

Remove AI tools you don't need

Some tech companies are forcing their AI features on us, whether we want them or not. **Robert Irvine** explains how to hide or disable these unwanted tools

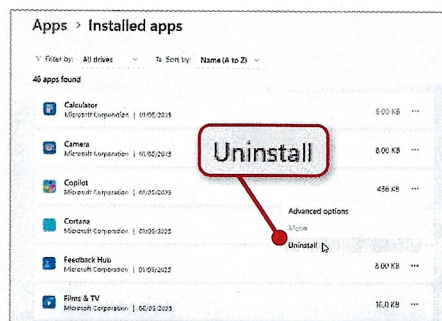


The past few years have seen an AI frenzy, with all the big tech companies competing to add the latest cutting-edge technology to their products. But while many of these tools are genuinely innovative and exciting, some are being foisted on us whether we want them or not.

Here we explain how to remove AI features you don't need from websites and software you use every day. Look out for the new AI Tips section in our next issue.

Copilot in Windows and Edge

It's fair to say that a large proportion of Windows users don't share Microsoft's enthusiasm for its AI assistant Copilot. But that hasn't stopped the company adding Copilot to many of its programs and apps, and even introducing a Copilot key for new PC keyboards (www.snipca.com/54770).



Microsoft now lets you uninstall Copilot from Windows 10 and 11

Copilot's integration with Windows 11 (and later Windows 10) initially meant it couldn't be removed, which hardly endeared the AI tool to users. Microsoft has since made Copilot easier to hide and uninstall in Windows and other software.

To remove the Copilot button from the taskbar in Windows 10 or 11, simply right-click its button and choose 'Unpin from taskbar'. If you can't see that option, right-click the taskbar, choose 'Taskbar settings' and switch off Copilot.

To uninstall it, open the Settings app and choose Apps then 'Apps & features' (in Windows 10) or 'Installed apps' (in Windows 11). Select 'Copilot' or the three-dot icon next to its name, and click Uninstall (see screenshot below left).

You can't remove Copilot from Edge, but you can hide its button. Click the browser's three-dot menu button and choose Settings then 'Copilot and sidebar'. Select 'Copilot' under 'App and notification settings' and switch off 'Show Copilot button on the toolbar'.

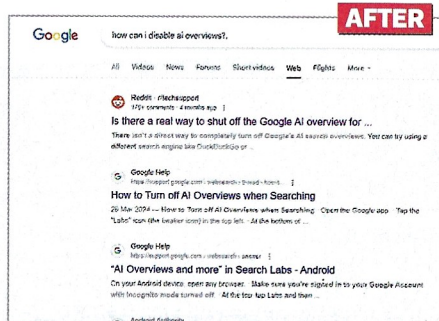
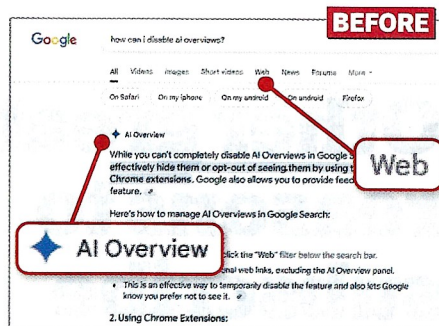
AI Overviews in Google search

Since last year, Google has provided AI Overviews for many search queries. These appear above your main search results and summarise relevant content from online sources to save you visiting those sites individually.

Although potentially useful, AI Overviews can slow down your searches and sometimes contain false or

misleading information. Google is also testing an AI Mode feature, which lets you ask questions about places and products to get AI-generated answers (www.snipca.com/54764). However, this is currently 'opt in', whereas AI Overviews don't have an off switch – Google says they're now a "core feature".

Thankfully, there are workarounds if you find the feature more of a hindrance than a help. One is to click the Web filter below the search box (see Before image below), which will display standard



Hide AI Overviews from Google search results by clicking the Web filter

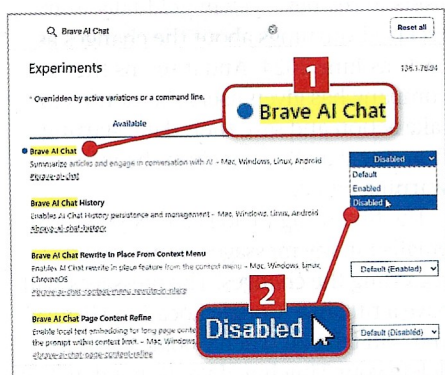
search results without AI Overviews (see After image below left).

Another option is to install the extension Hide Google AI Overviews in your Chromium browser (www.snipca.com/54766) or Firefox (www.snipca.com/54768). Additionally, adding **-AI** to your search queries, for example **pause Windows updates -AI**, will hide AI summaries. More crudely, some Google users have found that adding a swear word to queries stops AI Overviews appearing.

Leo in Brave

Like Copilot in Edge, Brave's AI assistant Leo is enabled by default and becoming increasingly difficult to ignore. Leo now appears in the browser's toolbar, sidebar, address bar, main menu and right-click menu, which is annoying if you never use the AI tool.

You can reduce Leo's presence in Brave by going to the Leo section of the browser's Settings (**brave://settings/leo-ai**) and switching off the options 'Show Leo icon in the sidebar' and 'Show Leo in the context menu'. Also right-click its toolbar button and choose 'Hide Leo AI icon'.



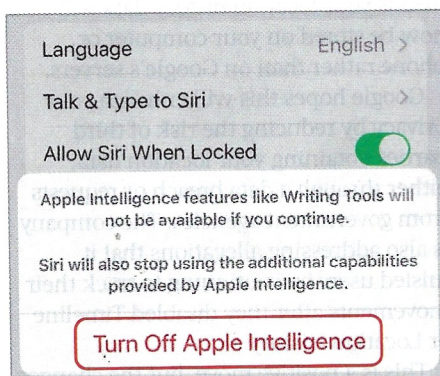
Disable Brave AI Chat to remove the Leo AI tool from the browser

However, this won't disable Leo or remove the feature from other locations in the browser. To do that, type **brave://flags** in the address bar and press Enter to load the Experiments page. Search for **Brave AI Chat** (1 in our screenshot below left), select Disabled in its dropdown menu (2) and relaunch Brave. When the browser reopens, all traces of Leo will have disappeared. You can re-enable the AI tool later if you change your mind.

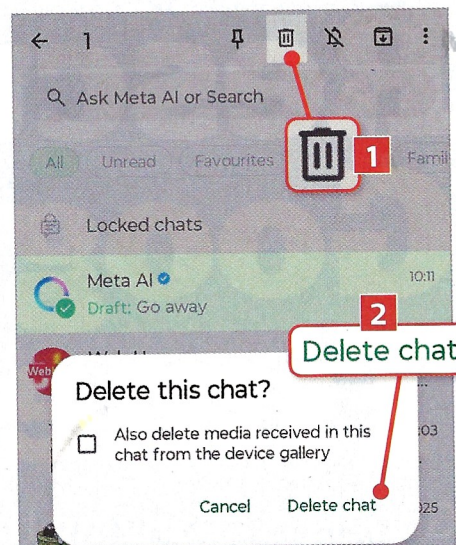
Apple Intelligence in iOS

When Apple released iOS/iPadOS 18.3 in January, it enabled its new AI (Apple Intelligence) feature by default. Although this includes some useful tools, provided you have a compatible iPhone or iPad (visit www.snipca.com/54775 for a list of compatible models), most are rather underwhelming, especially compared with Google Gemini and ChatGPT.

Worst of all, Apple Intelligence takes up at least 7GB of storage, whether you use it or not. To disable it and free up space, open the Settings app on your iPhone or iPad and select 'Apple Intelligence & Siri'. Switch off Apple Intelligence, then tap 'Turn Off Apple Intelligence' (see screenshot below) to confirm.



Turn off Apple Intelligence to reclaim space on your iPhone or iPad



You can't remove Meta AI but you can delete your chats with it

Meta AI in WhatsApp

The new Meta AI chatbot in WhatsApp is the most controversial AI addition of the year (so far). Represented by a blue-and-purple circle, it sits just above the 'New chat' button on your Chats screen, where it's easy to tap and launch by accident.

Some WhatsApp users may find Meta AI useful, but the widespread negative reaction suggests most don't and actually resent having the feature foisted on them (www.snipca.com/54751). What's more, although Meta claims the AI tool is "an optional service", there's no way to hide or remove it from the app.

Until Meta introduces that option, you can at least mute notifications from the AI tool. Tap the Meta AI button to start a conversation, then tap its name at the top of the chat. Select 'Notifications', switch on 'Mute notifications' and choose Always. You can also remove it from your Chats list by long-pressing your conversation and tapping the bin icon (1 in our screenshot above) then 'Delete chat' (2).

If you're desperate to get rid of Meta AI, your only option is to downgrade to a previous version of WhatsApp. To do this on an Android phone (it won't work on iPhones), back up your chat history, uninstall the current app then download and install the **APK** file for a pre-Meta AI version. Make sure you get this from a trustworthy source such as APK Mirror (www.snipca.com/54752).

However, installing old apps is risky, because they may contain security flaws that have since been patched. You'll also need to disable automatic updates to stop your phone downloading the latest version of WhatsApp and restoring Meta AI. **ca**

Coming soon: more AI annoyances

Undeterred by the backlash to its Meta AI tool, WhatsApp will soon introduce more AI features including one called Private Processing. This will give users access to online AI tools for summarising and rewriting messages, without breaking the app's encryption.

YouTube has started testing an AI Overviews feature, which will show relevant clips from videos at the top of your search results. This saves you having to click or tap through to watch entire videos, with the clips presented

in a carousel. Understandably, many YouTube creators aren't happy about the idea, believing it will deprive them of viewers and ad revenue.

After adding Copilot to Microsoft 365 tools, Microsoft is testing a Copilot menu in its Paint app for Windows 11. This will let you access all Paint's AI features, though some are only available on Copilot+ PCs. And Edge could soon move Copilot from its sidebar to the new-tab page, where it will be impossible to avoid (see www.snipca.com/54778).