



ChatGPT's new "Work" mode

**Digital Marketing School
Live Monthly Zoom**

Course Summary
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Course Overview

This session brought participants up to speed on ChatGPT's new "Work" mode, which Evan positioned as ChatGPT largely catching up to features first introduced in Claude. Two opening polls established the room's starting point: 42% of attendees pay for ChatGPT (notably higher than the 10-20% typical on Local Enterprise Office courses), and 62% had used Claude at least a little (again much higher than the 30-40% typical elsewhere). Evan noted this meant the group was more advanced than his usual audience, but structured the session so it would work for complete beginners too.

The framing throughout: for three and a half years, AI has mainly been used for advice, ideas and strategy. It is now shifting towards doing tasks directly, and ChatGPT has just added the features needed to compete with Claude on this front: work mode, skills, new models, plugins, usage limits, and a desktop app.

A recurring theme was that the free version of ChatGPT is now dramatically behind the paid version — Evan described the gap as "massive," a change from his previous advice that the free version was often good enough.

New Models

ChatGPT now has separate model options depending on whether you're in Chat or Work mode.

In Chat: the default is Instant 5.5. You can raise the reasoning level to medium or high thinking. The free version, inconsistently, has recently started showing a thinking option too (medium, high, and an "extra high" super-smart level), which Evan noted didn't exist there as recently as the day before — a sign of how fast this is moving.

In Work: there are three models, which Evan mapped to Claude's Haiku/Sonnet/Opus structure:

- **Luna** — bronze, fastest, lowest cost
- **Terra** — silver, everyday use
- **Sol** — gold, top-tier model

You also choose an effort level (medium, high, extra high, max) and can factor in speed. Evan's own default is medium thinking with Sol in chat for complex work, or Terra with medium effort in Work for anything that isn't especially complicated, reserving Sol for genuinely complex tasks.

Chat vs Work: Three Live Comparison Tests

Evan ran the same prompts across Work, Chat, and the free version to show the practical differences.

Test 1 — Full marketing campaign (Ivory Lane blouse):

The prompt asked for a two-week campaign: styling combinations from the site, campaign strategy, a two-week social calendar, four Instagram/Facebook posts, three reel briefs with hooks, a MailerLite email, three Meta ad variations, and a staff briefing document for two store locations, all saved as separate labelled files.

- **Work:** completed in under 6 minutes, produced all deliverables as separate documents.
- **Chat (paid):** produced very similar output, but took around 10 minutes and used a visibly different process (lots of Python scripting visible).
- **Free version:** could not complete it — said it lacked the information, asked Evan to paste in page text manually, then still couldn't finish and effectively asked him to upgrade.

Test 2 — Website audit (themarketingcrowd.ie):

Prompt: audit the whole site for inquiry generation, test customer journeys, identify drop-off points, compare against three competitors, and produce a prioritised report, spreadsheet, and 30-day plan.

- **Work:** completed in 5 minutes with no follow-up questions.
- **Chat:** completed in 6 minutes, output was different in structure from Work's version even though it noticed Evan had just run the same prompt in Work minutes earlier (a participant, Pam, asked whether Chat was just reusing Work's output — it wasn't; the results genuinely differed).
- **Free version:** declined outright, said it would need hours of manual crawling and effectively suggested upgrading.

Test 3 — Product graphics (blouse image + copy):

Prompt: two Instagram post options (4:5), two story options (9:16), a website header, an email header, all with specific dimensions and sale copy, plus the Instagram caption and email text.

- **Work:** took 22 minutes, delivered everything requested including captions.
- **Chat:** noticeably faster on the images, but skipped the caption and email text on the first pass — Evan had to prompt it again ("did you write the text?") before it completed the task. This was the first time in testing that Chat needed a manual follow-up to finish a task; Work self-checked its own task list.
- **Free version:** failed immediately on attachment limits ("come back in 2 hours").

Conclusions Evan drew from the tests:

- Paid is now vastly more capable than free — a bigger gap than before.
- For strategy, research, analysis and writing, Chat and Work produce broadly comparable results.
- For multi-part creative output (graphics, several document types), Work is more reliable at finishing everything asked for; with Chat, double-check the output is complete.
- Work-only advantages: skills, and the ability to operate directly on files on your PC via the desktop app.

Evan shared two reusable prompts for participants to try:

1. Describe your product/objective and ask ChatGPT what practical ways the new features could help achieve it, then ask it to write you an optimised prompt for the best option.
2. Describe an objective and ask ChatGPT to compare what Chat could realistically do versus what Work could realistically do, to help decide which mode to use.

Usage Limits

This is presented as a live "usage limits war" between OpenAI and Anthropic. When Claude introduced skills and Work-equivalent features, ChatGPT reportedly lost significant users to Claude; ChatGPT Work is a direct response. In turn, since ChatGPT started competing on usage limits, Claude has been raising its own limits and offering free access to some higher-tier models.

Key practical points:

- Usage limits only apply in **Work** mode — Chat mode is currently unrestricted.
- A 5-hour limit briefly appeared in ChatGPT Work when it launched, then vanished the next day — OpenAI has been adjusting this in real time as they compete for users.
- There is a stated weekly limit, but Evan's own account showed 97% remaining despite heavy use preparing for the course (having been at 82% the day before) — he suspects the "weekly" framing is really just a temporary promotional period (originally to 4 August, now stated as 5 August) rather than a genuine recurring weekly cap.
- Practical advice: for now, default to Work, since limits are very unlikely to be hit. When limits do start being enforced properly (expected once the competitive dust settles), move lower-complexity tasks into Chat to preserve Work usage for tasks that genuinely need it.
- AI models themselves cannot meaningfully compare usage limits across platforms when asked directly, because neither company defines limits in comparable units.

Skills

Skills are repeatable task setups — instructions created once and reused whenever needed, avoiding the need to re-explain requirements every time. Evan compared this directly to Claude, which several participants had used before.

Where to find them: in ChatGPT Work, skills sit under **Plugins** in the left-hand menu (not under a "Skills" label directly) — Plugins contains both Plugins and Skills as separate sections.

Three ways to create a skill:

1. **Convert an existing result into a skill.** After ChatGPT completed the full product-graphics task from Test 3 above, Evan simply asked "can you now turn this into a skill?" ChatGPT built and auto-saved a "Product Promotion Graphic" skill in about 2 minutes — no manual save step required (unlike Claude, where you must click Save). He then reused it on a different product ("Vita Dress") by just saying "using the product promotion skill," attaching the image and URL — no need to re-specify dimensions or text requirements.

2. **Build one interactively via Plugins → Skills → "+" → "Create with chat."** ChatGPT asks what the skill should do, then goes back and forth gathering details. Evan demonstrated by rebuilding his TMC brand skill live: he asked for a skill that would apply the Marketing Crowd's logo, colour palette and typeface to anything created (presentations, PDFs, Word docs, web pages). ChatGPT asked him to upload the logo and a branded sample (he used a compliment slip), extracted the visual rules, and asked clarifying questions –
3. including proposing a substitute typeface (Aptos) when it couldn't confidently identify the original, and checking whether to auto-include company contact details (Evan said no). It then built and auto-saved the skill.
4. **Upload an existing Claude skill file directly**, via Plugins → Skills → "+" → "Upload from your computer." Evan demonstrated this with his existing Claude "Social Media Crops" skill: downloaded it from Claude (via the three-dot menu on the skill), then uploaded the same file into ChatGPT, where it appeared immediately, ready to use. This means skills built in Claude do not need to be rebuilt from scratch in ChatGPT.

Invoking a skill: just describe the task and mention the skill name (e.g. "using the Marketing Crowd brand skill..."), or type "@" and select it from the list if it's not being picked up reliably. Evan noted ChatGPT is less reliable than Claude at automatically recognising when a skill should apply – in his testing it sometimes skipped the skill without being explicitly told to use it, whereas Claude used its equivalent skill 100% of the time when asked. His workaround: edit the skill's description to add more trigger phrases and scenarios ("use this skill when..."), since the description field drives when ChatGPT decides to invoke it – Claude-written skill descriptions tend to be more sophisticated on this front out of the box.

Managing skills: clicking a skill and then the three-dot menu lets you rename, delete, download, or review its description/instructions.

Suggested skill categories (mirroring the Claude course framing):

- **Brand/style skills** – logo, colour scheme, typeface, tone of voice
- **Customer/product knowledge skills** – feeding in a deep research report or similar so ChatGPT always has business context without being re-briefed

- **Admin/repeatable task skills** — e.g. Evan's own Zoom-transcript-to-course-summary skill: attach a transcript and ask for a summary, and it applies his standing rules (7-page length, refer to him as "Evan" not "Mr Mangan," strip out his self-introduction, no participant names, present in chat first, then convert to a TMC-branded, logo'd PDF)

Evan gave participants a prompt to help identify candidate skills: ask ChatGPT to help identify repeatable business tasks that could become a skill, and let it ask follow-up questions to narrow it down.

Plugins (Third-Party Connectors)

Unlike skills, plugins are available on the **free version** too — the first free-tier feature covered in the session. A plugin connects ChatGPT to a third-party account (Dropbox, Canva, Gmail, Zoom, Slack, Spotify, etc.) so it can retrieve or act on data there.

Demonstrated/discussed:

- **Canva** — connect your account, ask ChatGPT to find and edit a design. Evan said he's been consistently underwhelmed by this integration so far, though he expects it to improve.
- **Gmail** — connected to a dummy test account; asked ChatGPT to review recent emails and flag anything needing a reply. It correctly separated a security alert and a genuine service request from routine mail. Evan was explicit that he does **not** connect ChatGPT to his real email account, citing the amount of confidential/financial information typically in an inbox.
- **Zoom** — can report on past and future meetings but cannot pull transcripts; Evan called this "okay," not impressive.
- **Spotify** — asked it to recommend AI podcasts; the demo didn't fully work on the day.
- **Slack** — straightforward install-and-login flow, not demonstrated live.

MCP plugins (a broader, less curated category than the "approved" partner plugins above) were flagged as a topic for a future session. Evan gave a working example from Claude (not yet tested in ChatGPT): connecting to a Meta Ads account via an MCP URL, then asking Claude to list recent campaigns, compare their performance, and produce expert-level insights broken down by demographics, location and platform. He also mentioned Claude's WordPress and Shopify connectors (publishing posts, managing SEO, site actions) as another preview of where this is heading — noting this needs testing specifically within ChatGPT.

A participant asked about cleaning up poor-quality recorded video (e.g. yoga classes); Evan pointed to two external tools rather than ChatGPT/Claude: **Descript** (AI video editor) and **OpenArt**, which offers video upscaling, relighting, background replacement and image-to-video generation.

Desktop App and Work on Local Files

Everything up to this point had been done via the ChatGPT website, requiring manual upload of any file. The desktop app (downloaded from chatgpt.com/download) changes this: ChatGPT Work can be pointed at a folder on your computer and act directly on its contents, without uploading anything.

Setup demonstrated:

1. Create a folder on your desktop (name doesn't matter).
2. In the ChatGPT desktop app, create a **Project** (not just a folder) and use "Add Folder" to link it to that desktop folder. ChatGPT's access is restricted to that folder only — it cannot browse elsewhere on the computer.
3. Important safety note: always give it a **copy** of your files, never your only copy, in case something goes wrong.

Demonstrated tasks:

- **Receipts to spreadsheet:** pointed at a subfolder of receipt photos, asked ChatGPT to extract business name, product/service, and total into a spreadsheet with specified columns. Took under 3 minutes for the batch shown. Evan stressed always double-checking AI-extracted data for accuracy.
- **Scheduled updates:** asked ChatGPT to check the same folder daily at 4pm and add any new, previously unprocessed receipts to the same spreadsheet automatically — confirmed as simple to set up, no need to return and re-trigger it manually.
- **Bulk file tidy-up** (described, not demonstrated live): pointed at a messy downloads folder of ~80-100 files, asked ChatGPT to categorise them into topic-based subfolders and flag duplicates into a separate "duplicates" folder for manual review rather than auto-deleting.
- **Batch transcript summaries** (described): a folder containing 20-30 Zoom transcripts could be processed in one instruction — turn each into a course summary and file it into a subfolder named for the LEO, course, and date.
- **Product catalogue example** (in response to a question about invoicing, which Evan declined to address as outside his expertise): point ChatGPT at a folder of

~200 unlabelled product photos, ask it to categorise them (blouses, jackets, shoes, etc.) and write a product description for each from the image alone.

Important limitation flagged: skills created in the ChatGPT web version do **not** automatically carry over to the desktop app (this happens automatically in Claude). Workaround: download the skill file from the web version skills list and manually upload it into the desktop app the same way you'd import a skill from Claude.

** AI was used in the creation of this summary report.*