species counts, perhaps in CSV format.
- Searching for country species richness datasets and downloads
 - timesofindia.indiatimes.com
 - data360.worldbank.org
 - www.gbif.org
 - 13 more
- Exploring World Bank dataset options
 - I'm thinking of using the World Bank dataset, possibly through a direct URL from the data catalog, as I need actual numbers. If I can't use an API directly, I might download the CSV via the webpage. I'll see
- Searching for World Bank dataset download URL
 - datacatalog.worldbank.org
- Exploring file download options
 - I'm considering using the link to direct the file, but maybe I'll need to download it through a container from the visible URL. I could try clicking

ChatGPT boasts one of the leading programming models (second only to Claude Code), capturing 21% of the enterprise AI programming market by the end of 2025. Even those without programming experience can easily use ChatGPT or Codex (OpenAI's agent programming tool) to write and deploy applications and games.



Like most AI chatbots, ChatGPT and Perplexity can generate text, images, code, and video. Perplexity has made impressive strides in catching up with ChatGPT recently: it now has scheduled tasks, live camera recognition on the Perplexity mobile app, and multimodal capabilities including file processing and agentic programming via Perplexity Computer.

Nevertheless, ChatGPT remains a more versatile and comprehensive AI assistant. You can:

1. Use Canvas to iterate on writing and programming projects, with easy version history and sharing.
2. Create custom GPTs trained on your own data or browse the market for third-party GPTs built for specific tasks.
3. Use the ChatGPT agent to automate web-based tasks.
4. Leverage AI across your business applications with ChatGPT Apps.

So if ChatGPT is an incredibly versatile assistant, where does Perplexity shine?

Perplexity is built on real-time search.

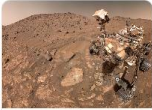
Although Perplexity looks and feels like a chatbot—and it can perform many chatbot functions—its primary purpose is to be an "answering tool" that provides real-time answers to queries from trusted sources.

When it first launched in late 2022, Perplexity was unique in its ambition to combine artificial intelligence (AI) with traditional web search. That's no longer the case. Search is a popular AI chatbot feature; Google has its own AI Mode, and ChatGPT's built-in search is also very good. But while Perplexity is no longer the only AI search app on the market, it still delivers better results than ChatGPT.


The best way to see this is to look at the same query in both applications. This is what ChatGPT provides for the question "What is the latest status of NASA's Mars rover?".

ChatGPT Share Sources


what's the latest with the NASA rover on Mars?



Reuters
NASA rover detects some of the oldest evidence of water flowing on Mars
4 days ago



The Times of India
Ancient river delta on Mars: NASA rover uncovers evidence of area once 'flooded with water'
Yesterday



The Times of India
Zebra rock found by NASA may reveal new clues about Mars geology
27 days ago

Here's the latest (2026) on NASA's Mars rover — mainly *Perseverance* — broken down into the biggest developments:

1) A major leap in autonomy (this is the big one)

NASA has fundamentally changed how the rover navigates:

- "Mars GPS" (Mars Global Localization) lets Perseverance figure out its exact position without Earth's help
- It matches its camera images to orbital maps and can localize itself within ~10 inches

[Ask anything](#)

ChatGPT can make mistakes. Check important info. See [Cookie Preferences](#).

Space
NASA's Perseverance rover now has its own 'GPS' on Mars: 'We've given the rover a new ability'
February 22, 2026 — NASA has equipped its Perseverance rover on Mars with a groundbreaking...

NASA
NASA's Perseverance Rover Completes First AI-Planned ...
Jan 30, 2026 — NASA's Perseverance Mars rover has completed the first drives on another world that wer...

Reuters
NASA rover detects some of the oldest evidence of water flowing on Mars
March 18, 2026 — NASA's Perseverance rover has uncovered some of the oldest evidence of water flo...

The Times of India
Zebra rock found by NASA may reveal new clues about Mars geology
February 23, 2026 — NASA's Perseverance rover has discovered a unique black and white banded rock o...

NASA
NASA Says Mars Rover Discovered Potential Biosignature ...
Sep 10, 2025 — NASA's Perseverance rover discovered leopard spots on a reddish rock...

Space
NASA won't give up hope on silent MAVEN Mars probe: 'We're still looking for it'
3 days ago — As of March 2026, NASA has been unable to reestablish contact with the MAVEN (Mars...

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It searched the web and retrieved content from about 20 search results. While the results weren't bad, the formatting was difficult to read, and the sources included less reputable publications like the New York Post and SlashGear.

There are other issues as well. While ChatGPT can usually understand from context whether you intend to search the web, sometimes it can't. If you're not careful, you might think you're receiving updates when you aren't because you didn't actively click the Search option.

This is what Perplexity offers with the same question.

Search Answer Links Images Share Download Cornet


what's the latest with the NASA rover on Mars?

Completed 1 step >

NASA's Perseverance and Curiosity rovers are both still active on Mars; Perseverance is roving in Jezero Crater with new autonomous navigation and AI-planned drives, while Curiosity recently resumed science after a communications blackout and is running a key organic-chemistry experiment in Gale Crater. [jpl.nasa +5](#)

Perseverance (Mars 2020 rover)

- Perseverance is approaching its 5-year-on-Mars mark (landed February 2021) and has driven roughly 40 km through Jezero Crater toward a region nicknamed "Lac de Charmes." [nasa +1](#)
- Engineering tests indicate its wheels and key subsystems should support operations at least into 2031, suggesting a long remaining lifetime. [nasa.spaceflight +1](#)
- In late 2025 NASA began using generative AI to help plan drives, cutting route-planning time and increasing science efficiency during traverses along the crater rim. [jpl.nasa](#)
- A new "Mars Global Localization" capability effectively gives Perseverance a GPS-like system: it matches its panoramic images to orbital maps onboard, localizes itself to within about 25 cm, and can drive farther without waiting for Earth-based confirmation. [space](#)
- Perseverance has cached 30+ rock and regolith samples that were originally intended



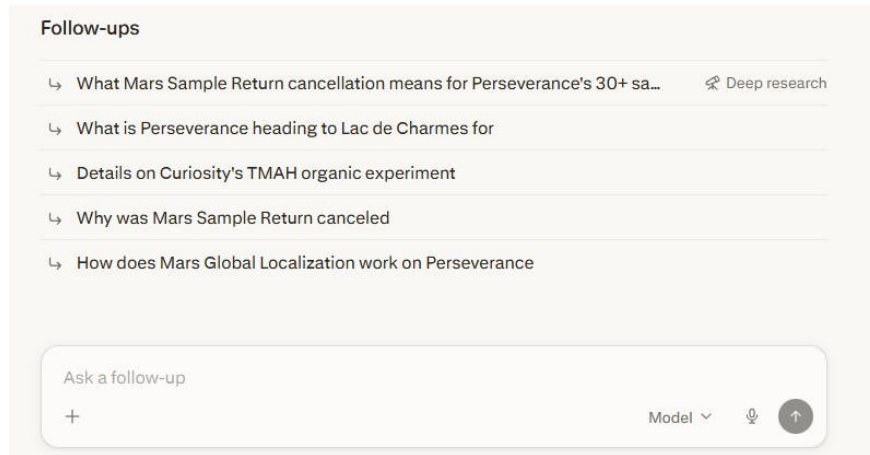
Perseverance rover on Mars
[anetechnica](#)

[Ask a follow-up](#)

[+](#) Model 🗣️ ⬆️

Perplexity actually uses fewer sources, but they are more authentic: Almost everything comes from NASA or reputable scientific journals and publications. And, although this is somewhat subjective, Perplexity presents results in a more polished and "up-to-date" way than ChatGPT's emoji-filled summaries.

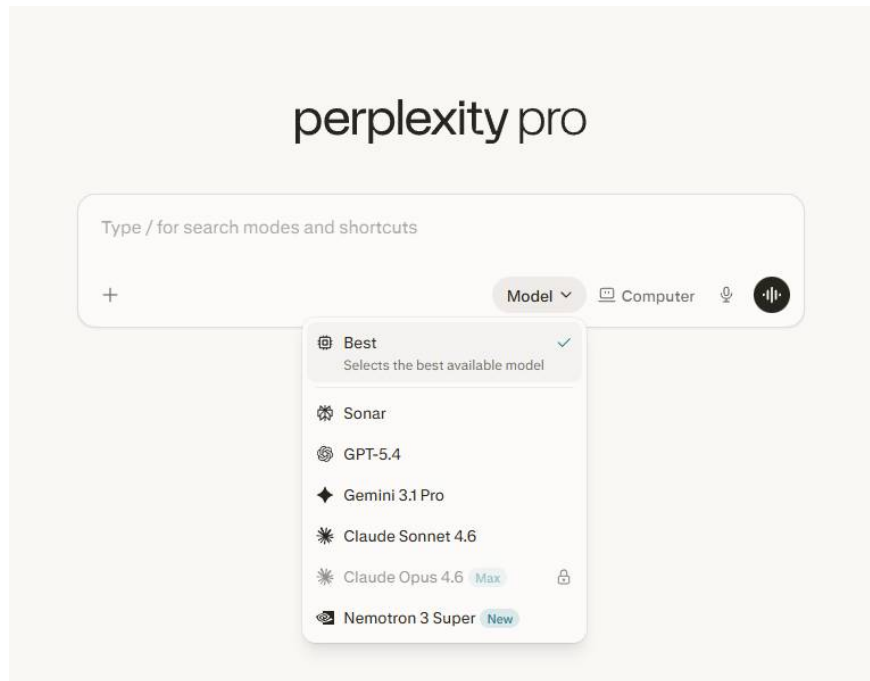
Perplexity conversations assume you want to delve deeper into the original question asked. The system even provides ideas for possible follow-up questions, along with Deep Research prompts at a single click.



Although this is just an example, the results will be similar for other factual prompts or news articles. No matter what you ask, Perplexity typically provides a more complete and well-supported answer – especially if you're dealing with recent news.

If you enjoy tinkering, you can choose which AI model Perplexity uses to generate the answer. Perplexity provides access to the latest models from OpenAI, Gemini, Claude, and Nvidia, along with Sonar, Perplexity's own proprietary model.

If you're not interested in any of these factors and just want the answer, you can also let Perplexity automatically select the best model for you based on your query.



Should you choose ChatGPT or Perplexity?

Here's a quick answer if you're unsure which tool to choose.

1. Choose Perplexity if you want a top-tier research assistant. You'll get real-time search results, consistent citations, and a specialized research environment for fields like academics and patents. Perplexity also gives you access to statistics and reports that would typically cost money. And with Perplexity Computer, you can manage your entire research project—along with app development and other tasks—with just one command.
2. Choose ChatGPT if you want a versatile AI assistant. It's a great partner for creative projects, data analysis, and programming, and you also get access to unique features like Canvas, custom GPT, and the ChatGPT agent. If web research and searching aren't your primary use case, ChatGPT is the best choice.

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