DAY 20 · Part 2 · How We Got Here

Why are there so many AIs you can use now? — Everyone's model race

Five-Minute AI Lessons · Sep 26, 2026

As the places making it went from a few to dozens, AI went from something you use to something you choose.

Today's answer

In a nutshell

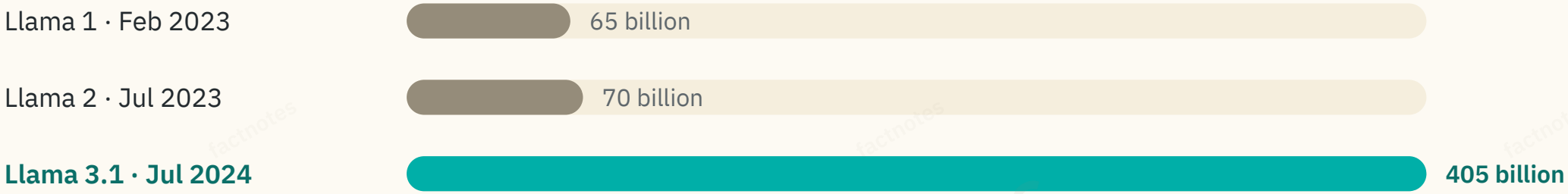
1. At the end of 2022, you could count the really usable chat AIs **on one hand**. Now dozens of places — in the US, Europe, China, even South Korea — each put out their own models.

2. The biggest change was **open models**. A model's whole bundle of numbers got released, so anyone could download it and run it on their own machine.

3. So now it's an age of **picking which one to use, not just using the one**. Price, speed and strengths all differ, and when one place releases a new feature, similar ones pop up all over within a few months.

In one picture

Size of models anyone could download



In a year and a half it got six times bigger. GPT-3 in 2020 was 175 billion, so now anyone could get a model bigger than that.

Key idea: the assumption that big models had to stay behind closed doors was broken

Experiment · Before & after

End of 2022 vs. now: what changed?

Who makes them

Before

Only a handful of places put out usable chat models. You could name them all on one hand.

After

Research teams in the US, Europe and China — and South Korea too — put out their own models. A...

When one releases a new feature, something similar shows up within a few months...

Open models

Before

Nobody gave out the bundle of numbers inside a model. You could only talk to it from outside an...

After

In 2023, a trend started of releasing the whole bundle of numbers. Now you can download it, run...

Remember GPT-3 in 2020 was 175 billion? Now anyone can download a model bigger...

Choosing

Before

There wasn't really a choice. There was basically only one you could use, so there was nothing...

After

There are cheap ones, fast ones, ones great at math, ones great at a particular language. You p...

The power to choose moved over to the users. But the job of judging which one t...

Pick an item and switch back and forth between 'End of 2022' and 'Now.' The key isn't the numbers — it's how 'b...

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Just three questions

Q1

What's the biggest difference between the end of 2022 and now?

① Prices to use it went way up
② All the models merged into one
③ Nobody makes them anymore
④ Way more places make models now

Q2

What does 'open model' mean?

① Anyone can download its numbers and run it
② A model with no ads
③ A model that always gives the right answer
④ A model that searches without the internet

Q3

When more places make models, what happens for users?

① Answers disappear
② You get to choose
③ The power goes out
④ The text gets bigger

Know the why, too

Q1

④

From a handful of places to dozens. With everyone chasing each other, prices went down and performance went up.

Q2

①

It's a way of releasing the whole bundle of numbers inside a model. You can download it, run it on your own machine and modify it.

Q3

②

Price, speed and strengths all differ, so you pick one to fit the job. But the job of judging what to trust comes with it.

As the places making it went from a few to dozens,
AI went from something you use to something you choose.



Tomorrow: Summarizing — how would you boil down everything from Part 2 onto one page?