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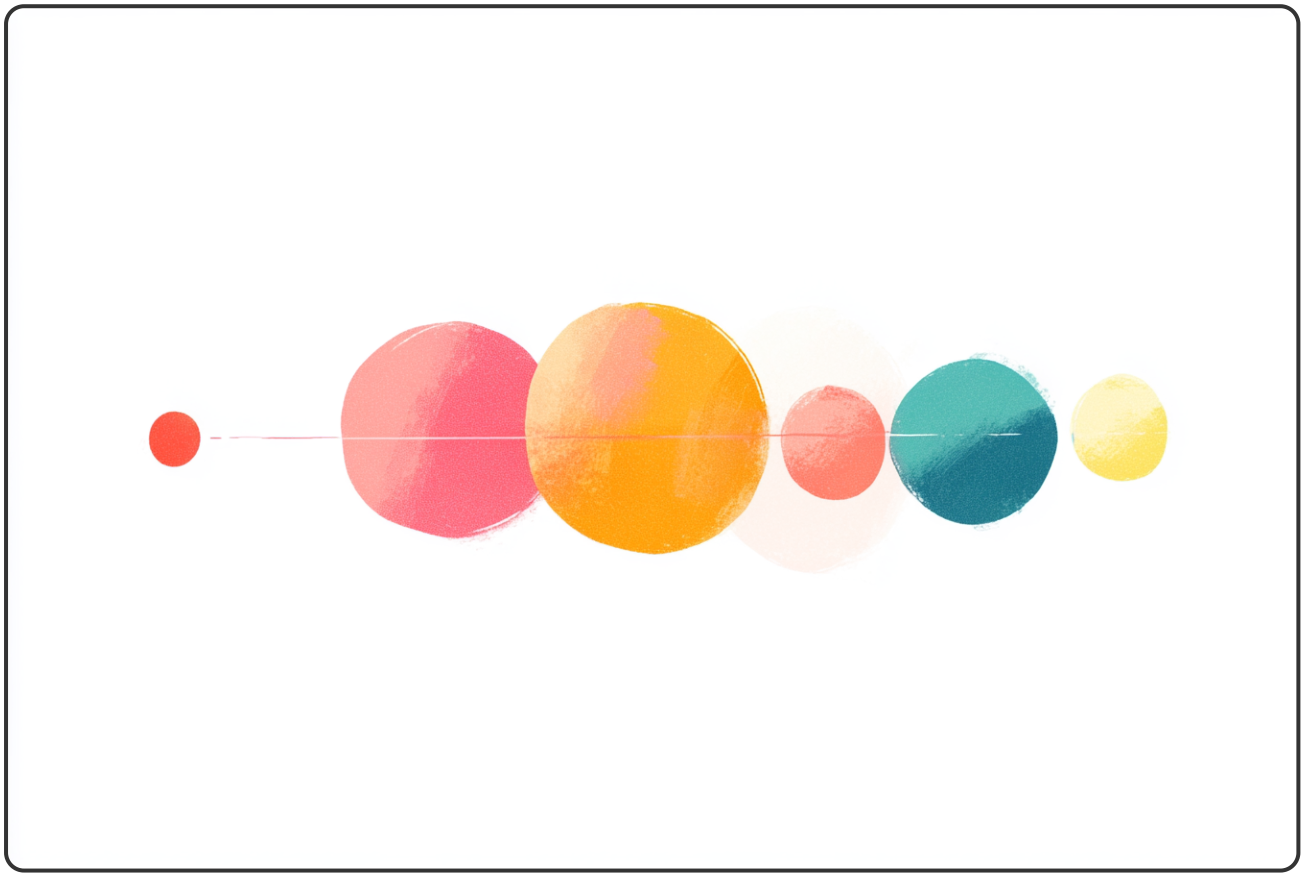
NotebookLM: a complete user guide

Last updated: January 10, 2026



(https://docs.ai-know.pro/notebooklm-en/img/notebooklm-cover.png)

This is a comprehensive guide to NotebookLM. It's one of the most interesting tools in the generative AI landscape - and in the following pages I'll explain why it's so special and how it can transform the way you work with content.

Why this guide

In the vibrant and fast-paced world of generative AI, NotebookLM stands out. It's not just another AI-based app, but something "different" that obviously needs to be used differently from other chatbots.

I decided to write this guide for two simple reasons:

1. **I actually use it**: I use it regularly and can guarantee that it's not only technically excellent, but genuinely useful.
2. **It's a unique tool**: it offers features that aren't easily found elsewhere in the generative AI ecosystem, and therefore deserves a dedicated guide to help unlock its full potential.

I had already written a version of this manual last May, but since then NotebookLM has become practically a different application: updated interface, new features, new possibilities.

Who this guide is for

This guide is designed for professionals in various fields who want to:

- Understand NotebookLM's potential
- Integrate it into their workflows
- Leverage all its advanced features
- Apply it to concrete use cases in their field

Guide structure

The guide is organized in progressive chapters covering:

- NotebookLM's distinctive features
- Setup and initial configuration
- Source management and content organization
- Advanced features (mind maps, audio, sharing)
- Best practices and operational strategies
- Professional use cases across different sectors

License

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Why NotebookLM is different

Google's NotebookLM stands out from other AI systems through a simple principle: it works exclusively with documents uploaded by the user. No generic knowledge, no external information. It also benefits from access to Google's entire AI ecosystem - for example, it uses Gemini 3 as its model and Nano Banana Pro for image generation.

When working with numerous documents, transcripts, articles, or videos on a specific topic, the traditional process of reading, annotating, and organizing takes considerable time. NotebookLM changes this process by creating an environment where you can interact directly with materials, identify connections between information, and generate summaries based exclusively on uploaded sources. Each response includes citations that allow you to verify the origin of statements.

Google offers NotebookLM in two versions: a free Base version with essential features and a Plus version with expanded usage limits for professionals and advanced users. The following chapter details the features for each profile.

Important note: Google does not use user data, even from free accounts, to train NotebookLM.

(https://docs.ai-know.pro/notebooklm-en/img/01.png)

This guide refers to the Plus version. The Base version does not include all the features described.

Getting started

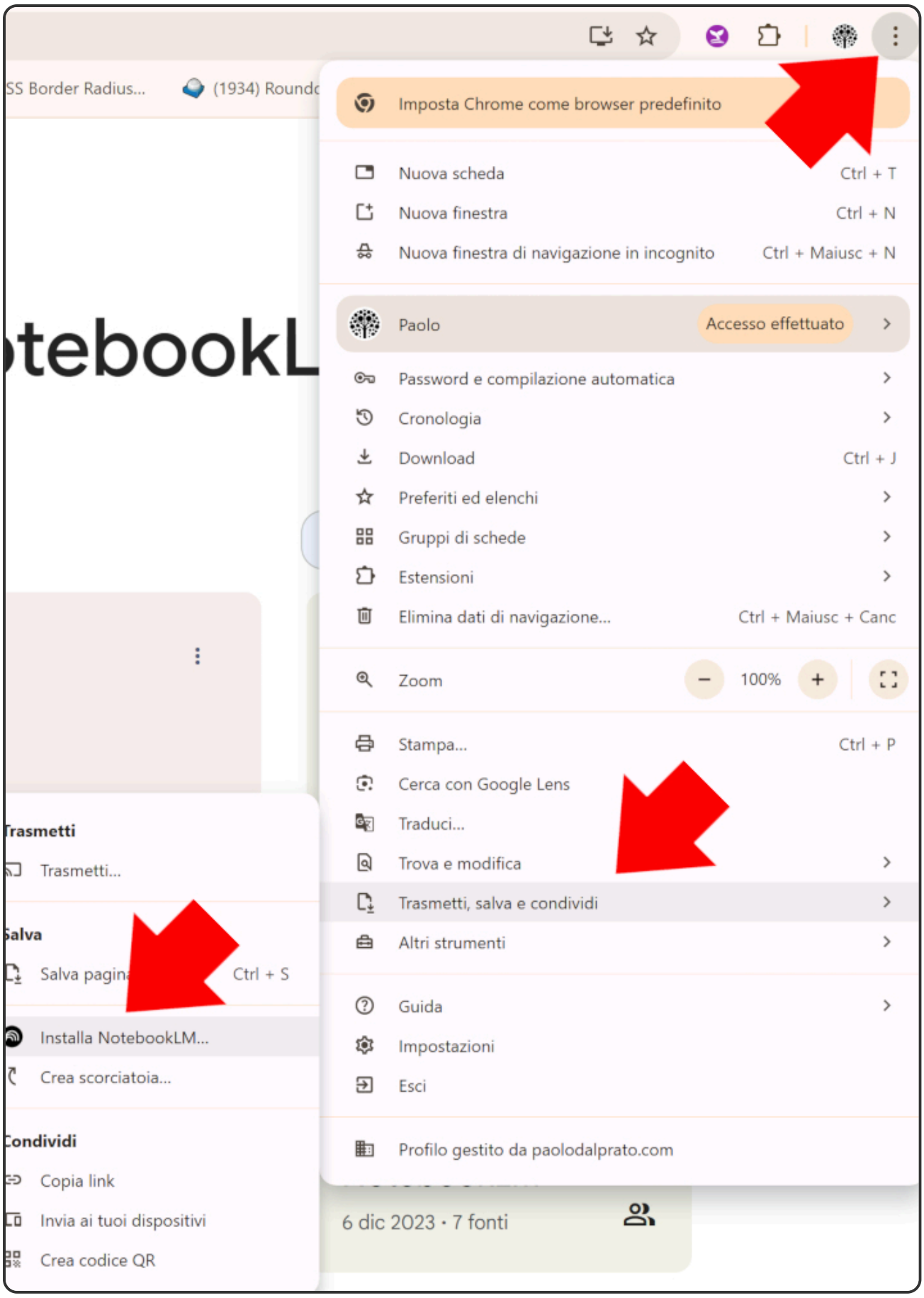
To use NotebookLM you need to be of legal age and have a Google account. Use a browser to access notebooklm.google (https://notebooklm.google/)

(https://docs.ai-know.pro/notebooklm-en/img/02.png)

From here, clicking the "**Try NotebookLM**" button takes you to the main dashboard - this is when you'll need your Google account.

Apps are also available for Android and iOS, downloadable from their respective stores.

For Windows there's also a desktop app. To download it, open NotebookLM in Chrome, click the three vertical dots icon in the upper right, hover over "**Cast, save, or share**", then click "**Install NotebookLM**" in the submenu that appears.



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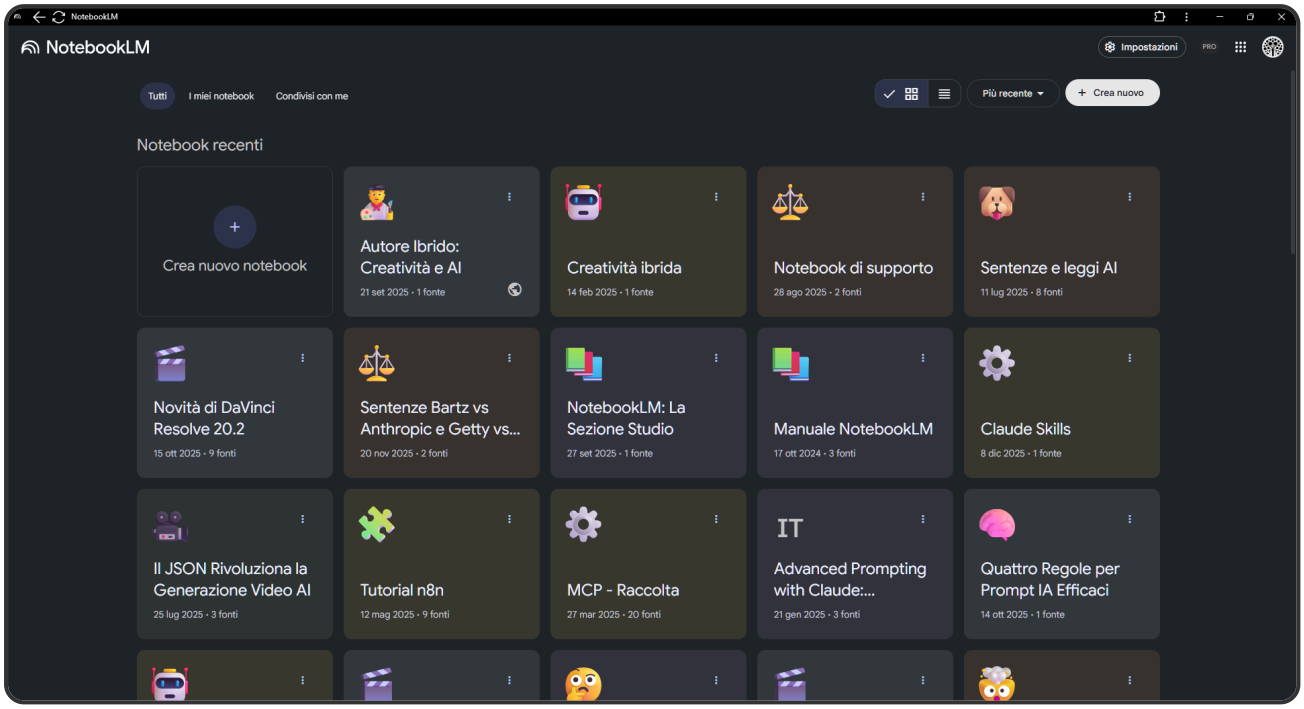
NotebookLM's main interface is a dashboard with a minimalist design showing all created or shared notebooks. A notebook is equivalent to a folder that collects materials for a specific project, topic, or collection of information sources to explore, analyze, or synthesize.



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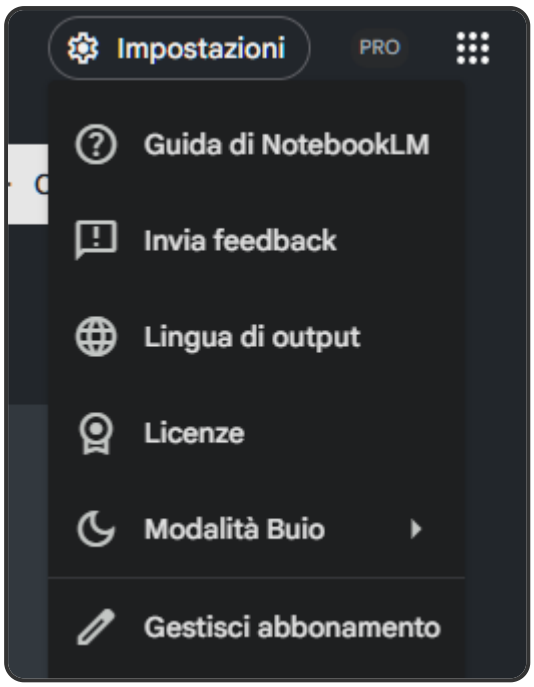
Dashboard navigation

The main dashboard shows an overview of all projects. Each notebook appears as a clickable element, accompanied by its name, which is automatically generated by default based on the content entered.

Above the notebook list, on the left you'll find selectors to define which folders to display. **My notebooks** shows notebooks created with your account, while **Shared with me** shows those created by other accounts and shared with you. Obviously **All** shows both combined.

Also above the notebook list but on the right are selectors to define the display mode (**grid** / **list**) and order (**Most recent** / **Title**), and at the far right the **Create new** button that starts a new empty notebook.

The "**Settings**" button, located in the upper right, activates a dropdown menu when selected. Of the various options, only two impact the app. The first is **Mode**, which lets you select light mode, dark mode, or the device's default setting. The other is **Output language**, which defaults to "**Default**" (the computer's language), but you can also explicitly choose the language you want to use.



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Language settings apply to several aspects of the system:

- **User interface**: all interface elements, from menus to buttons to descriptions, are displayed in the selected language.
- **Chat responses**: NotebookLM generates responses in the chosen language, regardless of the original source language (although response quality may suffer from automatic translations if there's a significant language mismatch).
- **Audio generation**: features using generated voice use the selected language, with appropriate voices for that specific language.

This is an international tool, particularly useful in multilingual contexts or for users who prefer to work in their native language even when sources may be in other languages.

Saving your work

The dashboard allows you to quickly switch between projects or resume work from where you left off. When working in a notebook, data is saved in real-time, so no specific action is needed when exiting - there's no "**Save**" button because it's not necessary.

As the number of notebooks grows, you'll appreciate the simplicity of this interface which, despite its minimalism, manages a complex system of information and relationships.

Understanding version limits

Before starting to use NotebookLM intensively, it's important to know the limits of the different available versions:

The Base (free) version offers:

- Creation of up to 100 notebooks
- Maximum 50 sources per notebook
- Limit of 500,000 words per source
- 50 chat questions per day
- 3 daily audio generations
- 3 daily video generations

The Plus version expands these limits to:

- 500 total notebooks
- 300 sources per notebook
- Same word limits per source (500,000)
- 500 chat questions per day
- 20 daily audio generations
- 20 daily video generations

These parameters affect project organization and source distribution across notebooks. For smaller projects or exploratory purposes, the Base version is generally sufficient. For professionals working on complex projects with numerous sources or requiring frequent interactions, the Plus version offers the flexibility needed for intensive use.

Understanding the workspace

Creating your first notebook

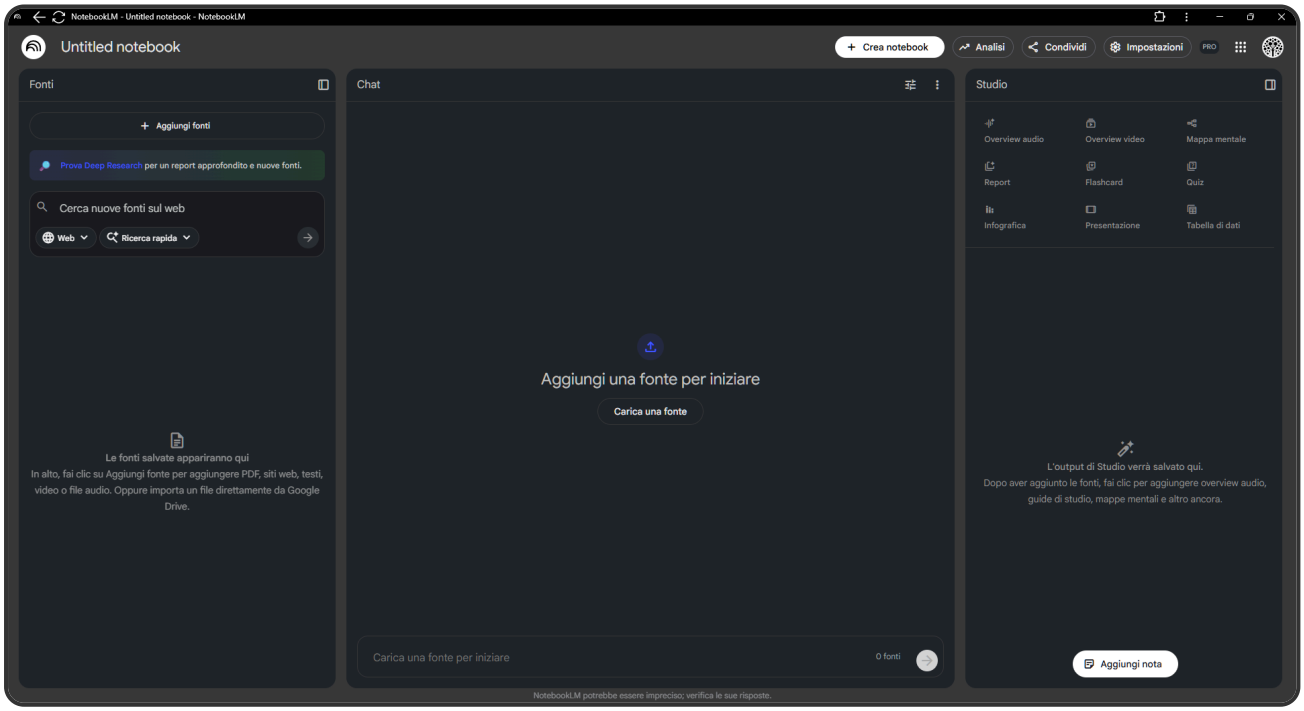
Creating a new notebook is a simple process requiring just a few steps. At creation time you can assign it a name, otherwise it will be defined by the system after the first data analysis. You can modify it at any time, so there's no need to worry excessively about this initial choice.

A notebook becomes truly useful when it starts containing information sources. You can think of a notebook as a virtual space dedicated to a specific topic: by adding various sources, you create a richer and more detailed information environment to interact with.

The three-column structure

NotebookLM's interface presents a structure divided into three columns, each dedicated to a specific function in the workflow:

- **Sources** (left): the archive containing and organizing all imported documents
- **Chat** (center): the space for dialogue with the artificial intelligence
- **Studio** (right): the area for saving and organizing generated content



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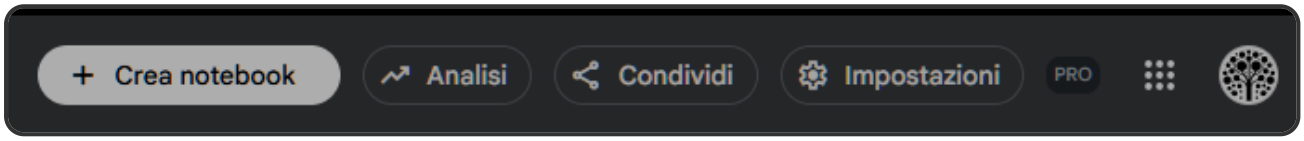
This organization reflects a logical work process: gather sources, interact with them, and organize the information found. Each column is described in detail in dedicated chapters.

General navigation

In the upper left, near the NotebookLM icon (which when clicked returns to the initial dashboard with all notebooks), you'll find the current notebook name. At startup it reads **Untitled notebook**, but you can select it at any time to modify it.

In the upper right are several buttons that act at a general level:



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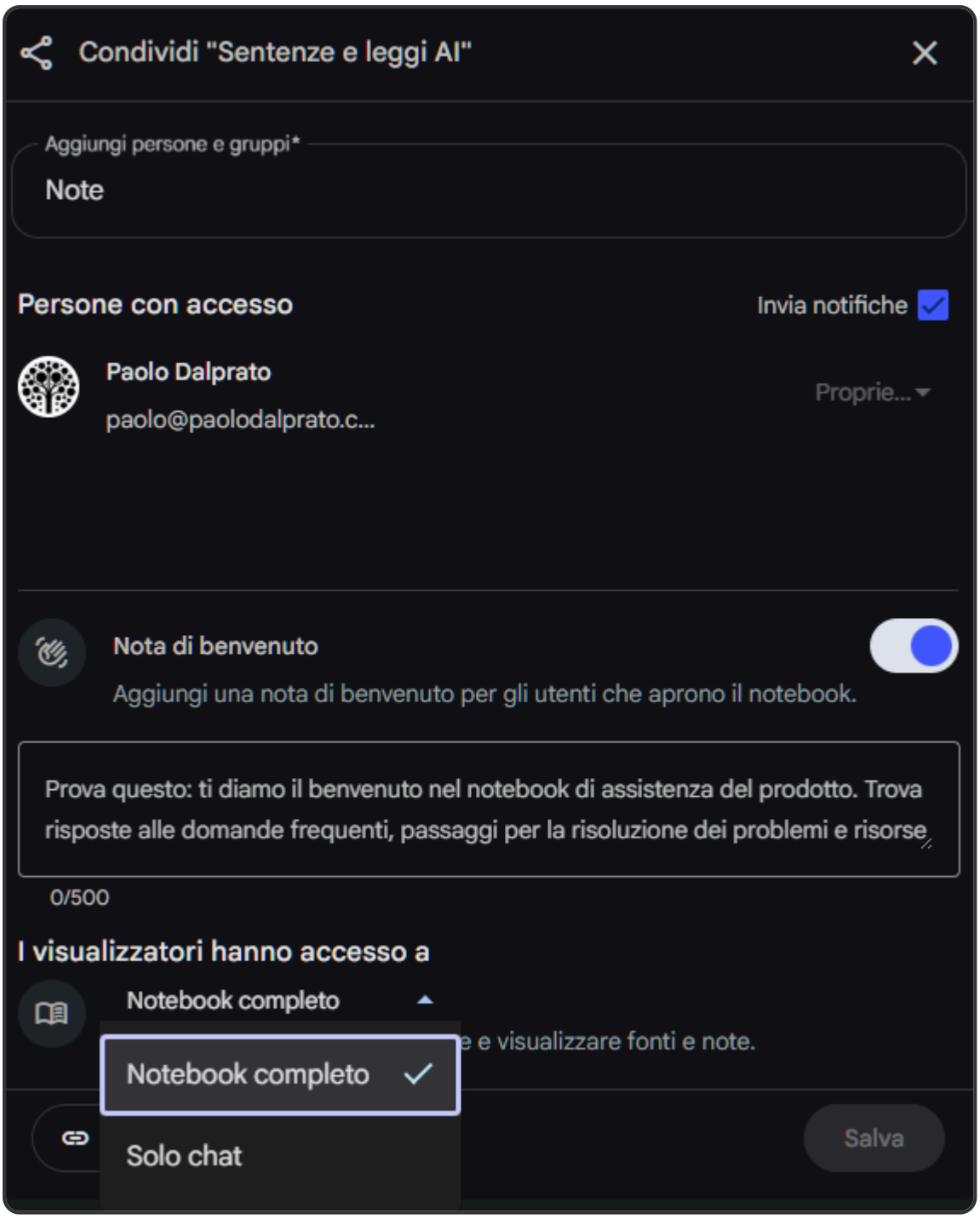
Obviously **Create notebook** opens a completely empty new folder. **Settings** has the same functionality seen in the dashboard in the previous chapter.

NotebookLM integrates sharing features that transform it into a collaborative tool. The "**Share**" button, when clicked, opens a popup that lets you define people and groups to share with.



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Customized sharing options

When you decide to share a notebook, NotebookLM offers various options to customize the sharing experience:

Complete sharing vs. partial sharing:

- You can share the entire notebook, including all original sources and notes saved in the Studio area

- Alternatively, you can share only the Chat portion, allowing recipients to interact with sources without accessing personal notes

Complete sharing is suitable for close collaborations where you want colleagues to benefit from all analyses and organizations. Sharing only the chat is more suitable for situations where you want to provide raw sources while keeping the interpretation and synthesis process private.

Welcome notes: guiding recipients' experience

One of the useful features of the sharing system is the ability to add a "welcome note" that recipients will see when accessing the shared notebook. This note represents an opportunity to guide collaborators' experience and maximize the value of sharing.

An effective welcome note can include:

- A brief description of the notebook's context and purpose
- Guidance on the most relevant sources or how to navigate the materials
- Suggestions for particularly useful questions to ask the system
- Explanations of any conventions or organizations adopted in saved notes
- Specific requests for feedback or contributions from recipients

This initial communication transforms sharing from simple material transmission to a guided experience that helps recipients get maximum value from the shared notebook.

Usage monitoring: analysis and continuous improvement

NotebookLM offers analytical tools to monitor how shared notebooks are used. These tools, accessible via the "**Analytics**" button at the top of the interface, provide data that can guide continuous improvement of shared materials.

Usage statistics show:

- Which notebooks have been accessed most frequently
- How users interact with shared sources
- What types of questions are most commonly asked
- Temporal usage patterns and emerging trends

This data helps identify:

- Topics that generate the most interest and require deeper exploration
- Unclear areas that need additional explanation
- Related themes that justify creating new notebooks
- The most effective methods for structuring and organizing content

It's important to note that analytics are only available for notebooks that have been shared with others, thus respecting the privacy of users exploring non-shared materials. Remember that data and analytics update approximately every 24 hours.

The two side columns, Sources and Studio, can be individually collapsed or expanded to adapt the workspace to your needs. You can do this either by clicking the collapse buttons found in the upper corner of each column with the open/closed page icon, or by dragging the separator line with the central Chat column using your mouse.

The workflow

The three-column structure establishes a natural flow:

1. **Collection**: import documents, links, audio, and video in the Sources column
2. **Exploration**: ask questions and request analyses in the Chat column
3. **Organization**: save useful responses and generate content in the Studio column

Data is saved in real-time: there's no "Save" button because every change is automatically stored. You can close the browser and resume work from where you left off.

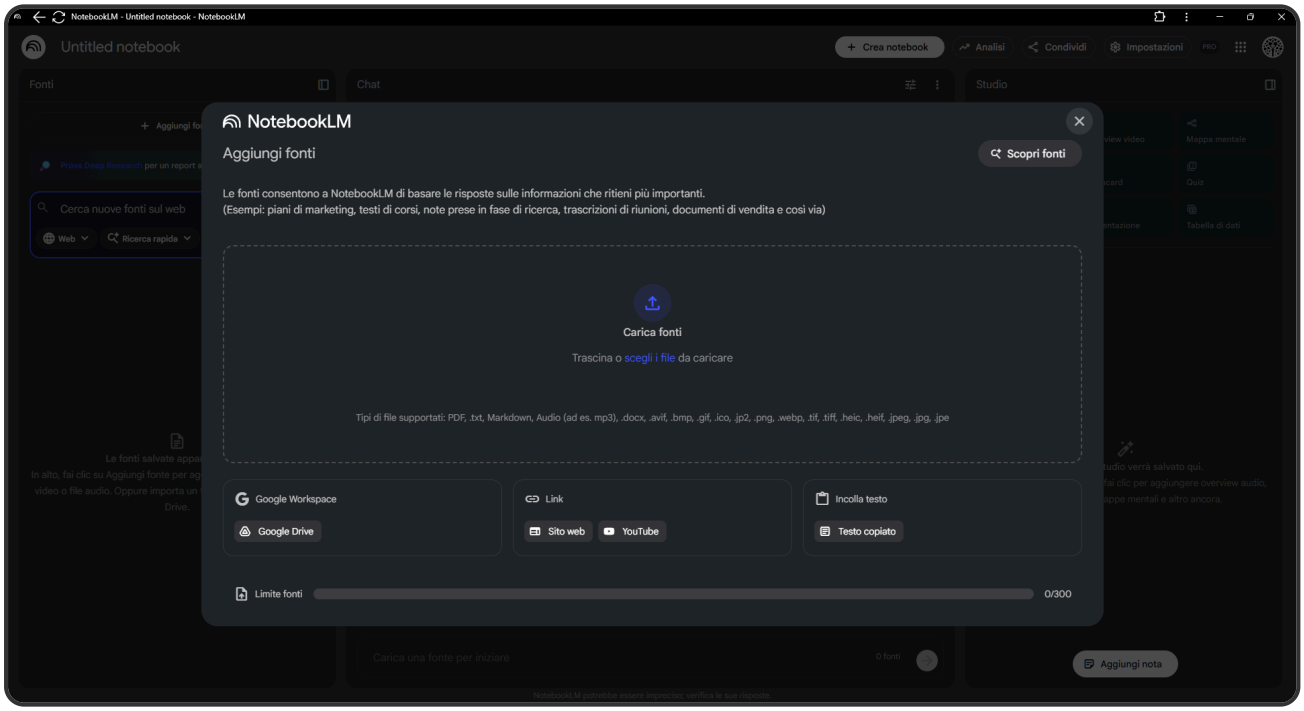
The Sources section

The Sources column, on the left side of the screen, contains and organizes all information sources imported into the notebook. Each source is represented by a clickable element that, when selected, shows additional details and options.

A fundamental function is the ability to select or deselect specific sources before asking questions or generating analyses. This allows you to focus the AI's attention on a specific subset of documents, particularly useful when working with many sources or wanting to compare different perspectives on the same topic.

Adding sources

At the top you'll find the "**+ Add sources**" button which opens a popup with import options:



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Supported file types are:

- Audio files: for example MP3 and WAV
- Copied and pasted text
- Google Docs
- Google Slides: up to 100 slides

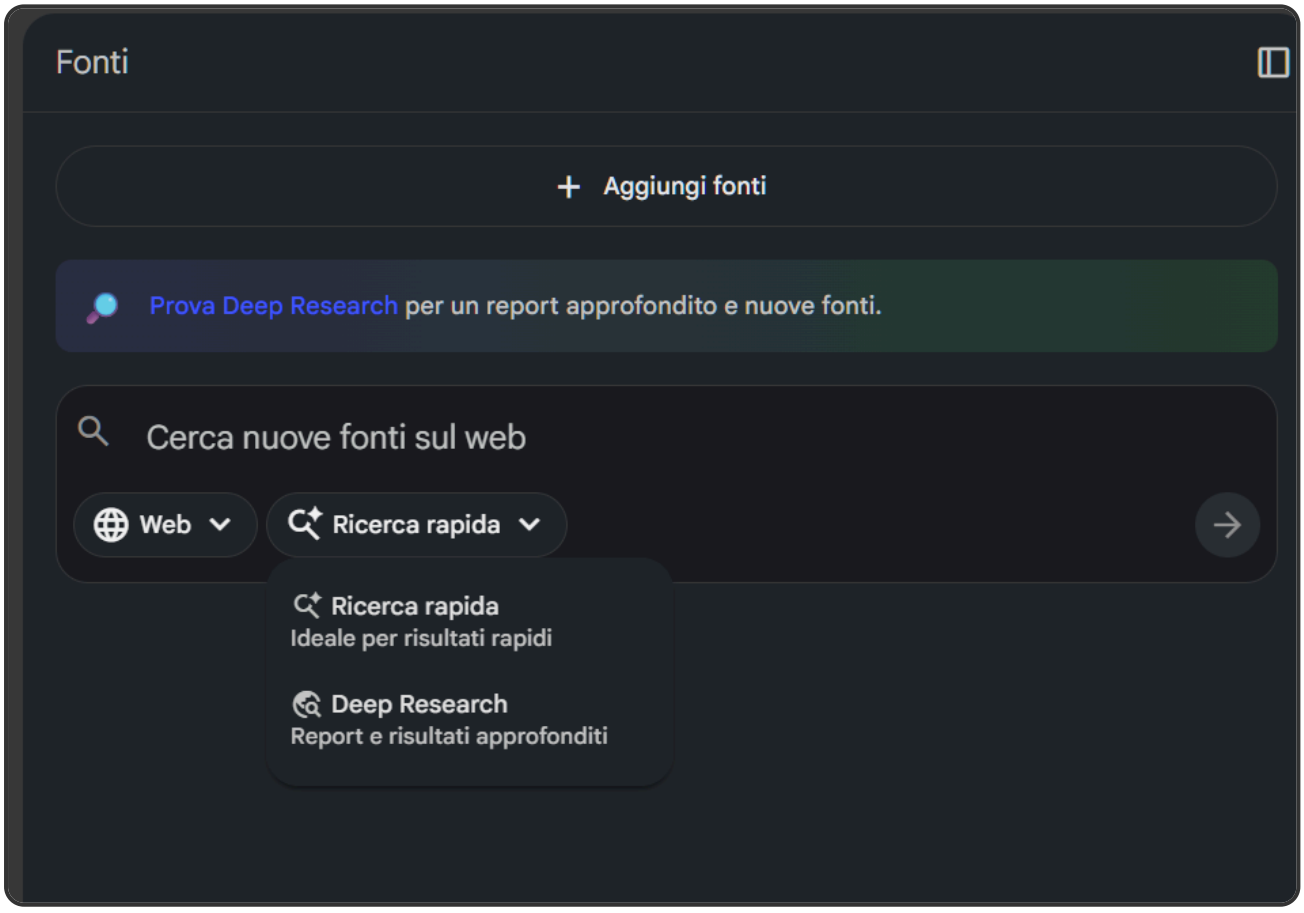
- Google Sheets: currently limited to 100,000 tokens
- Images: tiff, heic, jpeg, avif, bmp, GIF, ico, jp2, png, WebP
- Microsoft Word files, text files, Markdown, and PDF
- Web URLs
- Public YouTube video URLs

Google Docs: once imported, these documents don't automatically update if you modify the original version on Drive. Any significant change will require a new import.

Multimedia content: NotebookLM automatically generates transcriptions of video and audio, transforming them into analyzable text. Purely musical content without dialogue or narration cannot be effectively processed since the system works exclusively with textual information.

Searching for sources

Below the add button is the section for searching sources on the web, which functions as a search engine with a field for defining the text prompt.



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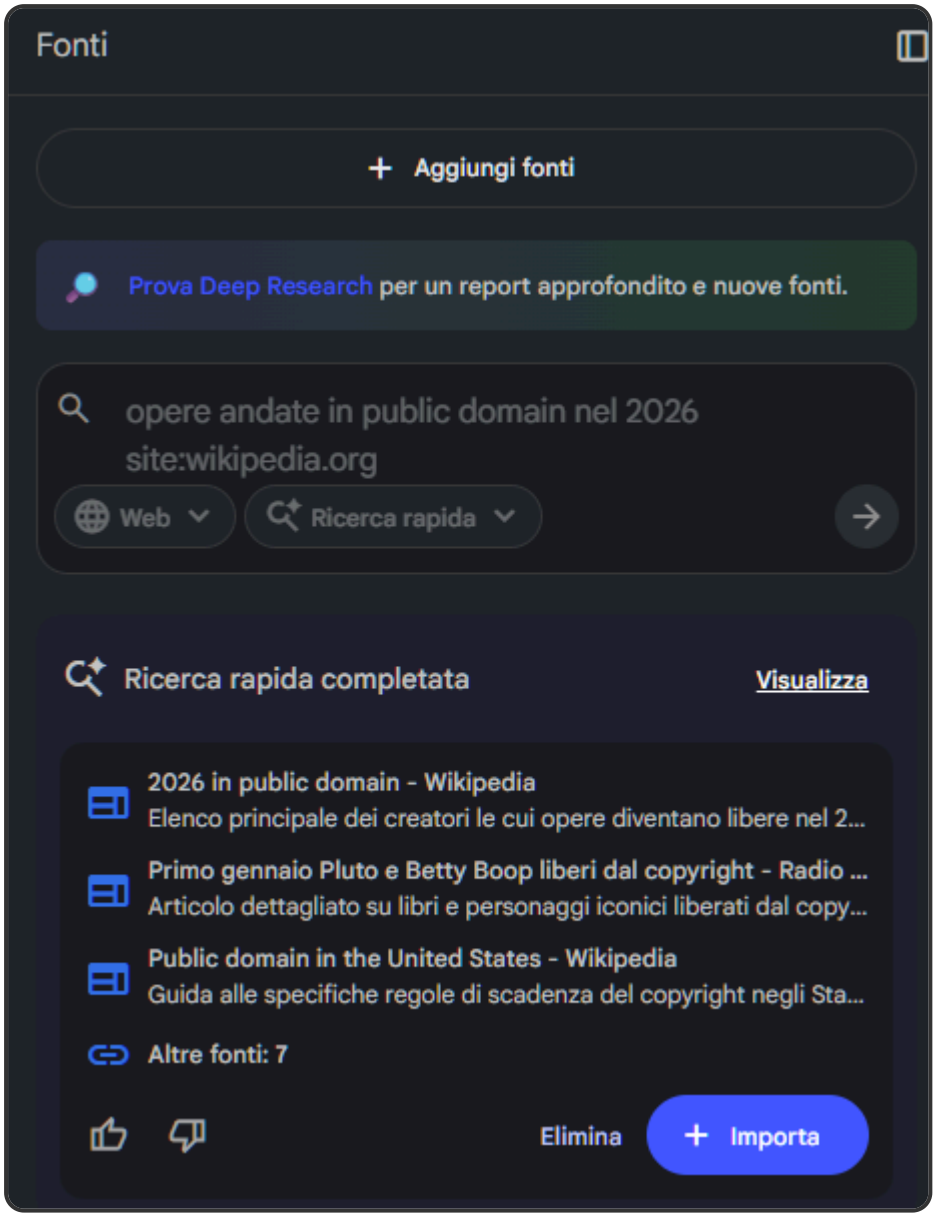
Two dropdown menus allow you to configure the search:

- The first selects where to search: on the **Web** or in your Google **Drive** connected with the same account

- The second defines the search type: **Quick search** or **Deep Research** for more thorough analysis

You can also start an exploratory search without specifying particular topics. The search description can include Google's advanced search operators like "**site:**" or "**filetype:**".



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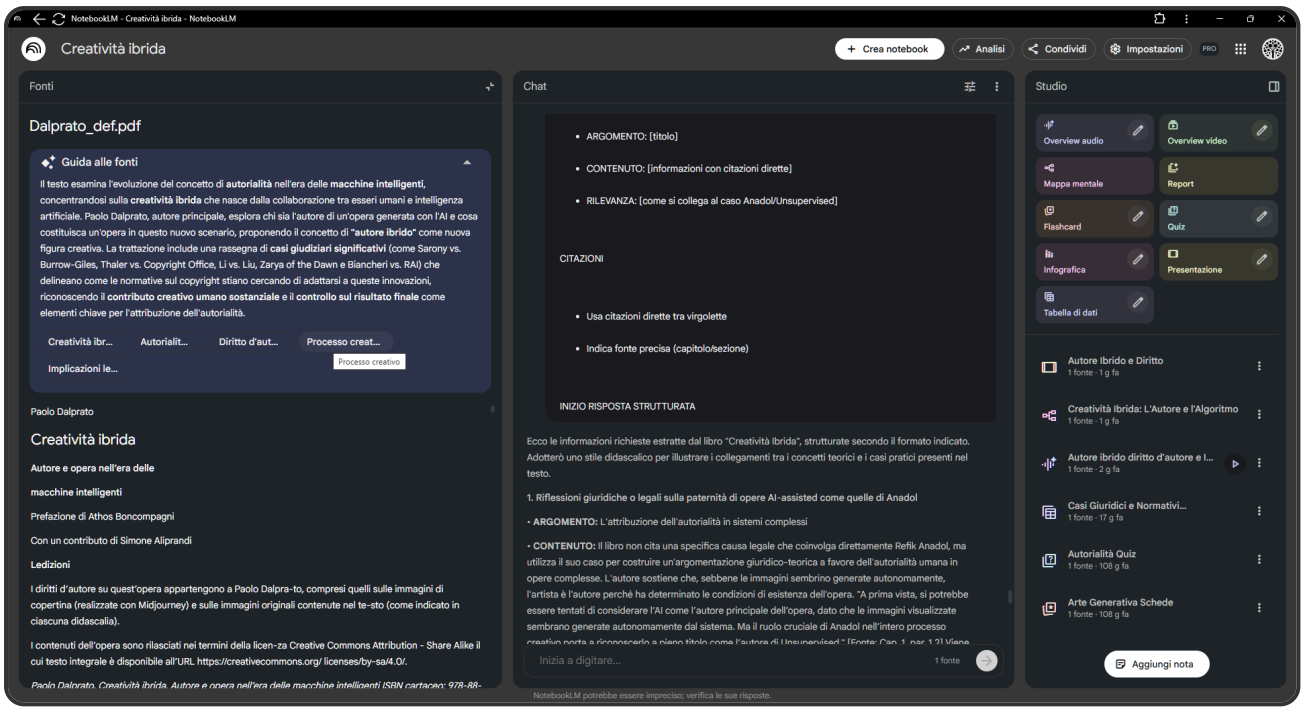
The result shows a preview of 3 links from a list of 10 selectable items for insertion into the notebook.

Source guide

Clicking on a specific source expands the column to show the **Source guide**: a document summary followed by a series of buttons representing the main themes automatically identified.



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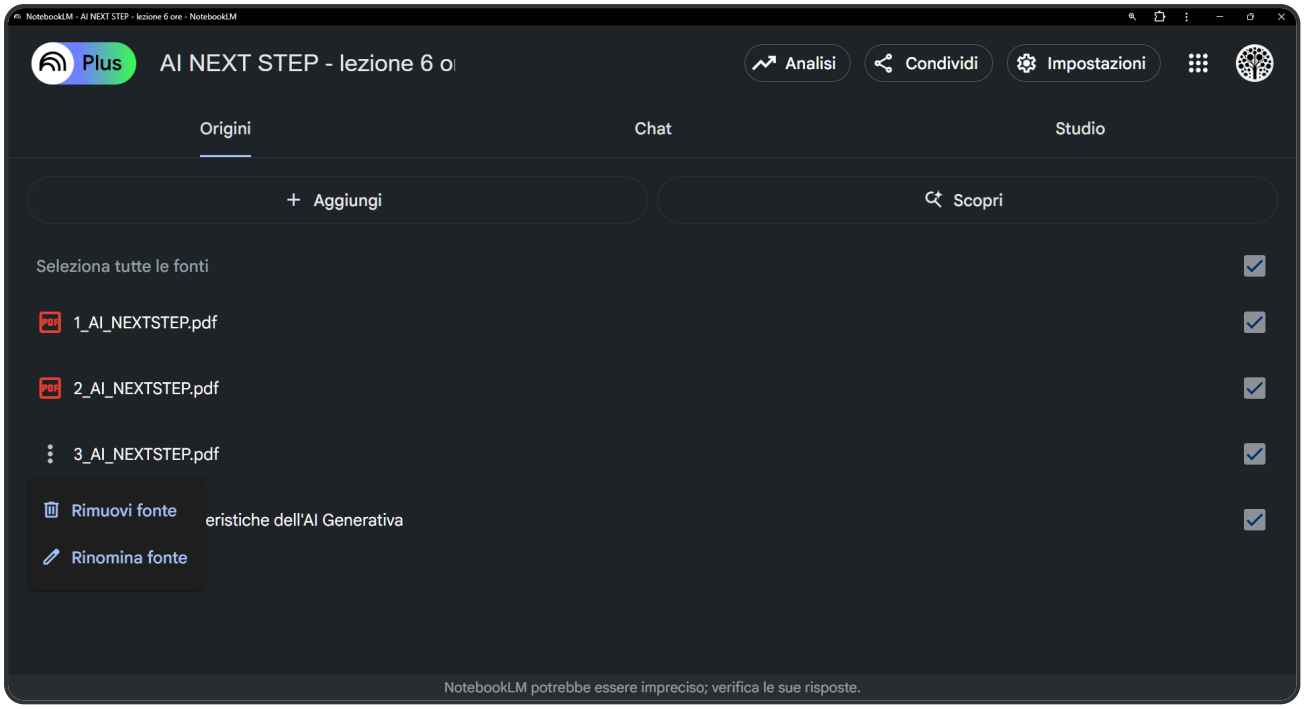
These thematic buttons, when clicked, automatically generate a response in the chat area on that specific topic. Below the buttons you'll find the complete source content; in the case of video or audio, this corresponds to the automatically generated transcription.

This view allows you to navigate directly in the original text, verify specific information, or explore sections of particular interest.

Managing sources

When sources are displayed in list view, hovering over a source name reveals three vertical dots. Clicking on them opens a popup with commands to delete or rename the document.



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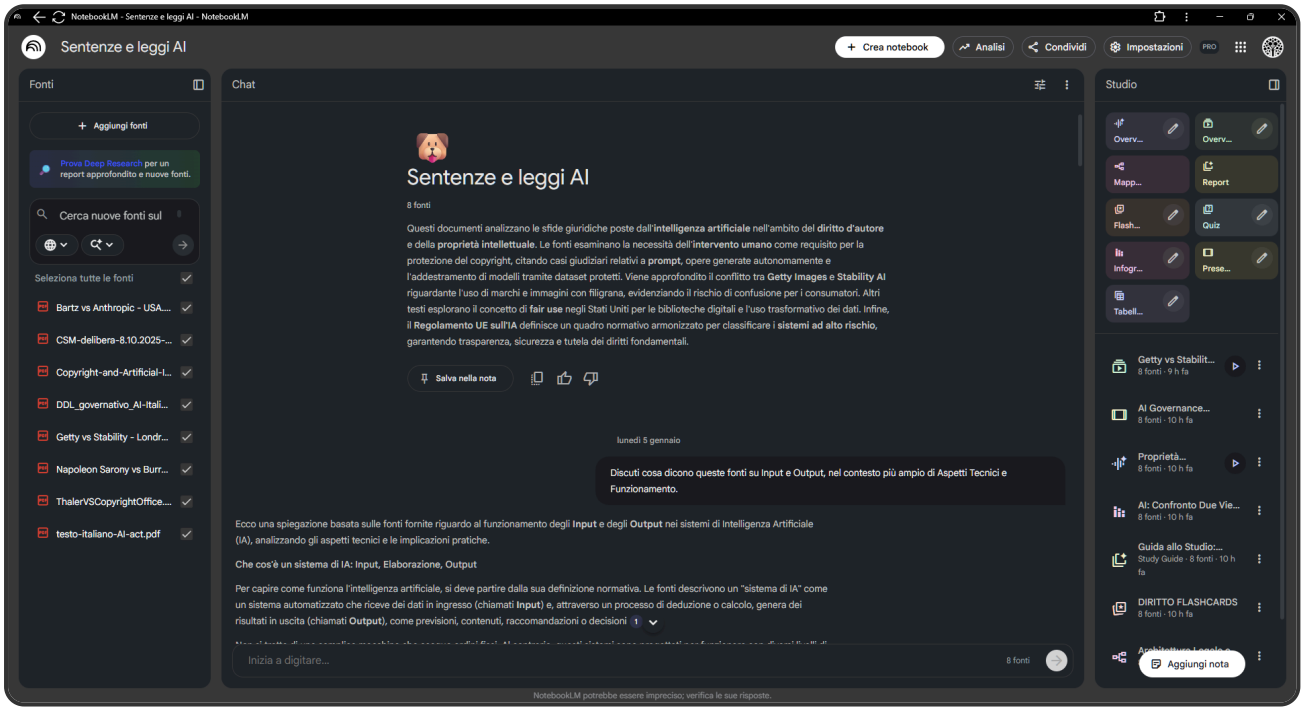
This function is particularly useful when managing numerous sources: it allows you to assign meaningful names that facilitate immediate content identification. It may also make sense to add numbering, for example to define a chronological sequence of documents.

In the upper right of the column is the button to collapse it toward the left edge of the window, to give more space to the chat area.

The Chat section

The central column, called Chat, is the space for interacting with artificial intelligence. Here you ask questions, request analyses, and receive responses based exclusively on the sources selected at that moment in the Sources column, formatted according to your request. All interactions (user questions and system responses) are automatically saved and remain available in subsequent sessions unless explicitly deleted by the user.



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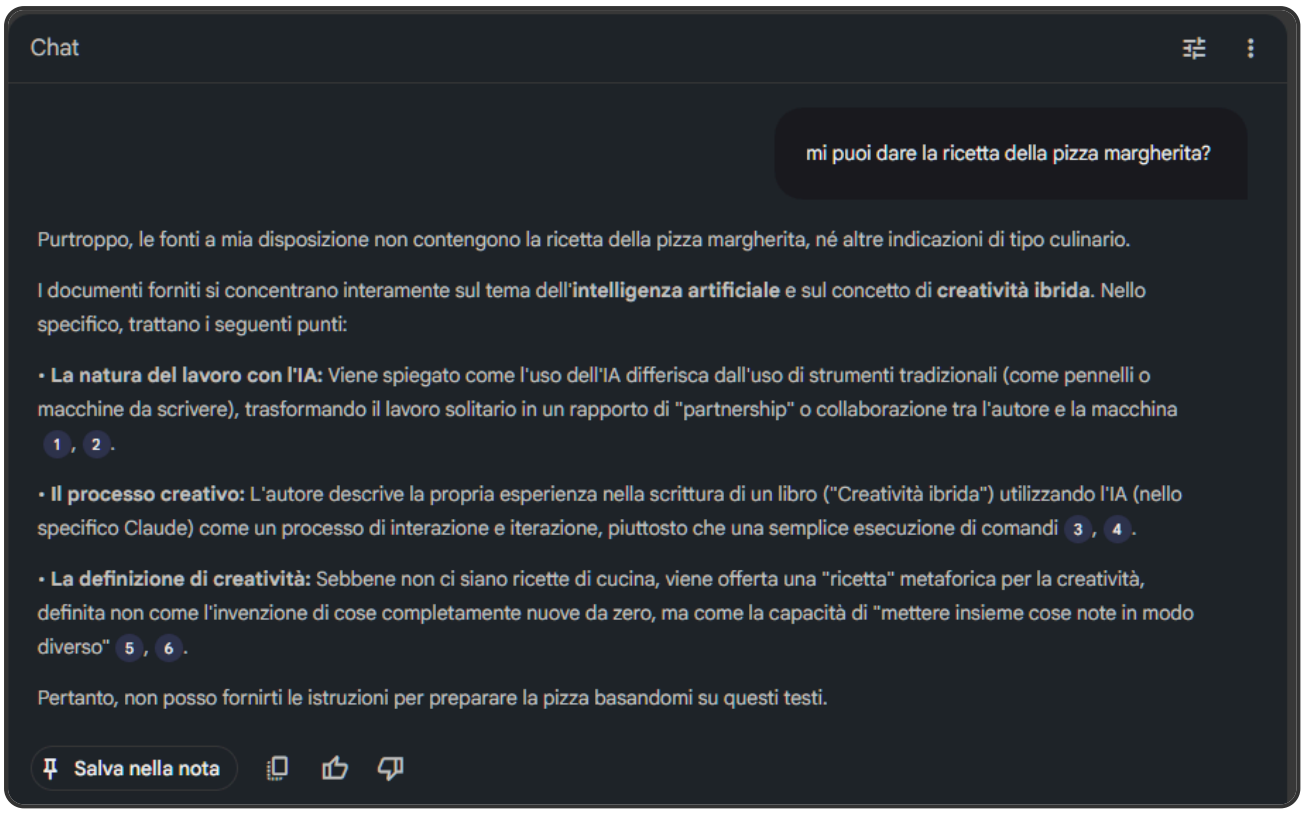
As already mentioned, the system only allows interaction with sources uploaded by the user, which provides very strong control over so-called hallucinations. In fact, when asked questions about topics not contained in the sources, NotebookLM responds that it cannot fulfill the request due to lack of information. This approach reduces the risk of unverifiable information, though it should be remembered that verification of AI-produced content is always the user's responsibility.



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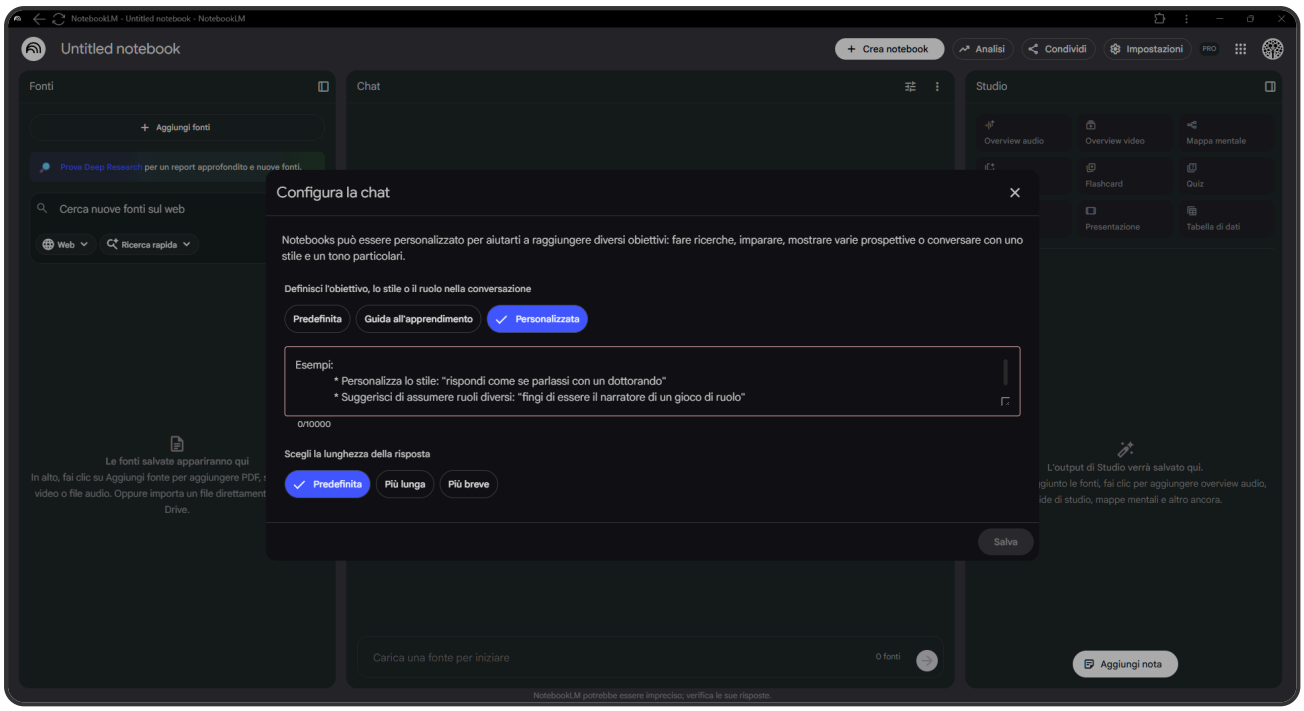
The choice of sources is entirely the user's responsibility: their validity determines the quality of responses.

Interface structure

Starting from the top, in the upper right band you can see two icons: - **Three vertical dots**: allows complete deletion of the entire chat, except for the summary that's automatically created when sources are first loaded. It's not possible to delete a single response. This can be useful for managing space in a frequently queried notebook, where the risk is ending up with a very long chat - perhaps save the most useful responses in the Studio area first. - **Three horizontal lines**: opens a popup to configure the chat



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This popup allows you to configure the entire chat, acting on two aspects:

- **Behavior**: you can work on objectives, style, and roles that NotebookLM should maintain in responses. The available choices are:
  - *Default*: for general research and brainstorming activities.
  - *Learning guide*: for educational content, allows understanding new concepts and skills effectively through an interactive process with the user.
  - *Custom*: allows you to easily define a true system prompt for the notebook, up to 10,000 characters. These instructions can include:
    - The level of language formality
    - Preferred response structure (e.g., bullet points vs. narrative paragraphs)
    - Use of specific terminology or industry jargon
    - Analysis approach (e.g., favoring synthesis or detailed exploration)
    - Emotional tone (e.g., neutral, enthusiastic, cautious)
    - Specific perspectives to adopt or emphasize

  Thanks to this advanced customization, you can create tailored conversational experiences for different purposes, from analyzing scientific literature to explaining complex concepts for beginners, from exploring ideas to critically evaluating arguments.
- **Response length**: you can choose from:
  - *Shorter*: Concise responses that get straight to the point, ideal for quick reviews or when only essential information is needed

- *Default*: A balance between detail and conciseness, suitable for most situations
- *Longer*: Detailed and extensive responses that thoroughly explore topics, ideal for complete analyses or in-depth learning

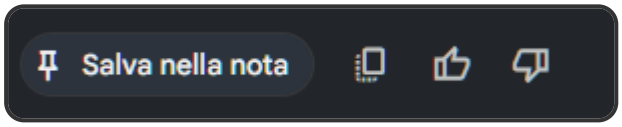
This setting influences all responses generated in the Chat column, allowing you to adapt system verbosity to the specific context you're operating in, whether it's a quick information check or an immersion in a complex topic.

In the central part of the column, user questions are visible aligned to the right, and system responses aligned to the left. At the bottom of the column is the space to enter the prompt.

When sources are first loaded, a general notebook summary is generated, with a concise synthesis of the main topics covered in the loaded sources. If additional sources are loaded later, this summary is not updated.

This summary cannot be removed; the only way to eliminate it is to delete all sources.

Below the summary, as below every NotebookLM response, you'll find some buttons for specific functions:



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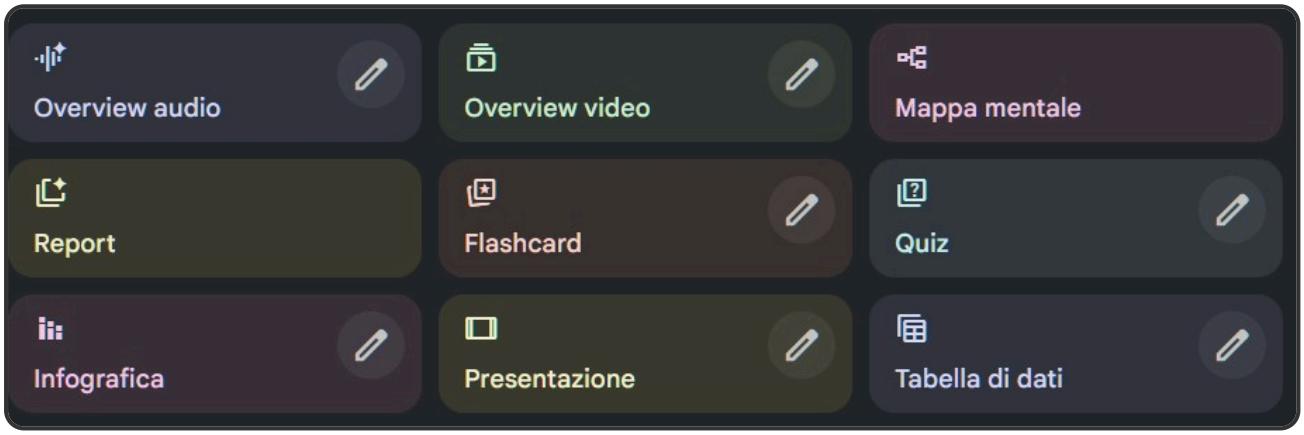
- **Save to note**: saves the element to the Studio section
- **Copy icon**: copies the element to clipboard
- **Thumbs up and down**: allow you to rate the text quality

The main part is dedicated to the actual conversation: you type questions in the input area at the bottom and view responses in the upper part. Each response includes numerical references (like [1], [2]) that link statements to original sources. Clicking on these numbers takes you to the source reference for the information used at that point.

The Studio section

After loading sources, NotebookLM allows you to work on content through the Studio section, which contains a series of tools for processing data in different ways. Each tool is represented by a button: when the pencil icon appears, it means the tool is customizable.

The Studio section is located in the right column of the interface and represents the operational heart for transforming sources into structured content. Available tools range from multimedia content generation (audio and video) to creating educational materials (flashcards and quizzes), through visualizations (mind maps, infographics) and synthesis documents (reports, presentations, data tables).



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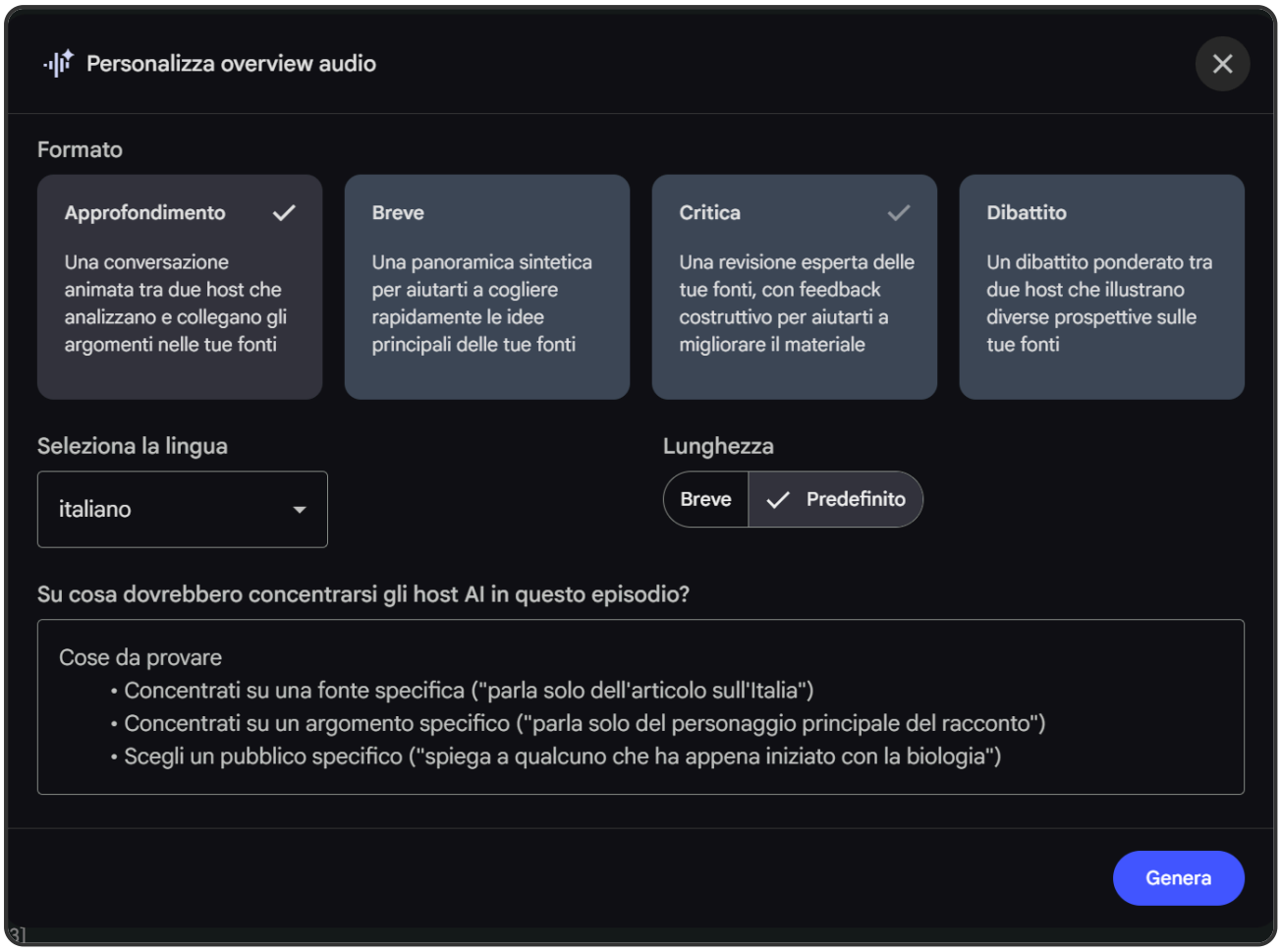
All tools work on the sources selected at the moment they're activated: if you want to process only specific sources, simply select them before clicking the desired tool's button.

Audio Overview

Audio Overview generates a discussion between AI hosts who analyze and connect key topics in selected sources. The result isn't a simple text reading, but a dialogue reminiscent of a podcast format.

Clicking the pencil icon accesses customization.



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Format: four options that determine the conversation's structure and style.

- *Deep dive*: an animated conversation between two hosts analyzing and connecting topics in the sources
- *Brief*: a concise overview to quickly grasp the main ideas
- *Critique*: an expert review of sources, with constructive feedback to help improve the material
- *Debate*: a thoughtful debate between two hosts illustrating different perspectives on the sources

Language: selectable from over 80 supported languages, including Italian.

Length: two options between Short and Default.

Custom prompt: allows you to indicate what the AI hosts should focus on. For example, you can ask them to focus on a specific source, a particular topic, or adapt the explanation to a specific audience.

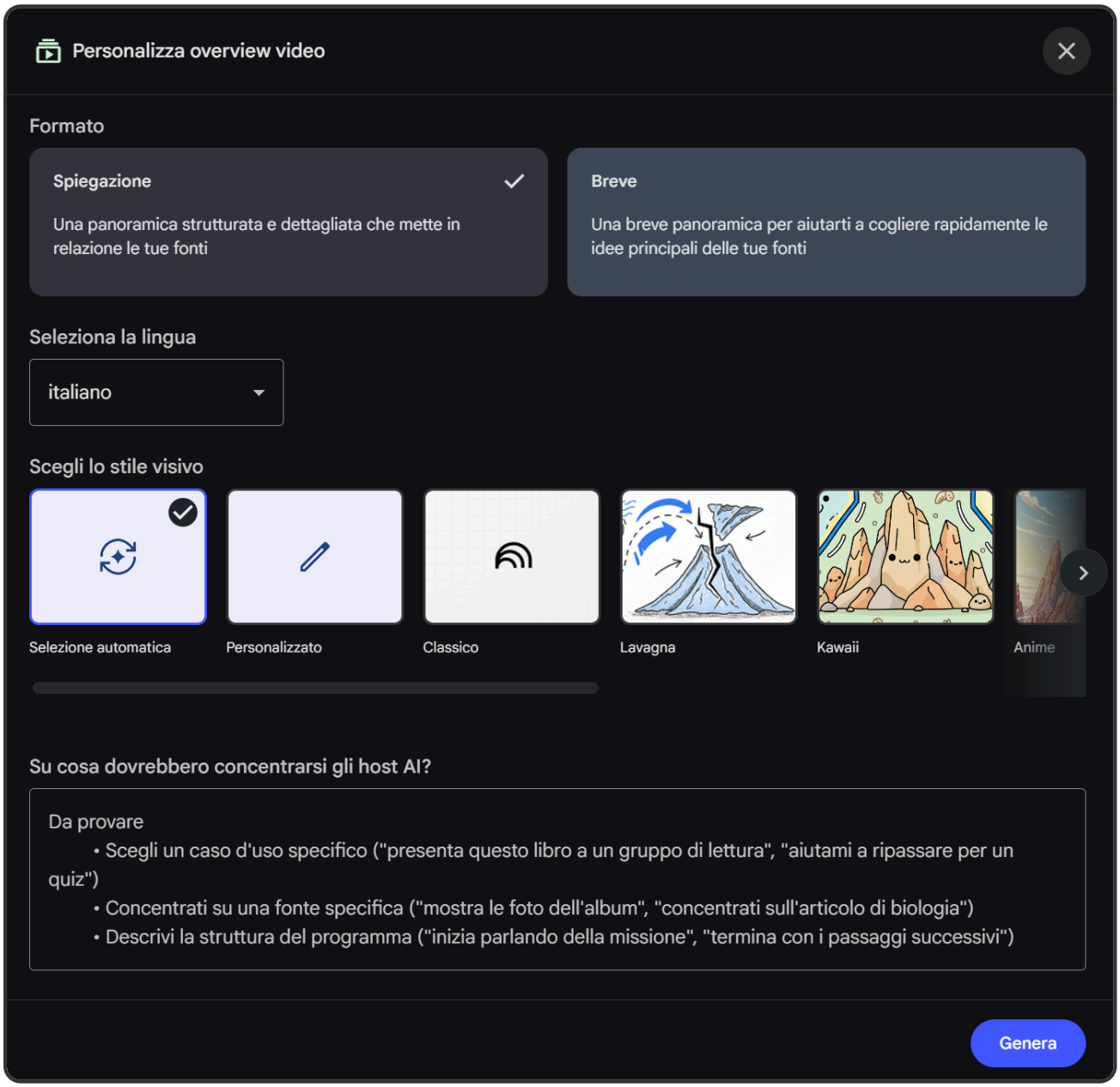
Once audio is generated, to create another you must first delete the existing one; you can download it to your computer before deleting.

Interactive mode: for English audio, a feature is available that lets you participate in the conversation. While listening, you can interrupt the hosts to ask questions by voice; the hosts respond based on the sources and then resume the original discussion.

Video Overview

Video Overview transforms sources into a video of AI-narrated slides, automatically extracting images, diagrams, quotes, and numbers from uploaded documents.

Clicking the pencil icon accesses request customization.



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Format: two available options.

- *Explainer*: a structured and detailed overview that relates the sources
- *Brief*: a quick overview to grasp the main ideas

Language: selectable from supported languages.

Visual style: determines the video's graphic appearance. Options include Classic, Whiteboard, Kawaii, and Anime, or you can leave automatic selection. With the Custom option, you can describe the desired style to generate a tailored one.

Guidance prompt: allows you to indicate what the AI hosts should focus on, specifying a use case, particular source, or program structure.

The video can be played directly in NotebookLM, downloaded, or shared via link.

Mind map

The mind map generates a graphic representation of relationships between key concepts present in sources. It's the only Studio section tool that doesn't allow customization, but offers a particularly useful visualization for getting an overview of content and identifying connections not immediately evident in linear reading.

(https://docs.ai-know.pro/notebooklm-en/img/13.png)

Map structure

The result is an interactive diagram that positions the main topic on the left and organizes related themes in a branching hierarchical structure:

- **Central node**: the starting point on the left, represents the main topic of selected sources

- **Primary nodes**: main themes branching directly from the central node
- **Secondary nodes**: subtopics or specific aspects branching from primary nodes
- **Terminal nodes**: detailed information or specific examples at the map's edges

The number of levels isn't fixed but depends on topic complexity and number of sources.

Interacting with the map

The map is fully interactive:

- You can increase or decrease zoom and move between different areas
- Branches can be expanded to view subtopics or collapsed for a general view
- Clicking a node opens the chat with a detailed analysis of how that concept is treated in sources, with direct references to relevant passages

Exploration strategies

The map offers different approaches for exploring content:

Progressive exploration: start from the central node and follow branches toward increasingly specific details, useful for understanding the general structure of the knowledge corpus.

Targeted search: scan the map to quickly identify nodes relevant to a specific aspect, directly accessing desired information.

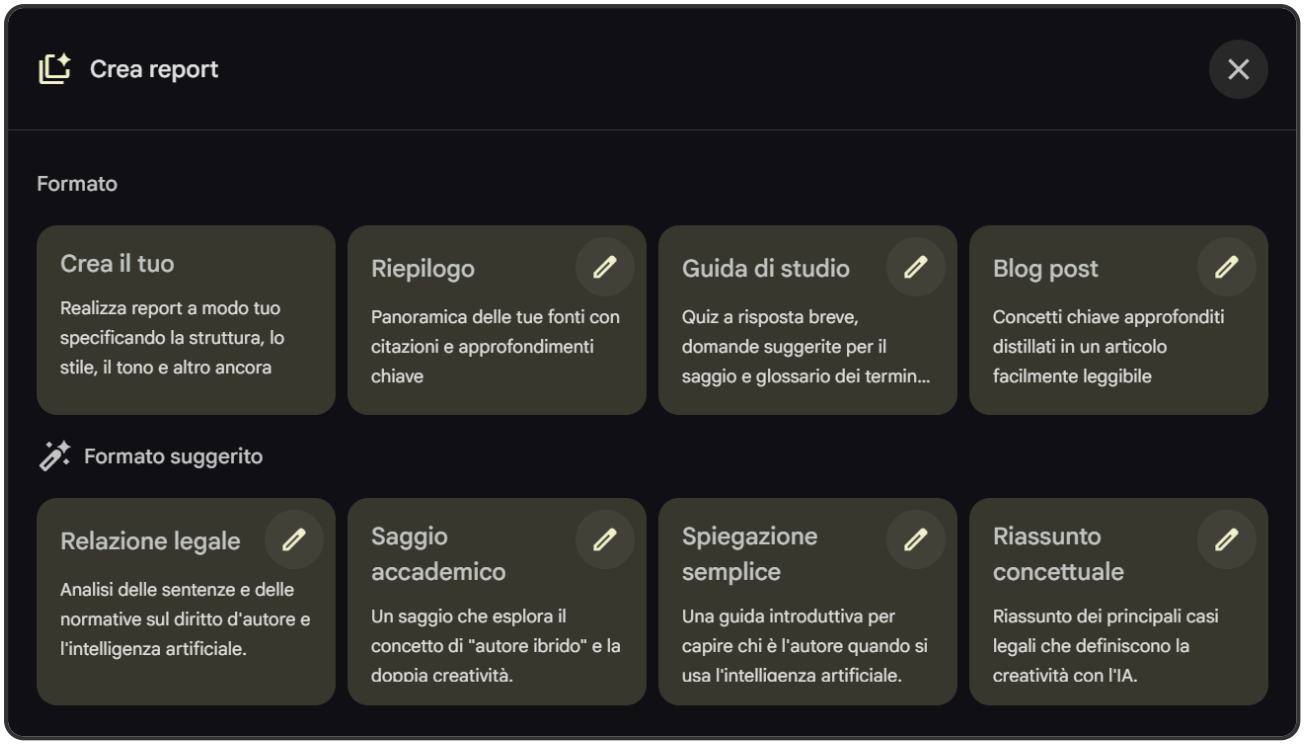
Connection identification: observe how some concepts appear in different branches, highlighting cross-cutting relationships between topics.

Gap detection: areas with less branching may indicate topics less developed in sources, suggesting where deeper exploration might be needed.

The map can be downloaded as an image or shared through the notebook.

Report

The Report button activates generation of synthesis documents based on a prompt describing the desired result. Clicking it opens a panel with two levels of options:



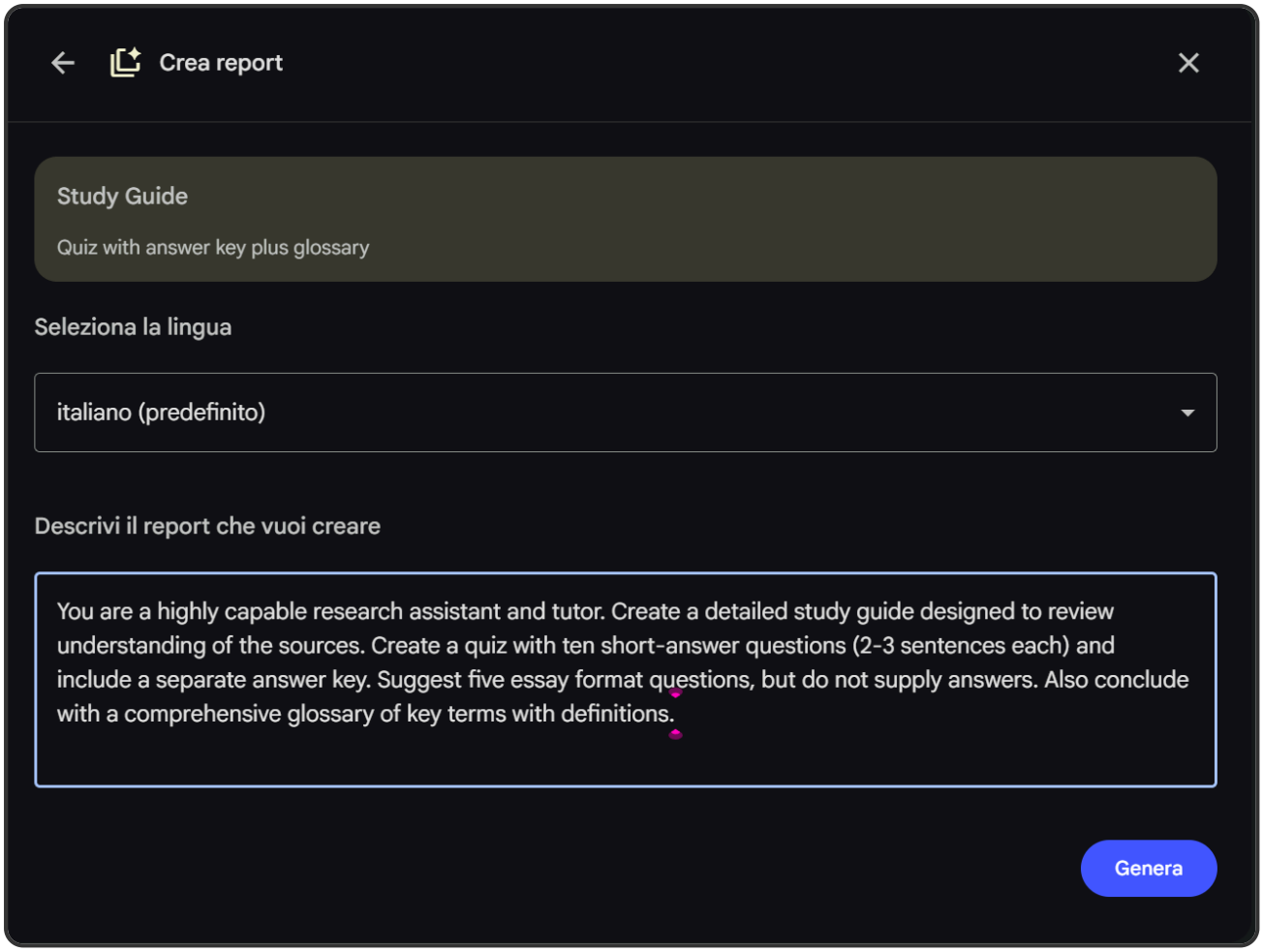
(https://docs.ai-know.pro/notebooklm-en/img/19.png)

In the upper row are four available formats:

- **Free format**: allows writing any prompt to get the desired report type
- **Summary**: creates a content synthesis, with the possibility of adding custom requests
- **Study guide**: generates an organized structure for systematic learning
- **Blog post**: produces text suitable for online publication

In the second row, NotebookLM proposes report suggestions specifically calibrated to the loaded content. Having analyzed the sources, the system offers various hypotheses, all further customizable.

Clicking the pencil icons allows you to request analysis of only part of the sources, give more weight to certain topics, or specify preferred writing style.



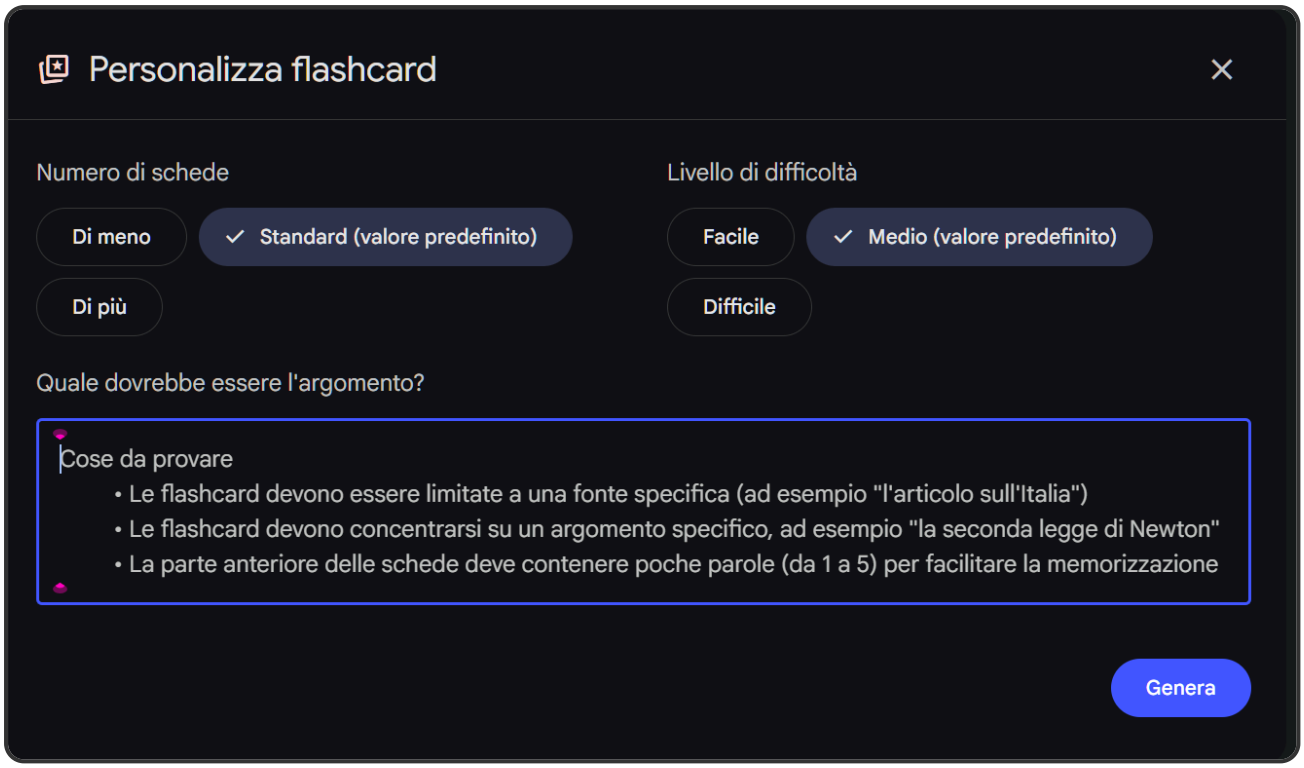
(https://docs.ai-know.pro/notebooklm-en/img/20.png)

Results are always textual and detailed, with references to original sources.

Flashcards

Flashcards are cards with a question or phrase to complete on one side and the answer on the other, a classic tool for study and memorization.

Configurable parameters:



(https://docs.ai-know.pro/notebooklm-en/img/21.png)

Number of cards: three options between Fewer, Standard, and More.

Difficulty level: Easy, Medium, or Hard.

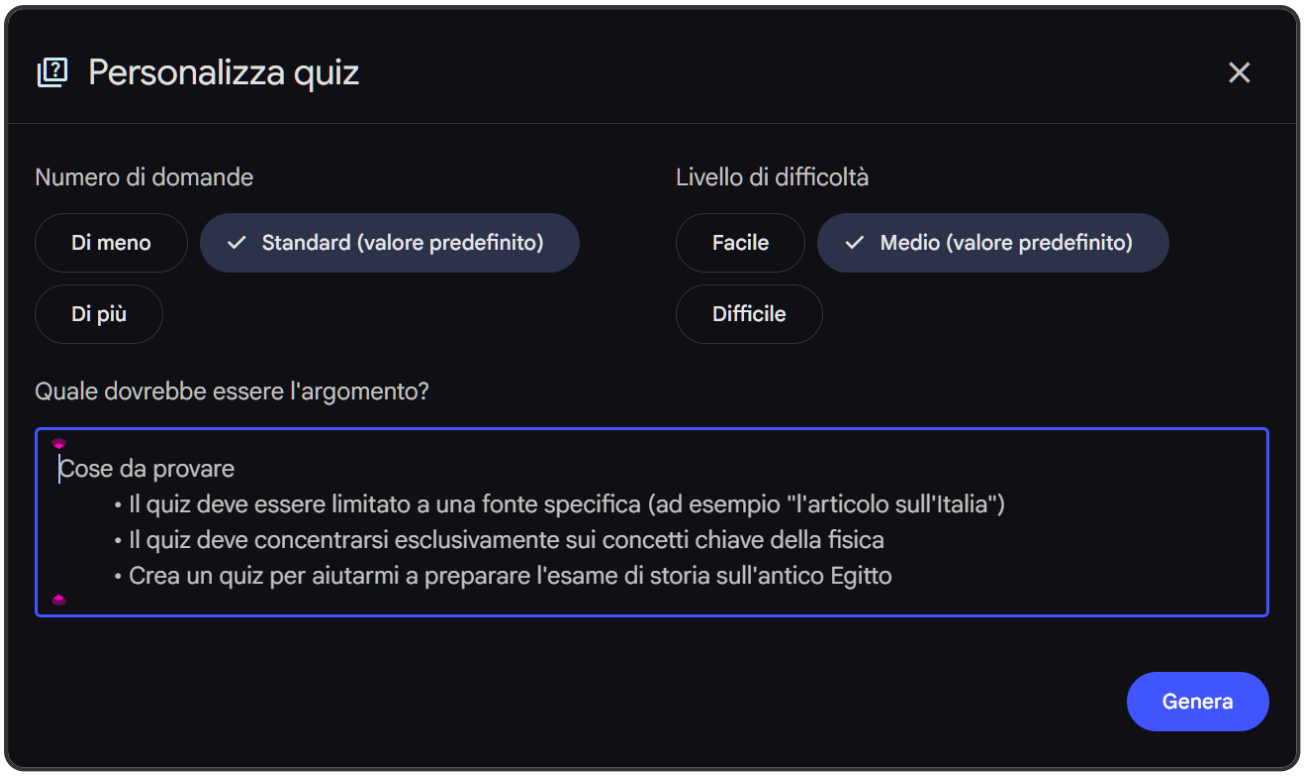
Custom prompt: allows specifying the flashcard topic. For example, you can limit cards to a specific source, focus on a particular topic, or request that the front contain few words to facilitate memorization.

Each flashcard includes an "**Explain**" button that generates a detailed explanation of the question and answer, with direct references to the source parts from which the information was derived.

Quiz

Quiz generates multiple-choice questions, each with four options of which only one is correct.

Configurable parameters:



(https://docs.ai-know.pro/notebooklm-en/img/22.png)

Number of questions: three options between Fewer, Standard, and More.

Difficulty level: Easy, Medium, or Hard.

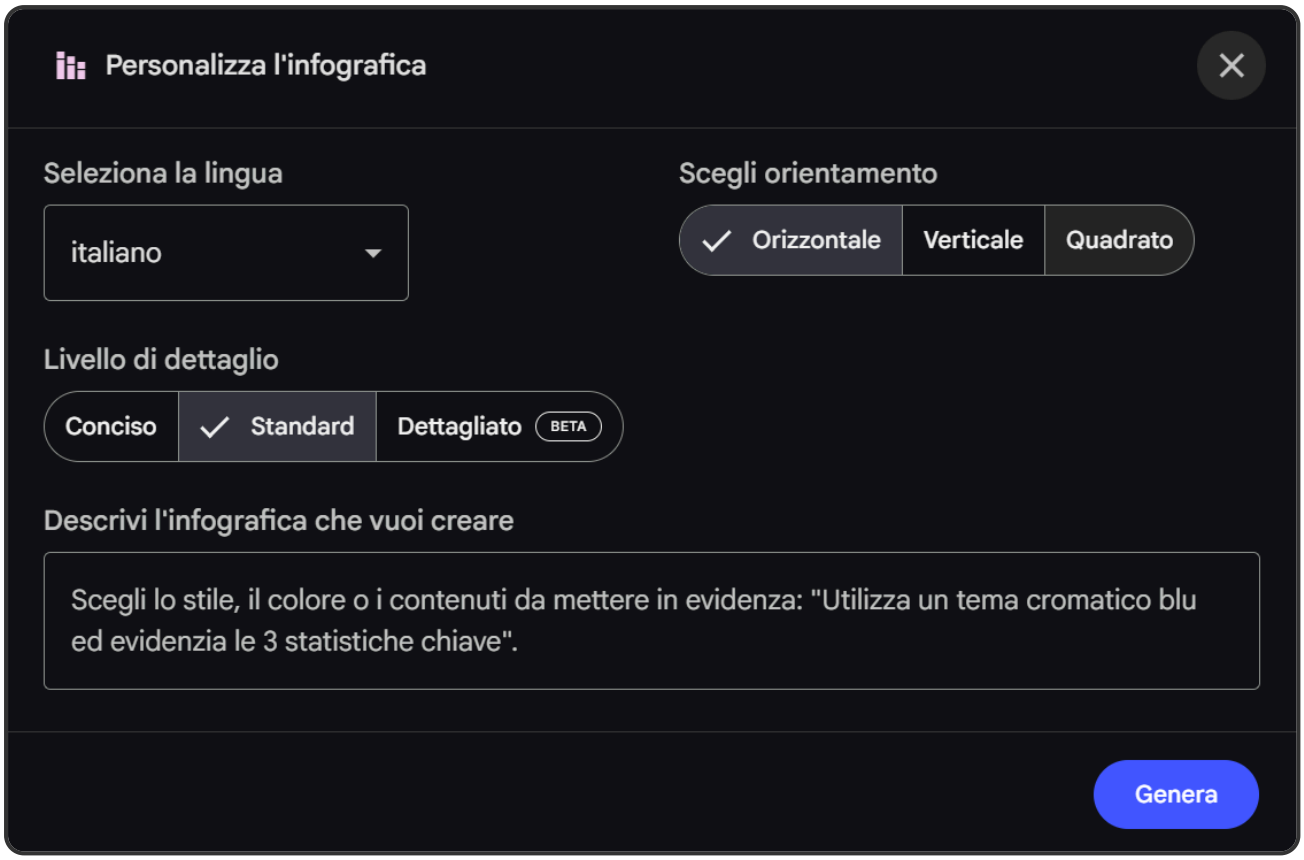
Custom prompt: allows specifying the quiz topic. For example, you can limit the quiz to a specific source, focus on key concepts of a topic, or create a quiz to prepare for an exam on a particular theme.

When you select an answer, the system confirms if it's correct or indicates the error and shows the right answer. Here too the "**Explain**" button generates a textual explanation with references to specific source parts.

Infographic

The infographic transforms source information into a visual summary presenting key points, data, and relationships between concepts in graphic format.

Customization:



(https://docs.ai-know.pro/notebooklm-en/img/23.png)

Language: selectable from supported languages.

Orientation: Horizontal, Vertical, or Square, depending on intended use.

Detail level: three options between Concise, Standard, and Detailed (in beta).

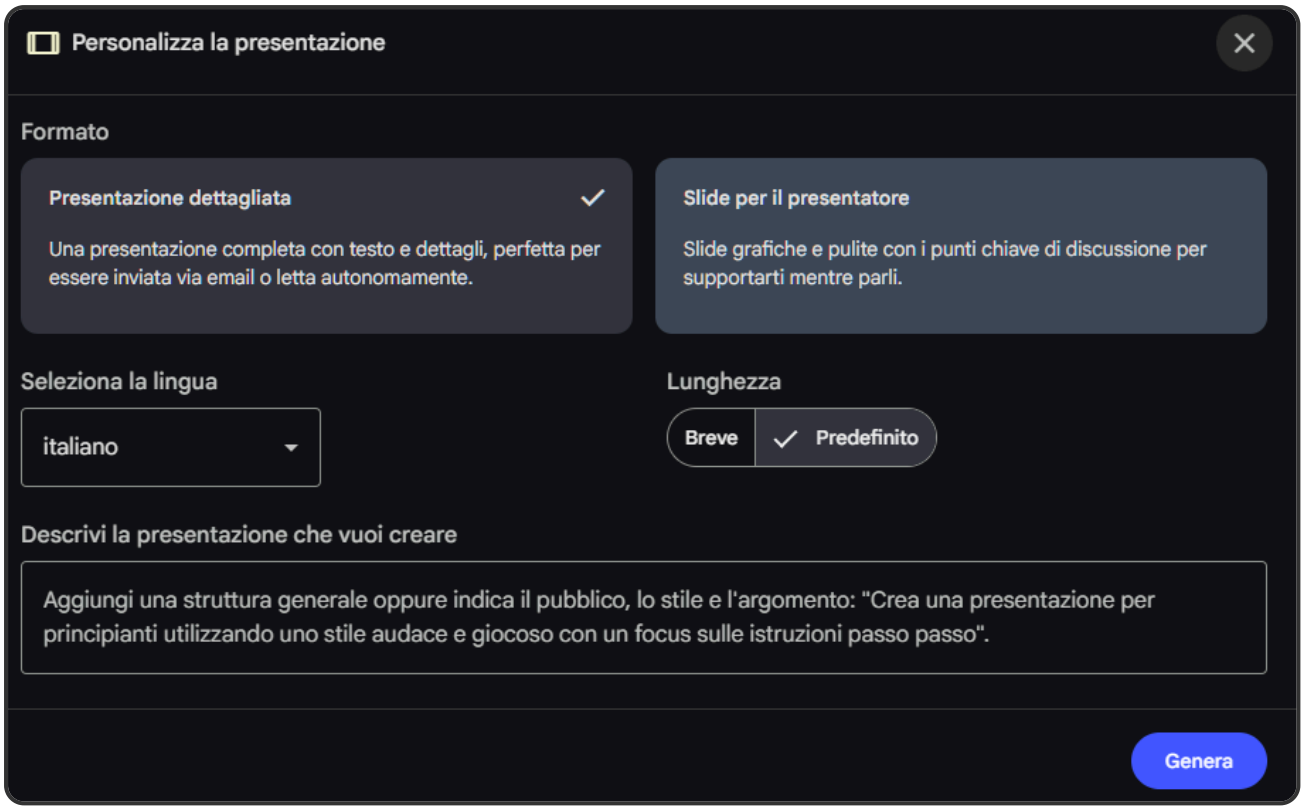
Custom prompt: allows describing the desired infographic, specifying style, colors, or content to highlight. For example, you can request a specific color theme and indicate which statistics to emphasize.

The generated infographic can be downloaded as a PNG file or shared via link.

Presentation

The presentation reworks sources into a slide format, ideal for sharing or reviewing key concepts.

Customization includes:



(https://docs.ai-know.pro/notebooklm-en/img/24.png)

Format: two options with different purposes.

- *Detailed presentation*: a complete presentation with text and details, perfect for sending via email or reading independently
- *Presenter slides*: clean, graphic slides with key discussion points to support the speaker

Language: selectable from supported languages.

Length: two options between Short and Default.

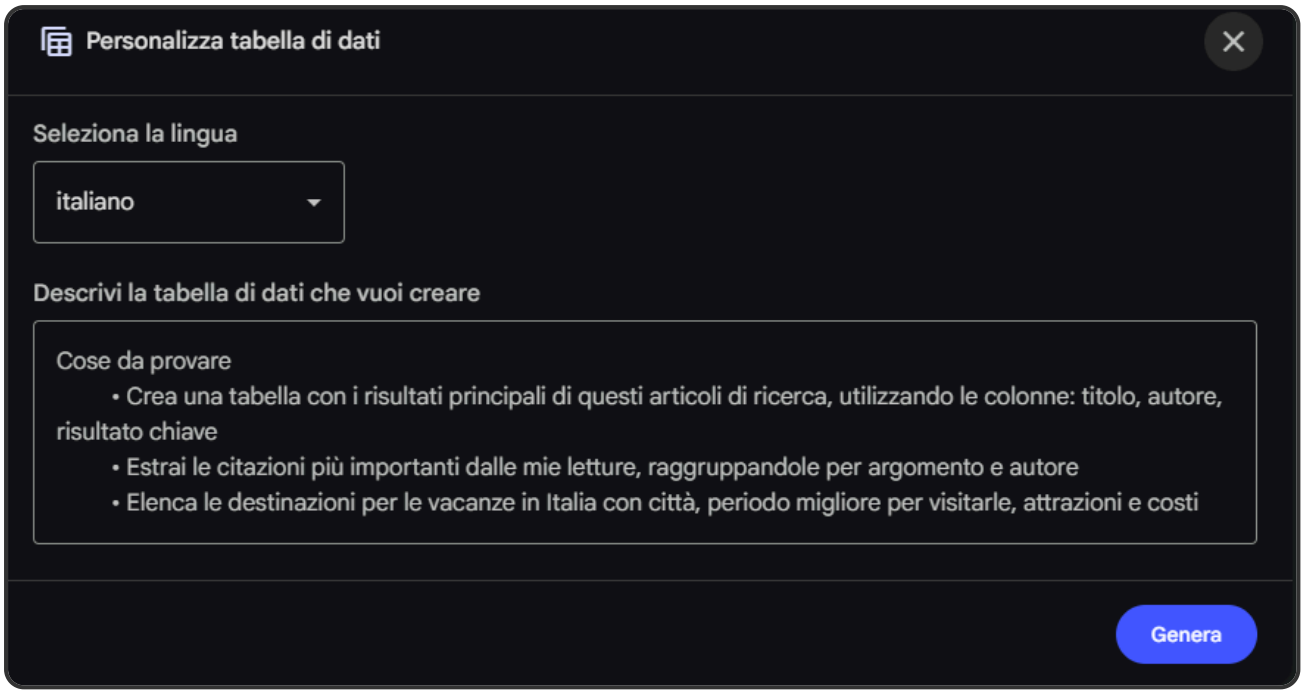
Custom prompt: allows describing the desired presentation, specifying overall structure, audience, style, and topic. For example, you can request a presentation for beginners with a bold and playful style, focused on step-by-step instructions.

The presentation can be viewed directly in NotebookLM in full-screen mode, downloaded as PDF, or shared via link.

Data table

The data table organizes information extracted from sources in tabular format, useful for comparisons, structured lists, and data synthesis.

Customization includes:



(https://docs.ai-know.pro/notebooklm-en/img/25.png)

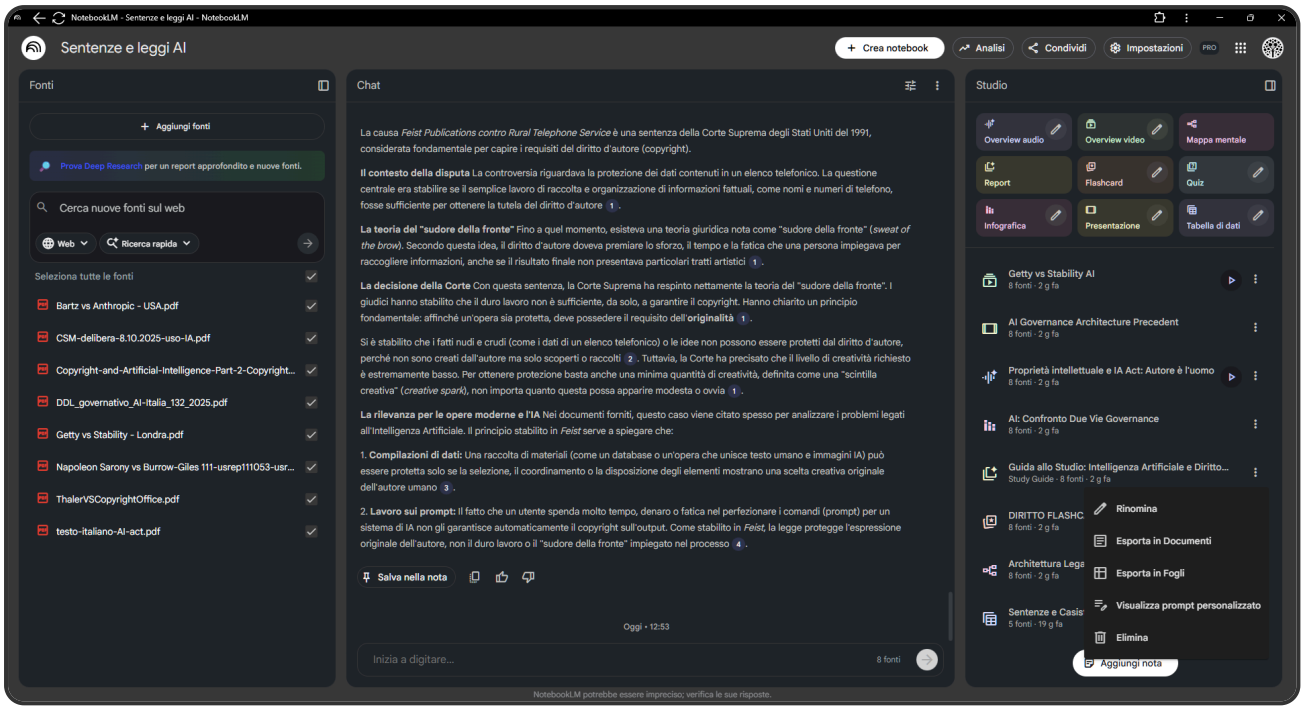
Language: selectable from supported languages.

Custom prompt: allows describing the desired table, specifying columns and type of information to extract. For example, you can request a table with main results from research articles organized by title, author, and key finding; or extract quotes grouped by topic and author; or create a list of items with specific characteristics in defined columns.

Actions on elements

When viewing the list of elements created in the section, on the right of each element you can see the three vertical dots icon. Clicking it opens a popup with possible actions, which may vary depending on the element's specific type.

An example of what you can do on a report:



(https://docs.ai-know.pro/notebooklm-en/img/26.png)

Possible actions can range from changing the name to downloading the file, from viewing to sharing to deletion. Note that elements in document, presentation, and data table formats can be exported as documents and/or as tables to Google Drive managed with the same account used for NotebookLM.

Strategies and best practices

NotebookLM, like any tool, has specific limitations. Considering them as design characteristics rather than impediments allows you to manage them strategically. In this chapter, we describe NotebookLM's main constraints and strategies for navigating them effectively, transforming potential limitations into opportunities for more effective tool usage.

Understanding the limits

Before exploring specific strategies, it's important to understand NotebookLM's main structural limits. Beyond those already seen, there are also what we might call qualitative ones:

- Exclusive dependence on textual content of loaded sources
- Inability to process purely musical or non-verbal audio/video content
- Lack of automatic updating for modified Google Drive documents
- Limitations in integration with external ecosystems
- Constraints in visual interface customization

Recognizing these limits doesn't diminish the tool's value but allows developing intentional strategies to optimize its use within available parameters.

Experimentation and iteration: finding your ideal configuration

NotebookLM is becoming increasingly structured, perhaps even complex. Learning to use it isn't a process completed in one go, but a continuous exploration that benefits from experimentation and iteration. We recommend:

- Trying different stylistic configurations and comparing results
- Gathering feedback from other users to identify the most effective styles for different audiences
- Progressively refining customization instructions based on practical experience
- Adapting configurations as your understanding of topics and needs evolve

This iterative exploration not only improves the NotebookLM experience but also deepens understanding of how you communicate and work with information, offering insights into your own cognitive and communication style.

Source management strategies

Source management represents one of the most important areas for overcoming NotebookLM's limitations. Here are some techniques:

- **Strategic segmentation**: instead of loading very long documents as single sources, consider dividing them into smaller thematic sections. This improves response precision by making it easier for the system to identify pertinent information.
- **Preliminary distillation**: before loading particularly verbose or redundant sources, consider a "distillation" phase where you extract and condense the most relevant information. This preliminary process can transform extensive and dispersive documentation into more concentrated and usable sources.
- **Multi-notebook organization**: rather than trying to fit all sources related to a topic into a single notebook, develop an architecture of interconnected notebooks, each focused on specific aspects of the general theme. This approach allows overcoming the per-notebook source limit while maintaining an organic view of the topic.
- **Organization within a notebook**: in the sources column, the list is alphabetically ordered, and long titles are partially visible due to column width limits. When a notebook contains many sources, it can be useful to rename them by prepending a code that allows grouping them based on desired operations. For example, if texts from multiple authors are collected and you want to analyze by individual author, inserting the name at the beginning of the title allows quickly selecting a specific author's works.
- **Cyclical updating**: for sources that are frequently updated (like Google Drive documents), implement a regular update cycle where you remove the previous version and load the updated one. This practice, though manual, ensures the notebook always reflects the most recent information.

Maximizing daily interactions

Limits on daily interactions (chat questions and audio generations) can represent a significant constraint, especially for intensive users. Here are some strategies to maximize the value of each interaction:

- **Query planning**: before starting a session, plan the most important questions in advance. This preparation reduces "exploratory" questions and ensures each interaction generates significant value.
- **Composite queries**: structure questions that incorporate multiple related requests, such as "*Summarize concept X, compare it with Y, and identify the main applications in context Z*". This approach allows extracting more information from a single interaction.
- **Using prompts for structured responses**: explicitly request responses that organize information into dense and informative structures, such as comparative tables or hierarchical lists. This maximizes the amount of information obtained per query.
- **Systematic saving**: adopt the habit of saving every potentially useful response in the Studio area. This allows progressively building a permanent knowledge base that reduces the need to repeat similar

questions in future sessions.

Formulating effective questions

Response quality depends on question clarity. Some strategies:

- **Specific questions**: instead of "*Tell me about this topic*", prefer "*What are the three main factors influencing this phenomenon according to the sources?*". Specific questions guide toward more focused responses.
- **Analysis requests**: NotebookLM is effective at analyzing relationships and trends. Questions like "*How has this theory evolved over time?*" or "*What are the main differences between these two approaches?*" produce useful results.
- **Context clarification**: if you're interested in a particular perspective, make it explicit: "*Considering only the most recent sources, how is this process described?*" or "*According to author X, what would be the best solution?*".
- **Structured synthesis requests**: you can guide the response format with requests like "*Create a comparative table of the different methods mentioned*" or "*Provide a numbered list of necessary steps*".
- **Follow-up questions**: the most productive conversations arise from a series of interconnected questions. Progressively deepen topics based on previous responses.
- **Dynamic customization**: NotebookLM allows dynamically defining interaction modes through specific question formulation. This form of contextual customization allows varying the AI's approach even within the same session, adapting it to different momentary needs. For example, you can include specific instructions in questions like:
  - "*Provide a simplified explanation of this concept, suitable for a beginner*"
  - "*Critically analyze this theory highlighting strengths and weaknesses*"
  - "*Create a comparative table highlighting differences between these approaches*"
  - "*Synthesize this information in no more than three key points*"

This flexibility allows using general settings for most interactions and specifying particular requests when necessary, avoiding frequent changes to base configurations.

Creating thematic environments: notebooks with distinct personalities

An advanced approach to customization consists of creating different notebooks, each with distinct configurations and conversational styles, dedicated to specific purposes. This allows quickly switching between different "thematic environments" optimized for different types of activities. For example:

- **Thematic organization**: create separate notebooks for distinct topics. This approach keeps responses focused and reduces information dispersion.

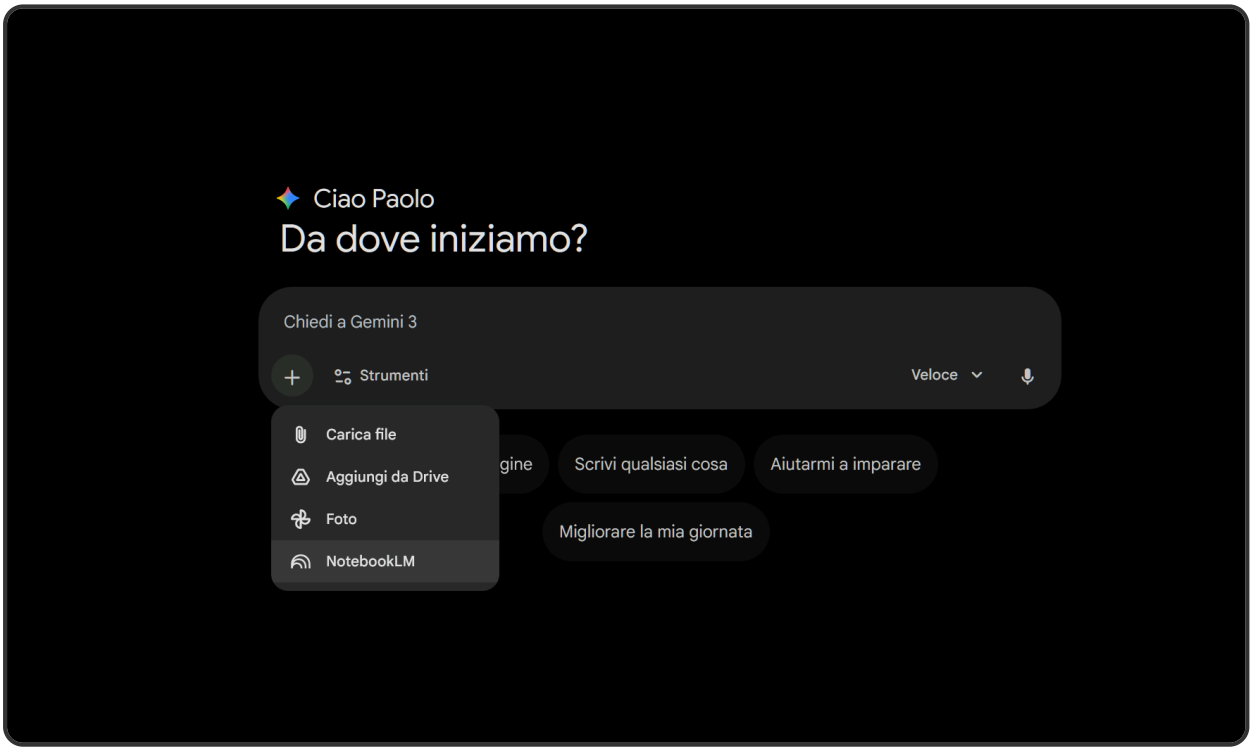
- **Project organization**: gather all sources related to a project in a single notebook, regardless of their thematic diversity. This allows exploring cross-cutting connections.
- **Chronological organization**: for topics that evolve over time, organize sources in chronological order, progressively adding new materials.
- **Dynamic selection**: maintain all sources in a single notebook, selecting or deselecting specific subsets before asking questions. The chat area is only active if at least one source is selected.

This multi-notebook strategy allows optimizing not only stylistic configurations but also source and note organization, creating distinct information environments for different usage contexts.

Integration strategies with other tools

No tool is isolated, and NotebookLM is no exception. Strategically integrating it with other tools in your digital ecosystem can significantly expand its capabilities:

- **Integration with other AIs**: it has long been possible to connect NotebookLM with Claude through dedicated MCP servers, combining the best of both. Additionally, Google recently started rolling out the ability to import a notebook as a data source - already-enabled accounts can do this in Gemini chat by clicking the **+** icon that allows adding reference sources. In the source list they'll find NotebookLM; selecting this option opens a popup with the list of notebooks defined in the NotebookLM account managed with the same Google account.



(https://docs.ai-know.pro/notebooklm-en/img/27.png)

- **Source selection with search tools**: use specialized search engines and databases to identify relevant sources before importing them into NotebookLM. This "pre-selection" process ensures each loaded source offers significant informational value.

- **Workflows with writing tools**: develop workflows connecting NotebookLM to writing and publishing tools. For example, you could use NotebookLM for initial research and analysis, export results to a text editor for creative elaboration, and finally publish content through specialized platforms.
- **Document preparation pipelines**: create document preparation pipelines using OCR, transcription, and formatting tools to transform content not directly supported (like book scans or complex audio recordings) into formats importable into NotebookLM.
- **Complementary annotation systems**: alongside NotebookLM, use specialized annotation systems that allow enriching sources with metadata, links, and classifications, thus creating a richer and more contextualized information ecosystem.

Community and support resources

An additional dimension for overcoming tool limitations consists of accessing and contributing to user communities and support resources:

- **Forums and user groups**: participate in forums and groups dedicated to NotebookLM to share experiences, strategies, and creative solutions. These communities are often sources of innovative techniques not found in official documentation. An example is the Reddit community.
- **Feature requests**: actively participate in tool improvement by reporting bugs and suggesting new features. NotebookLM is continuously evolving, and user feedback plays an important role in defining its future capabilities. Very useful for this is the official Discord server managed by the development team.
- **Tutorials and use cases**: explore detailed tutorials and professional use cases illustrating how other users have creatively overcome tool limitations in contexts similar to your own. YouTube is the reference.

Accepting limits as creative opportunities

Finally, it's important to recognize that some limits aren't simply obstacles to overcome but should be seen as opportunities.

- **The value of selection**: the source number limit invites us to be more selective and intentional in choosing materials, a process that in itself can significantly improve the quality of thinking and analysis.
- **The power of synthesis**: size limits push us toward the art of synthesis and distillation, increasingly valuable skills in an era of information abundance.
- **Intentionality in interactions**: limits on daily interactions encourage us to be more deliberate and reflective in our questions, counteracting the tendency toward impulsive and superficial interaction with digital systems.

This approach transforms NotebookLM's limits into opportunities for interacting with information more consciously and strategically, fostering a more solid understanding of content.

Professional use cases

NotebookLM, with its ability to analyze, synthesize, and interact with source collections, finds applications in a wide range of professional contexts. In this final chapter, we explore some specific use cases illustrating how this tool can be integrated into real workflows to address concrete challenges in different work areas. These examples aren't simple theoretical demonstrations but practical scenarios highlighting the value NotebookLM can bring to professionals in various sectors.

Academic research: accelerating the literature review process

For academic researchers, one of the most demanding challenges is systematic review of existing literature. This process, essential but often lengthy, can benefit from NotebookLM application.

Scenario: A researcher in the cognitive neuroscience field is preparing a research proposal on the effects of mindfulness meditation on emotional regulation. She needs to analyze over 50 scientific articles to identify consensus, controversies, and gaps in existing literature.

NotebookLM application:

1. The researcher creates a notebook dedicated to the meditation and emotional regulation theme
2. Imports PDFs of relevant scientific articles, organizing them into thematic subgroups
3. Uses the mind map to quickly identify key concepts and their interconnections
4. Asks targeted questions like "*What are the main neural mechanisms proposed to explain meditation's effects on emotional regulation?*" or "*What are the most commonly used experimental methodologies in this field?*"
5. Generates audio summaries to assimilate information during commutes
6. Uses the "**Report**" function for different types of analysis
7. Systematically saves the most relevant analyses in the Studio area
8. Shares the notebook with research group colleagues for collaboration and feedback

Result: What would traditionally require weeks of reading and annotation is completed in days, with deeper understanding of interdisciplinary connections and more precise identification of gaps in existing literature.

Professional consulting: preparing industry analyses

Business consultants frequently need to assimilate large amounts of information about specific sectors to provide informed recommendations to clients. NotebookLM can make this process more efficient and thorough.

Scenario: A consultant must prepare a strategic presentation for a client intending to enter the European renewable energy market. He has market reports, competitor analyses, regulatory documents, and specialized articles available.

NotebookLM application:

1. The consultant creates a notebook dedicated to the European renewable energy market
2. Imports various reports and documents, categorizing them into market, technological, regulatory, and competitive aspects
3. Generates a mind map to visualize interconnections between various sector aspects
4. Asks analytical questions like "*What are the main entry barriers in this market?*" or "*How do market leaders' strategies differ?*"
5. Uses the "**Report**" function to anticipate likely client requests
6. Uses the "**Data table**" function to generate summary tables with various data
7. Creates structured notes that will form the basis of the final presentation

Result: The consultant produces a more complete and nuanced analysis than would be possible with traditional methods, identifying opportunities and risks not immediately evident and preparing a presentation solidly based on verifiable data.

Investigative journalism: connecting dots across numerous sources

Investigative journalists often face massive collections of documents, interviews, and reports to analyze to identify patterns and hidden stories. NotebookLM can be an ally in this information analysis work.

Scenario: A journalist is investigating the environmental impact of a large manufacturing company. She has collected company press releases, environmental reports, local resident testimonies, press articles, and regulatory documents.

NotebookLM application:

1. The journalist creates a notebook dedicated to the investigation, with separate sections for official sources, testimonies, and independent analyses
2. Loads all documents, paying particular attention to interview transcripts with residents and internal whistleblowers
3. Starts with broad questions like "*What are the main discrepancies between the company's official statements and independent reports?*", using the "**Data table**" function to compare data
4. Progressively refines the investigation with more specific questions based on emerging patterns
5. Uses the "**Report**" function to generate various analyses
6. Creates a mind map to visualize relationships between actors, events, and consequences

7. Systematically saves the most significant results, creating a verifiable archive for every statement she intends to publish

Result: The journalist identifies connections and patterns that would have been difficult to detect with manual methods, building a solid case based on verifiable evidence and identifying points where further investigation is needed.

Corporate training: developing customized educational materials

Corporate training professionals need to create educational content that is simultaneously comprehensive, accessible, and customized for specific organizational contexts. NotebookLM can significantly facilitate this process.

Scenario: A training manager must develop a complete onboarding program for new managers at a technology multinational. She has company manuals, case studies, previous training videos, and organizational guidelines available.

NotebookLM application:

1. Creates different thematic notebooks corresponding to various training modules (leadership, internal processes, company culture, etc.)
2. Imports all available materials, including automatic transcriptions of existing training videos
3. Uses the chat customization function, through the notebook's system prompt, to create coherent educational structures for each module
4. Uses the "**Flashcard**" and "**Quiz**" functions to prepare assessment moments
5. Asks specific questions to extract practical examples and realistic scenarios from available sources
6. Uses the mind map to create visual representations of managerial competencies and their interconnections

Result: The trainer develops richer, contextualized, and practical educational materials, significantly reducing preparation time and increasing onboarding program effectiveness.

Healthcare: synthesis of guidelines and clinical research

Healthcare professionals must constantly stay updated on evolving guidelines and new scientific evidence, a task that can be demanding given the volume of medical literature. NotebookLM can offer significant support in this continuous updating process.

Scenario: A specialist physician must update her hospital department's protocols for managing a specific condition, integrating the most recent international guidelines and clinical studies.

NotebookLM application:

1. Creates a notebook dedicated to the specific pathology

2. Imports guidelines from different scientific societies, recent meta-analyses, and key clinical studies
3. Uses targeted questions like "*What are the main differences between European and American guidelines?*" or "*Which recommendations have reached the greatest consensus?*"
4. Creates a mind map to visualize different therapeutic approaches and their indications
5. Generates a timeline of clinical recommendation evolution
6. Uses the "**Report**" function to create accurate syntheses of evidence supporting specific recommendations
7. Uses the "**Presentation**" function to create a presentation of new protocols
8. Uses the "**Flashcard**" and "**Quiz**" functions to prepare assessment moments
9. Prepares a structured guide that will become the basis of the new clinical protocol

Result: The physician produces an updated protocol solidly based on the most recent evidence, with clear indications of consensus and controversy areas, potentially improving clinical outcomes and reducing variability in care practices.

Conclusions: a horizon of possibilities

These use cases represent only some of the countless practical applications of NotebookLM in professional contexts. The tool's versatility makes it adaptable to practically any field requiring analysis, synthesis, and interaction with information collections.

Adoption of NotebookLM by professionals in various sectors will lead to new usage methods and best practices, extending the tool's application possibilities. The key to making the most of this tool remains intentional experimentation: adapting it to specific challenges, integrating it into existing workflows, and progressively refining the approach based on direct experience.

NotebookLM isn't simply another tool in the growing generative AI ecosystem but represents a new paradigm in the relationship with information. Users are no longer passive content consumers but active explorers of dynamic and interactive information landscapes. In this context, NotebookLM doesn't replace human capabilities of critical thinking and creativity but enhances them, freeing resources for distinctive aspects of human work: intuition, evaluation, and innovation.