

Moving Any AI to Another PC

And to another account, or another assistant — what really travels, and what does not

Version 1.2 · 27 October 2026

Hans Tandt

Contents

1. What this is for.....	3
2. How hard is your move?.....	4
3. Why it is hard, even with the same assistant.....	4
4. An export is a one-way door.....	5
4.1 What an export gives you, and what it leaves behind.....	6
4.2 Memory: the part with no export button.....	6
4.3 Tools and plug-ins: the part that really breaks.....	7
5. The only thing that always travels.....	7
5.1 What is an .md file, and do I need to care?.....	7
5.2 The six files.....	8
6. Two prompts do the work.....	9
6.1 The six questions the export prompt asks.....	9
6.2 The four questions the import prompt asks.....	9
7. The question nobody asks.....	10
8. Check that it worked.....	10
9. If it does not work.....	11
10. A short checklist.....	11
11. Glossary.....	12

1. What this is for

You have worked with an AI assistant for months. It has learned how you work, what your project is, and which mistakes to avoid. Now you need that somewhere else: on another computer, in another account, or with a different assistant.

Most people think this is easy. Sometimes it is. Usually it is not, and the more you have built, the worse it gets. This guide tells you how hard your own case really is, and what to do about it.

NOTE — It does not matter which assistant you use

ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot, or whatever comes next. The questions in this guide are the same for all of them. Only the buttons have different names.

TRAP — The new session really has forgotten

When a new conversation seems to have lost everything you built up, that is not your imagination. It is exactly what happened. Nothing carried over, because nothing had been written down.

NOTE — Where this guide comes from

This is built on real experience of moving work between computers and between assistants. It tries to cover everything that went wrong in practice. It will not cover everything that can go wrong: the tools change every month, and every project is different. Treat it as a careful starting point, not as a guarantee.

TRAP — Never delete the old side first

Do not erase the old conversation, the old account or the old computer until the work really runs in the new place. Test it first, delete afterwards. If something turns out to be missing, the old side is the only place left to get it from.

NOTE — Who made this

These prompts and this manual were created by Hans Tandt (hanstandt.be). They are free under the MIT licence: you may use, copy and adapt them, as long as you keep this line.

2. How hard is your move?

There are three cases. They are not equally hard. Most people have only ever done the easy one, and then assume the other two work the same way.



Only the first case is simple. The other two are done by hand or not at all.

Your case	What really happens	What you have to do
Same assistant, same account, new computer	Everything is waiting for you when you sign in. Your conversations, what it remembers, your settings.	Almost nothing. Install the program and sign in.
Same assistant, a NEW account	Your conversations can be handed over as a document. What it remembers, your instructions and your saved assistants do not move at all.	Write everything down before you leave. Nothing moves on its own.
A different assistant	Nothing moves by itself. The new one has never met you.	All of it by hand, out of files you wrote yourself.

NOTE — Why the first case feels so easy

With most assistants your work is not on your computer at all. It is on the company's computers, tied to your account. Signing in on a new machine simply shows you the same thing again. Nothing was moved, so nothing could be lost.

3. Why it is hard, even with the same assistant

Staying with the same assistant does not make you safe. Moving a real piece of work from one computer to another is its own job, even when the program is identical on both sides.

Here is why it goes wrong:

1. What the assistant knows is kept in more than one place, and only part of it is in your project folder.
2. Your rules, settings and saved methods often live in your personal folder on the computer. Copying the project does not include them.
3. Plug-ins and tools have to be installed again. They never arrive with a copy of your files.
4. Some of what it knows was never written anywhere. It was in the conversation, and conversations are deleted after a while.
5. Folder names and drive letters change. A list of files that was correct on the old computer is wrong on the new one.

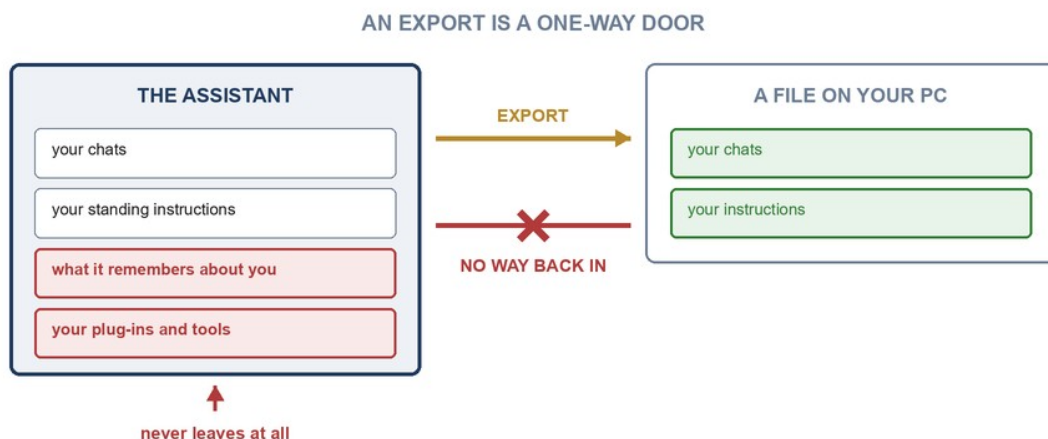
TRAP — A real project is the hard case

A short conversation is easy to leave behind, and losing it costs nothing.

A real piece of work is different. An application, a set of documents, a database: that carries months of decisions, plus every tool and plug-in you added along the way. That is what breaks, and it breaks quietly.

4. An export is a one-way door

Nearly every assistant lets you export your data. That sounds like the answer. It is not.



Some of it comes out. None of it goes back in. The most valuable part never leaves.

You can get a file out. There is no button anywhere that puts it back. Not into another account of the same assistant, and not into a different assistant.

TRAP — An export is not a backup

A backup is something you can put back. An export you cannot put back is a souvenir. It is useful to read, and useless to restore.

4.1 What an export gives you, and what it leaves behind

Taking ChatGPT as the example, because it is the one most people have. You ask for the export in the settings, and a link arrives by e-mail. It can take a while, and the link stops working after a short time, so download it the moment it arrives.

You do get	You do not get
Your conversations, as a data file	What it remembers about you
Your standing instructions	Your plug-ins, tools and connectors
Your account details	Your saved assistants and projects
Your thumbs up and thumbs down	Pictures that were generated for you

NOTE — Checked on 26 October 2026

Menus, file names and rules change often. Everything in this chapter was checked on that date against the makers' own help pages. If your screen looks different from this page, believe the screen.

The makers say it plainly themselves: uploading that file into another account does not bring across your settings, what it remembers, your saved assistants, or your subscription. It can be handed to the new assistant as a document to read. That is all.

4.2 Memory: the part with no export button

The thing that makes an assistant feel like it knows you is the one thing you cannot export. There is no file for it.

The only way to get it out is to open the memory in the settings, read it on the screen, and copy it out by hand.

TRAP — And the list you can read is not the whole list

The maker's own help says the memory you can read will not include everything the assistant has picked up from your conversations. So even copying it by hand does not get all of it. This is the best reason there is to write things down as you go, instead of relying on the assistant to remember.

4.3 Tools and plug-ins: the part that really breaks

Knowledge can be written into a file. A workbench cannot.

If your work used a plug-in, a connector, a code runner, a shared drive or a program on your computer, none of it arrives with the files. The new assistant will try to do the work anyway and fail — and it will look like the assistant has become stupid, when really a tool is missing.

What is missing	What it looks like
A plug-in or a connector	It says it cannot reach something, or it quietly gives you a poorer answer and does not say why
A program on the computer	A step fails, or produces nothing at all
A saved assistant or project	The rules you set up are simply not applied any more
A standing instruction	The tone and the length of the answers change, and you cannot put your finger on it

TIP — Write the list before you leave

The export prompt asks the assistant for this list, item by item. It is the one thing nobody thinks of until the work stops.

5. The only thing that always travels

Whatever you are moving to, one thing works everywhere: a plain file that you wrote yourself. No company owns it, no account holds it, and every assistant can read it.

That is the whole trick. If something matters, it has to leave the conversation and go into a file while you still have the conversation in front of you.

5.1 What is an .md file, and do I need to care?

The six files further down all end in `.md`. If you have never seen that before, here is everything you need to know about it.

An `.md` file is a plain text file. Nothing more. You can open it with Notepad, read it, and type in it. The letters stand for Markdown, which is only a habit of writing things down: a line that starts with `#` is a heading, a line that starts with `-` is one point in a list. That is the whole of it.

NOTE — You do not have to make these files yourself

If you have never created one in your life, that is not a problem at all. The export prompt makes them for you and fills them in. You only have to save what it gives you, and then read it to check that it is true.

TRAP — Windows hides the ending, and that catches people

If you do make one by hand in Notepad, choose "All Files" in the save box before you type the name. Otherwise Windows quietly saves it as `Session_Notes.md.txt`, and it will not be the file you think it is. In File Explorer, switch on "File name extensions" in the View menu so you can see what you really have.

Now the part that matters. If you only ever chat with an assistant — you ask, it answers, you close the window — none of this is important, and you can stop worrying about files.

But using an assistant is much more than chatting. The moment you build something, keep a project running over weeks, or work on more than one computer, these files become the most valuable thing you have. They are the memory. Everything else belongs to the company whose assistant you are using, and it stays with them.

TIP — Start on the first day, not on moving day

The best time to start a `Session_Notes.md` is the day the project begins. The second best time is today. Writing three lines at the end of each session is easy. Reconstructing six months of decisions on the day you move is not, and most of it will simply be gone.

5.2 The six files

File	What goes in it
<code>HANDOVER.md</code>	The one the next assistant reads first: what this is, what must not be undone, and why
<code>PROJECT.md</code>	What this work is, written for someone who was never here
<code>RULES.md</code>	How to work: your rules, your paths, your habits
<code>FACTS.md</code>	The facts, each one with its source and a date
<code>TOOLS.md</code>	The workbench: plug-ins, tools, settings and programs, and how to put them back
<code>Session_Notes.md</code>	The log: what was done, what was decided, and why

NOTE — Keep them as separate files, not a zip

Save the six as ordinary files in one folder. Many assistants will read `.md` files you drop into a conversation, but will not look inside a zip — and for a web assistant, dropping the files into the chat is exactly how you hand them over. If you are sending them over a network, zip them for the journey and unzip before you use them.

TIP — The reason matters more than the decision

"We use this tool" is worth almost nothing on its own. "We use this tool because the other one failed when nobody was watching" stops the next person undoing it.

TRAP — A conversation is not a safe place to keep anything

Conversations are deleted after a while, and the assistant's own memory cannot be exported. A file you wrote is the only part still there in a year. That is why the writing has to happen while the conversation is still open in front of you.

6. Two prompts do the work

Two plain text files do the whole job. You paste one into the old assistant and one into the new one, as a single message.

File	Paste it into	What it does
1_EXPORT_PROMPT.txt	The OLD assistant	Asks you six questions, then works through seven steps: what it knows, the tools, the files that must exist, filling them in, the handover file, what will not travel, and a last check
2_IMPORT_PROMPT.txt	The NEW assistant	Asks you four questions, then six steps: read it and say it back, rebuild the workbench, what is now wrong, what it can keep, put it in place, and prove it

They are plain text on purpose. A text file opens on any computer, with nothing installed and nothing to choose.

NOTE — They ask. They do not run off on their own

Both prompts stop and ask before they touch anything, and they wait for you at every step. You stay in charge the whole way. If the assistant cannot do something, it is told to say so instead of pretending.

TIP — You do not have to have been tidy

If the files do not exist yet, the export prompt creates them and fills them in from the conversation you are already in. Starting from nothing is fine.

6.1 The six questions the export prompt asks

1. What is this work? It gives its own description, and you correct it.
2. Where does it continue — the same assistant on a new computer, a new account, or a different assistant?
3. Can it write files on your computer, or must it print them in the chat for you to save?
4. Is there already a folder with files for this work?
5. How far back should it go — this conversation only, or everything it remembers about you?
6. Is there anything you do not want written down?

6.2 The four questions the import prompt asks

1. Where are the files? A folder, or pasted in.
2. Where should this work live on this computer?
3. Does it already have notes about you — keep them, or start clean?
4. Can it write files here, or must you save what it prints?

7. The question nobody asks

When the new assistant has read everything and answers well, it is easy to think the job is done. It is not. There is one more question, and it is the one that decides whether any of this lasts.

Ask it: what will you still know tomorrow?

Some assistants keep a memory between conversations. Some keep nothing at all. Many keep less than you think, and none of them volunteer the answer. If you do not ask now, you find out in three weeks, when it has forgotten.

TRAP — This is why a new session seems to forget

If the assistant has no lasting memory, every new conversation starts from nothing at all. Then your files are the memory, and they have to be read again at the start of every single session. Not once, after the move. Every time.

The import prompt asks this for you, and then gives you the exact message to paste at the start of your next session, so you do not have to explain the work again.

How long a single session should run before you start a fresh one is a different subject again, with its own guide and its own tools. It matters for the same reason: anything that lives only in the conversation is not safe.

8. Check that it worked

Do not assume. Ask the new assistant these four questions and compare the answers with what the old one told you.

Ask it	You should get
"What is this project?"	The same answer the old assistant gave
"What did we decide, and why?"	The reasons, not only the decisions
"What is still open?"	The real open points, not a vague summary
"What are you unsure about?"	An honest list. Silence here is a bad sign

TIP — Keep the old side until all four are right

Do not delete the old account, the old conversation or the old computer until every answer above is correct. Until then it is the only copy you have.

9. If it does not work

Sometimes the new assistant has read everything and still cannot do the work. Something is missing and you cannot see what. There is a way out, and it is simpler than it sounds: ask it. You can go round this loop as many times as you need — each time the question gets sharper, because the new assistant knows more about what it is short of.

1. Ask the new assistant plainly: what is missing? What would you need to do this properly?
2. Tell it which assistant you came from, by name. This changes the answer, because it knows roughly what the other one can do and how it keeps things.
3. Ask it to write you a prompt — one you can paste into the OLD assistant — asking for exactly what it still needs.
4. Paste that prompt into the old assistant, bring the answer back, and hand it to the new one.

TIP — Say which assistant was on the other side

"I am coming from <name>" is worth a great deal. An assistant that knows which one sat on the other side can often suggest a way round a limit, or tell you where that one keeps the thing you are missing.

TRAP — This only works while the old side still exists

The whole loop depends on the old assistant still being there to answer. That is the real reason not to delete anything until the new side works.

10. A short checklist

- The six files, written while you still had the old conversation open
- `TOOLS.md`, listing every plug-in, connector and program the work needs
- The reason behind every decision, not just the decision
- What was tried and rejected, so nobody tries it again
- Anything you were told out loud that was never written down
- A note of what the assistant said it was unsure about
- The memory read off the settings screen and copied by hand, if there is one
- The exact message to paste at the start of the next session
- Never: a password, a key, or a login file
- Nothing deleted on the old side until the work really runs in the new place

11. Glossary

Word	What it means
Markdown (.md)	A plain text file with a simple way of marking headings and lists. It opens in Notepad. Nothing special is needed to read or write one.
Memory	What the assistant has worked out about you and keeps between conversations. Usually cannot be exported.
Standing instruction	A rule you set once that the assistant applies every time. Also called a custom instruction.
Export	A copy of some of your data, given to you as a file. Not a backup: nothing reads it back in.
Plug-in	An add-on that lets the assistant reach something outside itself. Installed, never copied.
Connector	A link between the assistant and another system, such as a drive or a mailbox.
Session note	A file where you write what was done and why. You write it, and it travels with your folder.
Account	Where the company keeps your conversations and your memory. Change the account and you leave them behind.

Revision history: Version 1.0 — 26 October 2026 — First version. Written as the companion to the Claude-specific handover guide, for people moving to or from any assistant. Product details were checked on that date against the makers' own help pages. Version 1.1 — 26 October 2026 — Says in 5.2 to keep the six files loose rather than zipped, because a web assistant reads uploaded files but not the inside of a zip. Version 1.2 — 27 October 2026 — Who made it, and the MIT licence (chapter 1). Dutch and German versions.