

# Read AI Alternative: Real-Time Coaching for Individuals (2026)

Read AI serves individuals and teams, with its depth in the shared meeting record. Hedy is the alternative for one person who wants live coaching.

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[Read this article online: https://www.hedy.ai/post/read-ai-alternative-hedy/](https://www.hedy.ai/post/read-ai-alternative-hedy/)



A woman in her fifties leaning forward at a cafe table mid-sentence during a client conversation, laptop open beside her and an iPhone lying face down

Quick answer Read AI serves individuals and teams, and its depth is the shared meeting record: engagement and sentiment metrics, workspace administration, playback on the top tiers, and search across your connected apps. Hedy is the stronger Read AI alternative for one person who wants help while the conversation is still happening. Every Hedy capture path is botless with no feature withheld for choosing one, speech recognition runs on your device by default, and Automatic Suggestions arrive during the meeting without you asking. Free for 5 hours a month, \$12.99/month for unlimited .

## Read AI alternative: the real decision

This page is written for one buyer: the individual professional paying for their own tool. That framing matters, because most of what separates these two products is a question of who the software answers to.

Read AI is a meeting intelligence platform, and it sells to individuals as well as teams. Its Free plan includes personalized meeting coaching and Topic Readouts, and Pro is pitched at individuals and small teams. What gets deeper as you move up the tiers is the organizational layer: paid Workspaces,

centralized licensing, and rules for who receives which report. For an operations lead standardizing how a company runs meetings, that's a reasonable purchase.

Hedy answers to the person in the conversation. It's a personal AI meeting coach that works across video calls, in-person meetings, lectures, interviews, and appointments. It surfaces suggestions while you can still act on them, then leaves you with a transcript, notes, Highlights, and to-dos afterward.

Two things most comparison pages get wrong about Read AI are worth fixing before going further.

Read AI is not bot-only. Its calendar auto-join and manual-invite flows do send the Read Assistant into Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and optionally Google Meet as a visible participant, defaulting to the name "read.ai meeting notes". But there are three botless paths. The macOS and Windows desktop app has a manual Record mode that captures microphone and system audio locally. The mobile apps capture locally too, with nobody added to the meeting. And the native Google Meet integration captures through an in-meeting integration rather than a participant, once an eligible user in the host's Workspace approves the consent dialog, subject to admin settings. On a consumer Gmail call, the host or the person who started the call approves it instead.

Read AI is not retrospective-only either. Its live dashboard streams the transcript, refreshes rolling summaries, flags sentiment changes, and shows engagement, a Read Score, filler-word rate, speaking speed, and talk-time distribution. It also pulls up Pre-Reads from earlier meetings in a recurring series, previous reports, your private notes, and transcript lines you save mid-call. Ask Read answers questions while the meeting is running and reaches back into prior conversations to do it.

So the useful contrast isn't "bot versus no bot" or "live versus retrospective". Every Hedy capture path is botless and none of them costs you a feature. Read AI's botless options are one part of a wider set, and the feature trade-off attaches to exactly one of them: Read AI documents the desktop Record mode as audio-only, without video, the post-meeting Coaching section, or participant-level Deep Dive metrics. On the live layer, Read AI gives you a detailed read on the conversation and answers what you type into it. Hedy generates suggestions proactively, without you asking. That's the difference an individual buyer is actually choosing between.

## At a glance

### Job to be done | Better fit | Why

Coaching during your own high-stakes conversations | Hedy | Automatic Suggestions (/help/automatic-suggestions/) appear on their own during the session, without you prompting for them.

Botless capture with no feature penalty | Hedy | Every Hedy capture path is botless and none withholds a feature. Read AI's desktop Record mode is audio-only and omits video, the post-meeting Coaching section, and participant Deep Dive metrics.

Live coaching in conversations that aren't video calls | Hedy | Session types tuned to a lecture, an interview, a negotiation, or an appointment, on mobile and Apple Watch as well as desktop. Neither product can capture a phone call on the same handset, an iOS and Android restriction (/help/recording-phone-calls/).

Speech recognition that runs on your device | Hedy | On-device by default on every platform, with Local AI Processing (/help/local-ai-processing/) as an opt-in way to run the whole pipeline locally. Read AI processes server-side.

Context you curate around one relationship | Hedy | Both products carry context between meetings. Read AI organizes it around search and automated readouts. Topics (/help/understanding-hedy-topics-organize-your-sessions-unlock-deeper-insights/) group sessions by client, project, or course and feed prep notes and live suggestions into the next one.

A shared team record with playback and participant metrics | Read AI | Read AI reports talk time, engagement, sentiment, and punctuality per participant. Audio and video playback and auto-generated video highlights are Enterprise and Enterprise+ features.

Capturing a meeting you can't attend | Read AI | In its bot flows, the Read Assistant can attend a meeting the licensed user doesn't join, where that user was invited and a host admits the assistant and permits capture. Read AI has said Zoom will require the user to be present and signed in. Hedy can't do this, by design.

Searching meetings alongside email, chat, and documents | Read AI | Ask Read reaches meetings, email, chat, and calendar, with cloud storage, documentation, and CRM search on paid plans, limited to what your account is authorized to see. Hedy

searches your sessions.

Centralized licensing, SAML, SCIM, custom retention | Read AI Enterprise+ | These are organizational rollout requirements. Hedy isn't trying to be that system.

## Why Hedy is the stronger Read AI alternative for individuals

### 1. Suggestions you didn't ask for

Read AI's live dashboard is live in a real sense, and it's fuller than most comparison pages admit. It streams the transcript, refreshes rolling summaries, flags sentiment changes, and shows engagement, a Read Score, filler-word rate, speaking speed, and talk-time split. It puts Pre-Reads from earlier meetings in the series, previous reports, your private notes, and saved transcript lines within reach while the call runs. Ask Read will take a question you type mid-meeting and pull prior conversations into its answer.

All of that still waits for you. You have to look at it, read it, and work out what it means while you're also holding up your end of the conversation. A talk-time bar can tell you that you've been doing most of the talking. It can't tell you which question to ask next, and Ask Read only answers the question you already knew to ask.

Hedy's Automatic Suggestions (</help/automatic-suggestions/>) work the other way around. They arrive unprompted, in the meeting's own language, when Hedy has something worth saying: a discovery gap you're about to walk past, a claim that went unchallenged, a follow-up question the source just made possible, a next step you haven't locked in. You don't have to ask, and you don't have to turn a number into an action.

That's the real distinction between the two live layers. Read AI measures the conversation and retrieves what you ask for. Hedy writes the suggestion before you think to ask.

### 2. Botless everywhere, with nothing held back

Hedy's macOS and Windows apps capture system audio directly. The iOS and Android apps capture microphone audio for an in-person conversation, or for a call played aloud on another device. Every one of those paths is botless: starting a session doesn't put anything in the participant list, post to the meeting chat, or notify the other people in the conversation, and no host has to approve a dialog before you begin. Recap emails and session sharing exist, and you turn them on when you want them.

Read AI can be botless too, in three ways.

The desktop Record mode is the closest match to how Hedy works: microphone plus system audio, no participant. But Read AI documents it as audio-only, without video, the post-meeting Coaching section, or participant-level Deep Dive metrics. If those are why you bought the product, this specific path isn't the one you'll use. That trade-off belongs to the desktop mode alone. Read AI's other two botless paths don't carry it.

The mobile apps capture locally as well, with nobody added to the meeting.

The native Google Meet integration captures without a participant and, unlike the desktop mode, advertises high-quality audio and video capture plus the live dashboard. The condition here is consent: an eligible user in the host's Workspace has to approve an in-meeting dialog, subject to admin settings, or the host or initiator on a consumer Gmail call. That's a defensible design choice on Read AI's part. It's also a moment where the room's attention lands on your tooling, which is what many individual buyers were trying to avoid.

The traditional Zoom, Teams, and optional Meet agent flow is the one that puts a visible assistant in the meeting, named "read.ai meeting notes" by default.

### **3. It covers the conversations that aren't video calls**

Read AI reaches past the scheduled call too. Its Operator release is aimed at unscheduled conversations, in-person ones, and platforms Read AI doesn't otherwise support, and the desktop app handles Webex, Slack Huddles, dialer software, and plain system audio with no calendar involved.

Hedy differs in what it does once it's listening. Hedy has session types tuned to the conversation you're actually in: a lecture, a job interview where you're the candidate, a negotiation, a journalism interview, an appointment where you're the patient. The coaching changes with the type, and it runs on whichever device you have with you, including an Apple Watch app for starting and steering a session from your wrist.

Neither Hedy nor Read AI can capture a phone call on the same handset. iOS reserves the audio session for the call and interrupts every other app, and Android keeps call audio behind a system-only permission. On mobile, Hedy captures what its microphone hears, which covers a conversation across a table or a call played aloud on another device. There is one live workaround: take the iPhone call on your Mac through Apple's Continuity "Calls from iPhone" and Hedy on the Mac captures both sides as system audio. The details are here (</help/recording-phone-calls/>) .

Hedy runs on macOS, Windows, iOS, Android, web, and Apple Watch. Every app is a full general release rather than a beta or preview, and the Windows app has been generally available since 2025 with the same feature set as the macOS app.

### **4. Your conversation is processed on your device by default**

This is the cleanest verifiable gap between the two products.

Read AI processes server-side. It announces multi-region deployments in the EU, Australia, and Canada for qualifying enterprise customers, arranged with its sales team rather than shipped as a line item on a tier, and its "local processing" language refers to that in-region infrastructure, not to your machine. There's no documented consumer mode where speech or AI inference runs on your device.

Hedy runs speech recognition on your device by default, on every platform, using Whisper. Two Nemotron engines run locally as well, one English-only and one multilingual. If you'd rather use a cloud engine, Deepgram and OpenAI are available with your own API key, which keeps that relationship yours.

Beyond speech, Local AI Processing (</help/local-ai-processing/>) can move the entire pipeline on-device on capable hardware, offline included: transcripts, summaries, notes, chat replies, and live suggestions. It's opt-in and off by default, because cloud analysis is faster and currently better, and Hedy is deliberately built to work well on hardware that can't run frontier models locally. The option is there when your hardware and your privacy requirements call for it.

Hedy doesn't train AI models on your conversation data, and neither do its inference partners. EU data residency (</post/eu-data-residency/>) is selectable at signup. Hedy has completed an independent SOC 2 Type I examination and HIPAA assessment (</post/hedy-soc-2-type-i-hipaa-complete/>) .

### **5. Two ways of carrying context forward**

Both products carry context across meetings. Read AI does it through Pre-Reads ahead of a recurring meeting, Topic Readouts, previous reports you can pull up mid-call, and Ada preparing you from earlier meetings with the same people. Its search is broad: Ask Read reaches meetings, email, chat, and

calendar, with cloud storage, documentation, and CRM search on paid plans. It searches what your account is authorized to see, which includes what colleagues have shared with you, and nothing beyond that.

Hedy organizes the same idea around a relationship you pick. Topics group sessions by client, project, course, or health journey. Hedy generates a Topic overview, lets you chat across every session in that Topic with citations back to specific conversations, and writes prep notes before the next session based on what happened in the previous ones.

Two layers of context feed this. Session Context holds the stable things about you: your role, what you sell, your background. Topic Context holds what's specific to one engagement: the job description, the deal, the syllabus, the diagnosis. Hedy uses both while suggesting things live, so its suggestions are grounded in your situation rather than generic meeting advice.

Both products remember. They just organize it differently. Read AI builds a searchable record and puts automated readouts on top of it. Hedy builds a thread you decide the boundaries of, and that thread feeds the next conversation while it's still running. Hedy's version isn't a substitute for an organizational knowledge base, and it isn't trying to be.

## Where Read AI may be the better fit

Read AI does several things Hedy doesn't, and if any of them is your actual requirement, buy Read AI.

- Running meetings for a team: paid Workspaces, centralized licensing, rules for who receives which report, org and team metrics, plus SAML, SCIM, domain capture, and custom retention on Enterprise+.
- Keeping a shared organizational record: participant-level talk time, engagement, sentiment, and punctuality metrics a manager can review, plus audio and video playback and auto-generated video highlights on Enterprise and Enterprise+.
- Capturing meetings unattended: in its bot flows, the Read Assistant can attend a meeting the licensed user never joins, as long as that user was invited and a host admits the assistant and permits capture. Read AI has announced that Zoom will require the user to be present and signed in. Hedy has no equivalent, deliberately.
- Searching across applications: Ask Read reaches meetings alongside email, chat, and calendar, with cloud storage, documentation, and CRM search on paid plans, scoped to what your account is authorized to see.

Those are team, management, and platform strengths. They're real, and they don't make Read AI the better personal meeting coach.

## Pricing and limits

Check both pricing pages before you decide. Pricing changes, and the numbers below were current when this page was written.

### Hedy

- Free : \$0. 5 hours of sessions a month, the first 30 minutes of Automatic Suggestions per session, on-device transcription, summaries, 30+ transcription languages, no credit card.
- Pro : \$12.99 a month or \$99.99 a year. Unlimited sessions, 120 minutes of Automatic Suggestions per session, Topics, Highlights, sharing, webhooks, API access, export, custom vocabulary, specialized session types.
- Lifetime : \$299 one time. Everything in Pro, including future updates.



Prices are USD and identical on every platform. Current numbers are on the Hedy pricing page (/pricing/).

## Read AI

Per seat, from Read AI's plans and pricing page:

- Free : \$0. 5 meeting transcripts or reports a month, and reports shared with you count against that. One hour maximum per meeting. No file-upload credits, no audio or video playback.
- Pro : \$19.75 a month billed monthly, or \$15 a month billed annually (\$180 a year).
- Enterprise : \$29.75 a month billed monthly, or \$22.50 a month billed annually (\$270 a year).
- Enterprise+ : \$39.75 a month billed monthly, or \$29.75 a month billed annually (\$357 a year), with a five-license minimum.
- EDU : \$60 a year, annual only, for verified .edu users.

Audio and video playback and auto-generated video highlights sit on Enterprise and Enterprise+. Free and Pro get text reports without playback.

The structures tell you who each product is for. Read AI prices per seat and escalates into governance tiers, with its top plan requiring five licenses. Hedy prices one person's unlimited use, with a per-session limit on Automatic Suggestions instead of a seat count.

The free tiers meter different things. Read AI counts whole meetings, five a month, capped at an hour each, and reports other people share with you eat into that same five. Hedy counts time, 5 hours a month, however you spread it.

## Privacy, processing, and bot behavior

For most individual buyers this comes down to two concrete questions: what shows up in the meeting, and where does the audio go.

What shows up in the meeting. With Hedy, nothing, on any capture path. There's no participant to explain, no chat message, no consent dialog for a host to approve. With Read AI it depends which path you're on: the Read Assistant is a visible participant in the auto-join and invite flows, the native Google Meet path asks an eligible user in the host's Workspace to approve a dialog, and the desktop Record mode and the mobile apps show nothing, with the desktop mode giving up video, the post-meeting Coaching section, and participant Deep Dive metrics.

Where the audio goes. Hedy transcribes on your device by default. With Local AI Processing enabled on capable hardware, analysis stays local too, and with Cloud Sync off a session exists only on the device that captured it. Read AI processes server-side, with in-region processing and storage in the EU, Australia, and Canada announced for qualifying enterprise customers through its sales team.

On training: Read AI states that meeting content isn't used to train its models unless you join the opt-in Customer Experience Program, though its privacy policy does permit connected Google data to train personalized models. Hedy doesn't train models on your conversation data, and neither do its inference partners.

On retention: Read AI's published numbers conflict with each other. One page says Free recordings are deleted after 180 days, another says audio and video on non-Enterprise plans are deleted after 30 days, and the privacy policy sets a two-year maximum. This page won't pick one of those and present it as the answer. If retention is a deciding factor, ask Read AI directly and get the answer in writing.

*Botless doesn't mean consent-free. Recording laws vary by jurisdiction and some require every party to agree. Tell people when you're capturing a conversation, whatever tool you use. Hedy removing the bot from the room removes a notification, not your obligation.*

If you want the full picture of what Hedy sends where, Hedy's privacy settings are documented here ([/post/ai-meeting-privacy-settings-explained/](#)) .

## What this page does not claim

- Read AI is not bot-only, and it is not team-only. It sells to individuals, and it captures without a participant on desktop, on mobile, and through its native Google Meet integration.
- Read AI is not purely retrospective. Its live dashboard streams transcription, rolling summaries, sentiment changes, and live metrics, and Ask Read answers questions during a call using prior-conversation context.
- Cross-meeting memory is not claimed as unique to Hedy. Read AI carries context forward too, through Pre-Reads, Topic Readouts, and previous reports.
- Same-device phone-call capture is not claimed for either product. iOS and Android don't permit it, for Hedy or for Read AI.
- Hedy is not an organizational meeting archive. It has no video playback, no participant engagement analytics, and no admin console. Hedy Teams is a waitlist, not a shipping product.
- Read AI's default retention window is not cited here, because Read AI's own published figures disagree about it.
- Whether Read AI's live layer includes proactive, situation-specific coaching prompts is not asserted here. Read AI documents live metrics and live Q&A, and describes Meeting Coach as a post-meeting report.
- Transcription accuracy is not ranked. It depends on audio quality, language, accent, vocabulary, and environment.
- Hedy's compliance position is stated precisely: an independent SOC 2 Type I examination and an independent HIPAA assessment are complete, and Hedy is GDPR compliant. Not "certified".

## Frequently asked questions

### Is Hedy a good Read AI alternative?

For an individual, yes. Read AI serves individuals and teams, and its depth sits in the shared meeting record: participant metrics, workspace administration, playback on the top tiers, and search across connected apps. Hedy is built for the person in the conversation. It coaches you while the meeting is happening, runs speech recognition on your device by default, and never puts a bot in the participant list. If you need team dashboards and centralized licensing, Read AI is the better fit. If you're buying for your own conversations, Hedy is the sharper choice.

### Does Read AI always join meetings as a bot?

No. Read AI's calendar auto-join and manual-invite flows send the Read Assistant into Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and optionally Google Meet as a visible participant, named "read.ai meeting notes" by default. But Read AI has three botless paths: its macOS and Windows desktop app has a manual Record mode that captures microphone and system audio locally, its mobile apps capture locally with no participant either, and its native Google Meet integration captures through an in-meeting integration rather than a participant, once an eligible user in the host's Workspace approves the consent dialog (or the host on a consumer Gmail call). The feature trade-off belongs to one of those paths only: Read AI documents the desktop Record mode as audio-only, without video, the post-meeting Coaching section, or participant-

level Deep Dive metrics. The native Google Meet integration advertises high-quality audio and video capture plus the live dashboard.

## **Does Hedy join meetings as a bot?**

No, in any flow, with nothing withheld for choosing it. Every Hedy capture path is botless. The macOS and Windows apps capture system audio directly. The iOS and Android apps capture microphone audio for an in-person conversation, or for a call played aloud on another device, because neither mobile OS lets any app capture a phone call on the same handset. Starting a Hedy session does not put anything in the participant list, post to the meeting chat, or notify the other people in the conversation, and no attendee has to approve a dialog before you can start. Recap emails and sharing exist, and you turn them on deliberately.

## **How does Hedy's pricing compare to Read AI?**

Hedy Free is \$0 for 5 hours a month, including the first 30 minutes of Automatic Suggestions per session and no credit card. Hedy Pro is \$12.99 a month or \$99.99 a year, and there's a \$299 one-time Lifetime option. Read AI's Free plan is \$0 with 5 meeting transcripts or reports a month, a one-hour cap per meeting, and no audio or video playback (playback and video highlights are Enterprise and Enterprise+ features). Read AI Pro is \$19.75 a month billed monthly, or \$15 a month billed annually. Enterprise is \$29.75 monthly or \$22.50 annually, and Enterprise+ is \$39.75 monthly or \$29.75 annually with a five-license minimum. Verify both pricing pages before you decide.

## **Where does each product process my conversation?**

Read AI processes server-side. It announces multi-region deployments in the EU, Australia, and Canada for qualifying enterprise customers and points you to its sales team, but that means in-region infrastructure, not your own machine. Hedy runs speech recognition on your device by default on every platform. On capable hardware, Local AI Processing can move the entire pipeline on-device, offline included, though it's opt-in and off by default. Hedy also offers EU data residency and doesn't train AI models on your conversation data.

## **How to choose**

Choose Hedy if you're the person in the conversation and you want help while it's happening. You get Automatic Suggestions during the session, transcripts, Session Notes, Highlights, to-dos, and Topics that carry context forward from one meeting to the next. Every capture path is botless with no feature penalty, it covers in-person conversations, lectures, and appointments as well as video calls, and speech recognition runs on your device by default.

Choose Read AI if you're setting up how a team captures meetings. You get a shared record with participant-level engagement and sentiment metrics, playback and video highlights on the top two tiers, unattended capture through the bot where a host admits it, workspace administration with SAML and SCIM at the top tier, and search that reaches across your connected apps.

If you're buying a better version of yourself in the room, that's Hedy. If you're buying a better record of what the room did, that's Read AI.

Related Hedy pages:

- [Best AI meeting assistants for 2026 \(/post/top-5-ai-meeting-assistants/\)](/post/top-5-ai-meeting-assistants/)



- Hedy's privacy settings, explained (/post/ai-meeting-privacy-settings-explained/)
- Local AI Processing (/help/local-ai-processing/)
- Topics and cross-session context (/help/understanding-hedy-topics-organize-your-sessions-unlock-deeper-insights/)
- Capturing a phone conversation (/help/recording-phone-calls/)

Try Hedy free (<https://www.hedy.ai>) | See pricing (/pricing/) | Read help docs (/help/)

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