OpenAI × ORY

OpenAI leverages Ory platform to support over 400M weekly active users

OpenAI

Industry

Artificial Intelligence

400M+

Weekly Active Users

Challenges

Self-host their CIAM solution

Improve the user experience

Better visibility & control over CIAM

Flexible architecture

Benefits

Modern architecture: Start with self-hosted and ability to evolve to SaaS

High availability and low latency with CockroachDB

Scaled authorization to 400M/week without UX or performance issues

The rapid adoption of OpenAI's tools such as ChatGPT introduced complex identity and access management (IAM) challenges. With a user base spanning enterprises customers and individuals, OpenAI needed to secure sensitive data and manage user permissions at scale. Learn how OpenAI tackled these challenges to create a secure, user-friendly CIAM framework that supports its continued growth and innovation.

The Challenge — ChatGPT's Growth and the Need for Modern CIAM

Launched in November 2022, ChatGPT quickly emerged as one of the fastest-growing applications, reaching 1 million users in just five days and surpassing 100 million monthly active users by January 2023. By December 2024, OpenAI reported over 400 million weekly active users. This hyper-growth highlighted the urgent need for robust access control, security, and scalability across its growing ecosystem of products and services.

Traditional customer identity and access management (CIAM) solutions, reliant on rigid, "black-box" architectures, failed to meet OpenAI's requirements for transparency, innovation, scalability, and self-hosting.

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By combining CockroachDB's distributed architecture with Ory's modern IAM platform, we delivered a scalable, resilient solution tailored to meet OpenAI's unique and complex needs.

Allen Terleto
VP Global Partnerships Cockroach Labs

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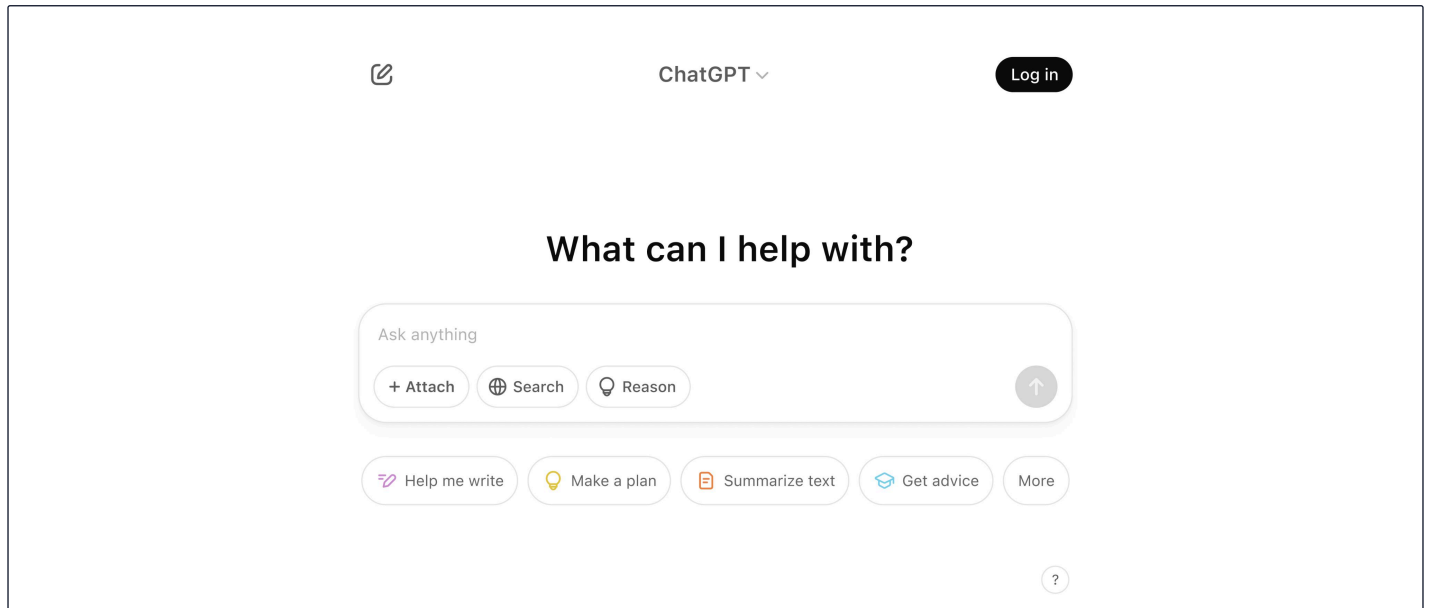
The popular AI assistant ChatGPT from OpenAI

To support its speed of innovation, OpenAI needed a modern CIAM platform that could support its analytics and integrate across cloud environments.

Key Challenges and Capabilities Sought from Vendors:

- **Self-hosting**: Most CIAM vendors cannot enable OpenAI to self-host, improve, and better innovate around CIAM experiences and data.
- **Improved UX Optimization**: OpenAI sought more ability and control to conduct A/B testing and other use cases to optimize user experiences efficiently.
- **Improved Observability**: Providing even more data and control for IAM operations and security to optimize performance.

Addressing these challenges meant taking an IAM approach that aligned with their strategic vision while avoiding vendor lock-in. By adopting an IAM solution designed for agility and transparency, OpenAI could position itself to deliver secure, frictionless experiences for their users.

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The Solution — Partnering with Modern, Scalable Technologies to Redefine IAM

OpenAI prioritized open-source solutions built on modern architectures to meet their evolving needs. This focus led to a partnership with Ory, where scalability was tested using Ory Network alongside CockroachDB.

Testing demonstrated how Ory's authentication and authorization capabilities, paired with CockroachDB's distributed architecture, delivered the performance, resilience, and scalability required for OpenAI's complex ecosystem.

OpenAI adopted an Ory Enterprise License for Ory Hydra's web-scale authorization. The collaboration with Ory and Cockroach Labs addresses challenges in scaling, compliance, and flexibility on a daily basis, giving OpenAI greater control over its CIAM stack while enabling faster innovation and secure, seamless user access.

> **OpenAI wanted a partner that could help enable our vision for owning our identity processes, data, and success. We have a lot of partners, and Ory is one of our best.**
>
> Benjamin Billings
> Identity at OpenAI

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The Results

With Ory, OpenAI is empowered with the ability to:

- **Innovate Rapidly**: Develop and iterate on identity solutions tailored to diverse use cases.
- **Scale Seamlessly**: Handle increasing global demand for AI services.
- **Gain Observability**: Proactively optimize user experiences, security, and performance with deep insights into system operations.
- **Ensure Resilience**: Deliver reliable user experiences even under exponential growth pressures.

As OpenAI continues its rapid growth, their need for highly scalable, resilient, and observable identity systems has become paramount. Ory's modern CIAM capabilities will continue to enable OpenAI to go beyond the limitations of legacy identity systems.

About Ory

Ory delivers modern IAM/CIAM solutions built on open standards, ensuring interoperability and flexibility across modern tech stacks. Powered by open source and trusted by a global community, Ory is the only CIAM vendor that provides choice from free open-source software and supported Enterprise Licenses to a fully-managed, globally secure, and compliant Ory Network.

The Ory Network is a global, cloud-native identity and access management (IAM) and customer identity and access management (CIAM) platform built for high availability and low latency. It secures user authentication, authorization, and API protection for humans, devices, and software with advanced zero-trust security.

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