OpenAI is retaining all ChatGPT logs “indefinitely.” Here’s who’s affected.

In the copyright fight, Magistrate Judge Ona Wang granted the order within one day of the NYT’s request. She agreed with news plaintiffs that it seemed likely that ChatGPT users may be spooked by the lawsuit and possibly set their chats to delete when using the chatbot to skirt NYT paywalls. Because OpenAI wasn’t sharing deleted chat logs, the news plaintiffs had no way of proving that, she suggested.

Now, OpenAI is not only asking Wang to reconsider but has “also appealed this order with the District Court Judge,” the Thursday statement said.

“We strongly believe this is an overreach by the New York Times,” Lightcap said. “We’re continuing to appeal this order so we can keep putting your trust and privacy first.”

Who can access deleted chats?

To protect users, OpenAI provides an FAQ that clearly explains why their data is being retained and how it could be exposed.

For example, the statement noted that the order doesn’t impact OpenAI API business customers under Zero Data Retention agreements because their data is never stored.

And for users whose data is affected, OpenAI noted that their deleted chats could be accessed, but they won’t “automatically” be shared with The New York Times. Instead, the retained data will be “stored separately in a secure

system” and “protected under legal hold, meaning it can’t be accessed or used for purposes other than meeting legal obligations,” OpenAI explained.

Of course, with the court battle ongoing, the FAQ did not have all the answers.

Nobody knows how long OpenAI may be required to retain the deleted chats. Likely seeking to reassure users—some of which appeared to be considering switching to a rival service until the order lifts—OpenAI noted that “only a small, audited OpenAI legal and security team would be able to access this data as necessary to comply with our legal obligations.”

https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2025/06/openai-confronts-user-panic-over-court-ordered-retention-of-chatgpt-logs/