

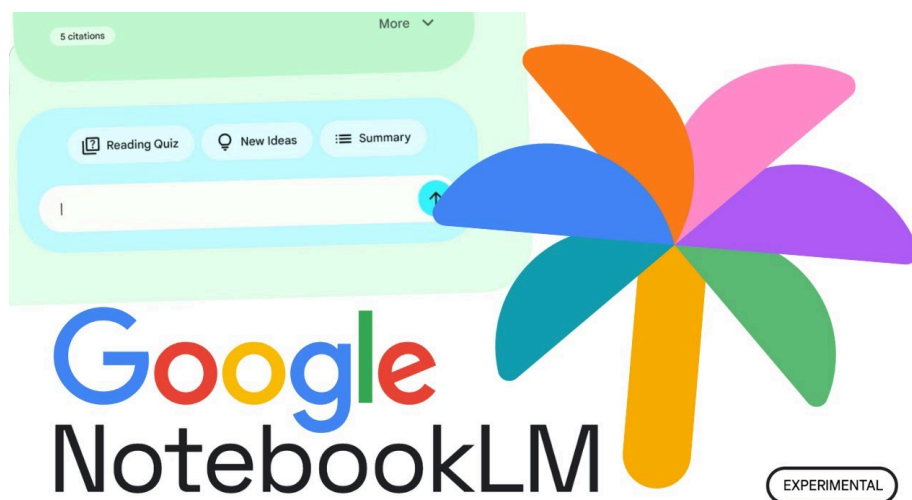
Introducing Google's NotebookLM

Google just upgraded their file system with AI notebook assistance



Reviews

By _____



(Image credit: Keep Productive)

Early Verdict

NotebookLM adds even more versatility to Google Drive, providing instant AI analysis of your personal documents. Even before its official release, the notebook shows obvious potential for chatbot integrations in the tools we know and love. As Google moves forward, we hope to see improvements in file-type integrations and response quality.

Pros

- + Integrates with Google Drive
- + Familiar interface

Cons

- Limited functionality
- Niche use cases

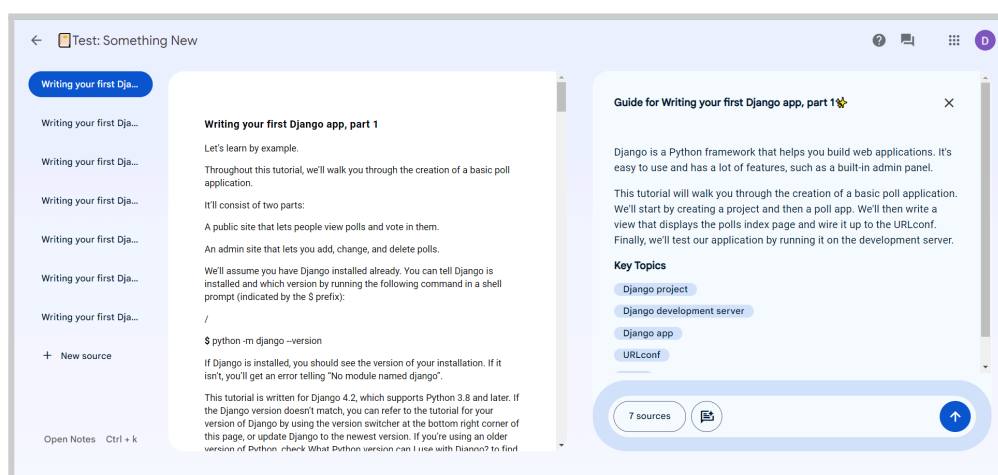
The wait is over! Google's new AI-powered "notebook" provides chatbot assistance for your Google Drive files. It's no secret that big tech companies are competing to dominate the AI market, but do these new tools really bring something new to the table?

NotebookLM's launch marks the second free chatbot developed by Google. It follows the release of [Bard](#), a general-purpose machine that can answer any of your questions. So why do we need NotebookLM? Unlike Bard, NotebookLM operates on your personal files, allowing it to answer questions specific to them.

Imagine a future with personal assistants at your disposal for any task. We think NotebookLM marks a step in this direction, using large language models for a specialized purpose. To put it to the test, we tried using the notebook for some common tasks.

Design

NotebookLM immediately impresses with a clean, convenient user interface (UI). It has the familiar feel of all Google products but brings new functionality. We can see our source documents in one window while asking questions about them in another. This specialized display outperforms competitors like Bard and ChatGPT for document analysis and boosts productivity for users.



The UI almost appears to be an extended version of Google Docs. Your imported documents appear in the middle of the screen, and you can navigate between them using the left bar. They are slightly smaller clones of their Drive counterparts, but you can't edit them in NotebookLM.

The right window contains all the new and exciting functionality. This is where you prompt the chatbot and receive answers. The window also provides numerous buttons to simplify the user experience, including functions for source toggling, document summary generation and sample prompts to jumpstart your discussion.

Performance

In contrast to other chatbots, NotebookLM does not save conversations between different sessions. Instead, it contains a notes section, where users can record the information they find most important. This can be helpful for organizing lengthy projects, but you have to be mindful to save any important information.

We found NotebookLM especially useful for creating step-by-step instructions from verbose materials. Although this required some initial overhead to import each document, it saved a lot of time in the end. As we worked, we used the notebook to summarize steps and clear our confusion when we had questions.

NotebookLM also makes it easy to prepare for meetings and classes. We were able to quickly catch up on old notes and even generate potential topics or questions to bring up. If you're overwhelmed and on a tight schedule, see if NotebookLM can bail you out!

These projects showed a lot of upside for NotebookLM, but we still see limitations as it is. Namely, your project must consist entirely of text documents, and you still need to cross-check any information it gives you. In some experiments, we found flawed and empty responses.

Final Thoughts

NotebookLM has our hopes high for the future of AI.

Although it's not immune to the erroneous habits of generative language models, this tool has clear potential. We hope to see people embrace this technology as it improves and becomes more prevalent. From students to business professionals, almost everyone stands to gain.

We will continue to use NotebookLM and update this review as new things excite us. If you haven't done so already, join NotebookLM's [waitlist](#) and try it out yourself.