



Claude's interface, web and desktop

Where everything is, what it does and which settings to touch



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How to use this handout

This handout gathers, in written and ordered form, everything covered in the lesson. You do not need to memorise it: it is there so you can find things again calmly, later, when the lesson is over and a question is left hanging.

GOAL

Find your way around Claude's interface, on the website and in the desktop app, and set privacy, models and permissions knowingly.

What you will be able to do

- Recognise the elements of the screen and the sidebar.
- Choose model and effort to fit the work.
- Search, organise and delete chats, and use incognito.
- Use projects, artifacts, skills and connectors.
- Decide privacy and safety settings, including the one on training.

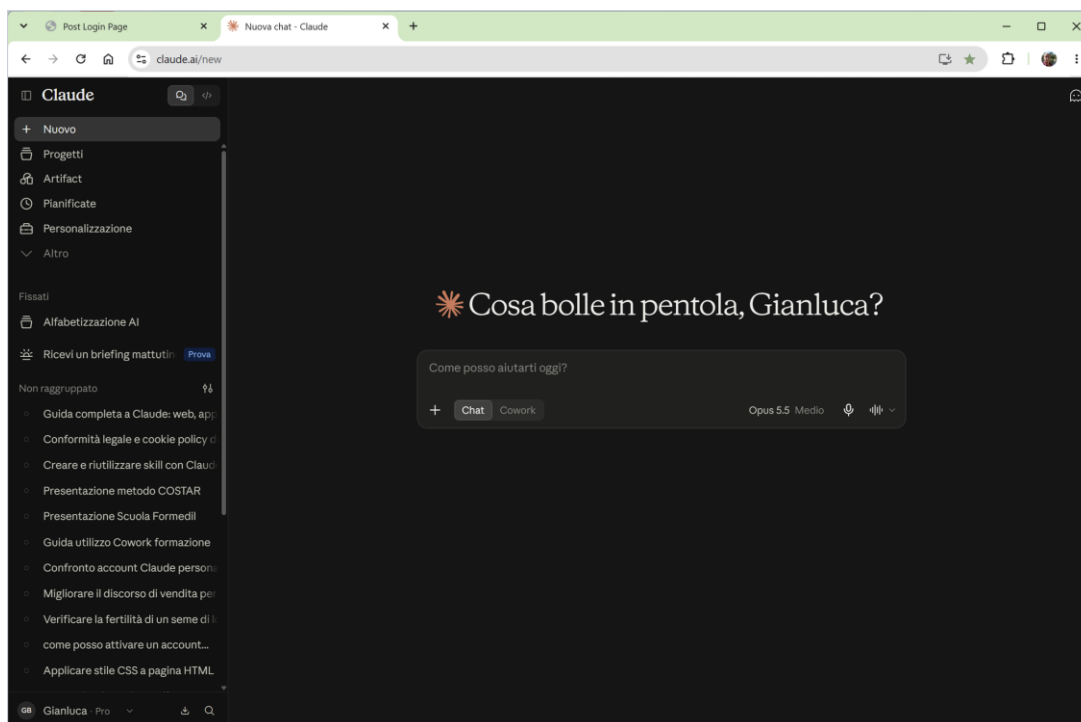
1. What Claude is and where you open it

Claude is an AI assistant: you type or talk, it answers. Before learning the buttons, you need to know where to find them.

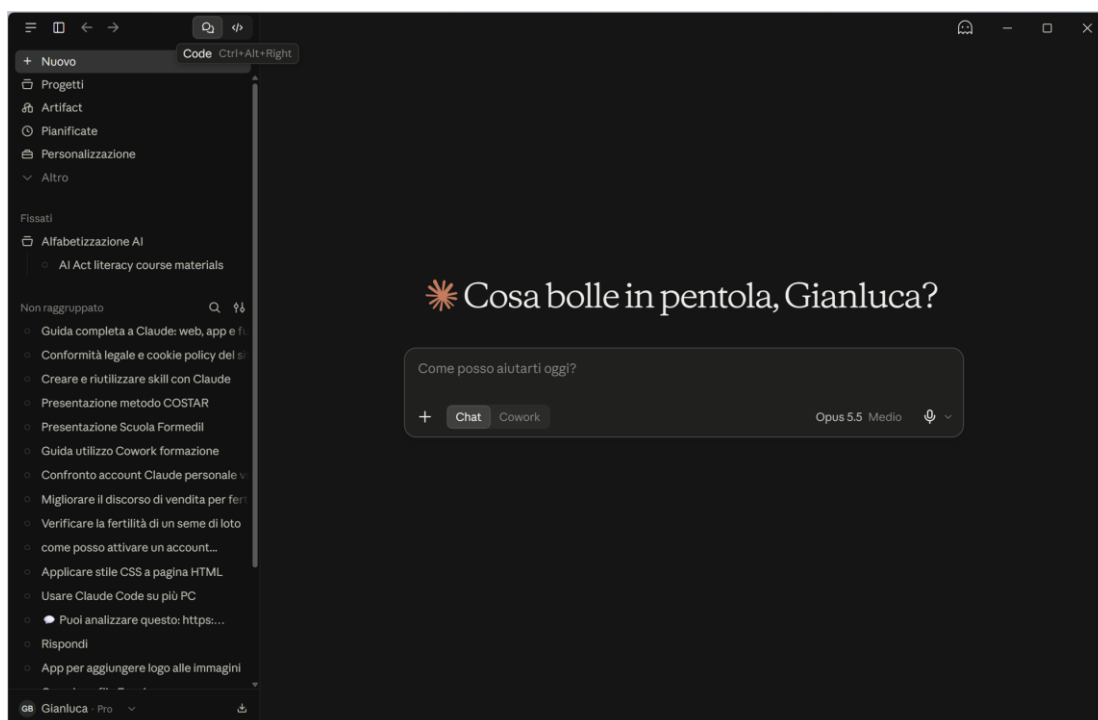
Claude reads what you type and the files you give it, thinks about the request and produces a text, an analysis, a document, code or a web page. No special commands are needed: just say **what you want to get**. The same account works everywhere: chats, projects and settings are the same on the web and in the app.

1.1 Two doors to the same Claude

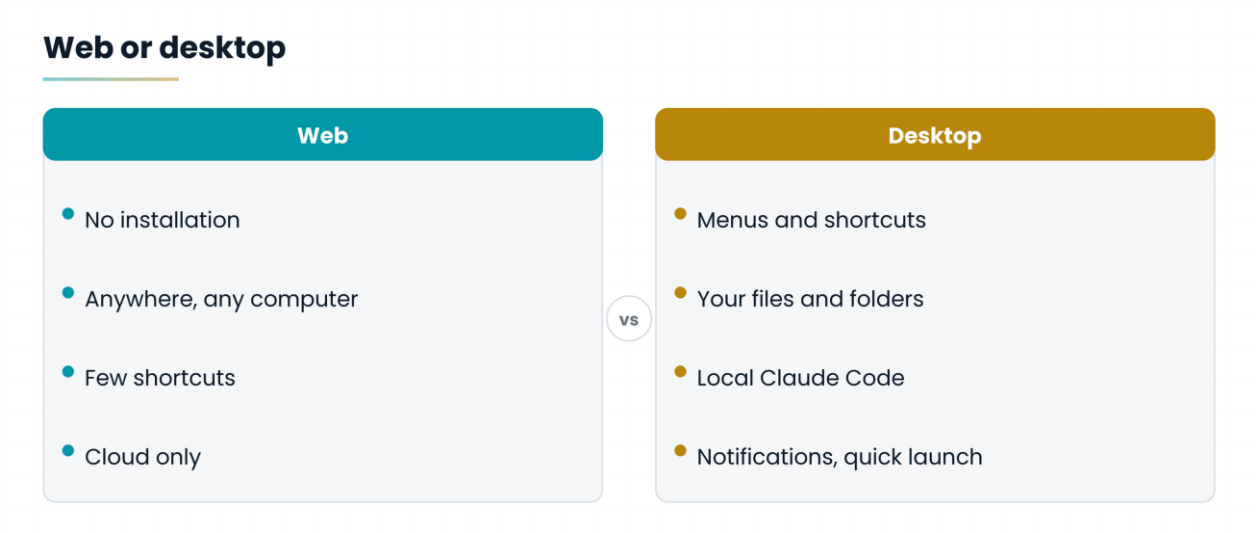
The **web version** opens in any browser at claude.ai: no installation, ideal on a computer that is not yours. The **desktop app** is a program you install, with its own window, menus, keyboard shortcuts and access to the files on your computer.



Claude on the web: sidebar, greeting and the writing box.



The desktop app on Windows: same layout as the web, plus a title bar.



Web or desktop: what changes

If you want to...	Use
Try Claude without installing anything	Web
Work with the files on your computer	Desktop
Use Claude Code on a project on your PC	Desktop
Open Claude from any program with a shortcut	Desktop
Check a task from another device	Web

Rule of thumb: the web to go anywhere, the desktop to work in depth.

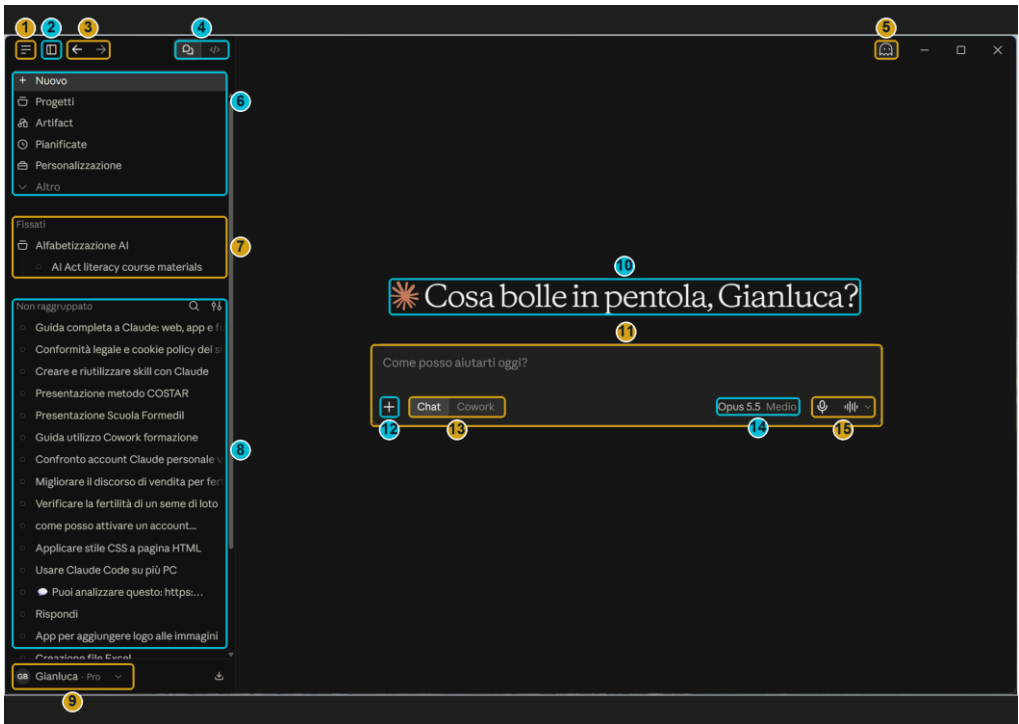
CLAUDE CAN BE WRONG

The interface itself says so under the box: Claude is an AI and can make mistakes, so always check the answers. Dates, numbers, regulations and names must be verified.

2. The main screen and the sidebar

Fifteen elements to recognise at a glance: after this section you will know where everything is.

The figure numbers the elements of the desktop app. **The web version is identical**, without the Windows title bar, and with the app download button and the search lens at the bottom left.



Anatomy of the window: each number matches an item in the list.

No.	Element	What it is for
1	Program menu	Desktop only: File, Edit, View, Go, Help
2	Sidebar	Shows or hides the list, with Ctrl+B
3	Back and Forward	Desktop only: like in a browser
4	Chat / Code	Switches between chats and Claude Code
5	Incognito	A chat that is not saved or used for training
6	Main entries	New, Projects, Artifacts, Scheduled, Customize, More
7	Pinned	Chats and projects locked at the top
8	Chat list	All conversations, with search and filters
9	Your account	Name, plan and the menu with Settings
10-15	Work area	Greeting, writing box, +, Chat/Cowork, model and voice

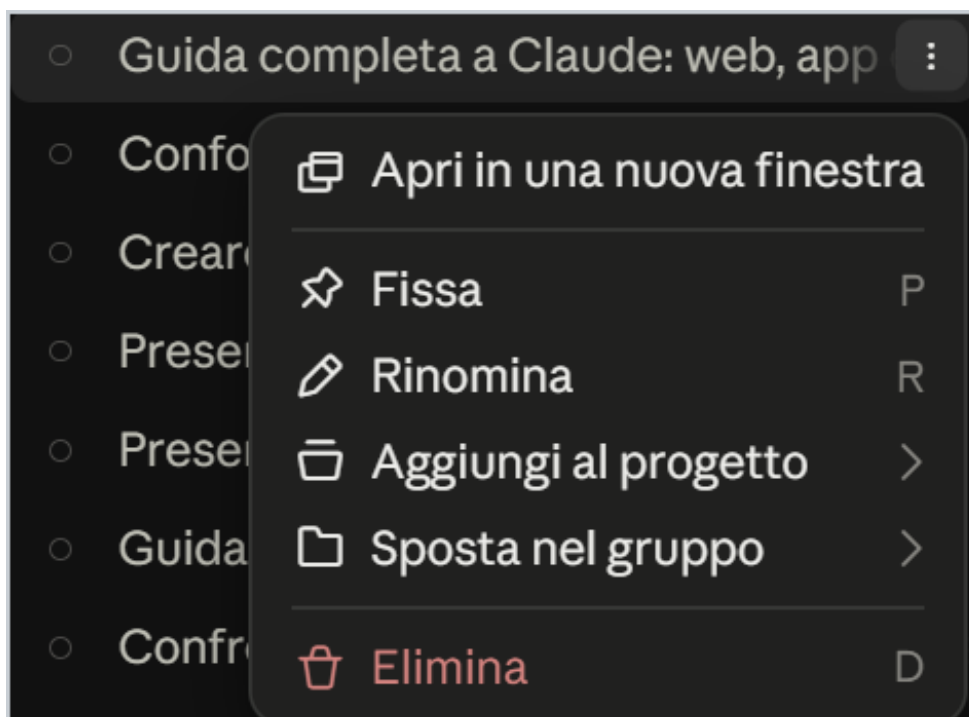
2.1 The entries at the top

- **New:** opens an empty chat (Ctrl+N in the app).
- **Projects:** collections of chats, files and instructions on one topic.
- **Artifacts:** everything you created with Claude.
- **Scheduled:** tasks that run by themselves at set times.

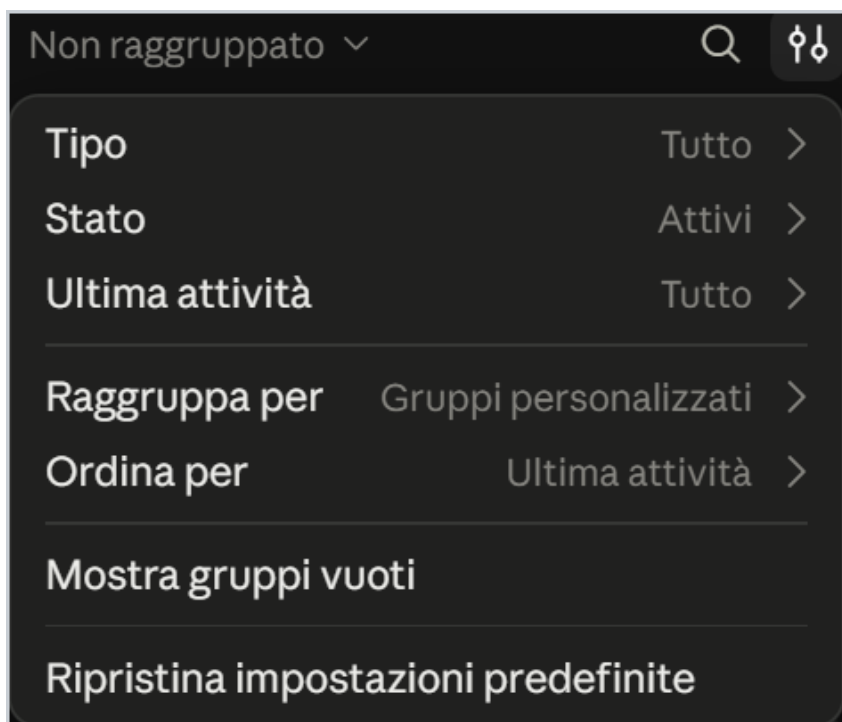
- **Customize:** skills, connectors and plugins.
- **More:** hides the less-used entries; you also choose which ones to show here.

2.2 Managing chats

When you hover over a chat, the **three dots** appear: the menu lets you pin it, rename it, put it in a project, move it to a group or delete it. The letters on the right (P, R, D) are shortcuts while the menu is open. The two **sliders** next to the lens open filters and sorting.



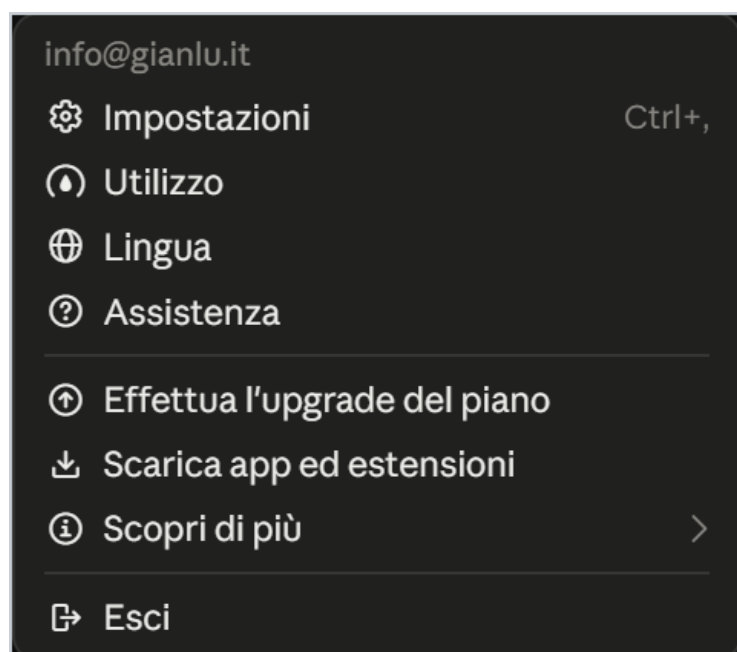
The chat menu: Pin, Rename, Add to project, Move, Delete.



Filters and sorting for the chat list.

2.3 Your account

At the bottom left, your name opens the account menu: **Settings** (Ctrl+comma in the app), **Usage** (how much of your limit you used), **Language**, **Help**, plan upgrade, app download and **Sign out**.

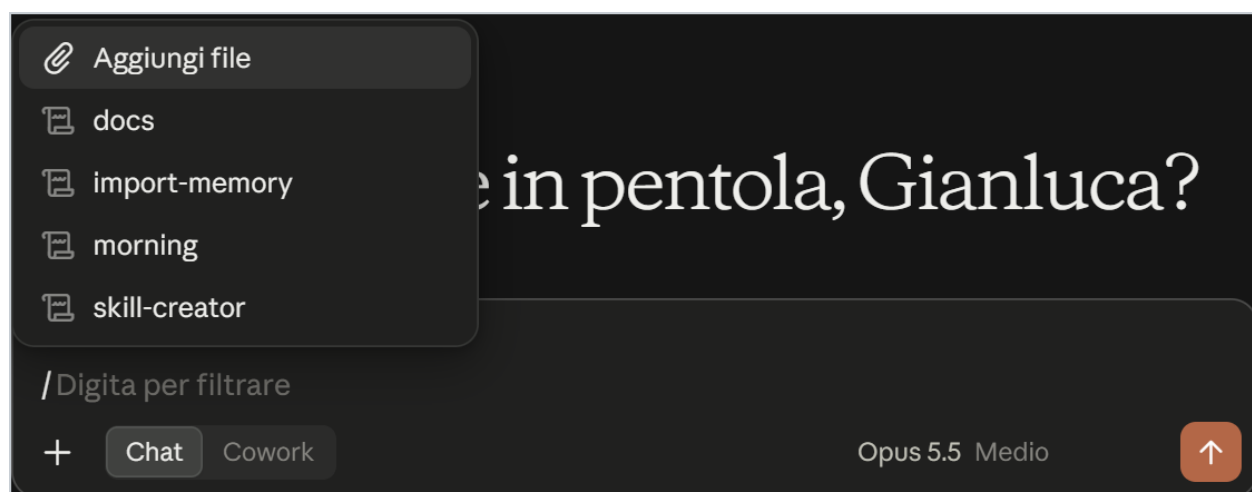


The account menu: Settings, Usage, Language, Help, Sign out.

3. The writing box: attachments, models, effort and voice

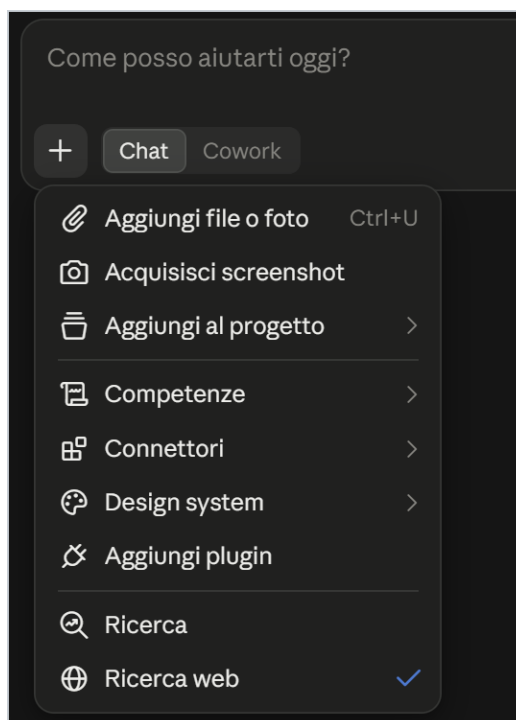
Everything starts here: one box with a few buttons, each with a precise job.

Write the request the way you would say it out loud. To start a new line without sending, use **Shift+Enter**; to send, **Enter**. If you type a **slash /**, the list of installed skills opens (Claude's work «recipes»).



Typing a slash in the box lists your installed skills.

3.1 The + button



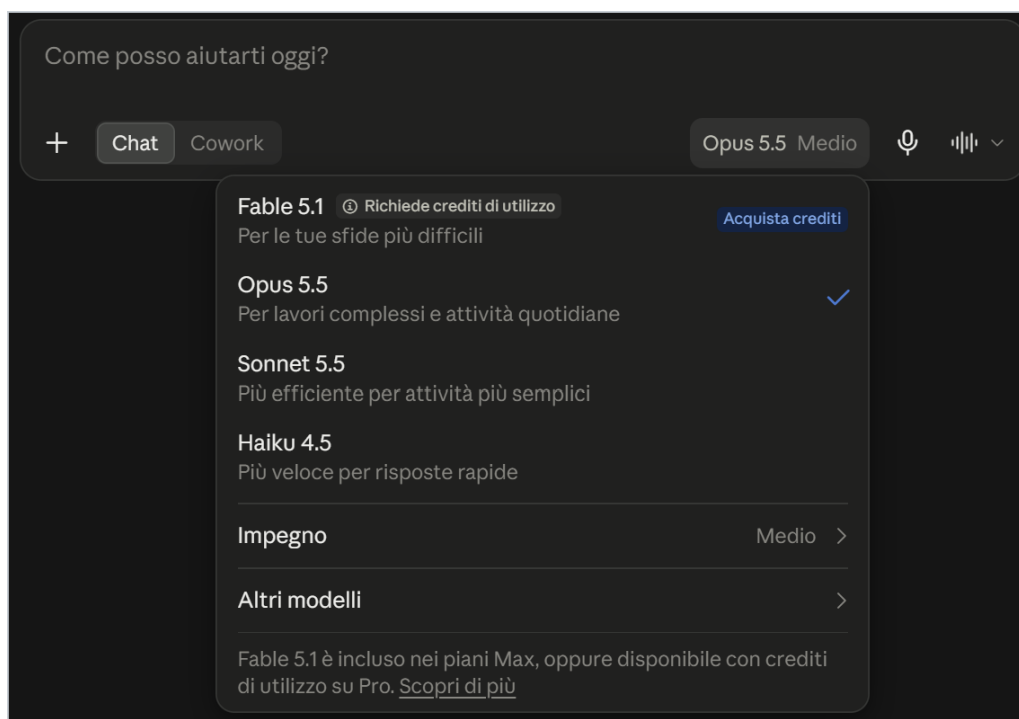
The + menu: attachments, screenshots, skills, connectors, web search.

- **Add files or photos** (Ctrl+U): PDF, Word, Excel, images, text; you can also drag them into the window.

- **Take a screenshot:** captures part of your screen and attaches it.
- **Add to project:** moves files and request into a Project.
- **Skills, Connectors, Design system, Plugins:** call the features of Customize.
- **Research** and **Web search:** with the tick, Claude checks up-to-date sources on the Internet.

3.2 The model

The button with the model name (for example «Opus 5.5, Medium») opens the list. As of October 2026 you find **Fable 5.1** (the hardest challenges, with usage credits on the Pro plan), **Opus 5.5** (complex work and everyday tasks), **Sonnet 5.5** (more efficient for simpler tasks) and **Haiku 4.5** (the fastest). Below, **More models** holds the earlier versions.



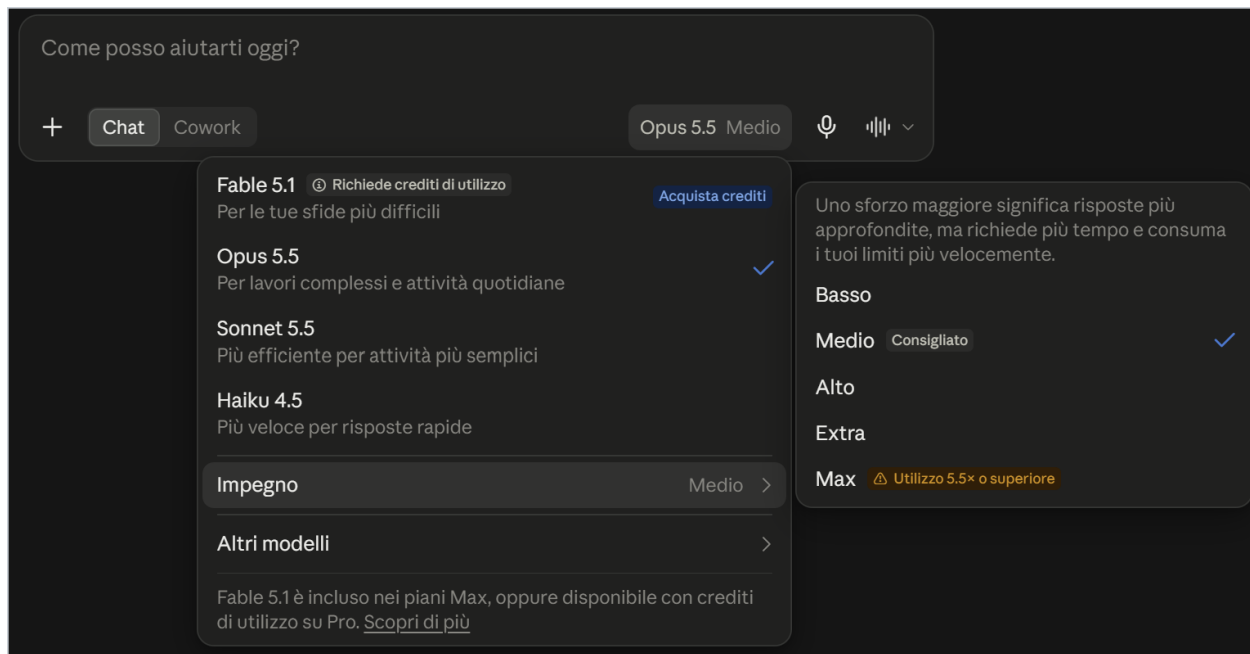
The model selector, with Effort and More models.

IN PLAIN WORDS

The model is **how capable** the assistant is; effort is **how long it thinks** before answering. Model names change fast: remember the criterion, light, balanced, powerful.

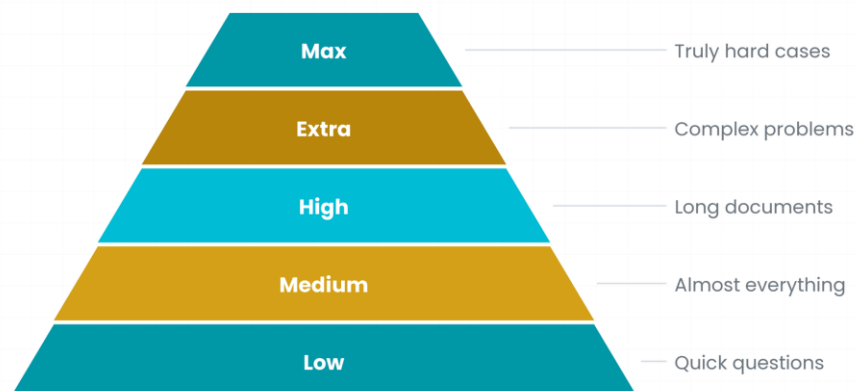
3.3 Effort

The **Effort** entry says it clearly: more effort means deeper answers, but takes more time and uses your limits faster. The **Max** level uses five and a half times the normal amount or more.



Effort: from Low to Max. More effort means more time and more usage.

How hard should Claude think?



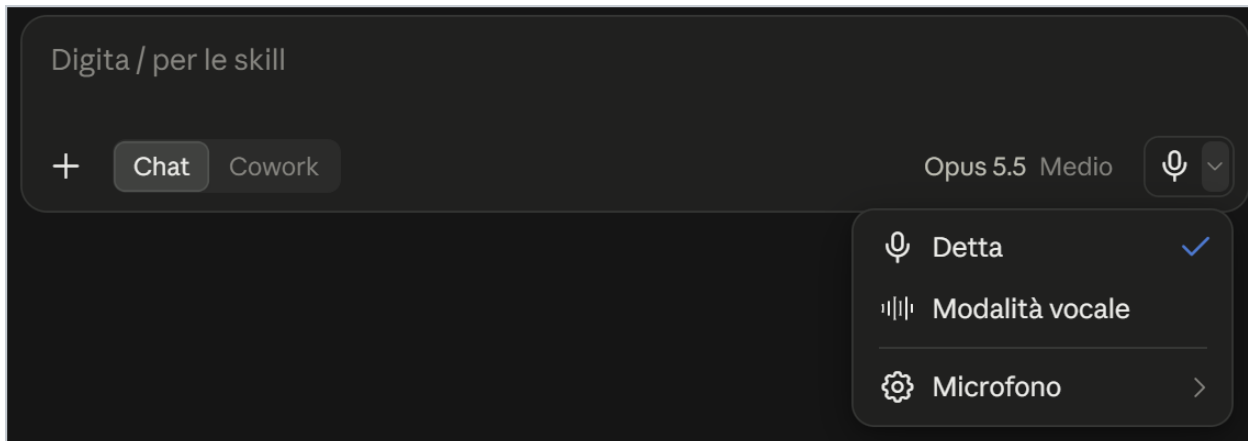
Which effort level to choose

START FROM MEDIUM

For almost all work **Medium**, the recommended level, is enough. Raise the effort only when the answer is shallow, lower it for quick questions.

3.4 Voice

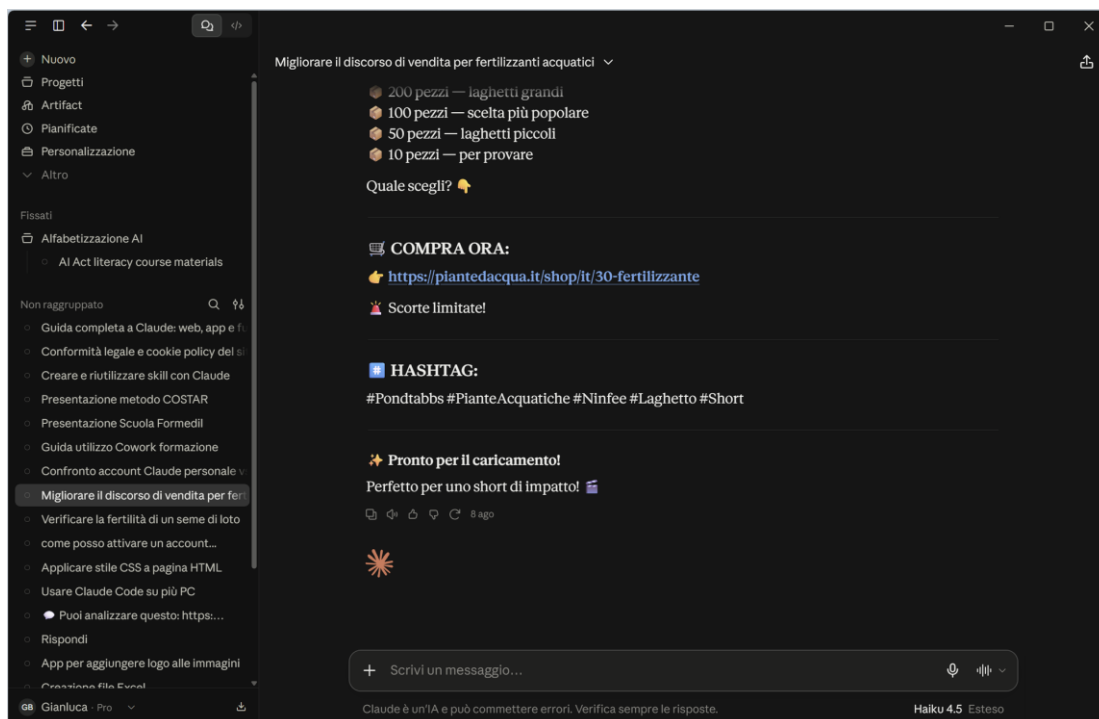
The microphone on the right opens three options: **Dictate** (your voice becomes text, Ctrl+D in the app), **Voice mode** (a spoken conversation) and **Microphone** (which one to use). Voice language, style and speed are chosen in Settings.



The voice menu: Dictate, Voice mode, Microphone.

4. Conversing, searching and working incognito

After the first message, the screen turns into the actual chat.



A conversation: title on top, reply, icons under the reply.

- **Chat title:** at the top, proposed by Claude after the first exchange; the small arrow opens actions on the conversation.

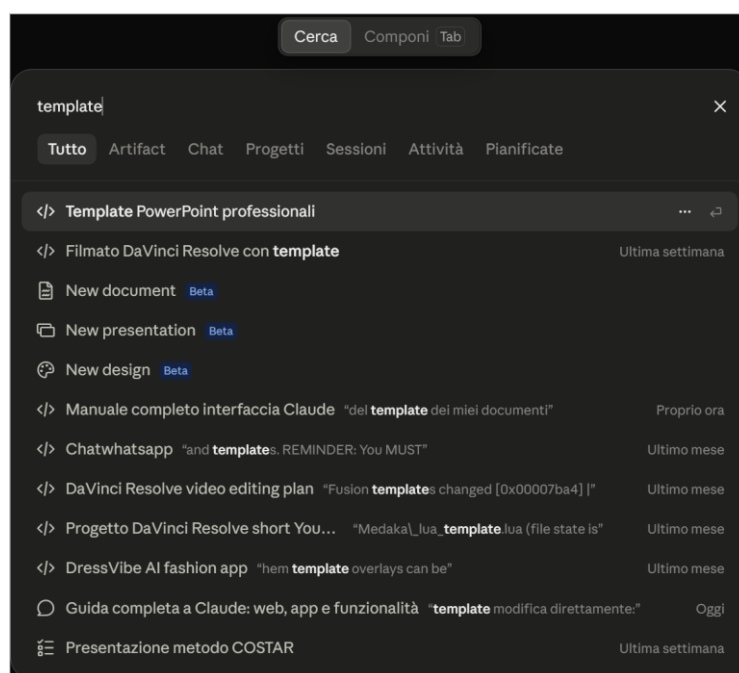
- **Share:** the icon at the top right creates a link; the links you made are managed in Settings, Privacy.
- **Bar under the reply:** copy the text, read it aloud, like or dislike (feedback), regenerate.
- **Box at the bottom:** to continue the dialogue; on the right you see the model and reasoning in use.

DO NOT START OVER

If the answer does not convince you, say what to change («shorter», «more formal», «add an example»). Claude takes the whole conversation into account.

4.1 Search

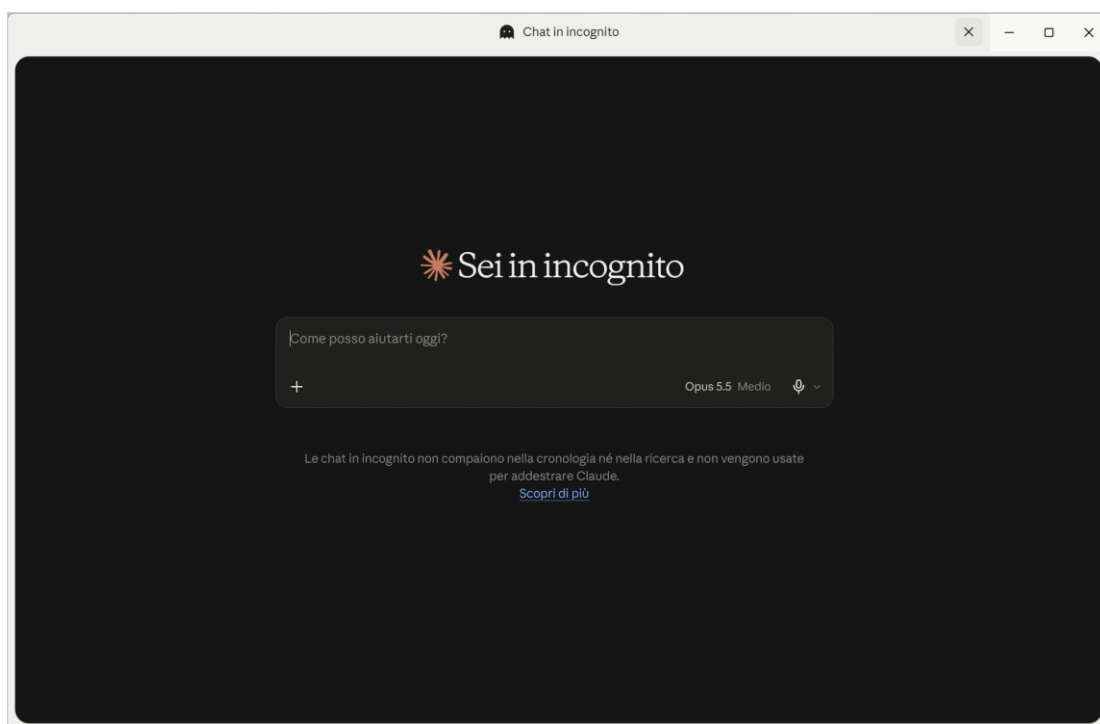
The lens (or **Ctrl+Shift+K** in the app) opens a window that searches chats, Artifacts, projects, sessions and tasks. Under each title you see the snippet with the word found and the date. The **Tab** key switches from **Search** to **Compose**.



Search: the typed word is highlighted in the results.

4.2 Incognito chats

The **ghost icon** at the top right (Ctrl+Shift+I in the app, where a separate window opens) starts a conversation that leaves no trace. The screen says so: it does not appear in history or search and **it is not used to train Claude**.



An incognito chat: no history, and not used to train Claude.

NOT TOTAL INVISIBILITY

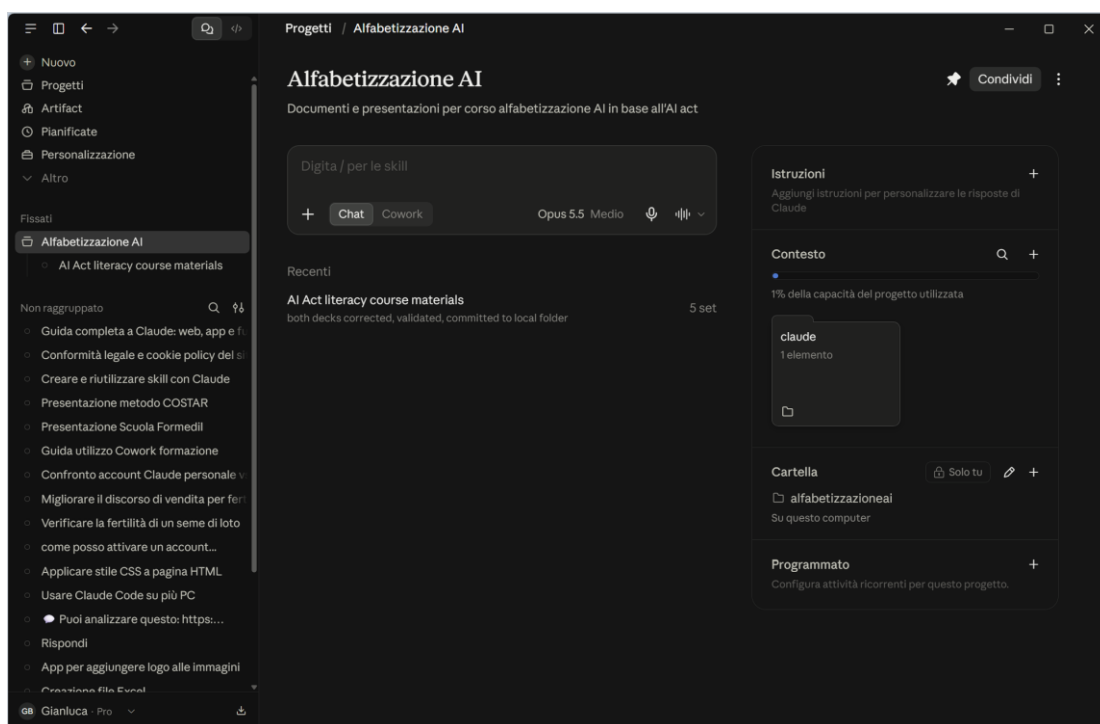
When you close the window the conversation disappears: copy what you need first. Incognito does not change your employer's or school's rules on AI use.

5. Projects, Artifacts and Scheduled tasks

Three sections for work that lasts more than one chat: gather the context, keep what you create, automate what you repeat.

5.1 Projects

A project is a smart folder: **instructions**, **files** and **chats** on one topic, all visible to Claude. You upload the documents once and every new chat already knows them. In the app, the **Folder** entry can also link a folder on your computer.

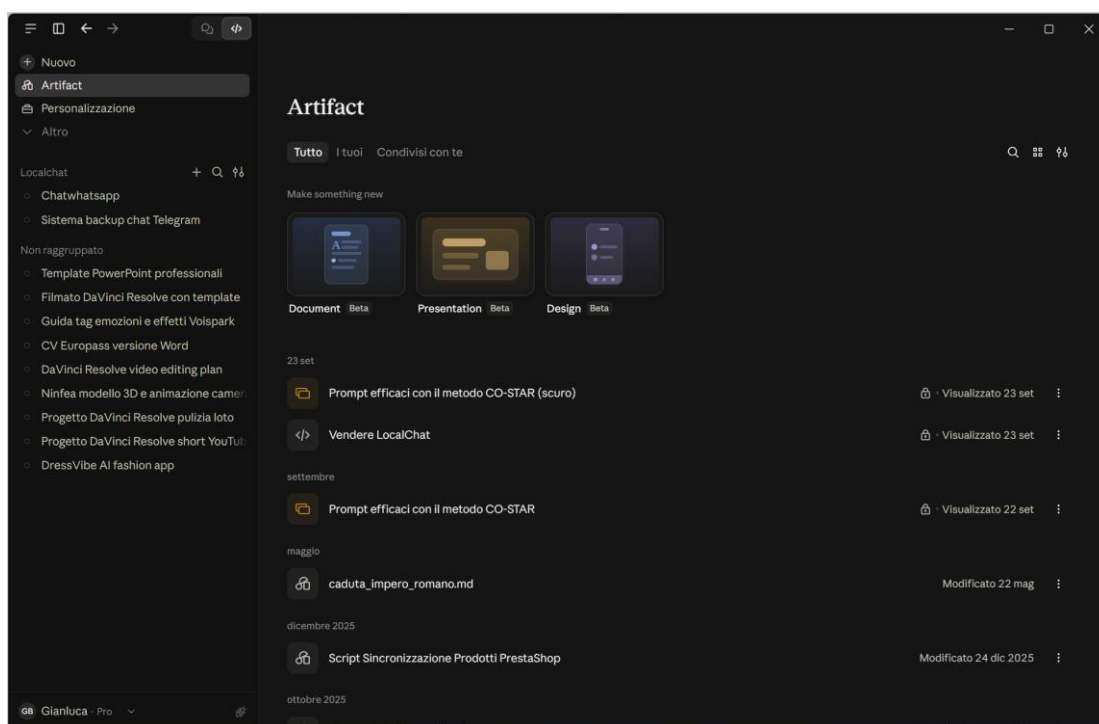


Inside a project: recent chats, Instructions, Context, Folder and Scheduled.

- **Instructions:** rules for all chats in the project (tone, format, role).
- **Context:** the uploaded files; a gauge shows how much capacity is used.
- **Scheduled:** recurring tasks tied to the project.
- **Pin** and **Share:** the pin locks it at the top, Share invites other people.

5.2 Artifact

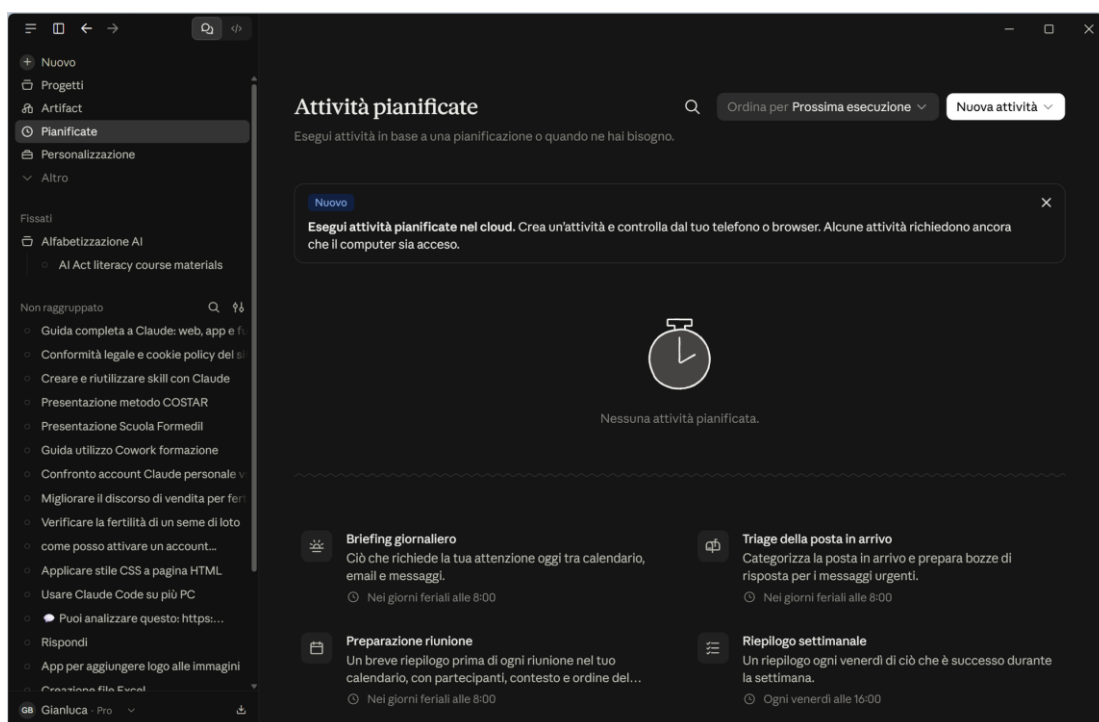
When Claude creates something lasting (a document, a presentation, a site, a small app) it shows it in a separate window: the **Artifact**. The Artifact page gathers them all, with three starting points (**Document**, **Presentation**, **Design**) and the filters All, Yours, Shared with you. They are turned on in Settings, Features.



The Artifact page: starting points and a list of what you made.

5.3 Scheduled tasks

Scheduled tasks run by themselves at the time you choose, even in the cloud: you can create them from your phone, but some need the computer to be on. Four starting templates: **daily briefing** (weekdays, eight o'clock), **inbox triage**, **meeting prep**, **weekly recap** (Friday, four in the afternoon).



Scheduled tasks: ready-made templates and the New task button.

THEY USE YOUR LIMIT

Every run counts as normal usage: few tasks, short and precise instructions. For those on your PC turn on Settings, System, Keep the computer awake.

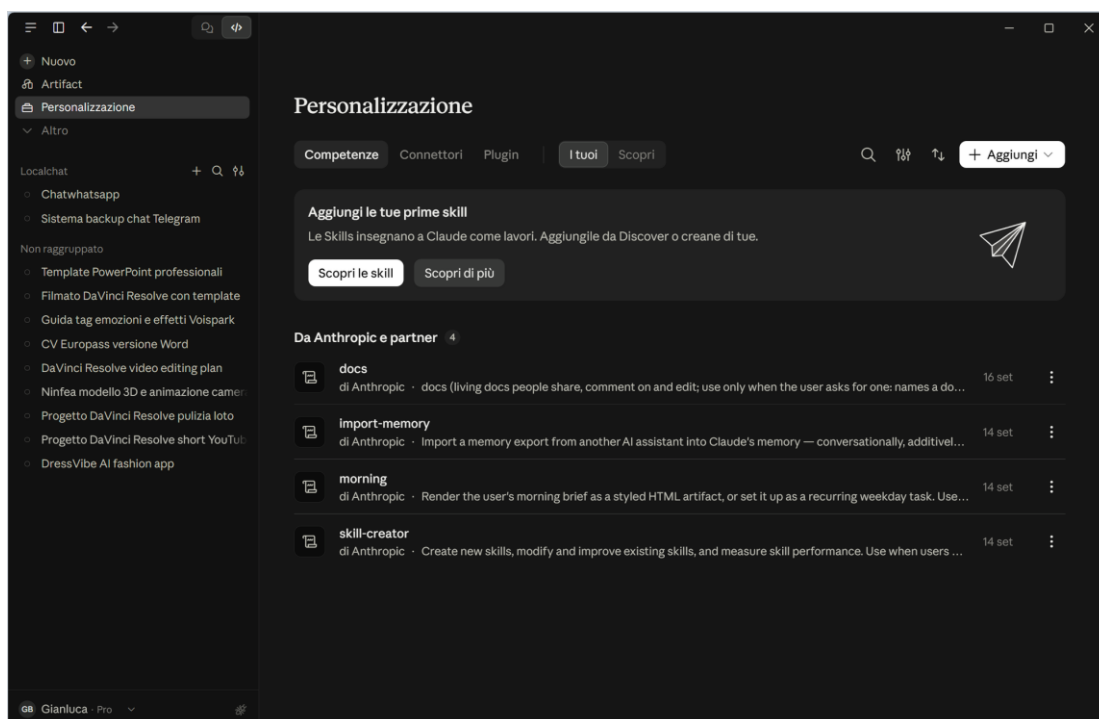
6. Customize, Cowork and Claude Code

How to teach Claude the way you work, connect it to your apps and have it carry out whole tasks.

The **Customize** page has three tabs, **Skills**, **Connectors** and **Plugins**, and two levels: **Yours** (what you installed) and **Discover** (the catalogue). At the top right you find search, filters, sorting and **Add**.

6.1 Skills

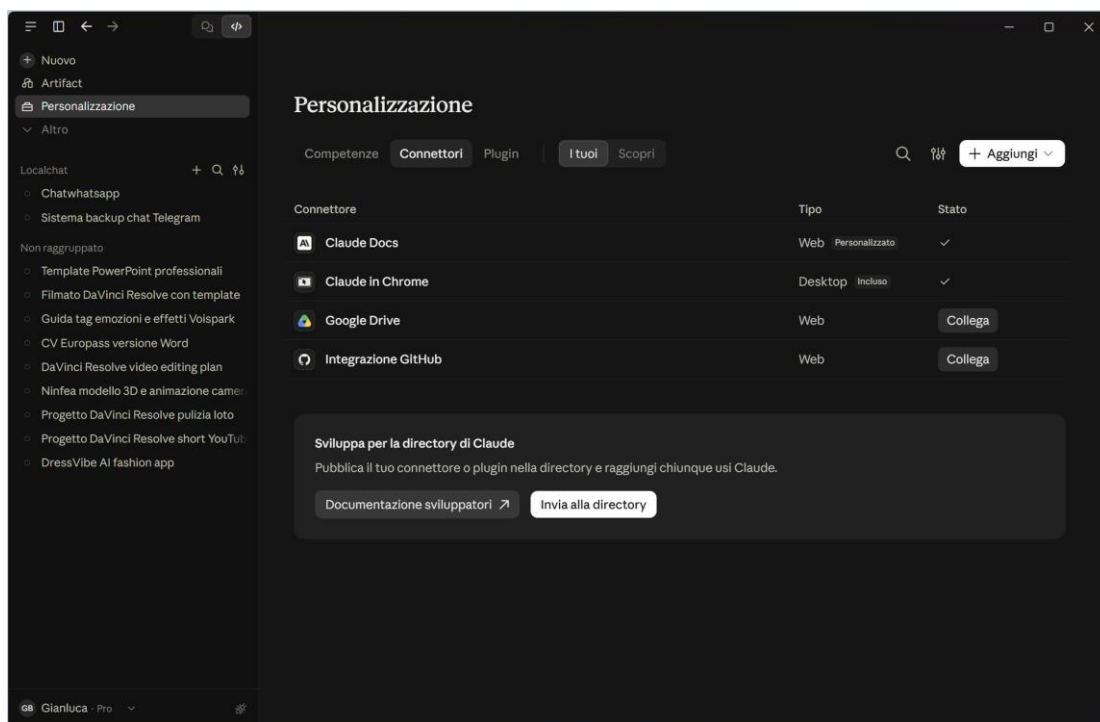
A skill is a set of reusable instructions: how to do a certain kind of work. You call it with the **/** key. With **Add** you can upload one, write your own, have Claude write it or record your screen while you show the procedure.



Customize, Skills: your skills.

6.2 Connectors

Connectors link Claude to outside services: Google Drive, Gmail, Google Calendar, Microsoft 365, Notion, Slack, GitHub and thousands more. A tick means a connected service, the **Connect** button one still to connect.



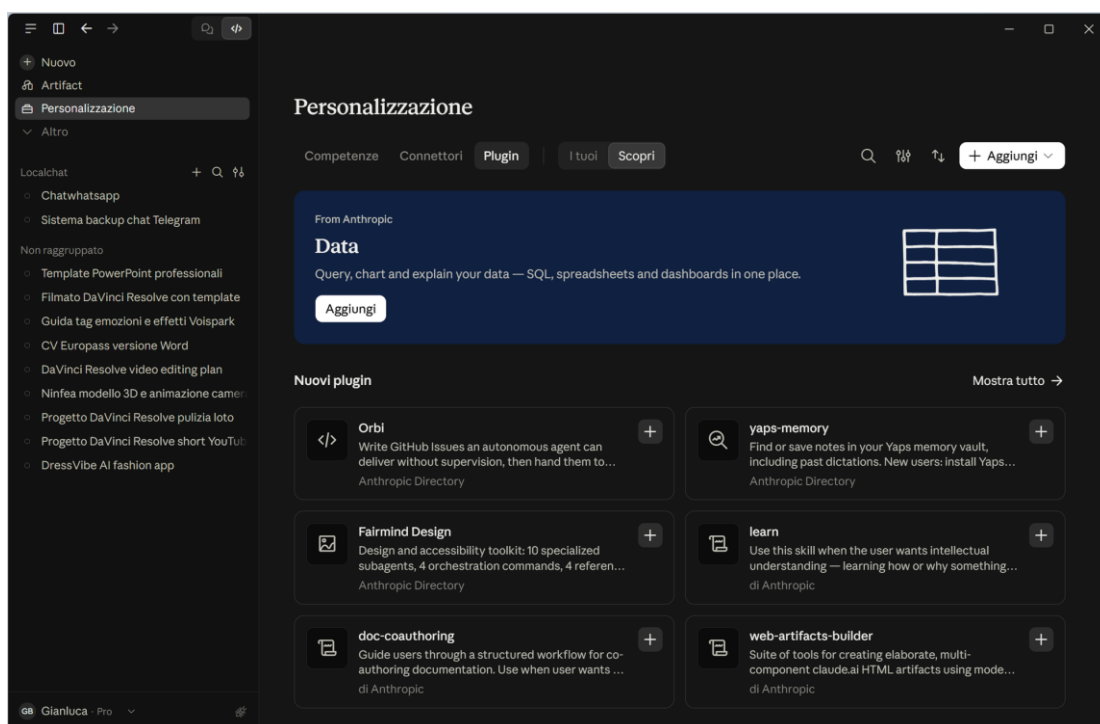
Connectors: a tick means connected, Connect means not yet.

A CONNECTOR IS A PERMISSION

Connecting Gmail or Drive means letting Claude read that data. Connect only what you need and disconnect what you no longer use.

6.3 Plugin

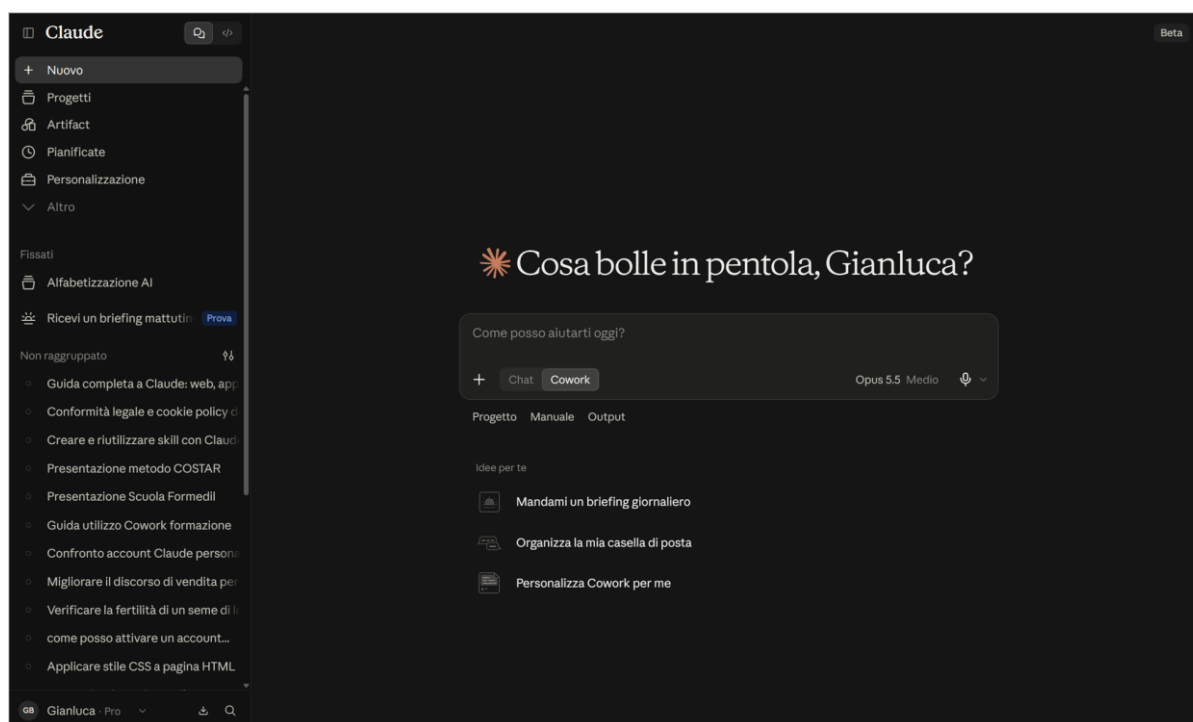
A plugin is a bundle of skills, connectors and commands for a trade: data, engineering, finance, design. Each card has **Try** (use it right away in a chat) and the **+** button to install it.



The plugin catalogue: bundles of skills and connectors.

6.4 Cowork

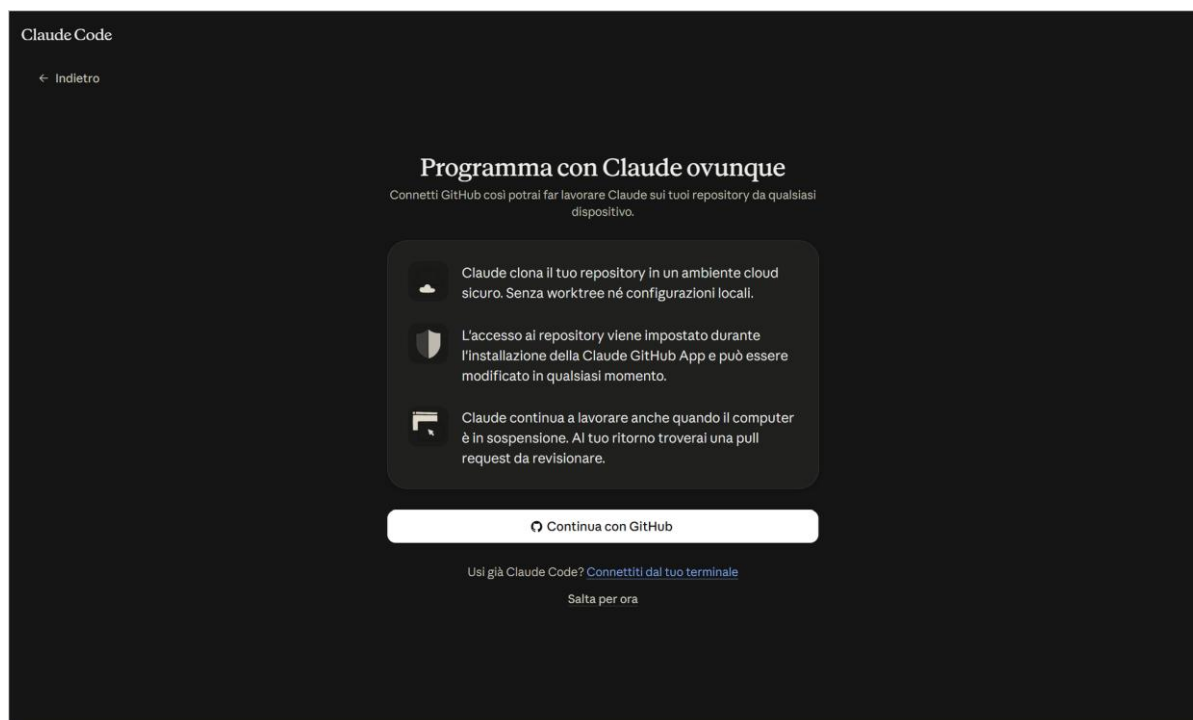
With the **Chat**, **Cowork** switch under the box you no longer ask a question: you **assign a task**, which Claude completes using files, browser and applications. The **Project**, **Manual** (asks for confirmation step by step) and **Output** tabs guide the work. The feature is in **Beta**.



Cowork: you assign a task instead of asking a question.

6.5 Claude Code

The button with the code symbol, next to the chat switch, opens **Claude Code**, the programming assistant. On the web it connects to **GitHub**: Claude works on a copy of the repository in a cloud environment and leaves you a pull request to review. In the app it works on the folders of your PC.

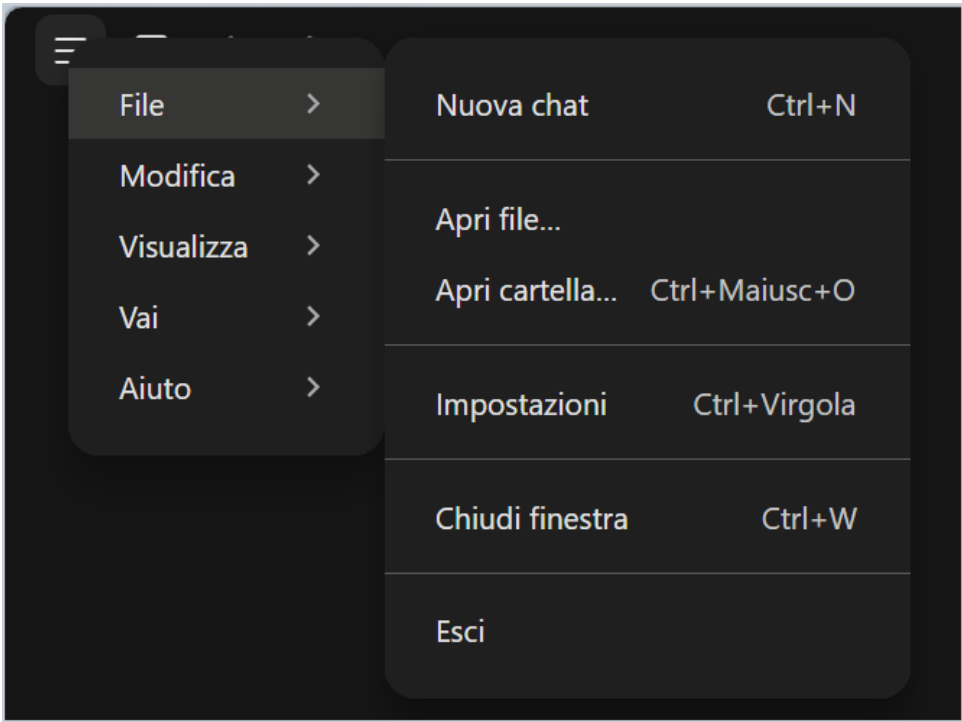


Claude Code on the web: it connects to GitHub.

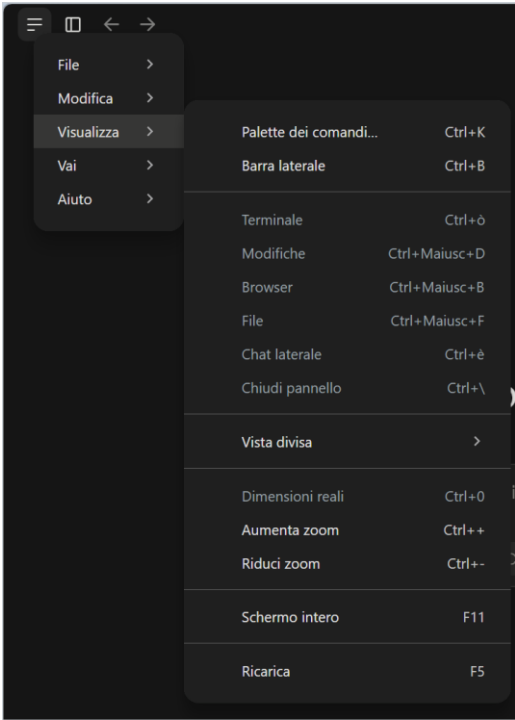
7. Desktop only: menus, shortcuts and windows

The app adds to the website a real program menu, the keyboard and multiple windows.

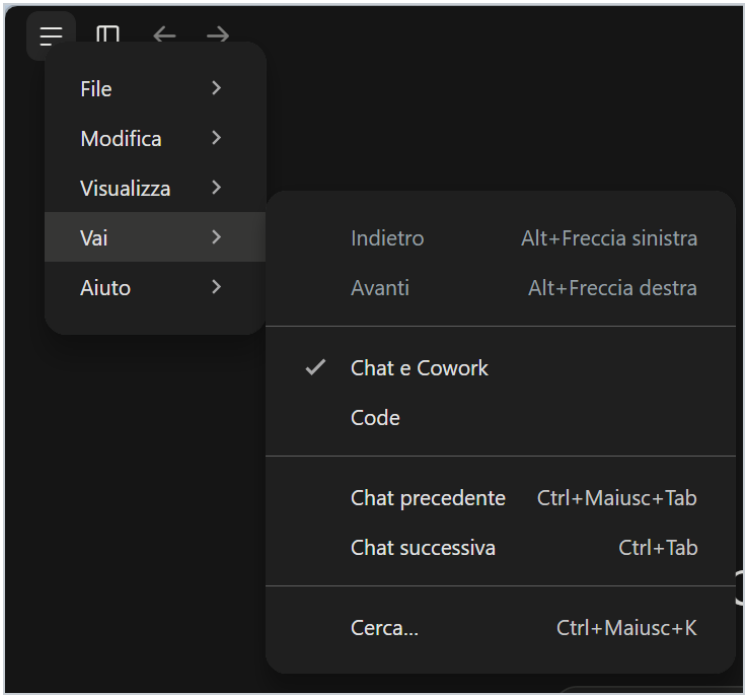
The **three lines** at the top left open five menus: **File**, **Edit**, **View**, **Go** and **Help**. Hovering over buttons shows their description with the shortcut.



The File menu of the desktop app.



The View menu: command palette, panels, zoom.



The Go menu: navigation, Chat and Code, search.

Action	Shortcut
New chat	Ctrl+N
Search everything	Ctrl+Maiusc+K
Incognito chat	Ctrl+Maiusc+I
Show or hide the sidebar	Ctrl+B
Add files	Ctrl+U
Dictation	Ctrl+D
Settings	Ctrl+,
Command palette	Ctrl+K
Previous and next chat	Ctrl+Maiusc+Tab, Ctrl+Tab
Open Claude from any program	Ctrl+Alt+Spazio
Zoom	Ctrl++, Ctrl+-, Ctrl+0

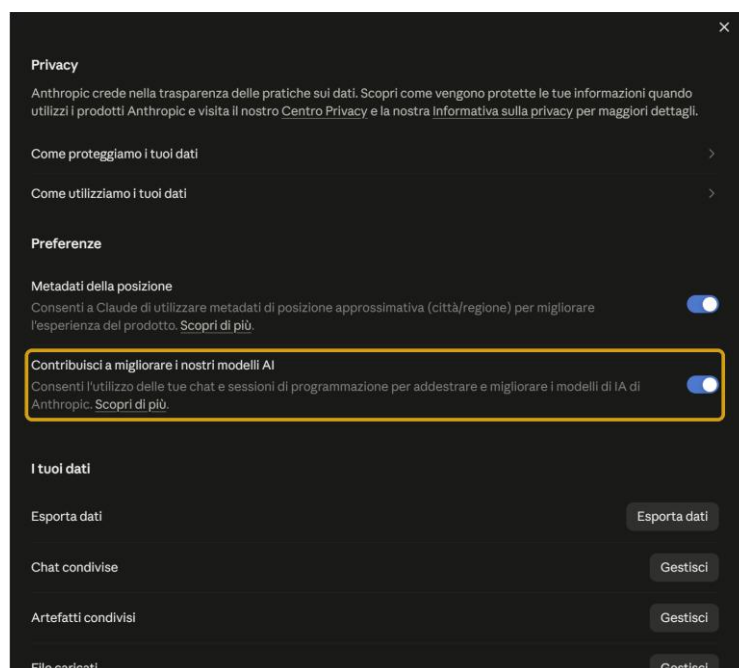
The most useful shortcuts. The full list is under Help, Keyboard shortcuts.

- **Command palette** (Ctrl+K): a box to search for and run any command.
- **Split view**: puts two sessions side by side in the same window.
- **Open in a new window**: from the chat menu; incognito chats already open separately.
- **Help**: guide (F1), troubleshooting, support and update check.

8. Privacy: the setting that decides on training

If you work with client data, students or confidential documents, this is the first setting to check.

It opens with **Ctrl+comma** (or from your name menu, Settings) and is under **Privacy**. In the **Preferences** part there are two switches, in the **Your data** part a series of control buttons.



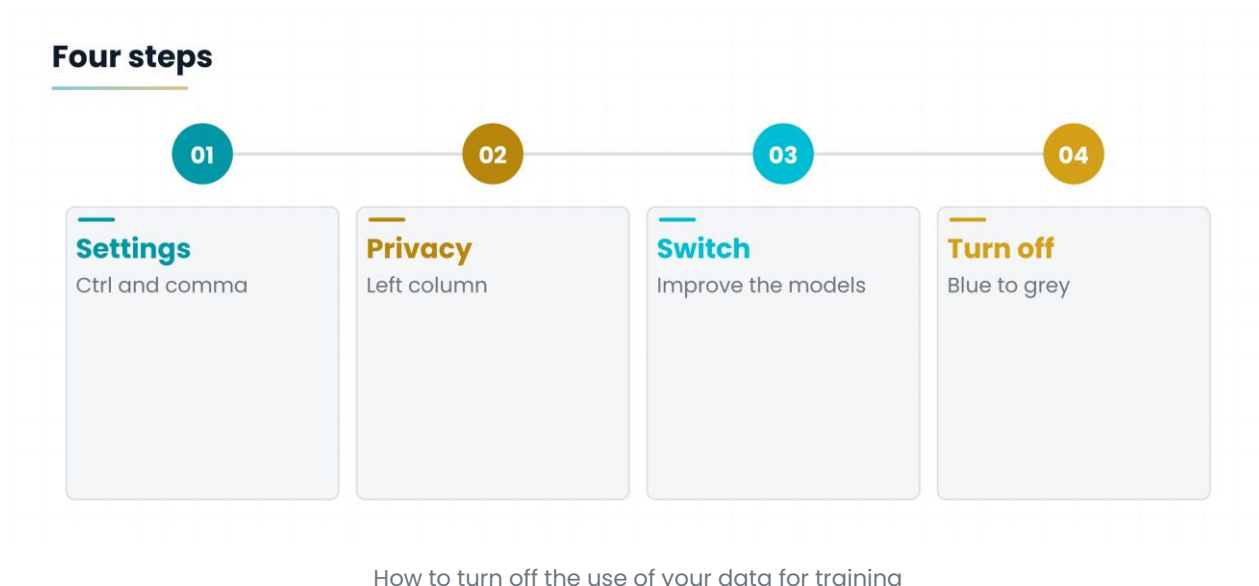
Privacy: the model-training switch is highlighted.

HELP IMPROVE OUR AI MODELS

It is the switch that lets Anthropic use your chats and coding sessions to train and improve the models. In the example screen it is on (blue).

If you **do not want** your content to train the system, **turn it off**: click until it turns grey, with the knob on the left. It applies to future conversations.

Incognito chats are never used for training anyway.



8.1 The other Privacy entries

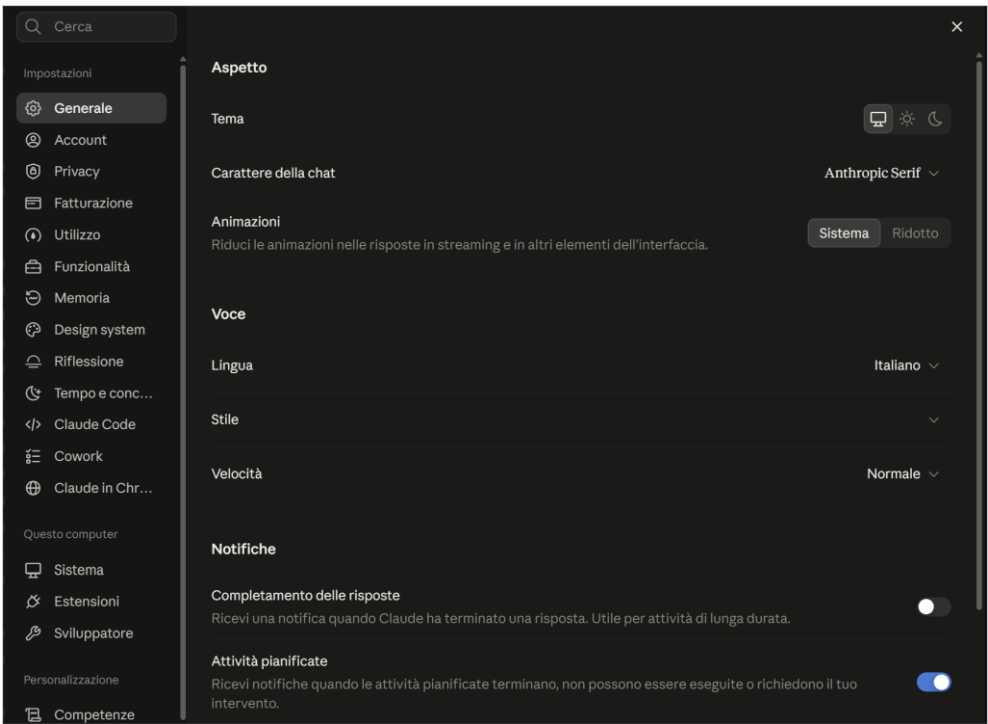
- **Location metadata:** an approximate location (city or region) to improve the experience; turn it off if you do not need it.
- **Export data:** downloads a copy of all your chats and data.
- **Shared chats** and **Shared artifacts:** the public links you created, to be revoked here.
- **Uploaded files** and **Your feedback:** you see and manage them here.
- **Memory preferences:** leads to the Memory options.

CHECK IN THIRTY SECONDS

Open Settings, Privacy. Look at the training switch. If it is blue and you do not want to contribute, click it. For the most sensitive work use incognito anyway.

9. The other Settings, one by one

The rest of Settings, in the order they appear in the left column.



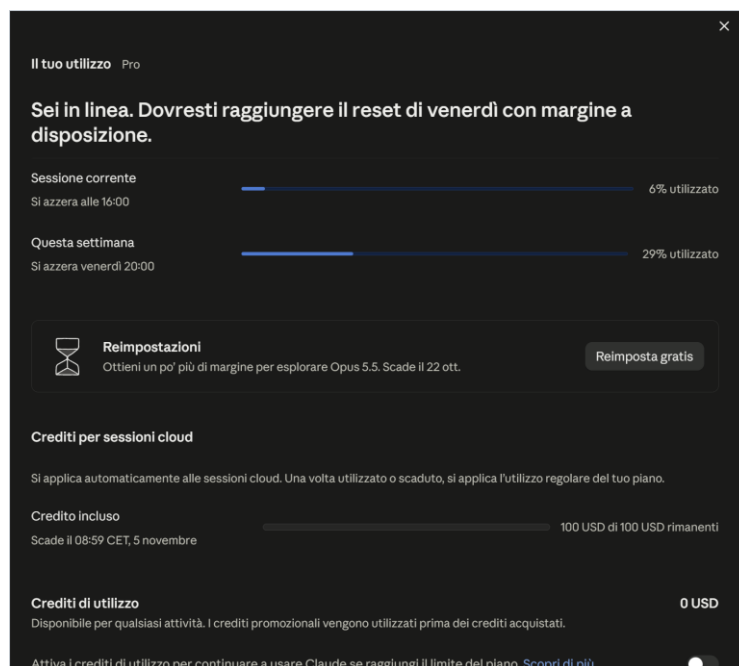
Settings: sections on the left, content on the right.

At the top there is a **Search** box to find an option by name. Sections are in three blocks: **Settings** (General, Account, Privacy, Billing, Usage, Features, Memory, Design system, Reflection, Time and focus, Claude Code, Cowork, Claude in Chrome), **This computer** (desktop only: System, Extensions, Developer) and **Customize**.

Section	What it controls
Generale	Light or dark theme, font, animations, voice language and style, notifications
Account	Name, Instructions for Claude valid for all chats, sign out of all devices, account deletion
Fatturazione	Plan, payment method, invoices, cancellation
Funzionalità	Connector tools, Artifacts, code execution and file creation, outbound network traffic
Memoria	Searching past chats; generating memory from them
Riflessione, Tempo e concentrazione	A recap based on chats (requires Memory); break reminders and quiet hours
Claude in Chrome	Browser extension and site permissions

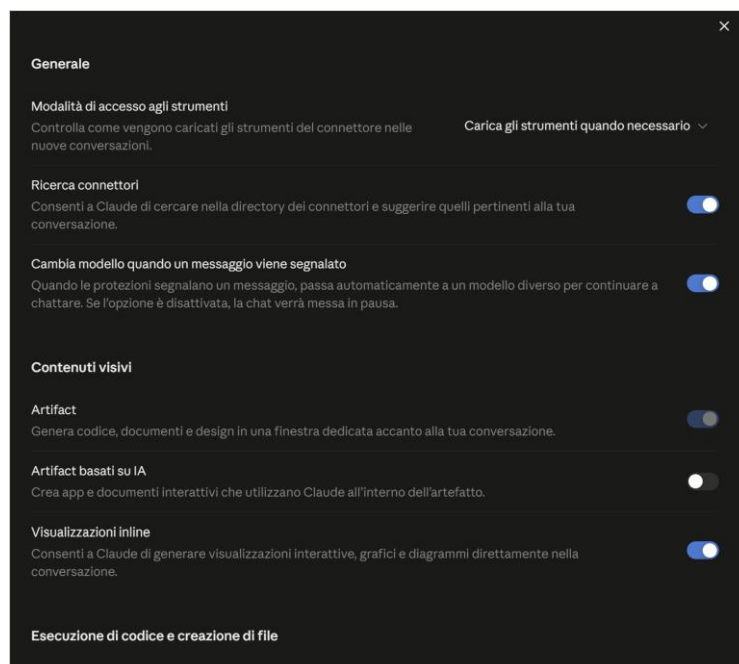
9.1 Usage

It shows **how much of your limit you used**: the current session (with the reset time), the weekly limit, credits and usage split between Claude Code, Chat and Cowork. It is the page to check if you run out of messages too early.



Usage: current session and weekly limit.

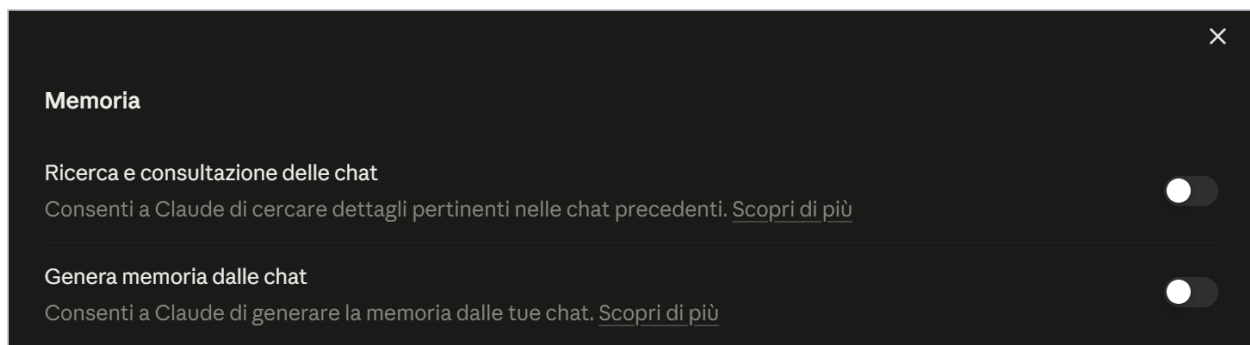
9.2 Features and Memory



Features: connectors, Artifacts and safety.

In **Features** two entries deserve a look: **Code execution and file creation** (needed for Claude to make Word, Excel and PowerPoint documents) and **Allow outbound network**

traffic, which the page itself flags as a security risk: with confidential documents keep it limited to package managers. In **Memory** two switches decide whether Claude searches past chats and whether it generates memory from them.



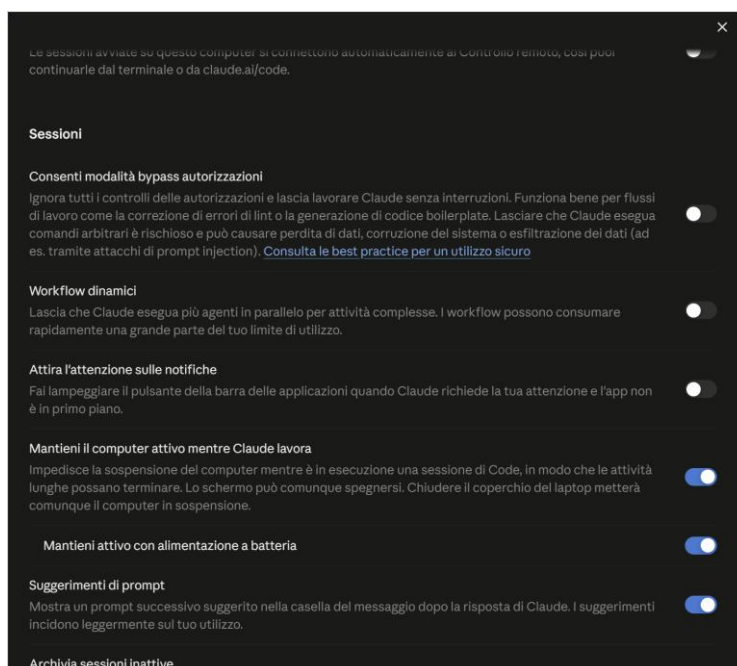
Memory: two switches, both off here.

10. Desktop only: Claude Code, Cowork and System

The most «powerful» sections of Settings: here a switch can give Claude more freedom. Read them calmly.

10.1 Claude Code

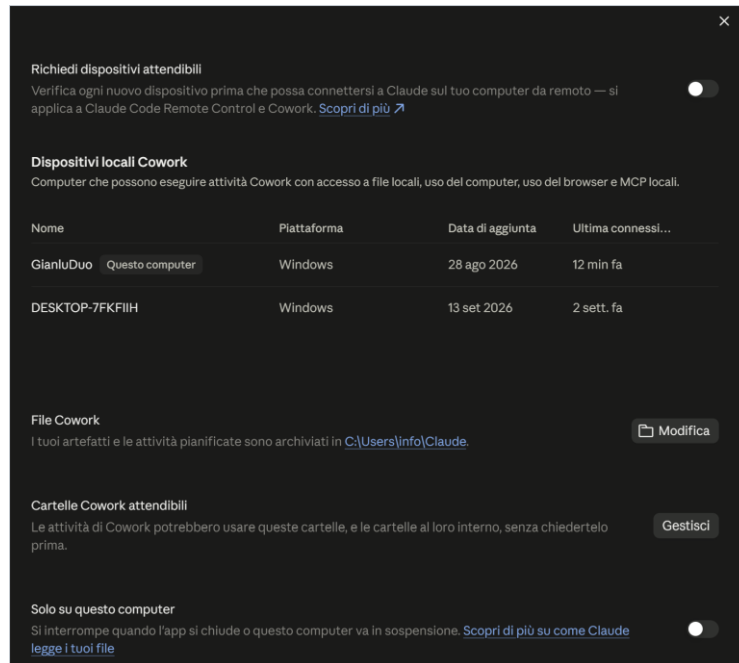
It controls code appearance, fonts and session display, the tokens of connected devices and the GitHub integration. The switch to know is **Allow permission bypass mode**: it makes Claude work without asking for permission and can cause data loss. **Leave it off.**



Claude Code sessions: the permission bypass mode is risky.

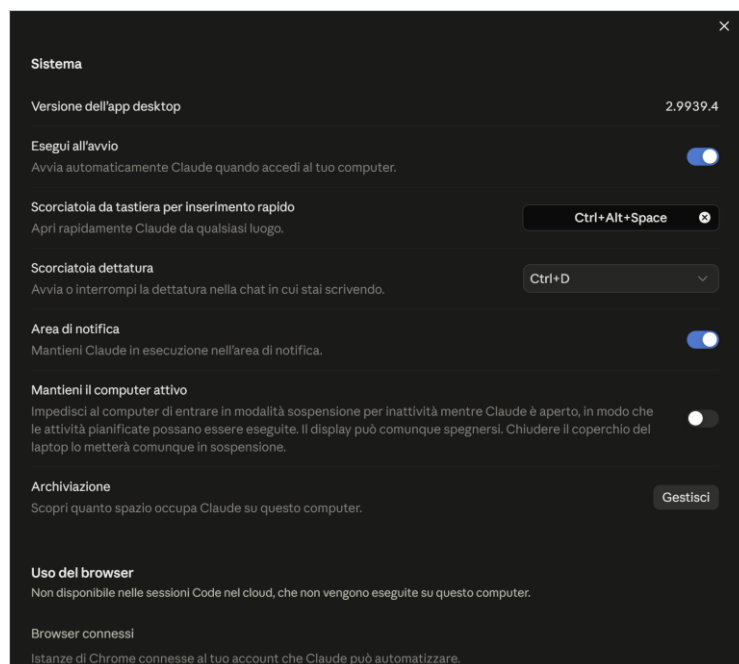
10.2 Cowork

Here you choose the **devices** that can run Cowork tasks, the folder where artifacts are saved and the **trusted folders**, where Claude works without asking each time. **Only on this computer** stops the task when you close the app. Add few folders, and only the ones you really want.



Cowork settings: devices and trusted folders.

10.3 System



System: start with Windows, shortcuts, notification area.

- **Run at startup:** Claude starts with Windows.

- **Quick entry shortcut** (Ctrl+Alt+Space) and **dictation shortcut** (Ctrl+D): both can be changed.
- **Notification area**: keeps Claude running even with the window closed.
- **Keep the computer awake**: prevents sleep so scheduled tasks can run.
- **Computer use (Beta)**: gives Claude control of screen, mouse and keyboard in the apps you authorise. **Denied apps** lists programs it can never access.

COMPUTER USE: TURN IT ON ONLY WHEN NEEDED

It is the most powerful setting: Claude can move the mouse and type for you. Keep it off until you have a precise task and put bank, password manager and mail among the denied apps.

10.4 Extensions and Developer

Extensions lets you install (even by dragging .MCPB or .DXT files) tools that make Claude interact with apps on your computer. **Developer** manages local MCP servers and points to Claude Platform for API keys, which need another account and are billed separately.

11. The settings to check right away

Eight checks that take less than five minutes.

Setting	Where	Advice
Help improve our AI models	Privacy	Turn off if you do not want chats used to train the models
Location metadata	Privacy	Turn off if you do not need it
Instructions for Claude	Account	Write your preferred language and style once and for all
Memory	Memory	Turn on only if you want Claude to know you
Outbound network traffic	Features	Limit to package managers with confidential data
Permission bypass mode	Claude Code	Leave off
Trusted folders	Cowork	Few and specific
Computer use	System	Turn on only for precise tasks



Good use of Claude starts with two minutes in Settings.

Gianluca Bonomo

A guided tour of the interface

Twenty minutes, with Claude open on the web or in the app: at the end you will move around without hunting for buttons.

1. Open Claude and, looking at the numbered figure, find the fifteen elements of the screen.
2. Start a chat with the request «Explain in three lines what a PDF file is», then rename it and pin it from the three-dot menu.
3. Change model and effort from the button at the bottom right and compare the speed of two answers.
4. Attach a file with the + button and ask for a summary in five points.
5. Search for the chat you just made with the lens, then open it and reread it.
6. Open an incognito chat, type a question, close the window and check that no trace remains.
7. Open Settings, Privacy, and check the training switch; decide whether to keep it on.
8. Write in Instructions for Claude the language and style you prefer.

CHECK THAT YOU DID

You know where a chat menu opens and what it contains.

You saw the difference between a normal and an incognito chat.

You made a conscious decision on the training setting.

You know where to see how much of your limit you used.

Questions that come up in class

Are chats the same on the web and in the app?

Yes. Account, chats, projects and settings are the same: only the container changes. The app adds menus, shortcuts, local files and Claude Code on your computer.

Do I have to install the app to use Claude?

No. The website works in any browser. The app is for working with files on your PC, using shortcuts or opening Claude from any program.

Is an incognito chat really private?

It does not appear in history or search and is not used for training, but it disappears when you close the window: copy what you need first. It does not change your organisation's rules.

If I turn off the training switch, does Claude work worse?

No: it only changes the use of your content to improve future models. It applies to later conversations; for up-to-date details read the Learn more link next to the switch.

Why do I run out of messages so fast?

Usage grows with chat length, attached files and effort. Open a new chat for each topic and keep effort on Medium; the Usage page shows where you stand.

Can I undo deleting a chat?

No: after you confirm it cannot be recovered. If in doubt, rename it or move it to a group, or export your data from Settings, Privacy.

Glossary

Term	What it means
Artifact	Lasting content created by Claude (document, page, app) shown in a separate window.
Claude Code	Claude's programming assistant, on the web in the cloud or in the app on your PC folders.
Connector	A link from Claude to an outside service, such as Google Drive or Gmail.
Cowork	A mode where you assign Claude a task instead of asking a question.
Effort	How much Claude thinks before answering: low, medium, high, extra, max.

Term	What it means
MCP	Model Context Protocol: the standard Claude uses to connect to outside tools and data.
Model	The version of Claude's brain in use: bigger means more capable but slower and heavier on your limit.
Plugin	A bundle of skills, connectors and commands for a trade.
Project	A folder with instructions, files and chats on one topic, visible to Claude in every conversation.
Skill	A set of reusable instructions on how to do a kind of work, callable with the slash.
Training	Use of content to improve future models: in Privacy you decide whether to allow it.

Further reading

Claude interface, web version and desktop app for Windows – observed and captured in September 2026

Anthropic help and privacy pages – to consult for up-to-date terms on data use

WATCH OUT

Interface observed and captured in September 2026: model names, menu entries and buttons change often. Screenshots are cropped from the original screens. The screenshots show the Italian interface.