

ChatTimeline V1.00

User Guide

Online Search Local Archive Timeline Export

For version 1.00, released 25 August 2026

ChatTimeline runs directly on chatgpt.com. The encrypted working archive remains local to the browser profile in use.

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1 Overview

ChatTimeline adds online search, an encrypted local archive, local full-text search, a chronological timeline and portable offline export to chatgpt.com. This guide covers version 1.00 only.

The six sections

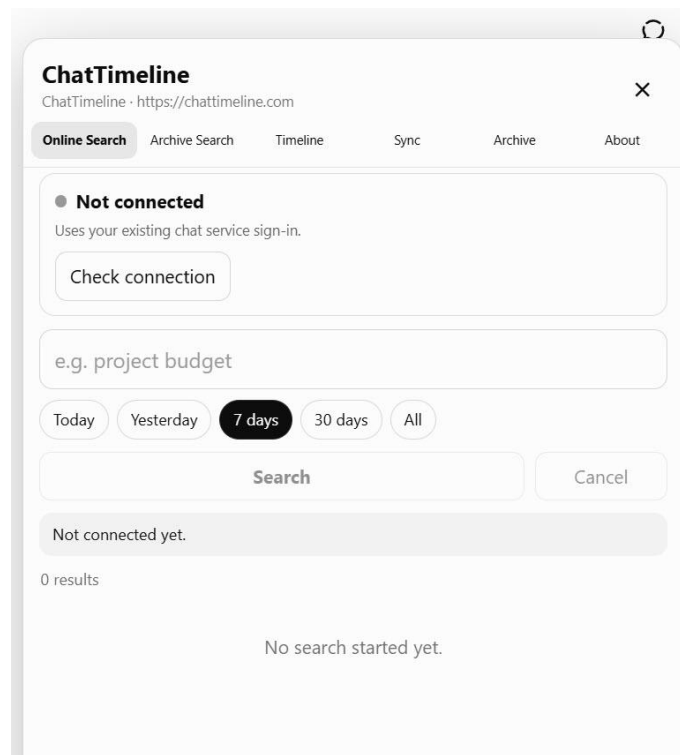
Menu	Purpose
Online Search	Searches the currently available online ChatGPT history.
Archive Search	Searches conversations already stored in the local archive.
Timeline	Displays archived chats chronologically, grouped by day.
Sync	Checks the online inventory and downloads new or changed content in two separate steps.
Archive	Creates, unlocks, locks, exports, imports or deletes the local archive.
About	Shows the version, website, privacy and legal information.

Important basics

- ChatTimeline uses the existing signed-in ChatGPT session. There is no separate ChatTimeline account.
- The working archive is encrypted with a password chosen by you. ChatTimeline does not store this password.
- After reloading the page or restarting the browser, the archive must be unlocked again.
- ZIP exports are intentionally unencrypted and contain readable chat content.
- The local archive belongs to the device and browser profile in use. Create an export before clearing browser data or changing devices.

Open the extension

- 1. Open ChatGPT** Open chatgpt.com in the browser and sign in.
- 2. Start ChatTimeline** Click “ChatTimeline” in the lower-right corner.
- 3. Choose a section** Select the required tab at the top of the side panel. Use × to close the panel.



Online Search before the connection check: "Check connection" uses the existing ChatGPT sign-in.

2 Using Online Search

Online Search searches the ChatGPT history directly through the signed-in session. It searches conversation titles first and then conversation content within the selected period.

- 1. Check the connection** In the Online Search tab, click “Check connection”. When connected successfully, a green dot, “Connected” and the detected user account appear.
- 2. Enter search text** Enter at least two characters in the search field.
- 3. Choose a period** Select Today, Yesterday, 7 days, 30 days or All. The default is 7 days.
- 4. Start the search** Click “Search” or press Enter in the search field.
- 5. Open a result** Click a result. Any search still running is stopped and the selected chat opens.

How Online Search works

- Phase 1 searches chat titles and builds the candidate list for the selected period.
- Phase 2 searches the content of candidates that were not already found by title.
- Results are labelled Title or Content and sorted by recency.
- Use “Cancel” to stop the search. Results already found remain available.

Note about All: With a large history, searching all periods generates considerably more requests and takes longer. For everyday searches, choose the narrowest suitable period.

Connection problems

If “Not connected” appears, first check that chatgpt.com is open and signed in within the same browser profile. Then reload the ChatGPT page and run “Check connection” again.

HTTP 429 during intensive use

The message “Chat history returned 429” means that the chat service has temporarily detected too many requests and limited further access. This is not a fault in the local archive. An active Online Search stops in this situation. Wait for a while and try again; a narrower period generates fewer requests than “All”.

The screenshot shows the Online Search interface. At the top, there is a search input field containing the text "elektro". Below the input field are five buttons for selecting a time period: "Today", "Yesterday", "7 days", "30 days", and "All". The "Today" button is currently selected. Below these buttons are two buttons: "Search" and "Cancel". Below the "Search" button, there is a light gray message box that says "Search stopped in phase 1." Below that is a pink message box that says "Chat history returned 429." At the bottom, it says "0 results".

Example of a temporary 429 limit. The screenshot is deliberately cropped to exclude account details.

3 Setting up the local archive

The local archive is the basis for Archive Search, Timeline and offline export. Its contents are stored in encrypted form in the browser.

1. Open Archive Select the “Archive” tab.

2. Choose a password Enter a password of at least eight characters.

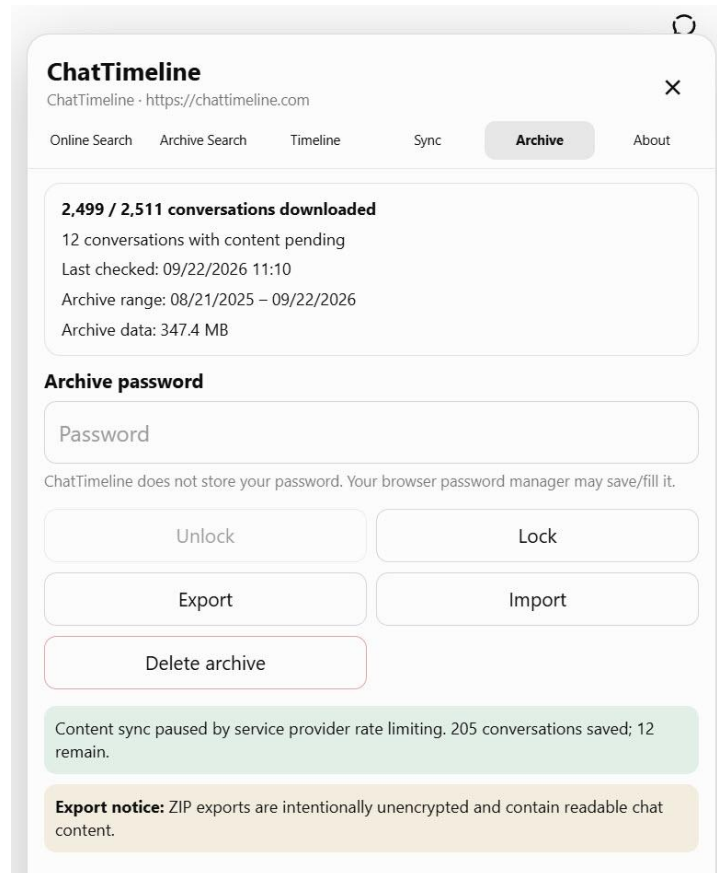
3. Create the archive Click “Create archive”. The archive is created and unlocked immediately.

4. Populate the archive Open the “Sync” tab and complete both synchronization steps described in the next chapter.

Keep the password safe: ChatTimeline does not store the archive password and cannot recover it. The browser password manager may save and fill the field if desired.

Unlocking or locking the archive later

- Unlock: Enter the password in the Archive tab and choose “Unlock”.
- Lock: Click “Lock” in the Archive tab. Archive Search, Timeline and export remain unavailable until the archive is unlocked again.
- The archive status and number of downloaded conversations appear in the status area at the top.



The screenshot shows the 'Archive' tab of the ChatTimeline application. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for 'Online Search', 'Archive Search', 'Timeline', 'Sync', 'Archive' (which is highlighted), and 'About'. Below the navigation bar, the main content area displays the archive status: '2,499 / 2,511 conversations downloaded', '12 conversations with content pending', 'Last checked: 09/22/2026 11:10', 'Archive range: 08/21/2025 – 09/22/2026', and 'Archive data: 347.4 MB'. Below this, there's a section for the 'Archive password' with a text input field. A note states: 'ChatTimeline does not store your password. Your browser password manager may save/fill it.' Below the password field are five buttons: 'Unlock', 'Lock', 'Export', 'Import', and 'Delete archive'. At the bottom, there are two informational boxes: a green one stating 'Content sync paused by service provider rate limiting. 205 conversations saved; 12 remain.' and an orange one stating 'Export notice: ZIP exports are intentionally unencrypted and contain readable chat content.'

The Archive tab contains status, locking and unlocking, export, import and deletion. The quantities shown are examples only.

Understanding the status information

Display	Meaning
x / y conversations downloaded	x chats are stored locally in full; y is the most recently known total online inventory.
content pending	Metadata is known for these chats, but their content still needs to be downloaded with Sync Contents.
Last checked	Time of the last successfully saved overview.
Archive range	Oldest to newest chat held in the archive.
Archive data	Approximate size of the local archive data.

4 Synchronizing the archive

Synchronization is deliberately separated into “Update Overview” and “Sync Contents”. This determines the scope first and allows the content-intensive second step to pause at rate limits and continue later.

Step 1: Update Overview

Update Overview reads the complete list of conversations available online and compares it with the local archive. New, changed or incomplete chats are marked as pending. This step does not download all conversation content.

- 1. Unlock the archive** Enter the password in the Archive tab and choose “Unlock”.
- 2. Open Sync** Open the “Sync” tab.
- 3. Update the overview** Click “Update Overview” and wait for the process to finish.
- 4. Check the status** The “content pending” figure shows how many conversations still require content in the second step.

Step 2: Sync Contents

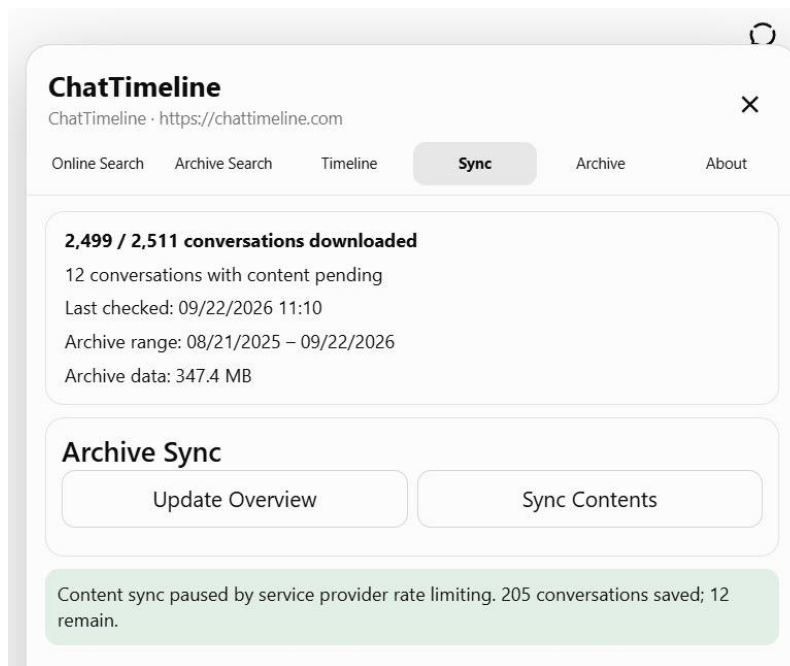
Sync Contents downloads the complete content of pending chats. Fully archived, unchanged chats are not downloaded again. ChatTimeline inserts short pauses between requests.

- 1. Start content synchronization** Click “Sync Contents” in the Sync tab.
- 2. Monitor progress** The current chat and the number completed out of the total pending are displayed.
- 3. Cancel if necessary** Use “Cancel” to stop the process cleanly. Chats already saved remain intact.

Handling rate limits

- If the service provider limits requests, ChatTimeline shows how many conversations have already been saved and how many remain.
- Wait for a while, then start “Sync Contents” again.
- The next run continues with incomplete or changed chats. A fully downloaded chat is not requested again unnecessarily.
- A very large initial synchronization can therefore be intentionally spread over several runs.

“Paused” rather than “failed”: The green rate-limit message means that ChatTimeline paused correctly. The number already saved remains intact; the remaining number is processed on the next run.



Rate limit during Sync Contents: 205 conversations were saved and 12 remain pending. Simply start Sync Contents again later.

Recommended routine: Run “Update Overview” first, followed by “Sync Contents”. Repeat the same two-step sequence for later updates.

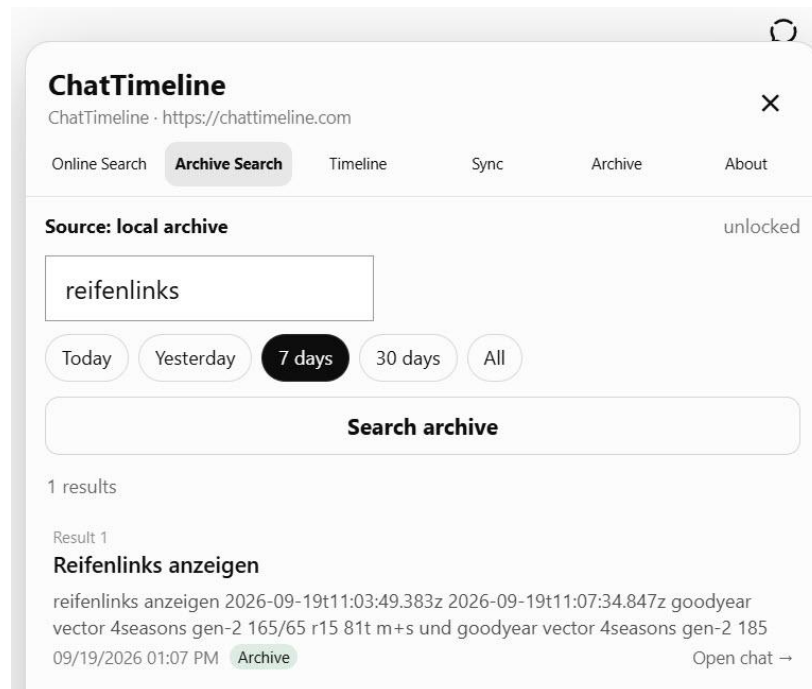
5 Searching the archive and using Timeline

Archive Search

Archive Search works exclusively with the local archive. It therefore requires no new content requests, but the archive must be unlocked.

- 1. Unlock the archive** If necessary, enter the password in the Archive tab and choose “Unlock”.
- 2. Open Archive Search** Select the “Archive Search” tab.
- 3. Enter search text** Enter the required term in the search field.
- 4. Set the period** Select Today, Yesterday, 7 days, 30 days or All.
- 5. Run the search** Click “Search archive” or press Enter.
- 6. Open the chat** Select a result. ChatTimeline opens the corresponding online conversation on chatgpt.com.

Important: Archive Search finds only chats whose content has already been stored locally. If conversations are missing, run Update Overview first and then Sync Contents.

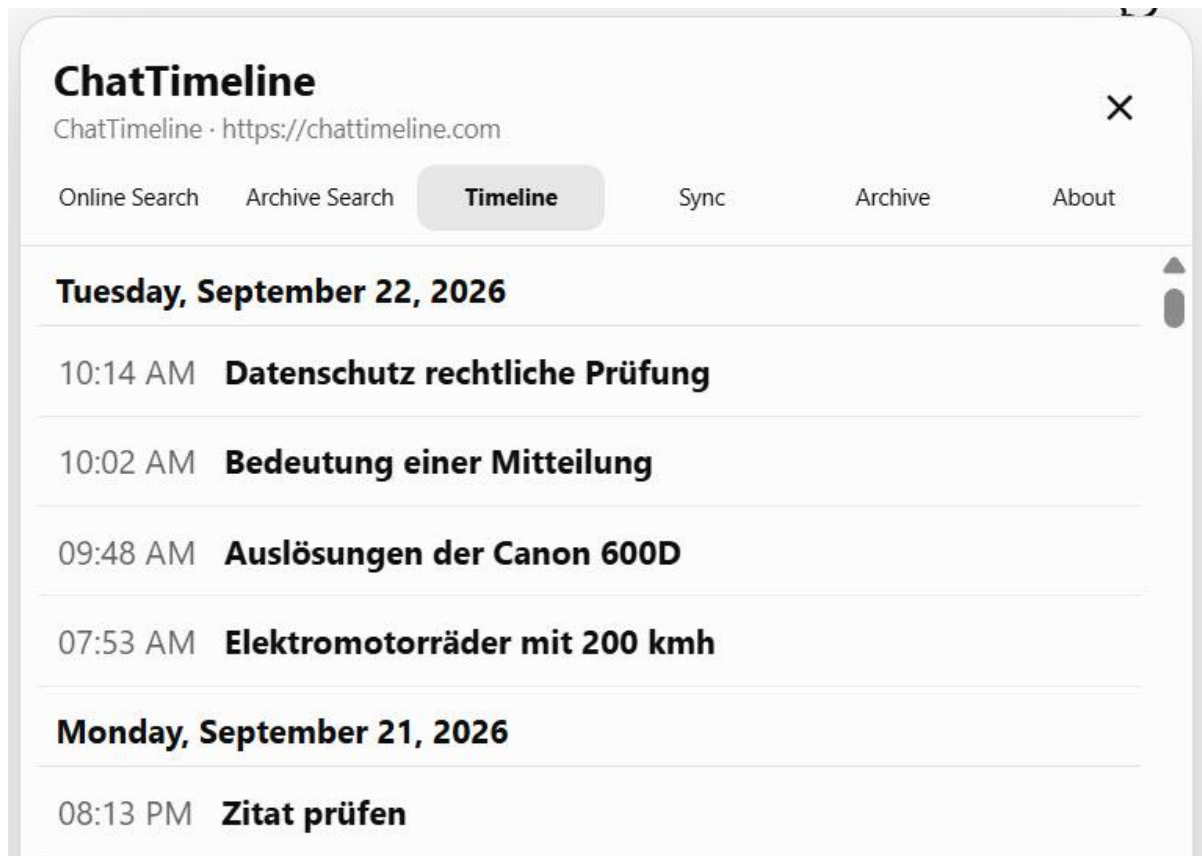


Archive Search searches the unlocked local archive and then opens a result in its corresponding online chat.

Timeline

Timeline displays archived chats chronologically, grouped by day. Within a day it shows the time, title and, where applicable, the associated project.

- 1. Unlock the archive** Timeline is available only while the archive is unlocked.
- 2. Open Timeline** Select the “Timeline” tab. The list is loaded from the local archive.
- 3. Select a chat** Click an entry to open the corresponding chat on chatgpt.com.



Timeline groups archived chats by date and sorts entries within each day by time.

Online Search or Archive Search

Criterion	Online Search	Archive Search
Source	Current online history	Local archive
Requirement	Signed-in connection	Unlocked and populated archive
Requests	Requests chat data during the search	No new online content requests
Best for	Chats not yet archived or very recent chats	Fast repeated searches in your own archive

6 Export, import and data security

Export provides an independent backup and a readable offline archive. Import restores this backup into an unlocked local archive.

Exporting the archive

- 1. Unlock the archive** Enter the password in the Archive tab and choose “Unlock”.
- 2. Start the export** Click “Export” and confirm the security prompt.
- 3. Save all ZIP parts** For larger archives, ChatTimeline creates several numbered ZIP files. Allow multiple downloads in the browser if necessary and keep all parts together.
- 4. Open the offline archive** Extract all ZIP parts into the same folder, then open index.html from the first part. The catalogue and full-text search are available there.

Security warning: The export is not encrypted. Anyone with access to the extracted files or ZIP files can read the chat content. Store exports only in a protected location.

Importing or restoring an archive

Import adds new conversations. Existing chats are replaced only if the imported version is newer or the local record is incomplete.

- 1. Prepare the target archive** If no archive exists, first create a new archive in the Archive tab with a password of at least eight characters. Otherwise, unlock the existing archive.
- 2. Choose Import** Click “Import”.
- 3. Select the ZIP parts** Select the relevant ChatTimeline ZIP files. Multiple files may be selected together.
- 4. Check completion** After import, ChatTimeline shows how many chats were imported or updated. ZIP parts without recovery data are ignored.

Deleting the local archive

“Delete archive” deletes the complete local ChatTimeline working archive from the browser. Online chats are not changed. Create and verify a current export before deletion. The security prompt must be explicitly confirmed.

Note deletions during comparison: After a complete online overview has been obtained successfully, local entries that no longer exist online may be removed. Create regular ZIP exports for an independent long-term copy.

Recommended backup routine

A complete backup exists only after the current online inventory has been checked, all pending content has been downloaded and every export part has been saved together.

- Run Update Overview so that new and changed chats are detected.
- Complete Sync Contents, or continue it later after a rate limit.
- Check that the status no longer shows any content as pending.
- Create an export and keep every ZIP part together in a protected location.

7 Quick help

Problem	Solution
Online Search remains disabled	Run “Check connection” first and make sure chatgpt.com is signed in.
Archive Search or Timeline does not work	Unlock the local archive in the Archive tab using the correct password.
Chats are missing from the archive	Run Update Overview, then start Sync Contents.
Sync Contents reports a rate limit	Start it again later. Chats already saved remain intact; only pending content is processed further.
Password forgotten	The password cannot be recovered. An existing unencrypted ZIP export can be imported after creating a new archive.
Offline search does not find all chats	Extract all export ZIP parts into the same folder. Use index.html from the first part.
Browser does not download all export parts	Allow multiple downloads for the page, then start the export again.
Changing device or browser	Export first, create a new archive on the target device and import the ZIP parts.

Quick routine for regular use

- 1. Open ChatTimeline** Unlock the archive in the Archive tab.
- 2. Update Overview** Check the online inventory and mark new or changed chats.
- 3. Sync Contents** Download pending content; continue later if rate-limited.
- 4. Search or browse** Use Archive Search or Timeline.
- 5. Export regularly** Keep all unencrypted ZIP parts complete and secure.

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