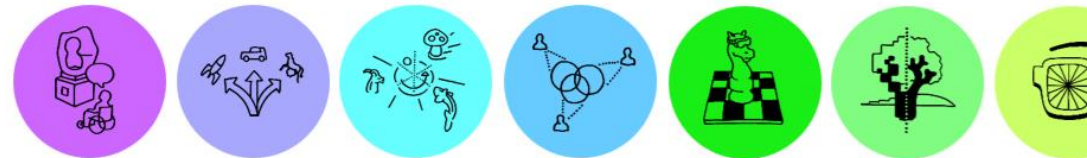
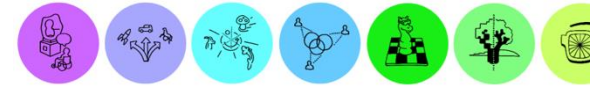


AI for Research - Apolitical

Brendan Arnold – Policy Lab, UK Government
February 2026



Agenda



General introduction for civil servants

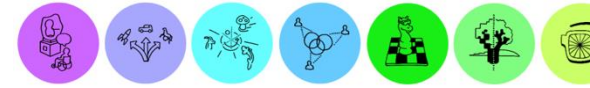
AI to solve a qualitative problem

AI to solve a quantitative problem

Check your guidance

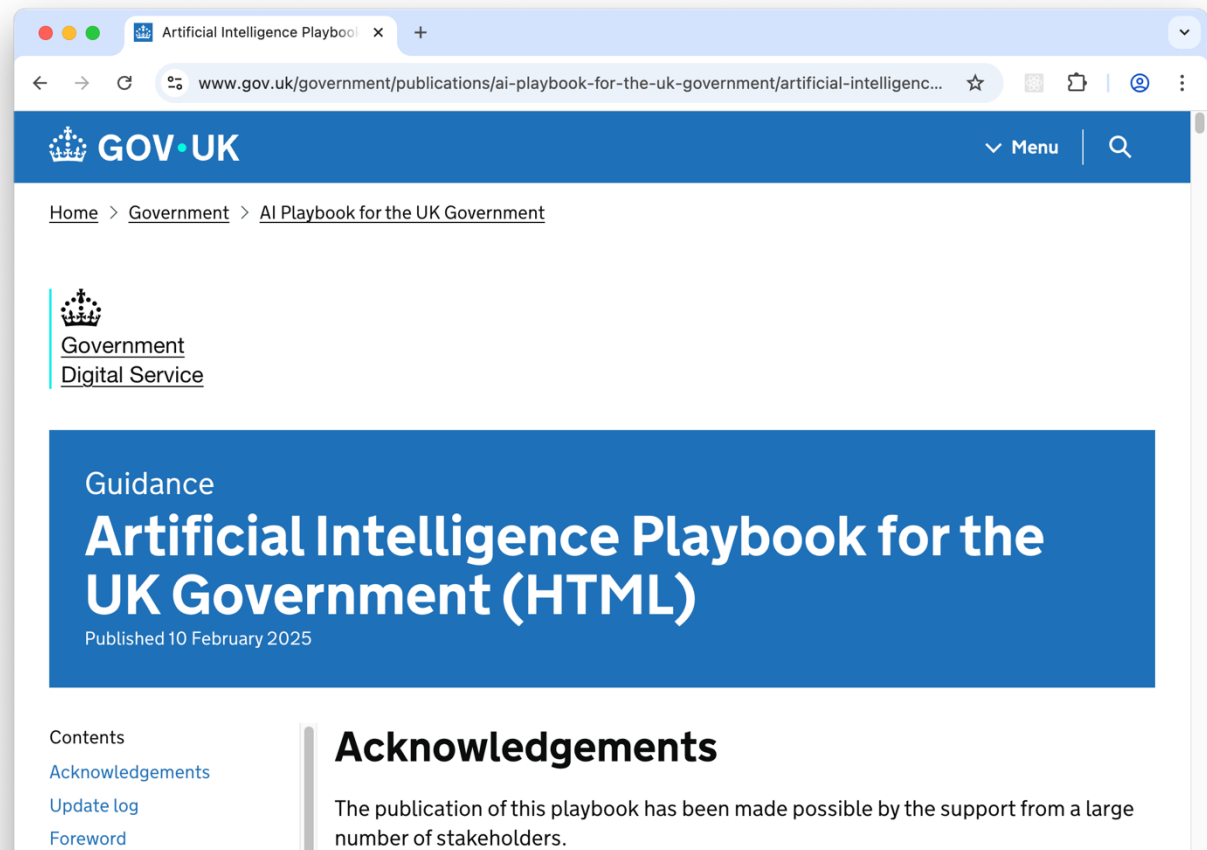


At least the third set of
guidance for UK government!

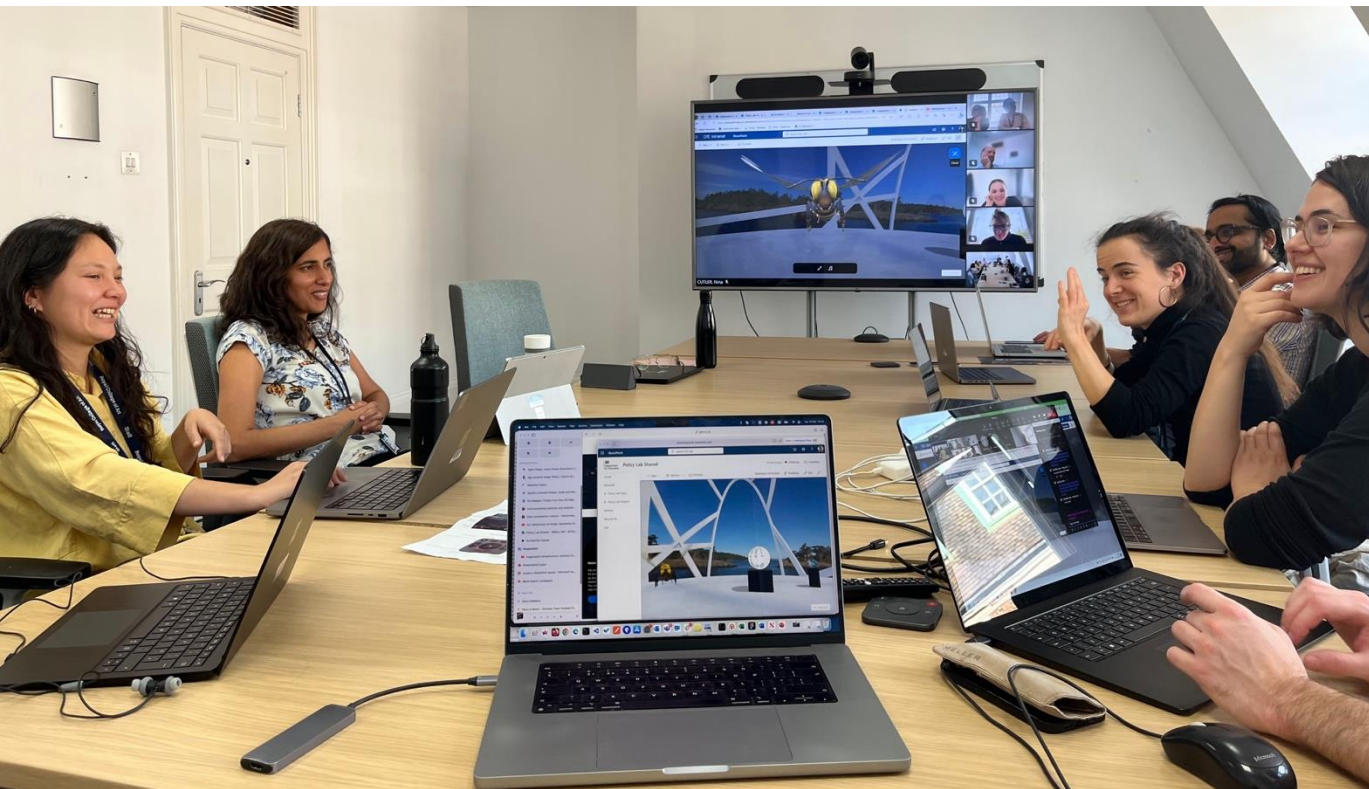


Not always possible to keep
up ...

.. but probably worth checking
if you haven't for a while



Collective learning through doing in Policy Lab



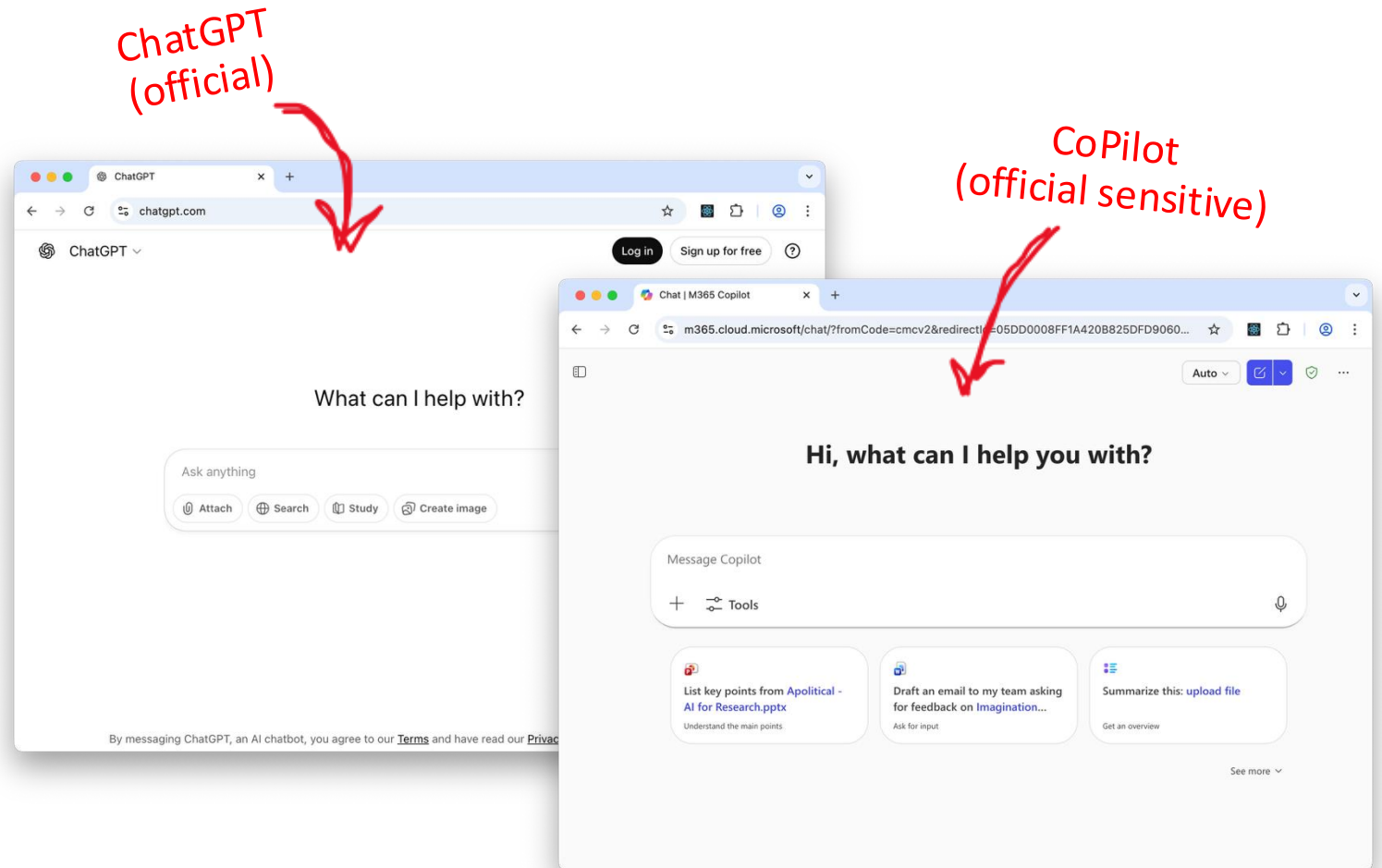
Sessions every two weeks
where we do an activity and
tackle a challenge ...

.. we then discuss how we
might apply it to our work ...

.. at least 8 have been about
AI and AI related work

There are many tools available - but basic prompts are kind of universal

Co-Pilot is just as capable as ChatGPT now ...

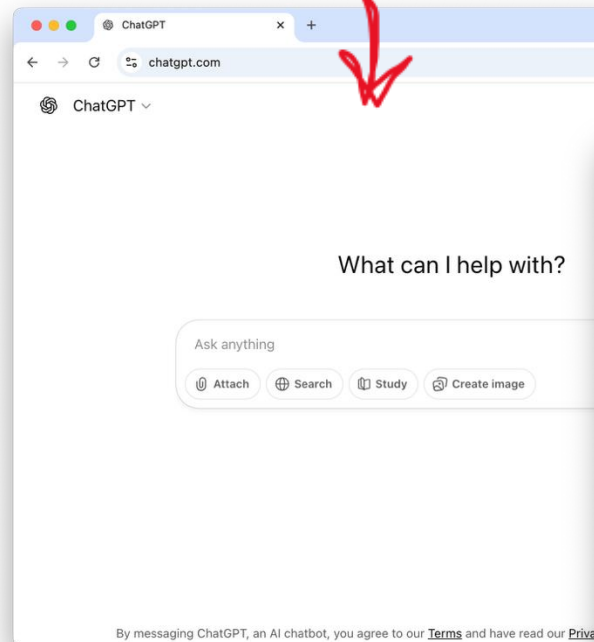


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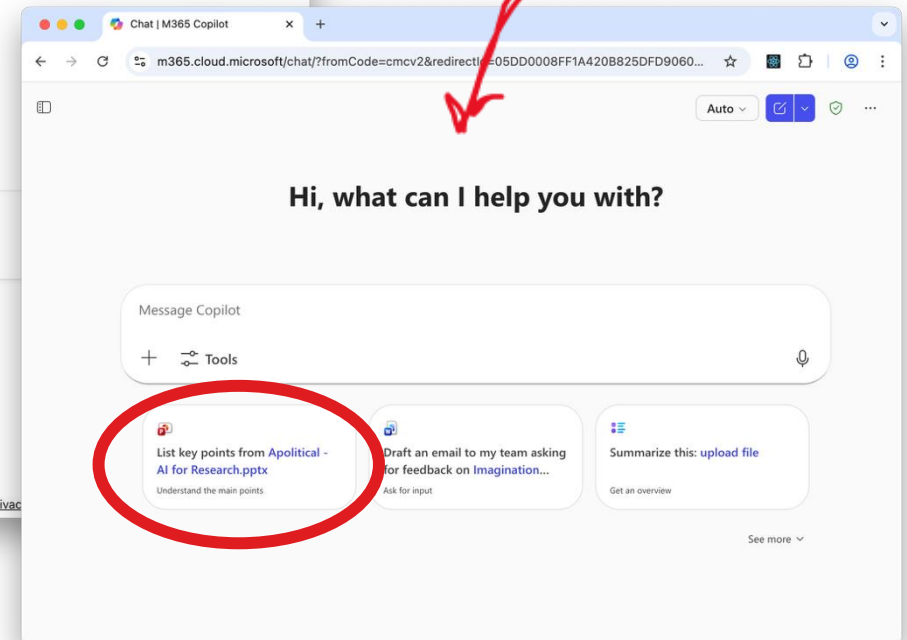
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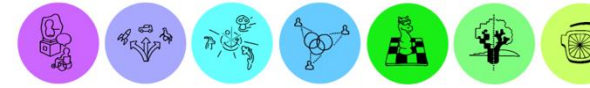
... and enterprise licenses can help you with recent documents

ChatGPT
(official)



CoPilot
(official sensitive)



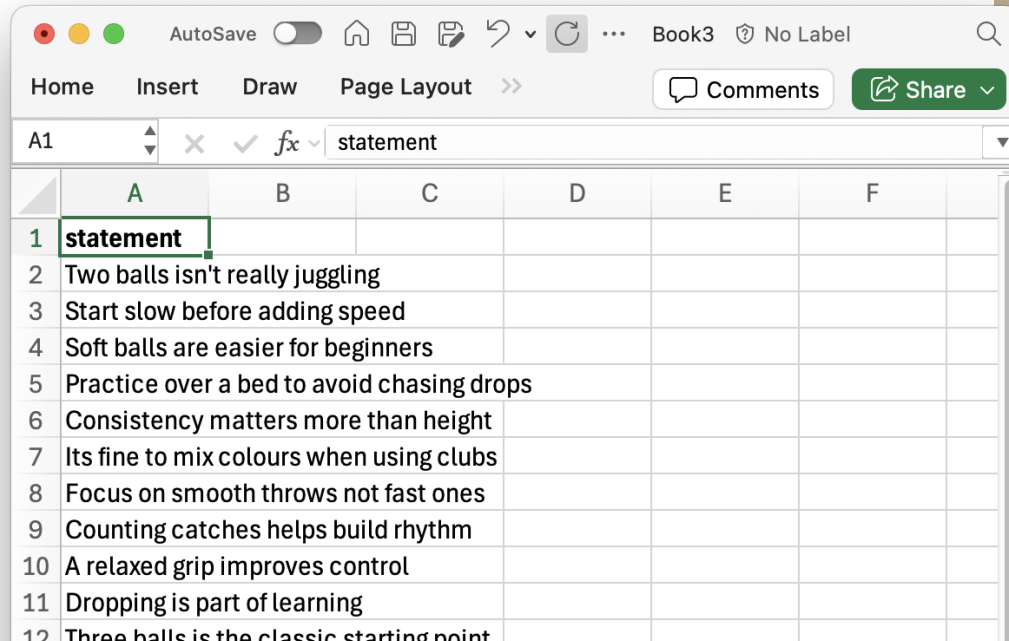


**AI to solve a qualitative
problem (grouping by topic)**

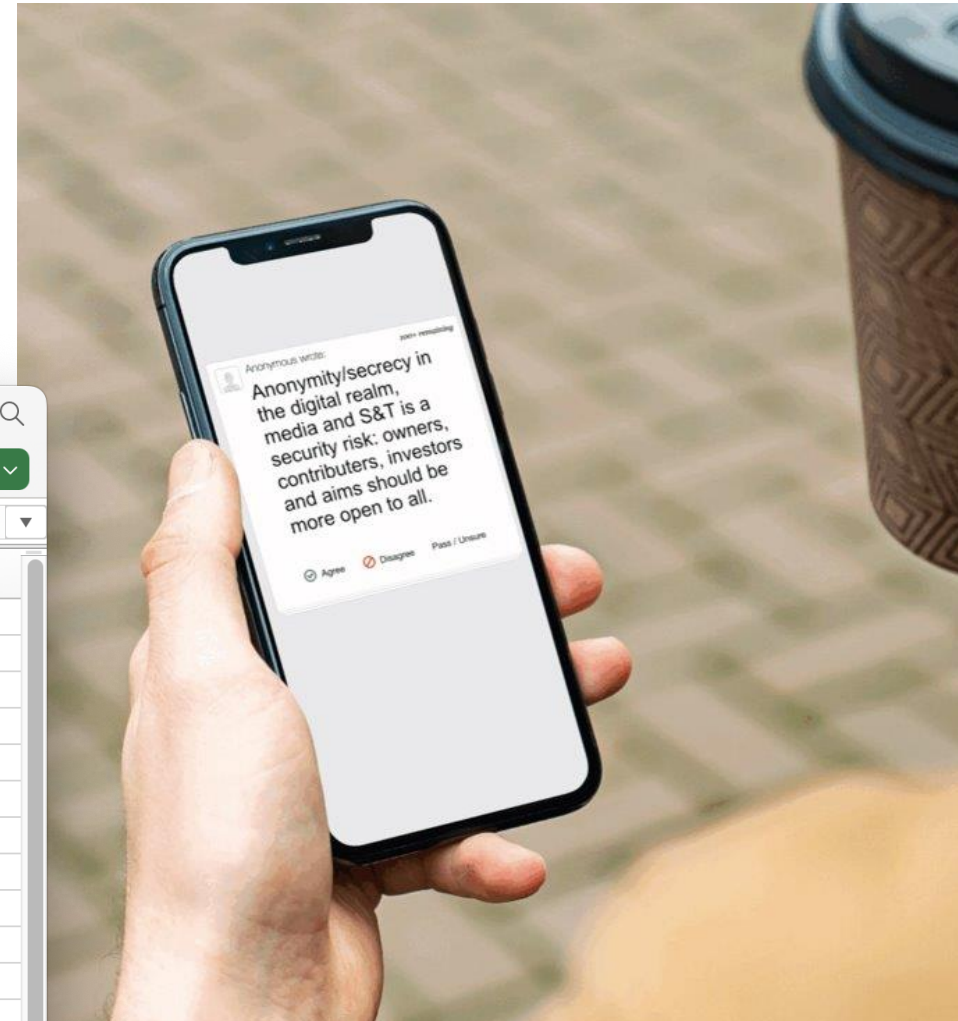
We use it for for our Collective Intelligence tool Pol.is

Generates **hundreds of statements** on a topic submitted by participants

How do we categorise them so we can sift through them easily?



	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	statement					
2	Two balls isn't really juggling					
3	Start slow before adding speed					
4	Soft balls are easier for beginners					
5	Practice over a bed to avoid chasing drops					
6	Consistency matters more than height					
7	Its fine to mix colours when using clubs					
8	Focus on smooth throws not fast ones					
9	Counting catches helps build rhythm					
10	A relaxed grip improves control					
11	Dropping is part of learning					
12	Three balls is the classic starting point					



Solving a qualitative problem (grouping by topic)



Where is the data?

Use .csv files rather than pasting into the window

Specify which files to look at, you can paraphrase

Best to start with pre-made topics



Example with attached files `data_categories.csv` and `statements_uncategorised.csv`

Example prompt

"Group the statements in the statements CSV file according to the topics and subtopics in the categories CSV file."

Output the results in a new CSV file in the following markdown format
| statement | topic | subtopic |

Make sure to include the correct IDs with the statements and include the statements verbatim, do not paraphrase"

Solving a qualitative problem (grouping by topic)



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How do you want it output?

Some other possibilities:

- Summarised text output
- A .csv file with format – you can use a screenshot or Markdown works well
- Python/Jupyter code (advanced)

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Extra qualifiers, quality checks

You may need to include some clause to avoid 'over-correcting' to preserve the data

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Solving a qualitative problem (grouping by topic)



The screenshot shows a spreadsheet application window with a table containing 20 rows of data. The columns are labeled 'statement', 'topic', and 'subtopic'. A red arrow points to the 'colours' subtopic in the 10th row.

statement	topic	subtopic
Two balls isn't really juggling	myths & misconceptions	myth
Start slow before adding speed	technique	tempo
Soft balls are easier for beginners	equipment & environment	equipment
Practice over a bed to avoid chasing drops	equipment & environment	environment
Consistency matters more than height	technique	tempo
Its fine to mix colours when using clubs	aesthetics	colours
Focus on smooth throws not fast ones	technique	tempo
Counting catches helps build rhythm	technique	exercises
A relaxed grip improves control	technique	grip
Dropping is part of learning	technique	learning
Three balls is the classic starting point	equipment & environment	equipment
Good posture helps accuracy	technique	posture
Practice a little every day	technique	practice
Watch the peak of each throw	technique	throwing
Even throws make patterns stable	technique	throwing
Music can help with timing	equipment & environment	equipment
Film yourself to spot mistakes	equipment & environment	equipment
Learn one trick fully before another	technique	learning
Warm up your wrists first	technique	grip
Juggling improves coordination	benefits	benefit

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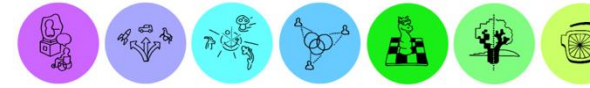
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Make sure to include the correct IDs with the statements and include the statements verbatim, do not paraphrase"

Solving a qualitative problem (grouping by topic)



- Us attached files instead of pasting into window
- You can paraphrase and the LLM will pick it up
- Start with premade topics if possible
- Ask for the output you want
- Beware of the LLM “over-correcting”
- **Topics are as broad as the size of the data set**



**AI to solve a quantitative
problem (who needs to login?)**

Solving a quantitative problem (who needs to login?)



Describe the data

Describe the what you see in Excel before asking about how to solve the problem



Example prompt

"I have two sheets in an excel doc - one has a list of ids of people who have logged in to our survey system, the other has a list of all our user records including their ids.

How can I generate a list of user records of people who have NOT logged in to our survey?"

Solving a quantitative problem (who needs to login?)



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Really good for technical help and to find idiomatic 'best practice' ways to do more complex tasks



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✓ Method 1 (Recommended): Use COUNTIF

Go to the **AllUsers** sheet and add a helper column (e.g., column Z or next empty column).

In row 2 enter:

</> excel

=IF(COUNTIF(LoggedInUsers!A:A, A2)=0, "Not Logged In", "Logged In")



Then drag down

Solving a quantitative problem (who needs to login?)



Describe the data

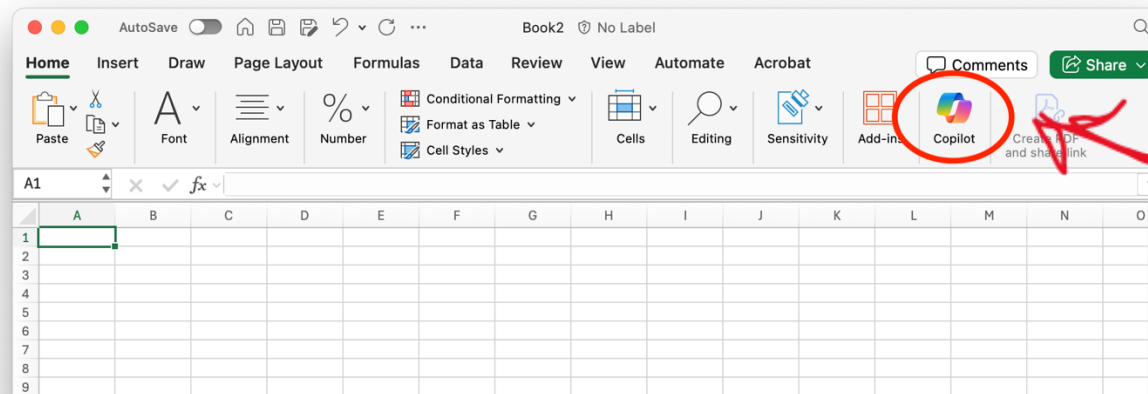
Describe the what you see in Excel before asking about how to solve the problem

Really good for technical help and to find idiomatic 'best practice' ways to do more complex tasks

Example prompt

"I have two sheets in my excel data. One has a list of users and the other has a list of user records. Using the data in this workbook ... including their IDs."

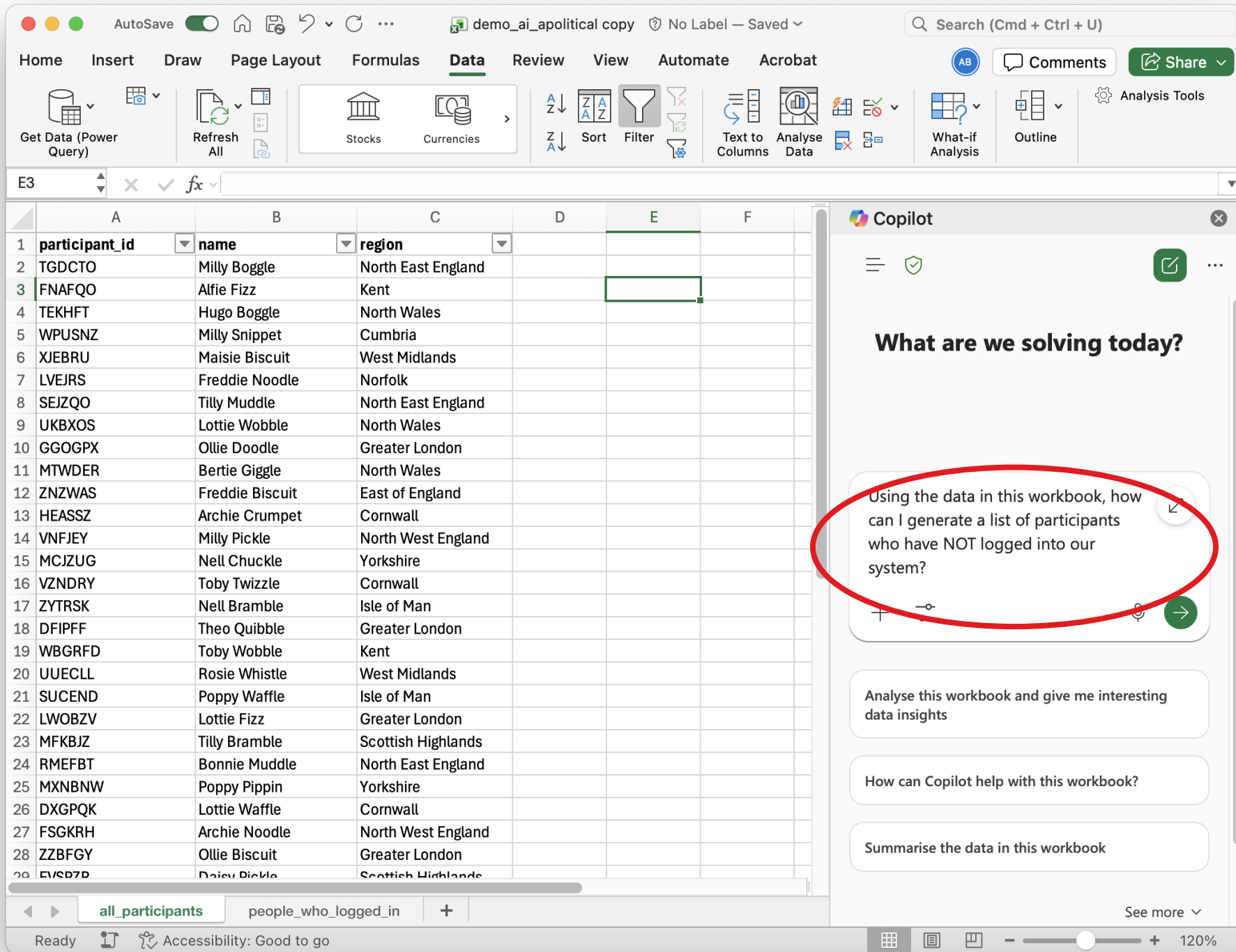
How can I generate a list of user records of people who have NOT logged in to our survey?"



CoPilot built-in to Excel for some licences



Thank you!



AutoSave demo_ai_apolitical copy No Label — Saved Search (Cmd + Ctrl + U)

Home Insert Draw Page Layout Formulas **Data** Review View Automate Acrobat

Get Data (Power Query) Refresh All Stocks Currencies Sort Filter Text to Columns Analyse Data What-if Analysis Outline Analysis Tools

D1 is_logged_in

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	participant_id	name	region	is_logged_in		
2	TGDC TO	Milly Boggle	North East Engla	NOT logged in		
3	FNAFQO	Alfie Fizz	Kent			
4	TEKHFT	Hugo Boggle	North Wales	NOT logged in		
5	WPUSNZ	Milly Snippet	Cumbria	NOT logged in		
6	XJEBRU	Maisie Biscuit	West Midlands	NOT logged in		
7	LVEJRS	Freddie Noodle	Norfolk	NOT logged in		
8	SEJZQO	Tilly Muddle	North East England	NOT logged in		
9	UKBXOS	Lottie Wobble	North Wales	NOT logged in		
10	GGOGPX	Ollie Doodle	Greater London			
11	MTWDER	Bertie Giggle	North Wales	NOT logged in		
12	ZNZWAS	Freddie Biscuit	East of England	NOT logged in		
13	HEASSZ	Archie Crumpet	Cornwall			
14	VNFJEY	Milly Pickle	North West England	NOT logged in		
15	MCJZUG	Nell Chuckle	Yorkshire	NOT logged in		
16	VZNDRY	Toby Twizzle	Cornwall	NOT logged in		
17	ZYTRSK	Nell Bramble	Isle of Man	NOT logged in		
18	DFIPFF	Theo Quibble	Greater London			
19	WBGRFD	Toby Wobble	Kent	NOT logged in		
20	UUECLL	Rosie Whistle	West Midlands	NOT logged in		
21	SUCEND	Poppy Waffle	Isle of Man	NOT logged in		
22	LWOBVZ	Lottie Fizz	Greater London	NOT logged in		
23	MFKBJZ	Tilly Bramble	Scottish Highlands	NOT logged in		
24	RMEFBT	Bonnie Muddle	North East England	NOT logged in		
25	MXNBNW	Poppy Pippin	Yorkshire	NOT logged in		
26	DXGPQK	Lottie Waffle	Cornwall			
27	FSGKRH	Archie Noodle	North West England			
28	ZZBFGY	Ollie Biscuit	Greater London	NOT logged in		
29	EVSD7D	Daivy Pickle	Scottish Highlands			

all_participants people_who_logged_in +

Enter Accessibility: Good to go

Copilot

participant IDs are in column A of that sheet):

```
=IF(COUNTIF(people_who_logged_in!$A:$A, A2)=0, "NOT logged in", "")
```

+ Add to cell

Generate the list of non-logged-in participants.

Can I automate this with a macro?

How to highlight missing IDs automatically?

Message Copilot

+

AI-generated content may be incorrect

- 120%

