

AI CHATBOTS FOR LIBRARIES

Integration

Tilman Scheel · CEO, ASK / AboutSomethinK · April 29, 2025



TILMAN SCHEEL & ASK

About Tilman



- Lawyer, art historian, AI lecturer & consultant
- Working in IT for film festivals and libraries since 2004
- CEO of ava-library.com and AboutSomethinK.org

About ASK



- First AI chatbot for public libraries worldwide
- In use for all Berlin libraries since June 2024
- Integrations across Europe and beyond

Today's focus: How data gets in and how the bot gets onto your website.

TODAY'S TOPICS

01

What should be integrated?

Metadata and frontend

02

How data is exchanged and updated

RAG, embeddings, APIs, etc., OAI-PMH

03

Into the frontend!

Koha, WordPress, CSS

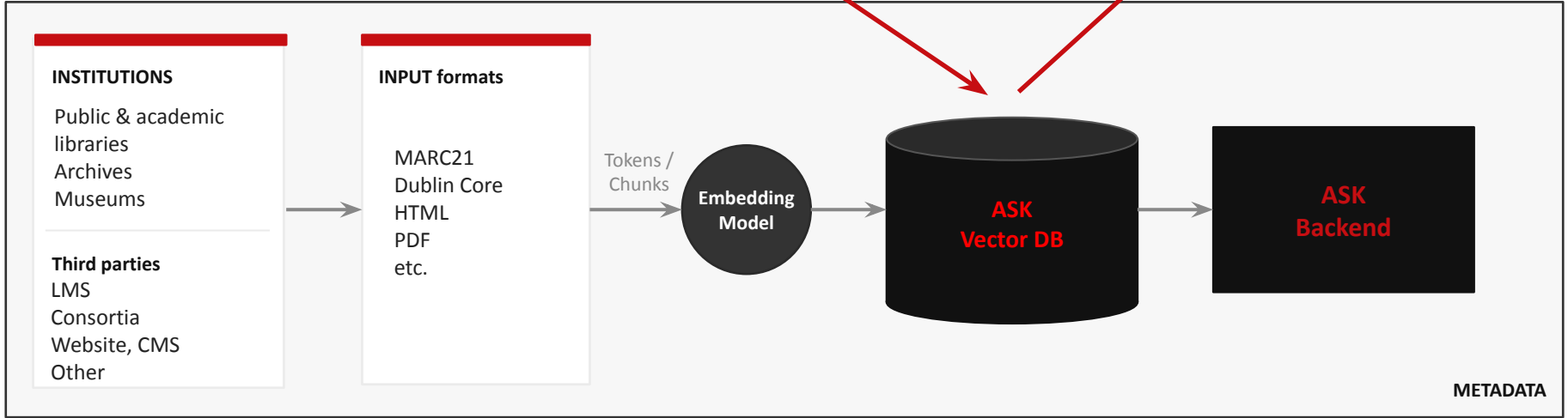
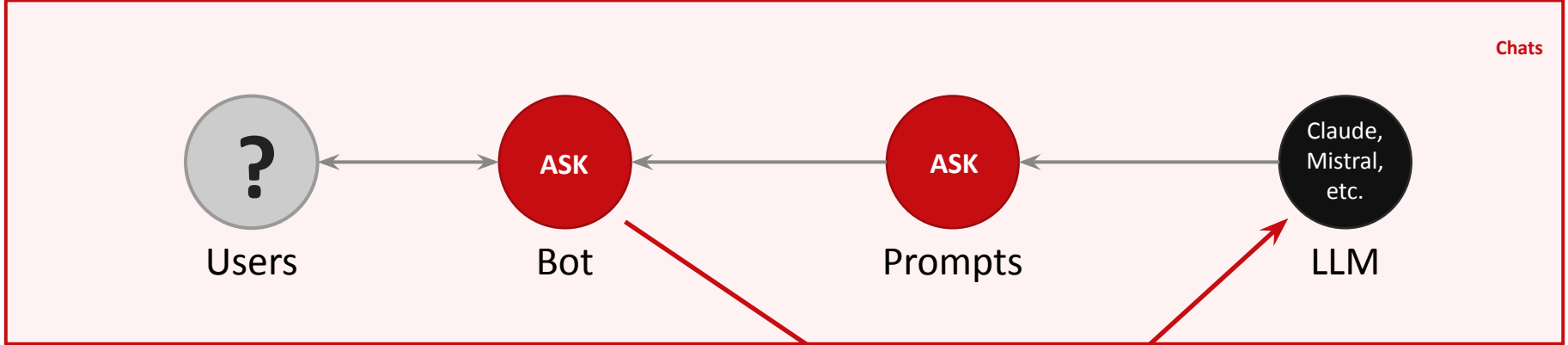
04

SearchChat, collaboration, Q&A

Unifying search & chat, shared prompts & community, Q&A with Chris

Metadata – RAG WORKFLOW

How catalog data becomes a chat answer



Data Integration

Koha · Axiell · Ex Libris · hbz — examples



DATA Integration – What?

HOW IT WORKS

- We receive your catalog data
- The data is split into chunks (per record or section)
- The embedding model converts chunks into vectors
- Vectors are stored in a dedicated database
- The bot searches this database for every user query

FORMATS WE WORK WITH

HTML pages

Dublin Core

Prompts

PDF, txt documents

JSON / XML

MARC21

The first import is the only cost-intensive step. After that, incremental updates are fast and inexpensive.

DATA Updates – How?



API

DIRECT API

Real-time or scheduled retrievals from your ILS. Automation preferred where available.

Best option: OAI-PMH



SFTP

SFTP TRANSFER

Regular file imports from a server. Simple and reliable — works with almost any system.



FILE

FILE IMPORT, Custom

Manual or script-driven imports. Practical for smaller collections or when automation has not yet been set up.

Our principle: no extra work for your team. After setup, the integration should run invisibly.

Data integration – live

Service-Bot

Gladbeck, Germany

Frontend: Gladbeck

Backend: self-prompting

Document-Bot

Dortmund, Frankfurt, Germany

Scrape: Dortmund

demos.aboutsomethink.org/dortmund.html

Document collection: Hebis

Backend:

- File upload
- Snippets

Recommendation-Bot

Montevideo, Uruguay

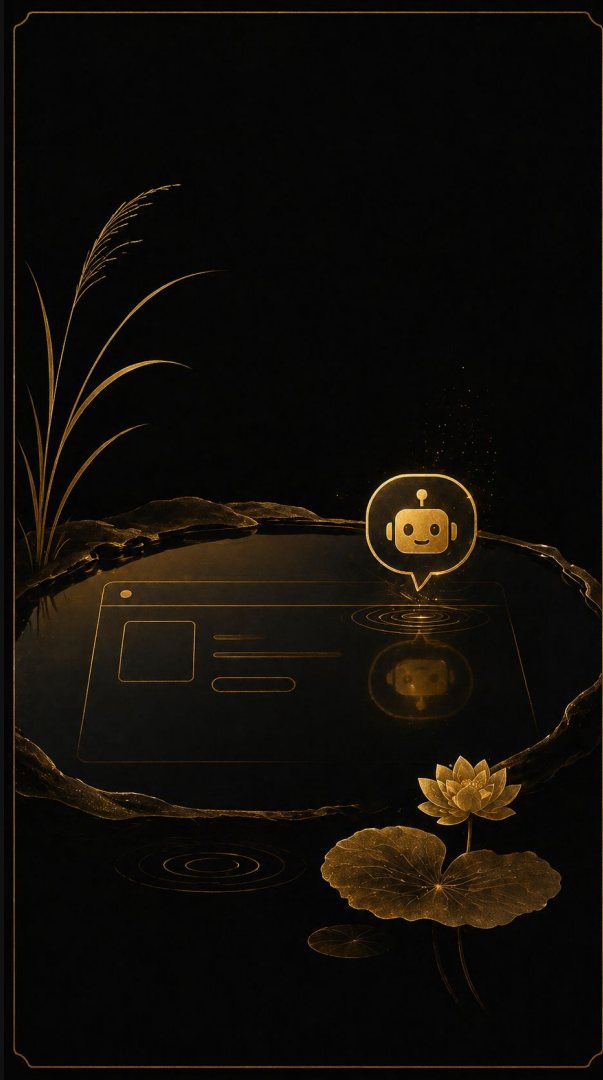
Full text/server: VÖBB/aStec

OAI-PMH: UCU/Koha –
OAI-PMH

Data consortium: HBZ
Custom Import – SFTP

Datronic: Custom API

Frontend



FRONTEND INTEGRATION

Embed the chat widget in any website



CODE BLOCK

Copy fewer than 10 lines of JavaScript / HTML and get started.



EMBED

Works with WordPress, Typo3, simple HTML — any CMS. Typical setup time: 3 minutes



CUSTOMIZE

Full control. You can adjust colors, size, and position.

Live example: WordPress deployment in Gladbeck — fully customized, live within one day

The protagonists - Live



Kai

(hbz)



VÖBB

(aStec)



UCU

(koha)



Philo

(self-prompting)



AVA

(self-prompting)



Quiri

(LMS)



So let's get started.

(and let AI help you)

Prompting - Fear not noble Librarian!

1

Natural Language

Just write what you want

2

Master-Prompts

The Prompt-Templates protect
you

3

Picasso

“Bad artists copy, great artists
steal”: Use the experience of other
libraries!

Future



KOHA frontend mockup – live (a bit)

SearchChat

- Connect search and chat (cf. Google, Bing)
- Add filters and logs
- Click — don't type

Collaboration


- github.com/voebb-dev/voebb-chatbot
- Share user experiences (models, feedback)
- Share prompts, tips, etc.


VuFind Integration - Testing


berlin Alle Felder [Erweitert](#)

Suchergebnisse - berlin

Treffer 1 - 20 von 1.107.744 Treffer pro Seite
Sortieren

- 

"Netzwerk Reform" Öffentlichkeit, Beschäftigte, Innenwirkung, Wissenschaft ; Dokumentation des Bundeskongresses vom 24. und 25. Juni 1999 in Berlin von Berlin
Veröffentlicht 1999
"... Bundeskongress Netzwerk Reform vom 24. und 25. Juni 1999 in Berlin ..."
Signatur: A1234.567
Standort: 3rd Floor Main Library
- Kein Titel verfügbar** von Berlin
Signatur: A1234.567
Standort: 3rd Floor Main Library
 [Link zur Katalogkarte](#)
- 

Was Rechtspopulisten fordern Ein Manifest gegen den Rechtsruck in satirischen Grafiken von Berlin, Katja
Veröffentlicht 2024
Signatur: A1234.567
Standort: 3rd Floor Main Library
 [Inhaltstext](#)
- 

Istalog Science-Fiction-Roman

VÖBB-Chatbot

Bot vor 3 Minuten

Hey! Ich bin dein KI-Empfehlungsassistent für den VÖBB. Ich helfe dir, die besten Medien aus unserem Katalog zu finden, egal ob Bücher, E-Books, Musik, Filme oder andere Dinge. Was für eine Empfehlung suchst du heute?

vor 3 Minuten

Bot vor 3 Minuten

Hier sind einige spannende Empfehlungen zu Medien, die sich mit Berlin beschäftigen:

- Drehort Berlin** von Markus Münch
Dieses Buch behandelt 30 Filme, die zwischen 1931 und 2007 in Berlin produziert

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Survey!

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<https://aboutsomethink.org/en/webinars/>

