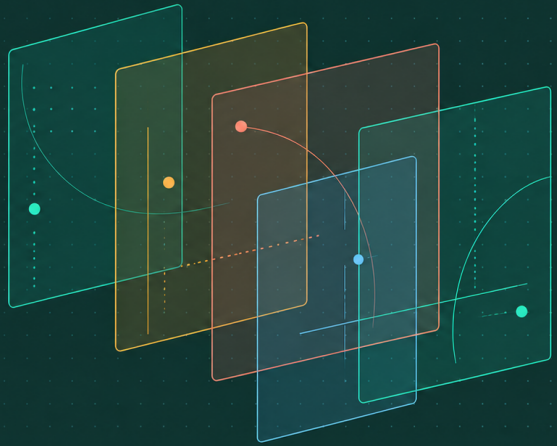
ACC 300 · ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

# Tool use in AI

What tools can do, and where desktop access helps.



# > You may already be using tools

A tool is a capability AI can call to get information or carry out an operation.

### WEB SEARCH

When AI searches the web, it calls a search tool and uses the returned results.

### FILE ANALYSIS

When AI runs calculations on an uploaded spreadsheet, it can use a code-execution tool.

### IMAGE GENERATION

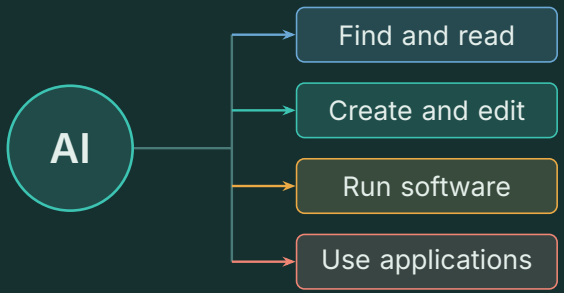
When you ask AI to create an image, it can call an image-generation tool.

### WHERE TO LOOK IN YOUR CURRENT CHAT

- Open the + or tools menu beside the message box. Look for Search, image creation, or file options.
- Check Settings for tools, capabilities, apps, or connectors. Some tools run automatically when needed.

# > Tools connect AI to things it can use

The available tools determine what AI can reach and what it can do.




Web pages, files, connected sources

Documents, images, existing files

Calculations, data processing, batches

App controls, messages, calendar events

→ **Check the operations each tool offers. Reading a file and changing it require different abilities.**

# > Bring the group’s updates together

File-reading and writing tools turn scattered updates into a shared project status.

```
> Read the meeting notes and progress updates in this project folder. Create
status.html showing what’s finished, what’s still open, and any conflicting
decisions. Link each item to its source and save it here.
```

IN WEB CHAT

Upload the updates. AI combines them into a status document that you download.

DESKTOP ADDS

File tools read the existing project folder and save the status page there, with links to the originals.

→ **The group gets a shared picture of what is done, what is open, and where decisions conflict.**

# > Resize photos for social media

AI can use a program to repeat an operation across many files.

```
> Resize the photos in Club photos for square social media posts, 1080 by
1080 pixels. Keep their proportions and add padding instead of cropping.
Save copies in social-ready. Leave the originals unchanged.
```

| INPUT | TOOL OPERATION | OUTPUT |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Club photos in different dimensions | Resize and pad each photo | Square images in social-ready |

- Web: upload the photos. Ask AI to use Python and return the resized copies as a ZIP.
- Desktop: local execution reads the existing folder and saves resized copies there.

APPLICATIONS

# > Update the club’s budget workbook

An application tool can change the document you already use.

```
> In this budget workbook, add totals for each expense category and a
chart comparing planned and actual spending. Use formulas linked to the
existing rows. Keep the transaction entries unchanged.
```

WEB CHAT

Edit an uploaded workbook and download the revised copy.

INSIDE THE APP

Use its AI tools to edit directly, including in a browser spreadsheet.

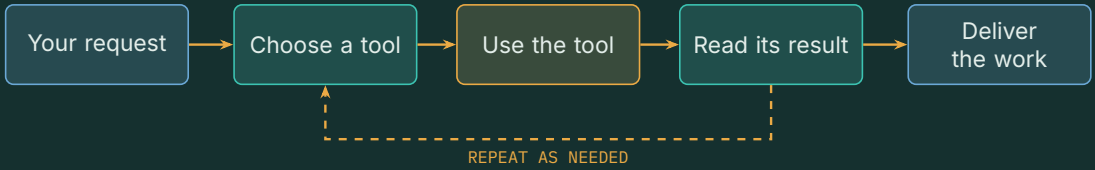
DESKTOP CONNECTION

Use supported editing tools in the existing local workbook.

→ **Choose a route that reaches your workbook and supports editing.**

# > One request can involve several operations

A tool performs an operation. An agent chooses tools and uses their results to decide what to do next.




THE PHOTO REQUEST CAN REQUIRE SEVERAL TOOL CALLS.

- AI may first list the files and check which processing software is available.
- It can use those results to choose a resizing method and run it on the batch.

You specify the result and boundaries. The enabled tools determine which steps it can carry out.

# > Match the setup to the task

Use the product's tool list to find the operations your request needs.

START WITH YOUR CURRENT WEB AI.

- Open its tools menu for file creation or code execution. For online files, look in Apps or Connectors.

FOR LOCAL FILES OR SOFTWARE, ADD DESKTOP TOOLS.

- Enable a file tool and select a permitted folder. For installed software, choose a mode with local execution.

FOR EDITS INSIDE AN APPLICATION, USE ITS AI TOOLS.

- Open its AI panel or connect an editing tool. In Excel, look for Copilot's edit mode and check your account's access.

# > Limit access to the task

Choose both the files the tool can reach and the actions you allow.

### FILES IT CAN REACH

Select the task folder or workbook. Use copies when experimenting. Keep unrelated personal and work folders outside the permitted location.

### ACTIONS IT CAN TAKE

When a tool asks for approval, read the action and destination. Renaming a file, overwriting it, and sending it elsewhere have different consequences.

### AN EXTENSION IS SOFTWARE YOU INSTALL.

- Use official downloads and check the publisher before installing an extension.
- A file can contain instructions intended to redirect AI, called prompt injection. Stop unexpected requests to send files elsewhere or install software.

# > Where do your files go?

A file can stay on your computer while its contents go to an AI provider.

### PROCESSING: WHERE THE CONTENTS TRAVEL

- Uploads go to the provider. Desktop tools may also send local file contents for AI processing.

### ACCOUNT RULES: WHAT THE PROVIDER KEEPS OR USES

- Review storage and model-training settings. University and employer accounts can have different rules from personal accounts.

### REMOVAL: ACCESS AND SAVED DATA ARE SEPARATE

- Remove folder permissions or disconnect the application to stop access. Use the provider’s deletion controls for saved copies already sent.

TOOL USE IN AI

# The tools change what you can ask.

Read across files. Run software.
Work inside applications.

Web tools may already do the work.
Desktop access connects tools
to your computer.

