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Privacy Perceptions of Custom GPTs by Users and Creators

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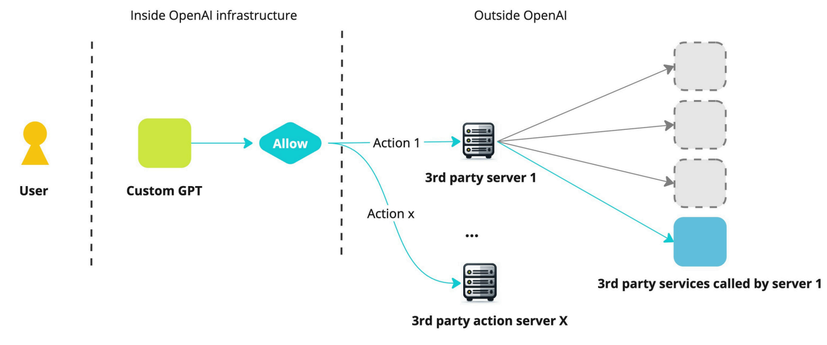
Background

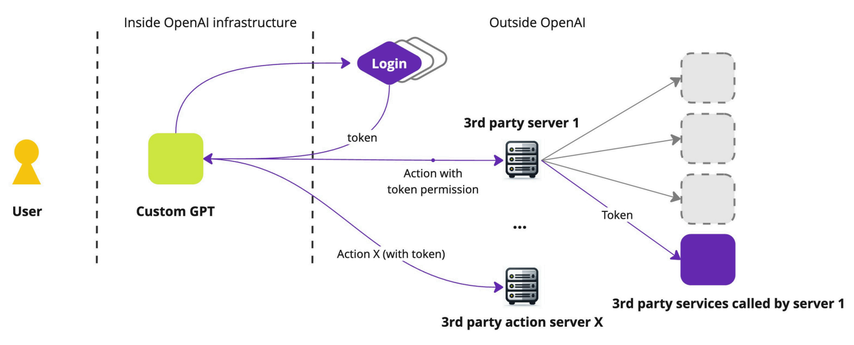
Custom GPTs are personalized applications built on LLMs and hosted on OpenAI's GPT Store.

In Scenario 1, anyone can easily create and publish a basic GPT using simple prompts — no coding required.

More advanced GPTs can also be built by connecting them to third-party services for richer functionality.



Scenario 2: Action-based GPTs



Scenario 3: Login-based GPTs

Method

We conducted semi-structured interviews (N = 23) with participants from diverse backgrounds, including 9 professional GPT creators (who have published GPTs that gained notable popularity), 8 user-creators (who create GPTs primarily for their own personal use), and 6 end users (who use GPTs but do not create them).

Findings

Privacy concerns

Privacy Concerns about GPTs		
Participant	Privacy Concerns	Brief Definition
All	UC1: Concerns about data collection	Transparency, consent, and scope of information gathering
All	UC2: Concern about data processing	Misuse, inaccuracy, or insecure processing of personal data
All	UC3: Concern about dissemination	Unauthorized exposure of information or intrusion into private life
All	UC4: Lack of privacy regulatory guidelines	Insufficient regulations, platform guidelines, and GPT verification
Creators	CC1: Concerns about creator's knowledge	GPT creators' work exploited through reverse engineering

Table 2: An overview of both User Concerns (UC) and Creator Concerns (CC) in the privacy of GPTs.

Practice practices

Privacy Practices to GPTs		
Participants	Privacy Decisions and Behavior	Brief Definition
All	UP1: Self-censorship of the input	Proactive efforts to reduce the amount of personal information shared
All	UP2: GPT evaluation	Users' continuous evaluation of GPTs for privacy and trustworthiness
All	UP3: Minimizing traces of GPT usage	The deliberate separation, deletion, and obfuscation of GPT activities
All	UP4: Accepting privacy risks for features	The compromises users make when balancing privacy concerns with utility
Creators	CP1: Knowledge protection	Actions to protect the creation of knowledge, including configuring settings
Creators	CP2: Creating privacy notices for GPTs	Practices towards protecting other users' (clients, end-users) privacy

Table 3: An overview of both User Practices (UP) and Creator Practices (CP) regarding the privacy of GPTs.

Key takeaways

- Misconceptions about GPT data flow: For example, some users believed that GPT creators could access their conversations, which is not the case in Scenario 1.
- Blurred boundaries between creator and user roles: Unclear role definitions and responsibilities lead to ambiguous privacy practices.

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