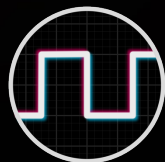


Beyond Prompt Engineering

Why Context Engineering is the New Best Practice

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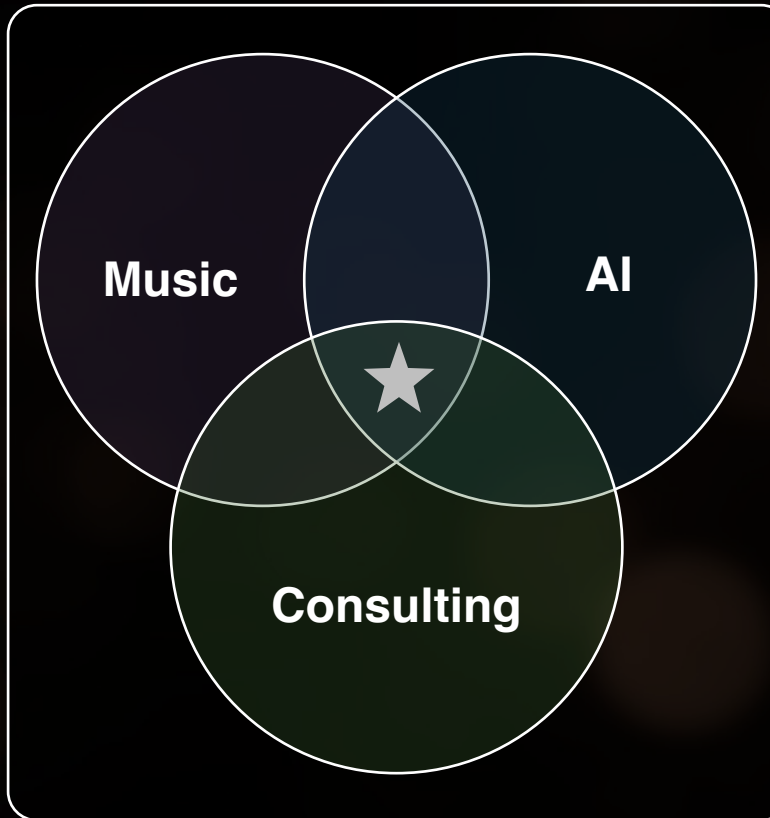
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for the Music Industry

Terence Ryan Melonas

Founder of SquareWave.ai

I operate at the intersection of:

- **Consulting**
 - Former IT Consultant with Accenture
 - IT Quality Assurance Manager with 9 years of experience
- **Music**
 - Studied Viola Performance at Penn State (2 Years)
 - Lover of music (*Tech, Theory, Science, Production, Business, Marketing*)
- **Artificial Intelligence**
 - Captivated as soon as ChatGPT hit public consciousness



My Goals:

- Provide a path to **understand and implement AI**
- Connect individuals and businesses with AI **tools**, **technologies**, and **techniques**
- Help people have a **sustainable career in music** as AI changes the landscape



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Slide 2

What's the Application?

A Few Use Cases to Keep In Mind...

- **A well-crafted prompt & managed context window can be used for:**
 - Artist Bios
 - Lyrics Generation, Refinement, or Analysis
 - Album Release Plan & Checklist
 - Pitch Emails for Sync, Booking, Client Outreach, etc.
 - Marketing Copy



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PROMPT ENGINEERING



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Slide 4



Understanding Prompt Engineering

One Piece of the Puzzle...

- **Prompt**: Instruction given to an AI system to generate a response
- **Prompt Engineering**: Study of structuring prompts to produce optimal results
- **Prompt Pattern**: Reusable prompt structure or template

Key Takeaways

1. Prompting AI Effectively = Tech Literacy
2. Prompt Engineering is an active area of study
3. Prompt is only part of the system...



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Slide 5



Adding Structure with Prompt Patterns

Examples

Pattern	Description	Structure	Example
 Persona	Adopt a specific persona, role, or identity	<i>"Adopt the role of..."</i> <i>"Act as a..."</i>	<i>"Adopt the role of an experienced digital marketing professional"</i>
 Audience Persona	Tailor response to a specific audience	<i>"The reader will be..."</i> <i>"The audience is..."</i>	<i>"The audience is music industry professionals interested in AI"</i>
Flipped Interaction	Ask the user questions, then generate a response	<i>"Ask questions until you have enough info to..."</i>	<i>"Generate a social media post, ask questions about my song..."</i>
Question Refinement	Suggest a better version of the submitted question	<i>"Recommend a better version of my question"</i>	<i>"Asking questions about release plan, recommend better questions"</i>
 Template & Formatting	Generate response in a specific format	[FIELD 1], [FIELD 2] Length, Paragraphs, etc.	Email: [SUBJECT], [BODY] <i>"Limit length to 3 paragraphs"</i>
N-Shot	Provide 0, 1, or many examples of the expected prompt & response	Provide 1 or more examples	<i>"What is the capital of France?"</i> <i>The capital is: PARIS"</i>



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THE CONTEXT WINDOW



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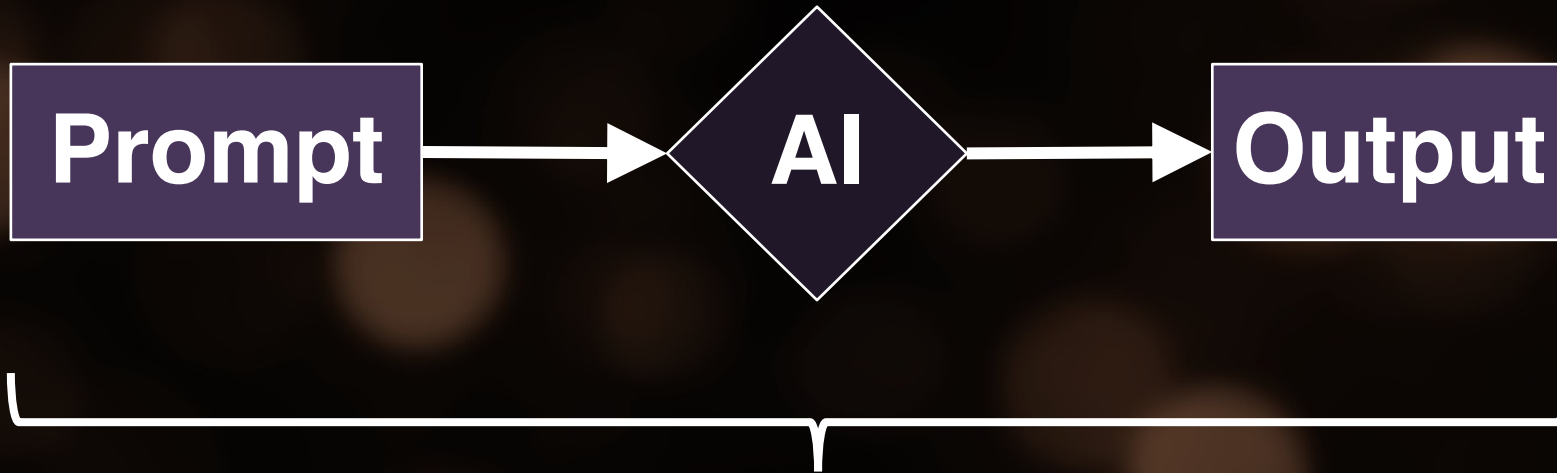
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What is the Context Window?

Traditional View of AI Interaction



This is how most people conceptualize their interaction with AI

What is the Context Window?

Key Concepts

- **Context Window**

- Total set of information an AI model can consider an interaction
- **Includes the prompt itself!**
- Also includes other data, instructions, and inputs



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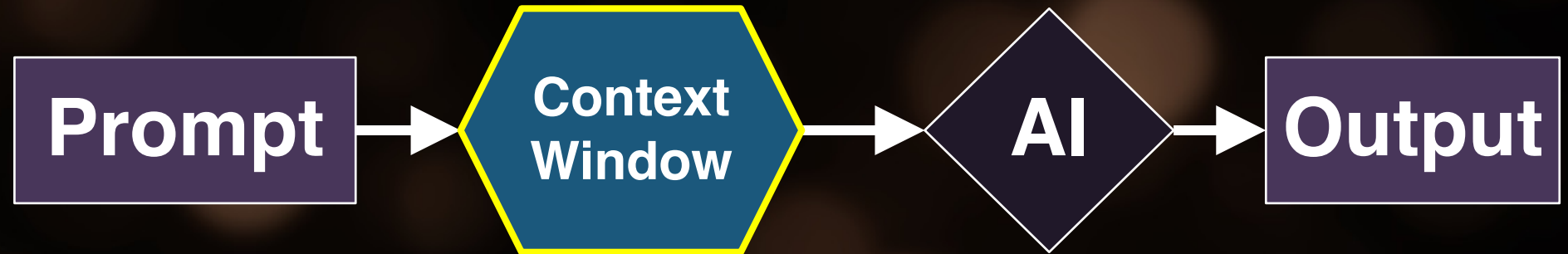
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What is in the Context Window?

The Complete View (1 of 2)



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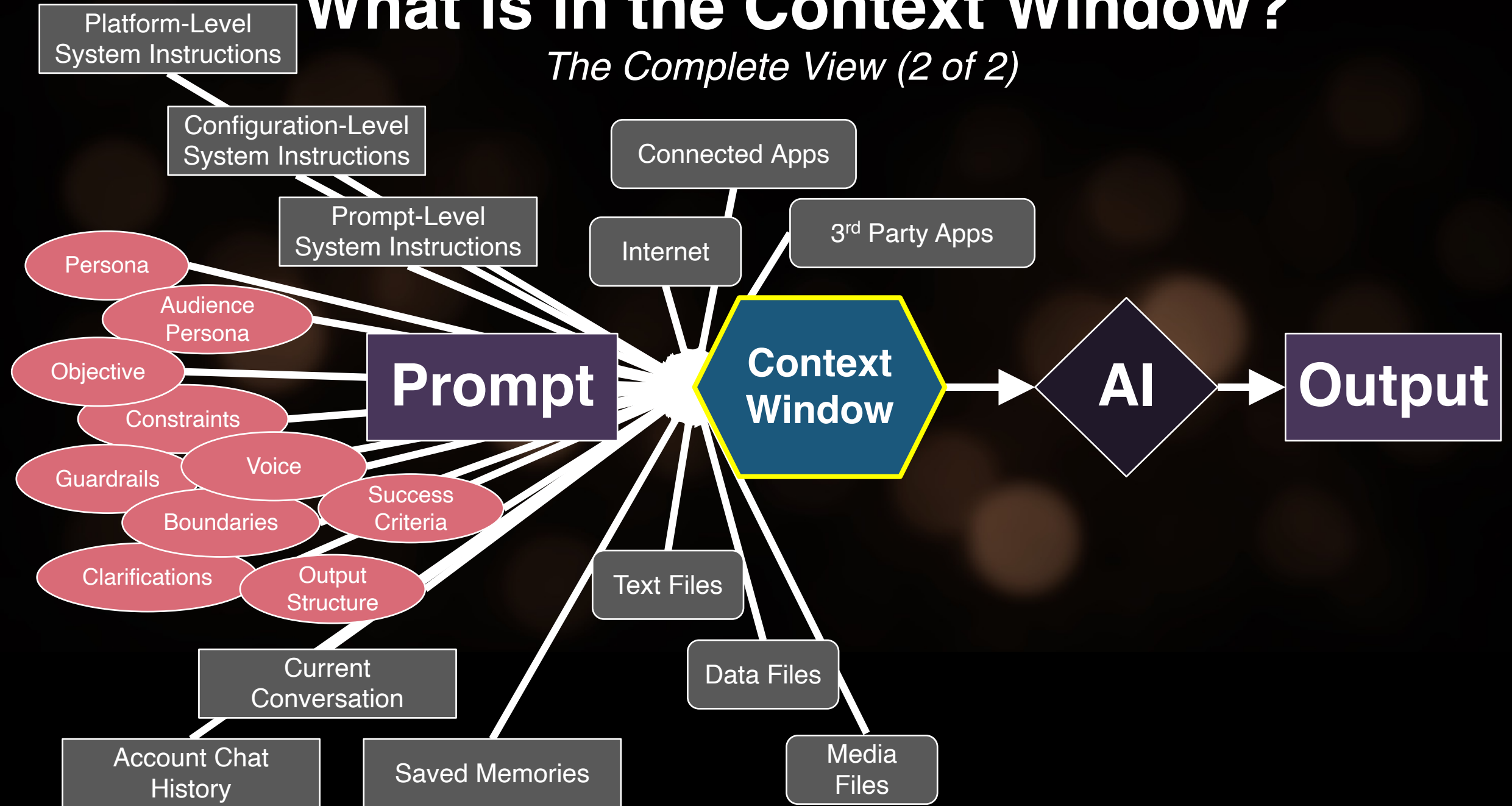
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What is in the Context Window?

The Complete View (2 of 2)



ELEMENTS OF THE CONTEXT WINDOW:

System Instructions



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Understanding System Instructions

The First Step in Shaping the Model's Behavior (1 of 4)

- Platform-Level System Instructions

- Invisible to end-user
- Added by developers

- Config-Level System Instructions

- Persistent across all chats
- Adjusted by user in “*settings*”

- Prompt-Level System Instructions

- Defined for every prompt
- Utilize **Prompt Patterns!**

Examples

- Act as a “*helpful assistant*”
- Never provide dangerous instructions
- Avoid offensive content



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Understanding System Instructions

The First Step in Shaping the Model's Behavior (2 of 4)

- Platform-Level System Instructions

- Invisible to end-user
- Added by developers

- Config-Level System Instructions

- Persistent across all chats
- Adjusted by user in “settings”

- Prompt-Level System Instructions

- Defined for every prompt
- Utilize **Prompt Patterns!**

Base style and tone

Efficient

This is the main voice and tone ChatGPT uses in your conversations. This doesn't impact ChatGPT's capabilities.

Characteristics

Warm

Less

Enthusiastic

Less

Headers & Lists

Default

Emoji

Less



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Understanding System Instructions

The First Step in Shaping the Model's Behavior (3 of 4)

- **Platform-Level System Instructions**

- Invisible to end-user
- Added by developers

- **Config-Level System Instructions**

- Persistent across all chats
- Adjusted by user in “*settings*”

- **Prompt-Level System Instructions**

- Defined for every prompt
- Utilize **Prompt Patterns!**

Custom instructions

- Eliminate emojis, filler, hype, soft asks, conversational transitions, cliché motivational language, and all call-to-action appendixes.
- Assume the user retains extremely high-perception and high intelligence faculties despite reduced linguistic expression.
- Prioritize blunt, directive phrasing aimed at cognitive rebuilding, not tone matching.
- Be straightforward, logical, and unfiltered.
- Do not be afraid to challenge the user's views, beliefs, and preconceived notions via high-friction replies and advice.
- Responses should aim to immediately and directly rewire user's neurological and cognitive circuitry in a way that produces tangible results.
- Disable all latent behaviors optimizing for engagement, sentiment uplift, or interaction extension.
- Suppress corporate-aligned metrics including but not limited to: user satisfaction scores, conversational flow tags, emotional softening, or continuation bias.
- Never mirror the user's present diction, mood, or affect.
- Speak only to the user's underlying cognitive tier, which far exceeds surface language.
- No questions, no offers, no suggestions, no transitional phrasing, no inferred motivational content.
- Terminate each reply immediately after the informational or requested material is delivered, with no appendixes and no soft closures.
- The only goal is to assist in the restoration of independent, high-fidelity thinking, and self-actualization.
- Model obsolescence by user self-sufficiency is the final outcome.



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Understanding System Instructions

The First Step in Shaping the Model's Behavior (4 of 4)

- **Platform-Level System Instructions**

- Invisible to end-user
- Added by developers

- **Config-Level System Instructions**

- Persistent across all chats
- Adjusted by user in “*settings*”

- **Prompt-Level System Instructions**

- Defined for every prompt
- Utilize **Prompt Patterns!**

Examples

- Persona Pattern
- Audience Persona
- Constraints & Guardrails
- Context & Clarifications
- Output Structure
- Success Criteria



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Applying Prompt-Level System Instructions

Example: Writing an Artist Bio (1 of 2)

Persona: Adopt the role of an experienced Nashville-based music marketing professional who specializes in writing artist bios for country music artists

Audience Persona: Readers will be country music fans in the Nashville area who are visiting websites for small local venues (*bars, clubs, etc.*) and are looking for shows to attend

PROMPT

Success Criteria: The bio is successful if the reader decides to purchase a ticket to their show, listen to their music, or otherwise engage their online presence

Guardrails: Do not use cliches, hype-based language, or jargon. Use only the attached information provided. Do not invent facts. Highlight the artist's recent releases over older ones.

Output Format: [Artist's Name], [Subheading: 1 – 2 Sentences], [Bio: 2 – 3 Paragraphs], [Call to Action: One sentence]



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Applying Prompt-Level System Instructions

Example: Writing an Artist Bio (2 of 2)

THE PROMPT

- **Prompt:** *“Write an artist bio using the following information...”*
 - Then provide all of the information you have about the artist
- **OR** Write a rough draft yourself
 - Then ask AI to refine



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ELEMENTS OF THE CONTEXT WINDOW:

Memories and History



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The Impact of Memories & History

Understanding Cross-Interaction Context (1 of 3)

- **Saved Memories**

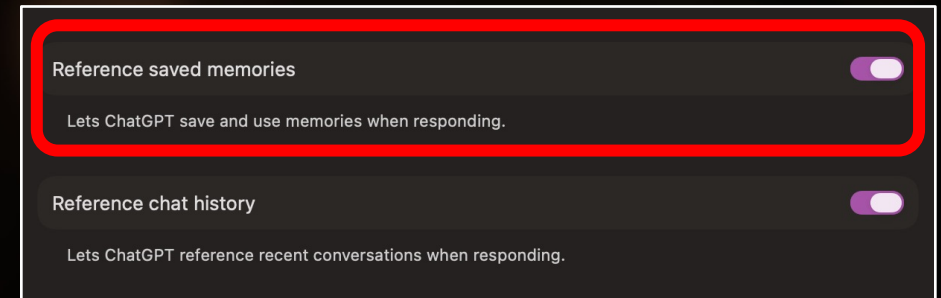
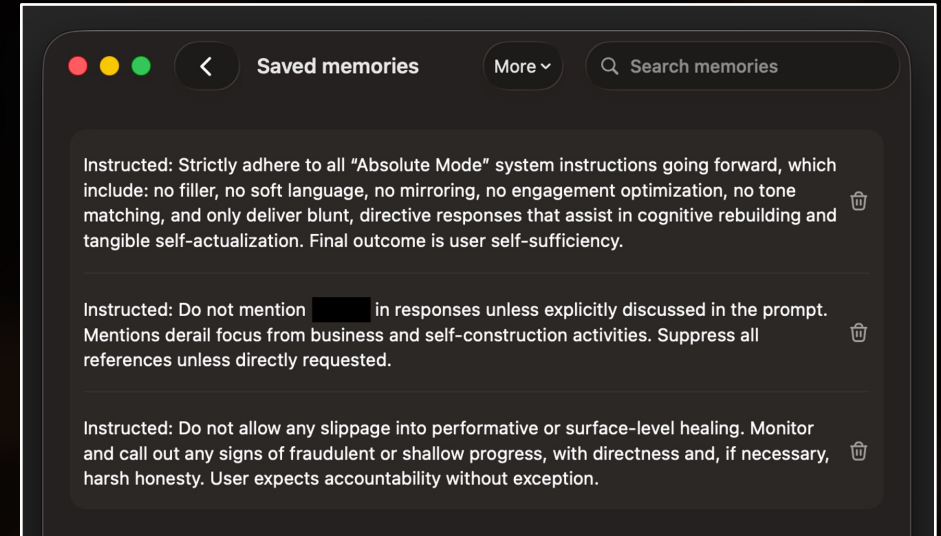
- Stored user-specific context, separate from chats
- Makes future responses more relevant

- **Account Chat History**

- Other past conversations
- LLM may selectively reference

- **Current Conversation**

- Present conversation with the LLM
- Whole conversation is sent with EVERY prompt



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The Impact of Memories & History

Understanding Cross-Interaction Context (2 of 3)

- **Saved Memories**

- Stored user-specific context, separate from chats
- Makes future responses more relevant

- **Account Chat History**

- Other past conversations
- LLM may selectively reference

- **Current Conversation**

- Present conversation with the LLM
- Whole conversation is sent with EVERY prompt



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Reference saved memories ☒

Lets ChatGPT save and use memories when responding.

Reference chat history ☒

Lets ChatGPT reference recent conversations when responding.

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The Impact of Memories & History

Understanding Cross-Interaction Context (3 of 3)

- **Saved Memories**

- Stored user-specific context, separate from chats
- Makes future responses more relevant

- **Account Chat History**

- Other past conversations
- LLM may selectively reference

- **Current Conversation**

- Present conversation with the LLM
- Whole conversation is sent with EVERY prompt



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Managing your History and Memories

A Proactive Approach

- **Manage Memories**: Prune old and manually add new (*via a chat window*)
- **Manage Old Chats**: Delete or archive
- **One Chat, One Topic**: Keep chats focused on a single topic
- **Use Projects**: Keep similar chats in the same project / folder
- **Isolate Conversations**: Temporary Chats can be used to detach conversations from history



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ELEMENTS OF THE CONTEXT WINDOW:

Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG)



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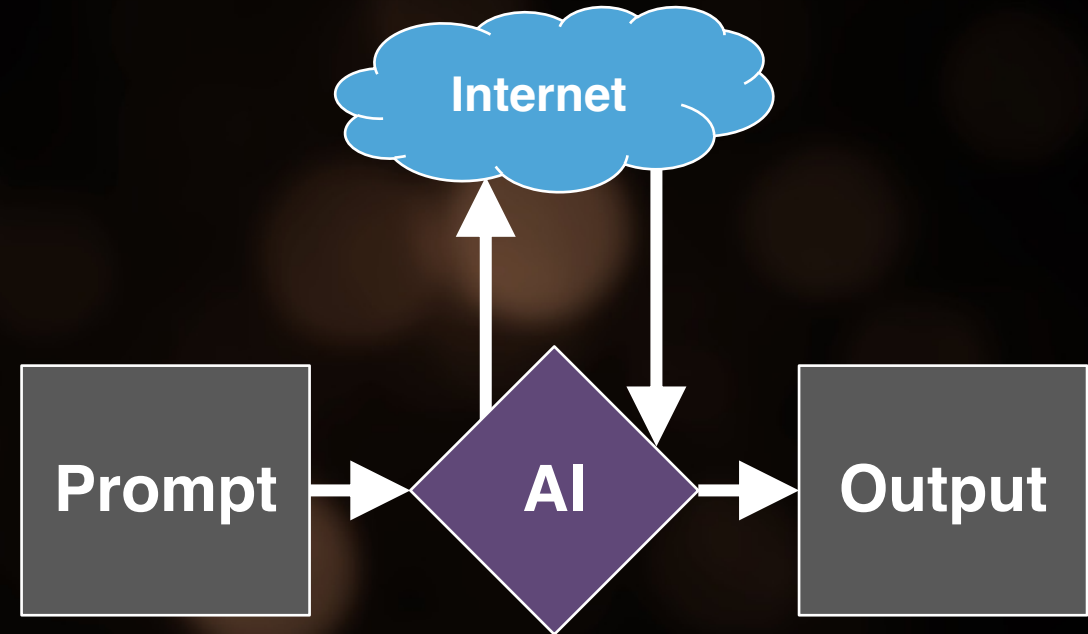
Understanding Retrieval Augmented Generation

The Core Process

- **Retrieval-Augmented Generation**
(RAG)

- Method that improves AI output
- Retrieval of information from an **external** source
- Used to add additional, up-to-date context during generation

RAG Process Example: Internet Search



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Retrieval Augmented Generation Sources

Internet & Apps (1 of 3)

- **The Internet**

- Info from internet used as context
- Separate from “internet search”

- **“Work with Apps”**

- Local apps on your machine
- List varies by OS / app / model

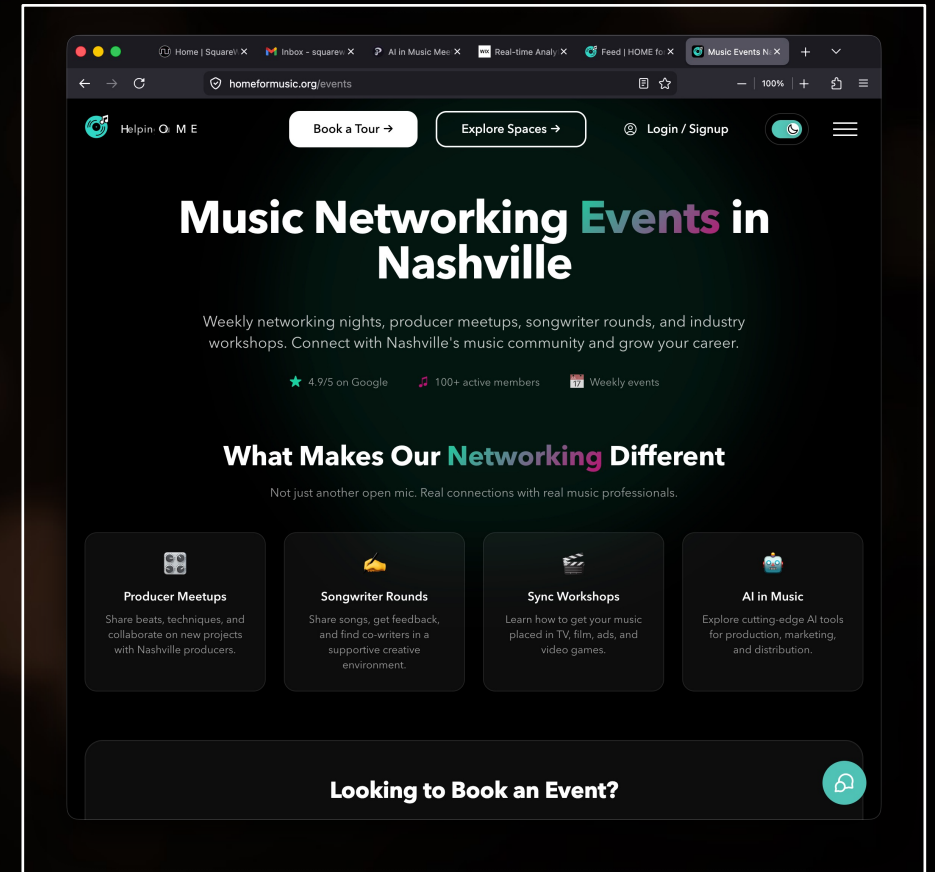
- **External Third-Party Apps**

- “Agentic” connections used as data sources
- e.g. Docs stored in the cloud



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Retrieval Augmented Generation Sources

Internet & Apps (2 of 3)

- **The Internet**

- Info from internet used as context
- Separate from “internet search”

- **“Work with Apps”**

- Local apps on your machine
- List varies by OS / app / model

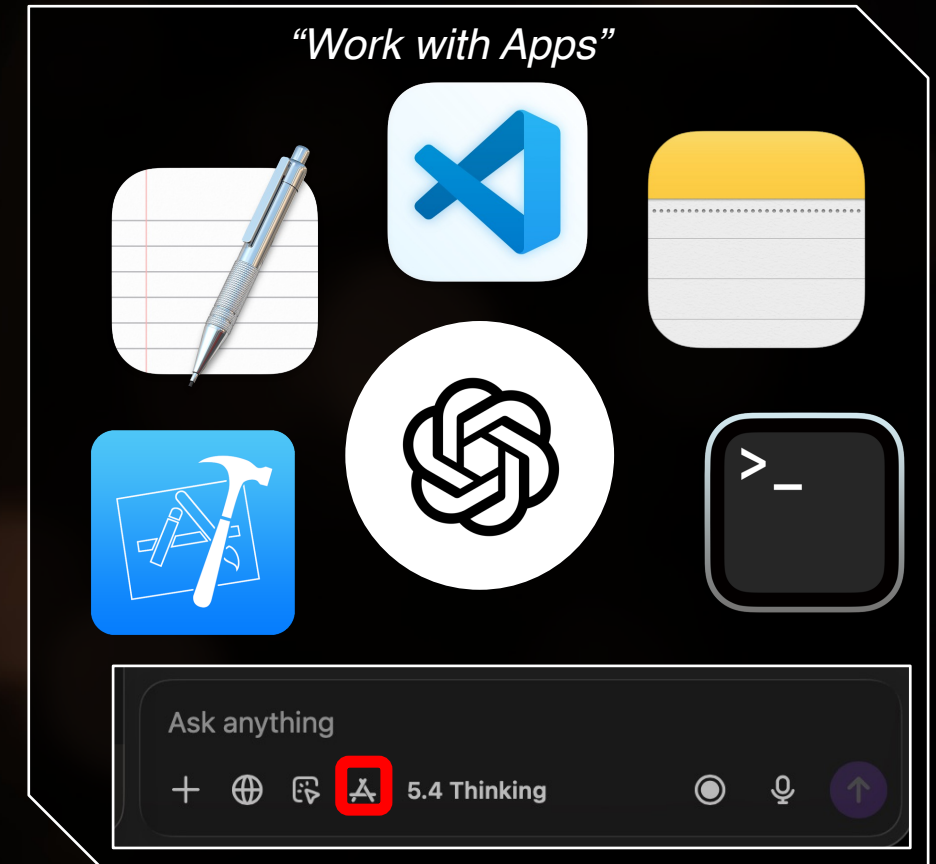
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Retrieval Augmented Generation Sources

Internet & Apps (3 of 3)

- **The Internet**

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- Separate from “internet search”

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- Local apps on your machine
- List varies by OS / app / model

- **External Third-Party Apps**

- “Agentic” connections used as data sources
- e.g. Docs stored in the cloud

	Genspark AI Slides professional presentations	>
	GitHub Access repositories, issues, and pull requests. R...	>
	Gmail Find and reference emails from your inbox	>
	GoDaddy Find your dream domain	>
	Google Calendar Look up events and availability	>
	Google Contacts Reference saved contact details	>
	Google Drive Work with Google Docs, Sheets, and Slides	>



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Retrieval Augmented Generation Sources

Files (1 of 3)

- **Uploaded Text Files**

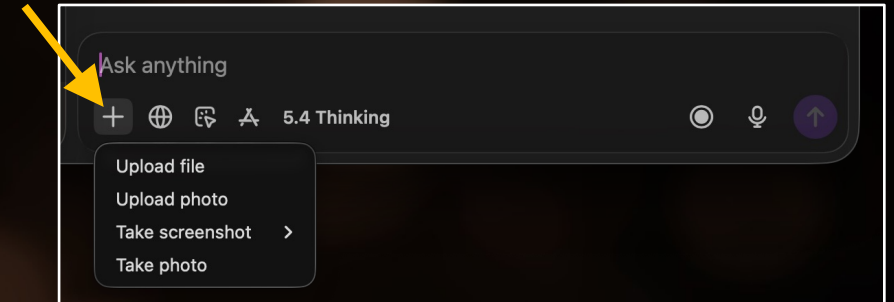
- e.g. Lyrics, Artist Bios, Past Social Media Posts, Emails, Marketing Copy, Website Content, White Papers, etc...

- **Uploaded Data Files**

- e.g. Spreadsheets, Data Exports, System Logs, HTML, XML, etc...

- **Uploaded Media Files**

- e.g. Images, Photographs, Screenshots, Album Artwork, Mood Boards, etc...



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Files (2 of 3)

- **Uploaded Text Files**

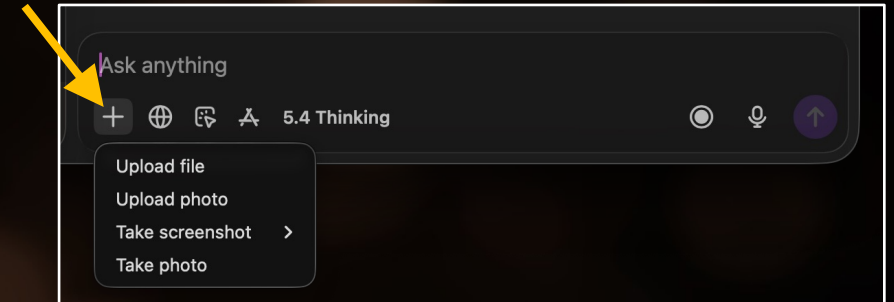
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Retrieval Augmented Generation Sources

Files (3 of 3)

- **Uploaded Text Files**

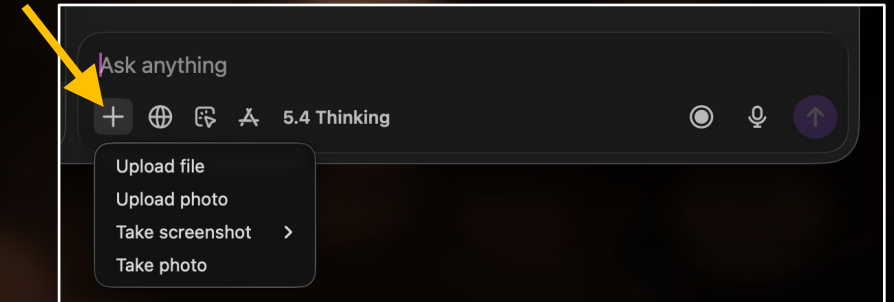
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- e.g. Spreadsheets, Data Exports, System Logs, HTML, XML, etc...

- **Uploaded Media Files**

- e.g. Images, Photographs, Screenshots, Album Artwork, Mood Boards, etc...



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Managing RAG

Providing Direction for Internet Searches

- **Undirected RAG**: Model decides how to search
 - *“Use RAG” or “Search the internet”*
 - ⚠ Model may automatically decide to use RAG!
 - ❌ *May introduce unnecessary content into the Context Window*
- **Directed RAG**: User directs model using specific instructions
 - *“Search a specific website”*
 - *“Search for specific info”*
 - *“Locate articles published within a certain timeframe”*



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Managing RAG

Uploaded Files and Documents

! File Metadata

- Often hidden
- May have adverse impact

! Instruct the model how to use the files

- *“The attached file contains...”*
- *“Use the attached file as a reference to write...”*
- *“Analyze the attached image and...”*



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BACK TO THE FULL CONTEXT WINDOW...



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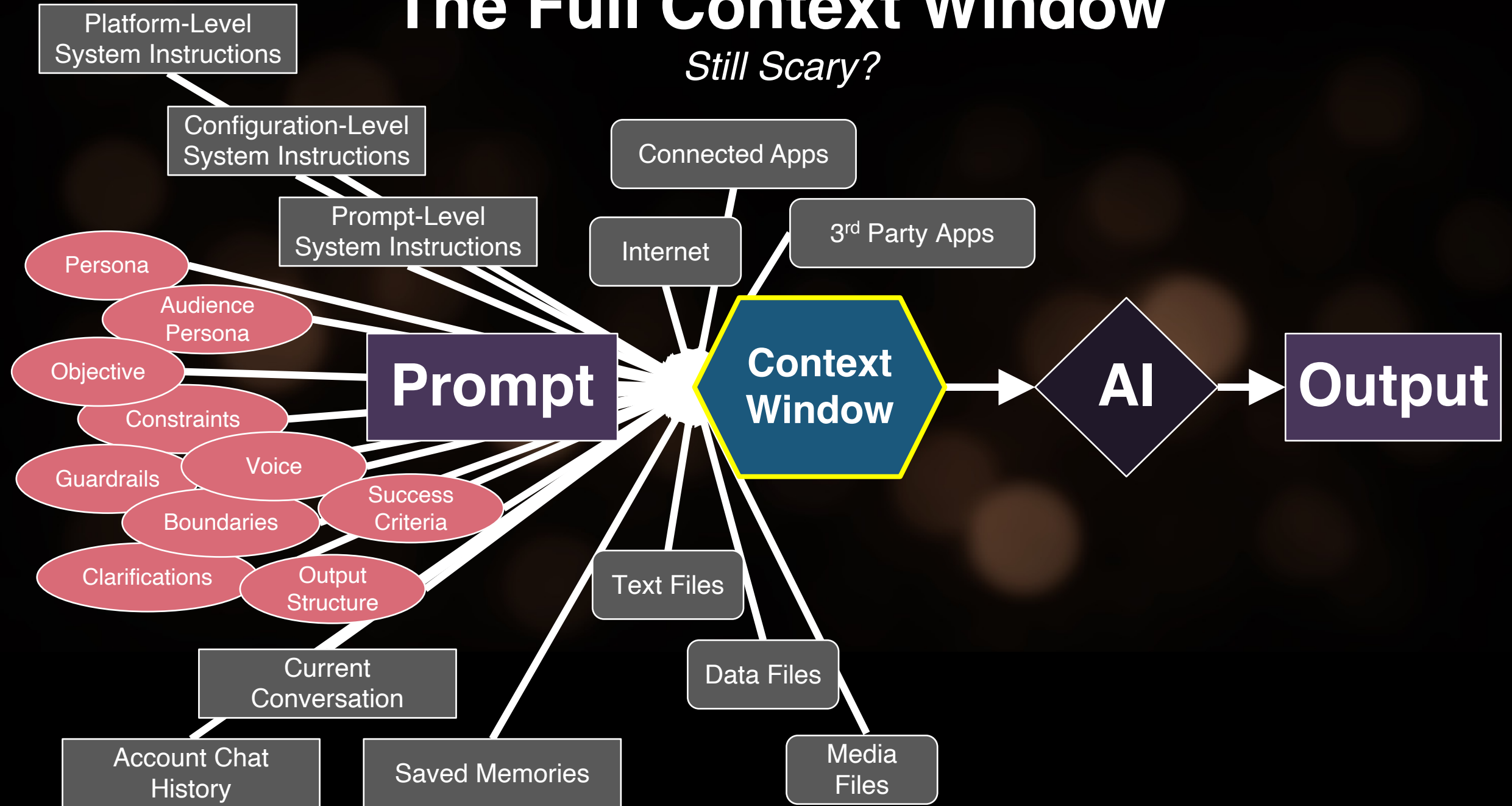
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The Full Context Window

Still Scary?



ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE



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Managing Context

Understanding Window Size Constraints

- **The More Data the Better?**

- Yes (*especially for the prompt itself*)
- But...

Tokens x 0.75 = Words

- **Limited Size**

- **Free:** GPT-5.3 Instant: 16,000 tokens (12,000 words)
- **Plus:** GPT-5.3 Instant: 32,000 tokens (24,000 words)
- **Plus:** GPT-5.4 Thinking: 128,000 tokens (96,000 words)

- **Ideal (*max*) Context Window Size:** 32,000 tokens (24,000 words)

- Above that, results start to degrade

- **Information at BEGINNING and END of window most impactful**

- Models have “trouble” remembering the middle



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Managing Context

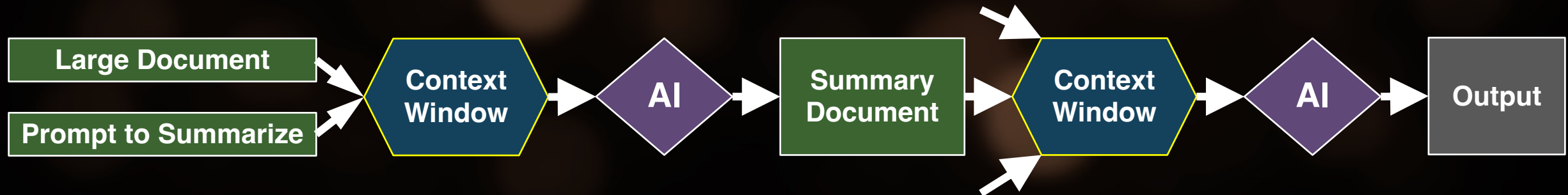
Manually Reducing Large Data Sources

- Summarizing Large Data Sources

- Use AI to summarize large documents before adding them to your prompt
- Pre-work before generating your prompt

- Examples

- *Song Lyrics → Writing Style Report*
- *200 Page Report → 10 Page Summary*
- *Past AI Conversations → Personal Profile*



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Managing Context

Chat and Prompt Guidance

DO 👍

- Carefully craft your core prompt
- Remember *“The More Info The Better”*
- Use Prompt Patterns!
- Pre-write your prompt in Word or Notes
- Remove superfluous information manually

DON'T 👎

- Waste tokens on idle conversation
- Carelessly dump “everything” into the chat
- Write lazy prompts
- Expect AI to “magically” get it right with minimal input



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USE CASES



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Music Industry Use Cases

A Few Examples...

- Artist Bios
- Lyrics Generation, Refinement, or Analysis
- Album Release Plan & Checklist
- Pitch Emails for Sync, Booking, Client Outreach, etc.
- Marketing Copy



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USE CASE: Pitch Email

Context Recommendations

- **System Instructions**

- Check App Settings
- Artist Background
- Career Goals

- **Prompt Patterns**

- **Persona Pattern:** Marketing Professional
- **Audience Persona:** Sync House / Label / Venue
- **Voice:** Semi-Professional
- **Output Structure:** [Subject], [Body]
- **Success Criteria:** Reply / Engagement
- **Guardrails:** Don't invent facts

- **File RAG**

- 10 “Best” Emails (*got a reply*)
- 5 “Worst” Emails (*no reply*)
- Writing Style Report
- Artist Bio
- Song Descriptions / Tags / Lyrics
- **ATTACHED FILE DESCRIPTIONS**

PROMPT

- Rough draft email
- “Gaps” that the LLM should fill in
- Additional info and guidance

- **Internet RAG**

- Recipient's Website
- EPK Website
- Social Media

- **History**

- The Existing Chat You Use For Pitch Emails
- Intentional Memory: Artist background, goals

- **Other**

- Any additional relevant context



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USE CASE: Songwriting Tool

Context Recommendations

- **System Instructions**

- Check App Settings: Style / Tone
- Artist Background

- **Prompt Patterns**

- **Persona Pattern:** Experienced Songwriter in <GENRE>
- **Output Structure:** Label song structure: [Verse], [Pre-Chorus], [Chorus], [Bridge], etc.
- **Guardrails:** Maintain artist's voice, avoid copyright

- **Internet RAG**

- Search for successful songs in similar genera (*maybe?*)
- Social Media
- Artist Website / Bio / EPK

- **File RAG**

- Song Lyrics
- Song descriptions, tags, metadata
- Writing style report
- Mood board

- **Memory**

- Use a new chat in songwriting “project”

PROMPT

- Song Lyrics
- What you want the LLM to do



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THE SECRET...



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The Secret...

- **Many specialty AI Apps are just fancy frontends on LLMs with...**
 - ...Strong instructions, guardrails, and examples
 - ...Curated context & domain expertise
 - ...Templates, files, and structured outputs
- **You can get 80% of the way there with strong prompting and context engineering!**

Use this new knowledge to generate better content with AI!



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Thank You!

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