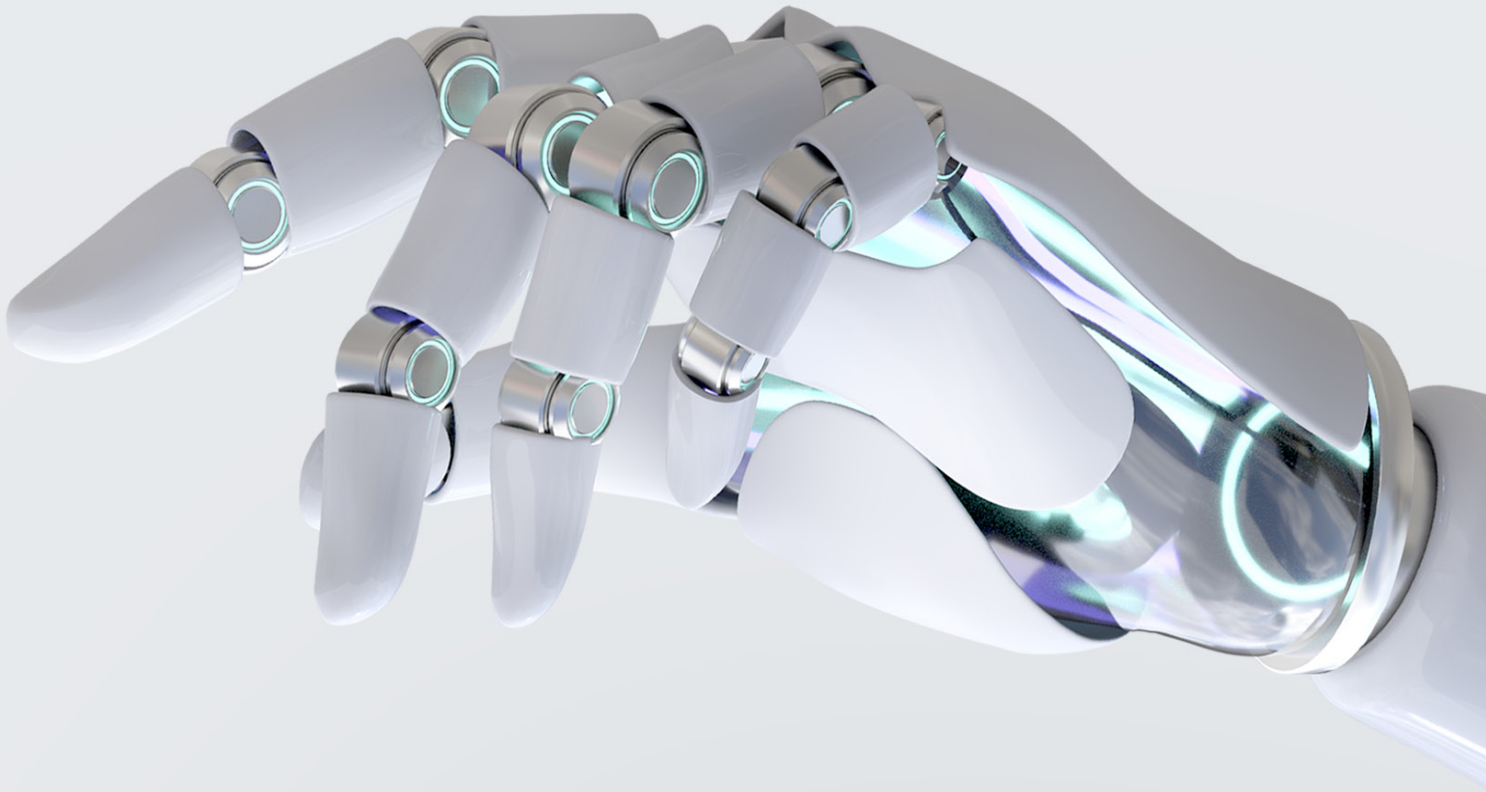


Digital Workplace Report



Microsoft Copilot: How revolutionary is AI really?

Now it's really important:

Cut costs with smart license management

Initiate the change:

What to look for when replacing legacy software

Artificial Intelligence in Teams Premium:

Automated protocols in a practical test



Welcome to the first issue of the Digital Workplace Report

As of November 1, 2023, the time has finally come! The much discussed and eagerly awaited Microsoft 365 Copilot is available for enterprise customers. In our first issue of the Digital Workplace Report, you'll find out if the investment is worth it, what Microsoft Copilot really offers, and how this AI will affect everyday office life.

We'll also address a top priority for many companies: optimizing costs. Specifically, cost optimization through intelligent license management. Due to the vast array of software utilized in businesses, however, this can be a complicated undertaking. Moreover, software procurement and management are often decentralized, making it even more difficult than it needs to be. Do you have a complete overview of all the software your users are using? Discover how to reduce your software expenses incrementally and understand what factors to consider.

We hope you'll find this report both exciting and inspiring!

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Microsoft Copilot: How revolutionary is AI really?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is currently a buzzword – and for good reason

Recently, significant advances have occurred in the AI domain, which significantly impact our daily work lives. AIs, like Microsoft 365 Copilot, can support us in resolving intricate issues, obtaining fresh perspectives, and unlocking our innovative potential.

What are the real capabilities of Microsoft Copilot and how does it impact deployment and corporate design adherence? To delve deeper into this inquiry, let's examine Microsoft's AI more closely.

Artificial intelligence: the new era of the digital revolution

Not long ago, artificial intelligence seemed like a mysterious entity with no relevance to daily office tasks. Today, however, AI tools generate significant value as one of our most innovative and essential technologies. The launch of OpenAI's chatbot „ChatGPT“ demonstrated to the general public how AI can streamline our daily routines.

AI systems already produce texts, create slogans, and even code software.

Microsoft's Bing is an AI-powered search engine that can answer complex inquiries. Users input prompts in a text field or even just speak them. The Bing AI uses large language models (LLMs) to understand and replicate human language, which is the cornerstone of artificial intelligence's strength. Thanks to advancements in language models, we can now communicate with AIs using natural language as the universal medium.

The process varies among AIs, yet they all rely on various colossal data sets as references. Software giants such as Microsoft have been developing artificial intelligence for years, and their progress is evident with the new AI „Microsoft Copilot.“ This AI is more than just an assistant, it's your work co-pilot, designed to aid in achieving your goals and enhancing your skills.

Despite the widespread excitement, the swift progression of artificial intelligence raises questions and apprehensions. These include effects on job markets as well as the implications of Microsoft Copilot on internal procedures and workflows, such as generating content that meets company design criteria.



Microsoft Copilot in the spotlight

Copilot integrates with all Microsoft 365 applications, including Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Outlook, and Teams. It allows you to unlock your creativity, work more efficiently, and streamline time-consuming tasks.

Basically, Office documents consist of form and content; Copilot specifically concentrates on the content.

Especially concerning composing, summarizing, and optimizing texts, Copilot proves to be an invaluable tool. The AI rapidly transforms your meeting notes into a comprehensive transcript and generates a draft for your next proposal with ease. Moreover, Copilot spell checks and optimizes text seamlessly, all within Microsoft 365 applications.

With Copilot, a Word document may serve as a presentation template in PowerPoint. The AI analyzes and combines information from both textual and video formats with prompts that you provide to create a comprehensive presentation that includes animations, images, and many other features. Moreover, Copilot automatically scrutinizes the web for appropriate visuals that you can conveniently incorporate into your Outlook, Word, or PowerPoint documents. Nevertheless, it's vital to keep in mind that you must comply with image licensing and copyright regulations.

Microsoft's Copilot AI can be used across all Microsoft 365 applications. In Outlook, it can generate message thread summaries and even compose emails based on past correspondence. In Excel, Copilot can visualize Excel data and analyze trends rapidly.

That's great news! When will enterprise customers be able to use these features of Copilot? Copilot has been undergoing testing since March of this year by twenty handpicked companies such as Chevron, Goodyear, General Motors, and Dow. In September, Microsoft announced that Microsoft 365 Copilot would be offered to enterprise customers on November 1, 2023.

Microsoft and the innovative team at start-up OpenAI — the developers of ChatGPT — are collaborating closely on the development of Microsoft Copilot. Microsoft has already invested nearly \$10 billion in OpenAI. According to Microsoft, OpenAI supplies the language model for Microsoft AI. ChatGPT 4 is the most recent version of this AI.

Productivity over branding

How does Microsoft Copilot impact corporate design? We recognize that Copilot improves productivity, whether by creating presentations, writing copy, or organizing our inbox. Unfortunately, the design of Office documents plays a secondary role or may even be irrelevant, as Copilot focuses its attention on content.

Copilot relies on pre-existing Office files and content within your organization. However, an all-too-frequent issue is that nearly 50% of all Office documents don't comply with the corporate design, as evidenced in studies like the Nielsen Company's Global Office Study. Furthermore, existing content may be outdated or inaccurate, in addition to any design issues.

In the worst case, Copilot may perpetuate past errors in every new Office document. Additionally, there is a risk that users might become less attentive since the content is automatically generated. This is counterproductive for a company's corporate design, to say the least.

In an internationally operating company with multiple locations, it's increasingly challenging to comply with corporate design standards. As individual teams work autonomously, the risk of deviation from corporate design rises significantly. Such deviations can harm brand awareness and corporate identity, causing considerable reputational damage.



The brand isn't strengthened by Microsoft Copilot

PowerPoint slides generated by Microsoft AI often fail to meet corporate design specifications. This can be attributed to improperly created past slides as well as PowerPoint's „Designer“ function, a relatively simple AI feature that has existed for years. Microsoft Copilot uses that old Designer AI to produce slides. Not only are that Designer function's potential uses limited, but its suggestions often clash with a company's design standards.

Only basic slides can be designed using the Designer function. But when a slide has multiple shapes and text fields, this feature's capabilities show their limitations.

In summary, Copilot employs tools unsuited for the intricate task of creating brand-compliant content.

So it's unsurprising that Microsoft 365 Copilot lacks the ability to manage templates, ensure design compliance and validation, or convert existing content to a new design.

Instead, the AI prioritizes productivity, particularly in text and speech, while neglecting design and layout. Users must make any design corrections manually unless dedicated Microsoft 365 add-ins, designed to automatically verify compliance with corporate design and directly correct deviations, are available.

Microsoft's Copilot AI doesn't function as a „single source of truth“. Rather than accessing real-time information from the Internet, Microsoft Copilot operates within the user's organization's isolated context through Microsoft Graph. That context includes a sizeable number of outdated templates and content. There's no specific source for Copilot to access up-to-date, design-compliant documents. Unless the AI is specifically instructed otherwise, outdated information is disseminated in a regurgitated format. Copilot could easily accelerate the spread of antiquated content and designs throughout

an organization. With over 60% of employees using Office documents for external communication on a regular basis, the potential for reputational harm increases rapidly when poor-quality content proliferates.

Microsoft Copilot: a double-edged sword

Microsoft's new AI aims to enhance the user experience while working with Microsoft 365. It remains to be seen if this promise will indeed come to fruition. But its potential impact is massive. Clearly, AI integration throughout the workplace will become the norm in the coming years, as very few software solutions will neglect the benefits of AI.

AI assistance can help users discover unused features in various Office applications. For instance, people typically use only 10% of PowerPoint's options, leaving 90% untapped. Copilot streamlines access to these features, but only if we give it the proper prompts and instructions for it to work effectively.

More broadly, Copilot maximizes its potential when composing, summarizing, and optimizing texts. Spelling and writing style are improved directly within Microsoft 365 applications.

Let's envision the future of Microsoft 365 with AI technology. One potential scenario is automatic delivery of AI-generated images tailored to your needs. Picture the ability to create unique visuals within Microsoft Office that precisely complement your content with minimal effort. This vision is already a reality with the Bing Image Creator.

When it comes to adhering to or implementing the corporate design, Copilot has limitations. This is because all Office applications, including Copilot, are designed to generate content rather than conform to approved design standards.

Another aspect that Microsoft 365 covers only rudimentarily is managing created content. It lacks a central source of truth or a central library in which all company-relevant, current content is collected and edited. Content management has never been one of the strengths of the Office applications. Yet, it's crucially important regarding compliance with design guidelines.

Microsoft Office add-ins offer solutions to improve business writing. These software solutions complement rather than compete with new Microsoft 365 Copilot. Together, Microsoft Copilot and add-ins contribute significantly to consistent corporate design, efficient workflows, increased productivity, and an enjoyable work experience.

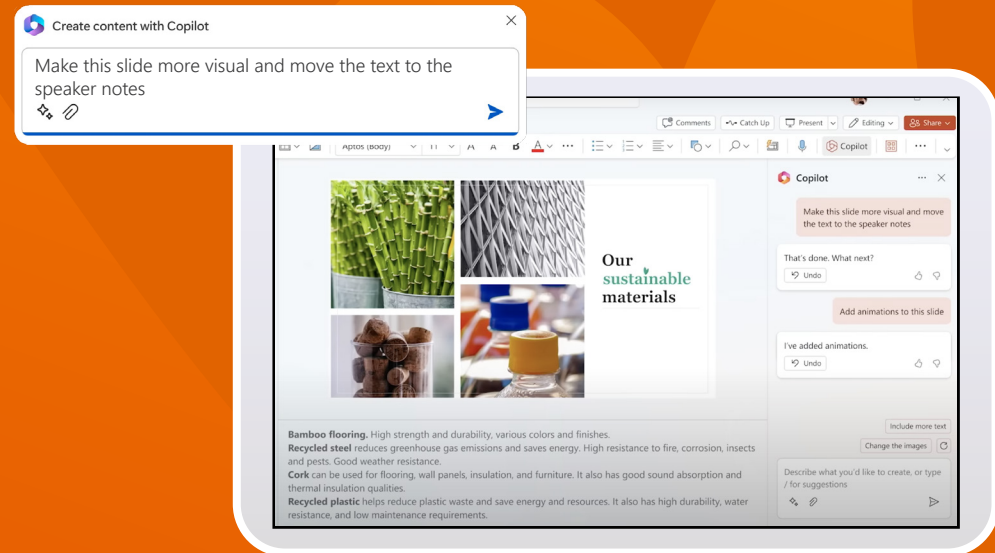
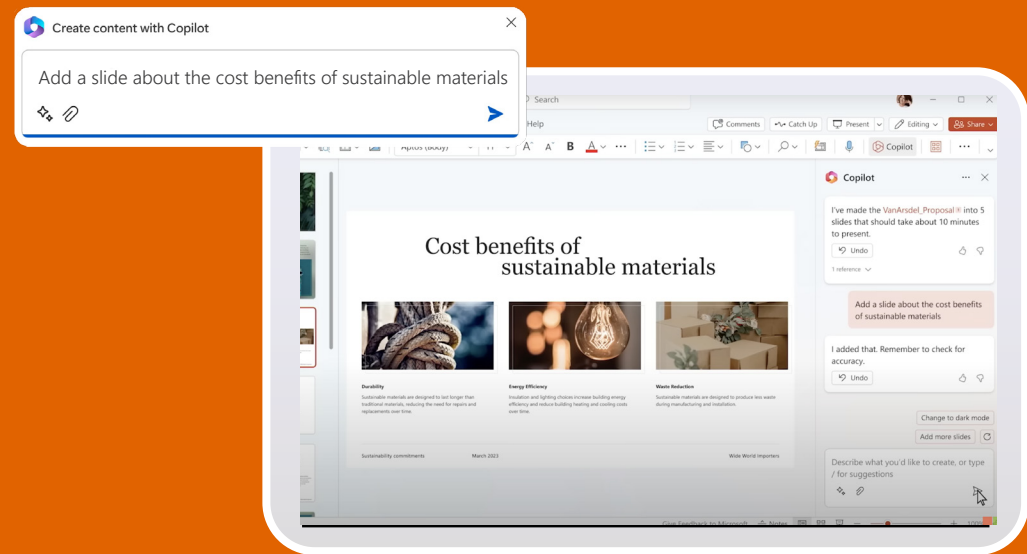
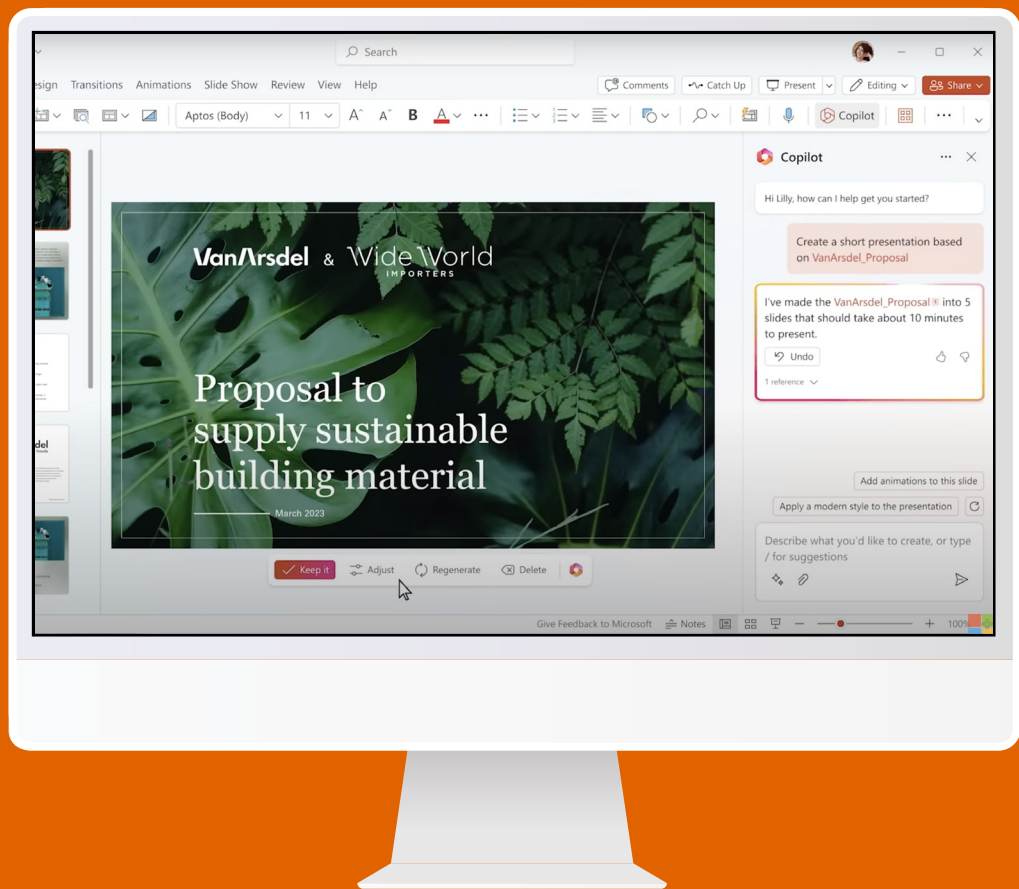
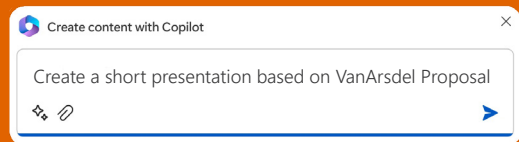


Functionality check: What Microsoft Copilot promises in everyday business



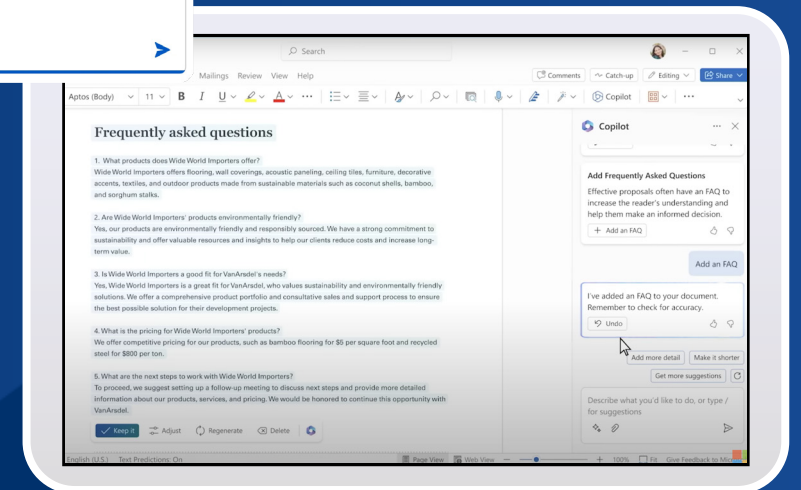
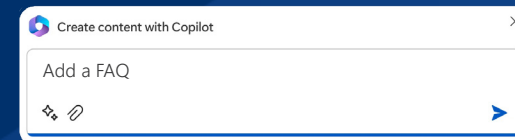
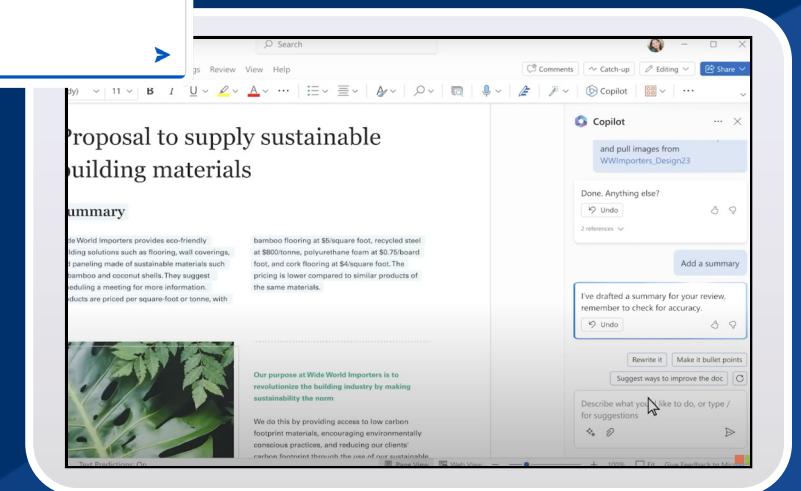
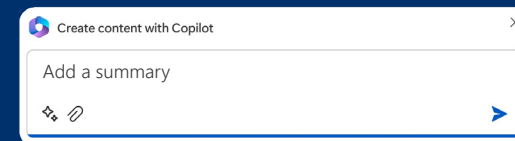
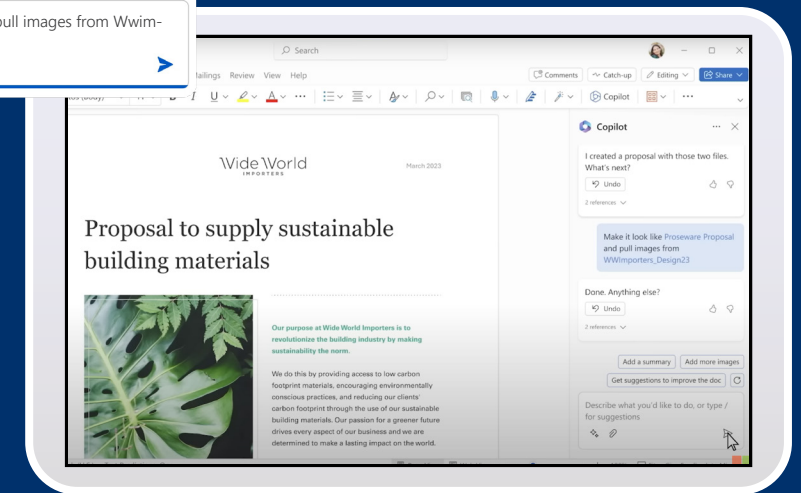
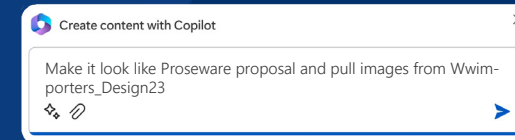
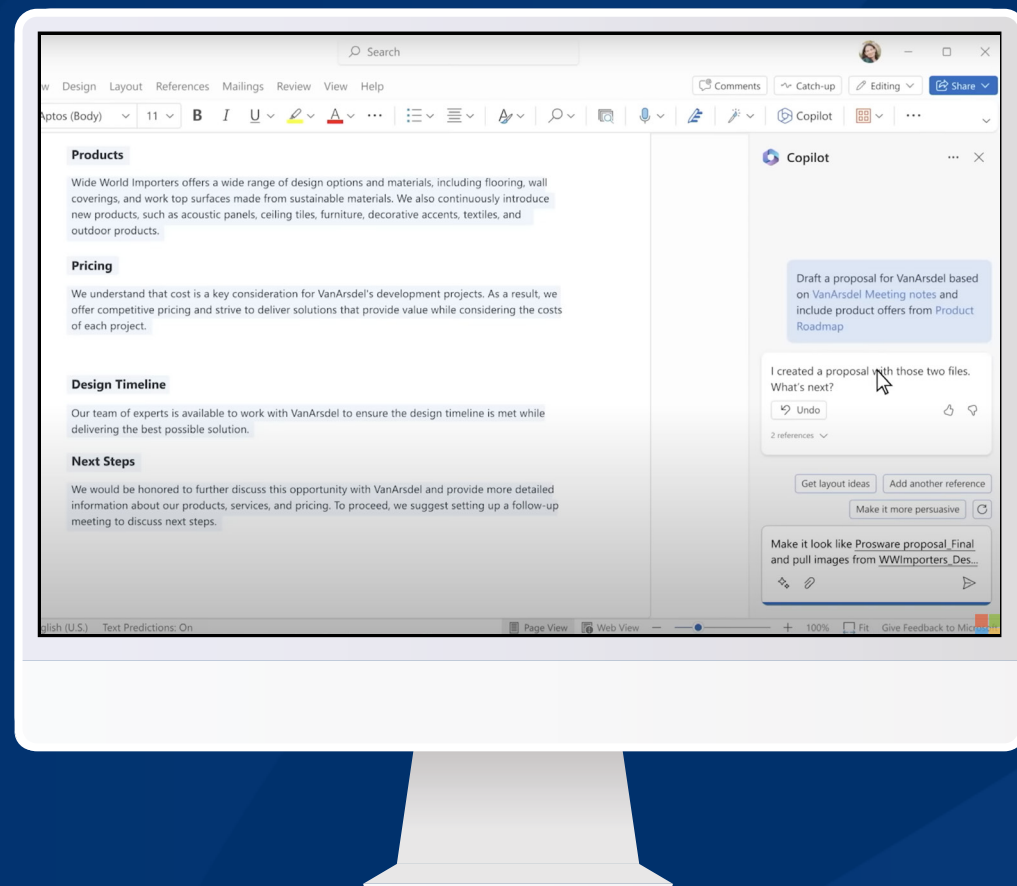
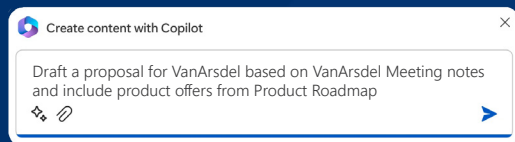
Microsoft Copilot promises to unleash the full potential of presentation software. As mentioned above, most users use only 10% of the features available. Copilot helps unlock the remaining 90% ... provided you give it the right instructions. For example, it can quickly present a variety of transitions and animations and suggest slide layouts and designs. You can also tell it to create simple presentations from Word documents.

It should be noted, however, that Copilot uses the abovementioned Designer function already included in the software for these tasks. This is also an AI, but it quickly reaches its limits when it comes to designing slides. Furthermore, it's not possible to create complex diagrams with Copilot.





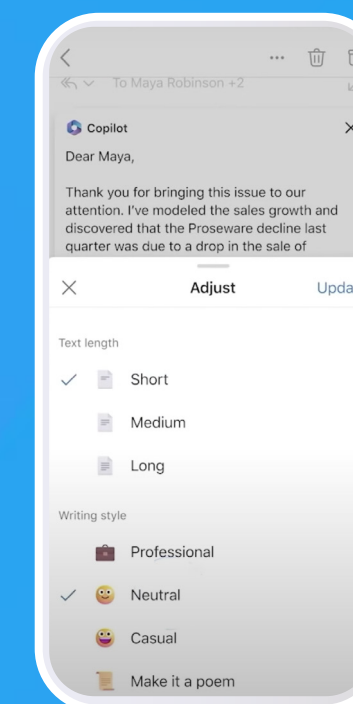
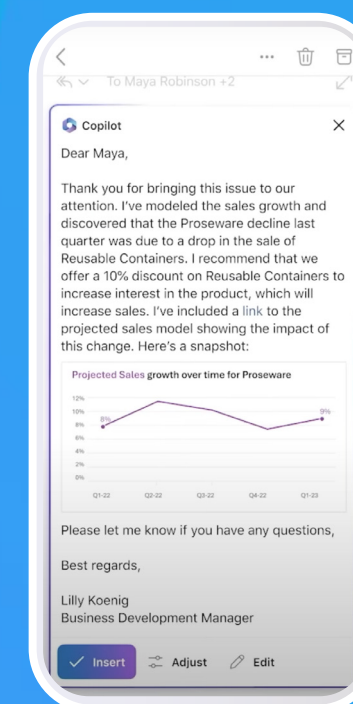
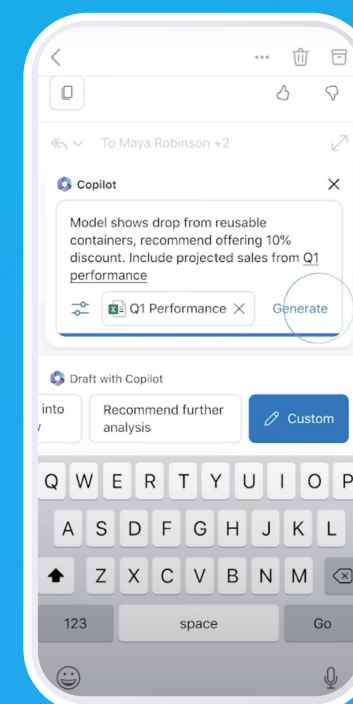
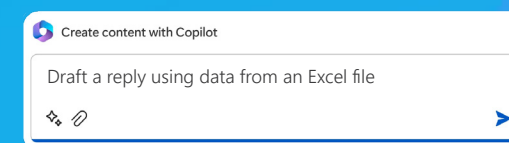
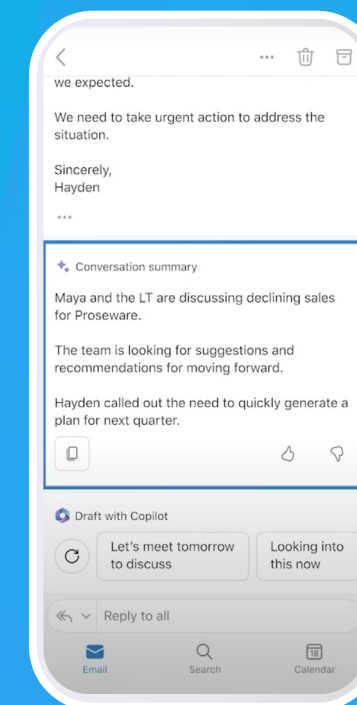
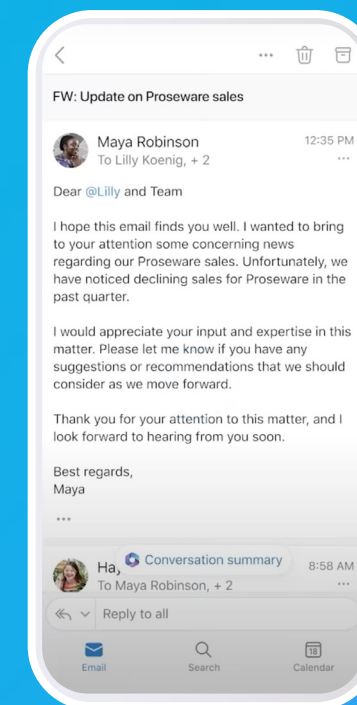
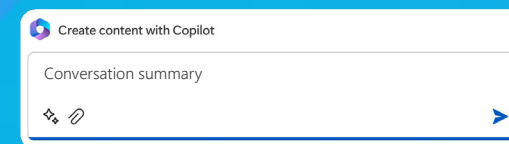
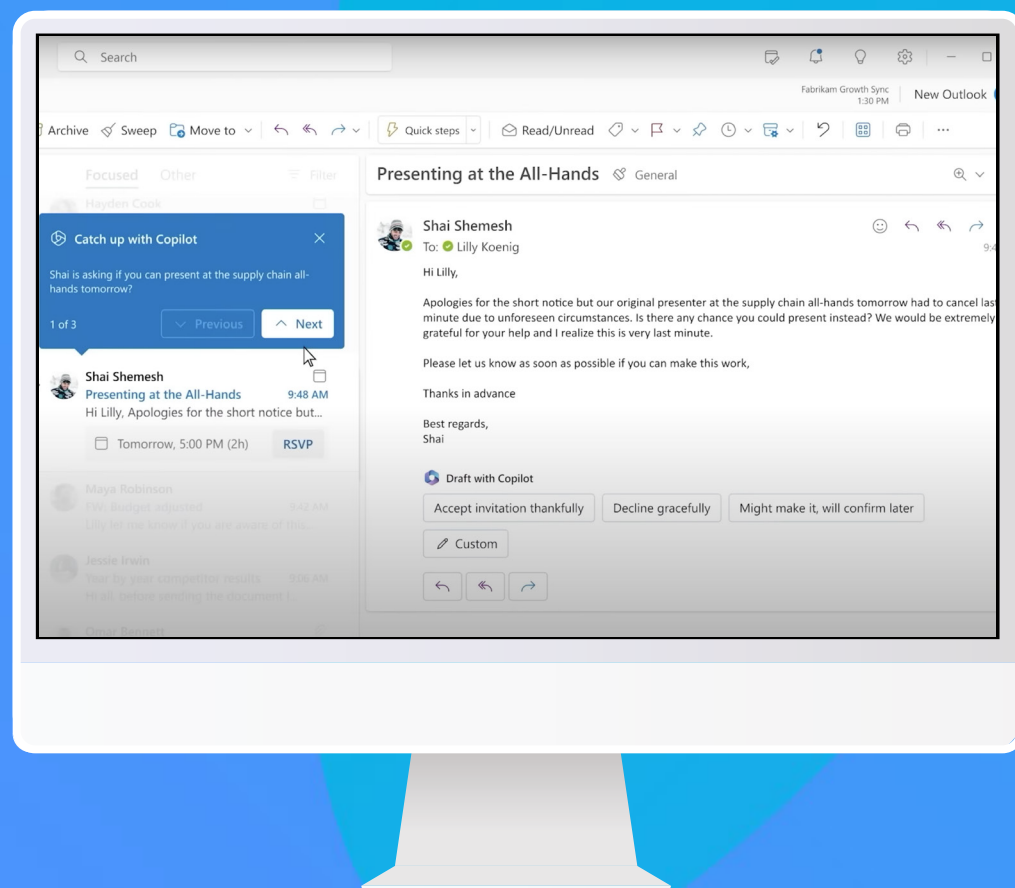
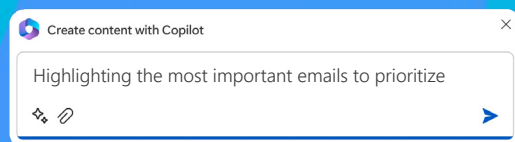
When it comes to working with text, Copilot really comes into its own. With the help of the AI, you can quickly summarize documents, shorten texts to the essentials, or have a speech written on a specific topic based on previous e-mail correspondence. The AI can insert speaker cues (pauses, eye contact, hand movements, etc.) into the script. Copilot can also create FAQs on a topic or generate a complete draft text for a proposal. It can analyze information from your company and optimize the text, giving you feedback on how to strengthen arguments or fix inconsistencies.



Outlook

Copilot also provides useful assistance in Outlook. You can ask the AI to compose and reply to emails based on bullet points. It can refine a draft in terms of tone, salutation, content, and so on. The AI personalizes the email using information from your calendar, emails, chats, and contacts.

Microsoft Copilot also helps you manage your inbox by organizing emails, showing priorities, or filtering the most important content from a long correspondence.





Because Microsoft Copilot works across applications, you can have it create a tabular summary based on different sources of information, such as Word documents or other spreadsheets. It can analyze data and trends, then suggest formulas based on your questions. It can also create reports. The AI will use information from various sources to highlight opportunities and risks. Another practical application is to create a SWOT analysis.

Create content with Copilot

Analyse this quarters business results and summarize three key trends

	D	E	F	G	H
	Discount Band	Units Sold	Manufacturing Price	Sale Price	Gross Sale
g Products	Low	4345	\$10	\$352	\$1,5
g Products	Low	4245	\$10	\$352	\$1,4
g Products	None	4124	\$10	\$352	\$1,4
g Products	Medium	3954	\$10	\$352	\$1,3
g Products	Low	4952	\$10	\$127	\$6
	Low	4903	\$5	\$127	\$62
Products	Low	1954	\$270	\$302	\$59
g Products	High	1990	\$220	\$302	\$60
ckaging	Low	1254	\$3	\$380	\$47
ckaging	Medium	1465	\$224	\$302	\$44
ckaging	Medium	1410	\$120	\$302	\$42
Products	Medium	1369	\$224	\$302	\$41
ckaging	Medium	1052	\$3	\$380	\$39
ckaging	Low	980	\$312	\$380	\$37
ckaging	Medium	1298	\$120	\$302	\$39
ckaging	None	954	\$3	\$380	\$36
g Products	Low	2785	\$110	\$127	\$35

Copilot

results and summarize three key trends

Key trends:

- Sales are trending up for all customers, except Proseware which is down this quarter.
- Manufacturing costs are down this quarter after an increase in Q3.
- Low discount products made up nearly half of total sales last month.

Filter Discount Band to Low

Add a margin column

Ask a question or request, or type '/' for suggestions

Create content with Copilot

Show me a breakdown of Proseware sales growth

time for Proseware

Product	Q1-22	Q2-22	Q3-22	Q4-22	Q1-23
Products	12%	12%	10%	8%	13%
Engineering	9%	11%	15%	5%	13%
Products	7%	10%	11%	6%	4%
Products	15%	18%	18%	10%	17%
Products	10%	14%	9%	5%	20%
Support	7%	11%	6%	15%	8%

time for Proseware

Country	Q1-22	Q2-22	Q3-22	Q4-22	Q1-23
Products	12%	12%	10%	8%	13%
Engineering	9%	11%	15%	5%	13%
Products	7%	10%	11%	6%	4%
Products	15%	18%	18%	10%	17%
Products	10%	14%	9%	5%	20%
Support	7%	11%	6%	15%	8%

Create content with Copilot

Help me visualize what contributed to the decline in sales growth

time for Proseware

Product	Q1-22	Q2-22	Q3-22	Q4-22	Q1-23
Products	12%	12%	10%	8%	13%
Engineering	9%	11%	15%	5%	13%
Products	7%	10%	11%	6%	4%
Products	15%	18%	18%	10%	17%
Products	10%	14%	9%	5%	20%
Support	7%	11%	6%	15%	8%

time for Proseware

Country	Q1-22	Q2-22	Q3-22	Q4-22	Q1-23
Products	12%	12%	10%	8%	13%
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Products	15%	18%	18%	10%	17%
Products	10%	14%	9%	5%	20%
Support	7%	11%	6%	15%	8%

Create content with Copilot

What would have happened if Reusable Containers had maintained the prior quaters growth rate

the prior quarter's growth rate?

Total growth for Proseware in Q1 would have been 9% instead of 1%.

I can create a model for the growth for Reusable Containers with Q1-23 growth rate equal to Q4-22.

This is how I produced the result:

- First, I copied the Proseware Sales growth by product table.
- Next, I located the Q1-23 growth rate for "Reusable Containers", which was originally 9%.
- I replaced that -9% value with 6%, which was the growth rate for that product in Q4-22, and the formula in the "Total Growth" row updated to reflect the new growth rate of 9%.

Model: "Reusable Containers" with Q1-23 growth rate equal to Q4-22

Product	Q1-22	Q2-22	Q3-22	Q4-22	Q1-23
Biodegradable Cleaning Products	3%	4%	6%	10%	5%
Compostable Food Packaging	9%	11%	15%	5%	13%
Reusable Containers	7%	10%	11%	6%	6%
Reusable Water Bottles	15%	18%	18%	10%	17%
Natural Personal Care Products	10%	14%	9%	5%	23%
Sustainable Snack Packaging	7%	11%	6%	15%	8%
Total Growth	8%	11%	10%	7%	9%

This is what the projected trend would look like:

12%
6%
0%

Q1-22 Q2-22 Q3-22 Q4-22 Q1-23

Add chart of Sales growth by Country

Project profit for Canada

Create content with Copilot

Show me the impact this would have had on the growth sales trends for Proseware

time for Proseware

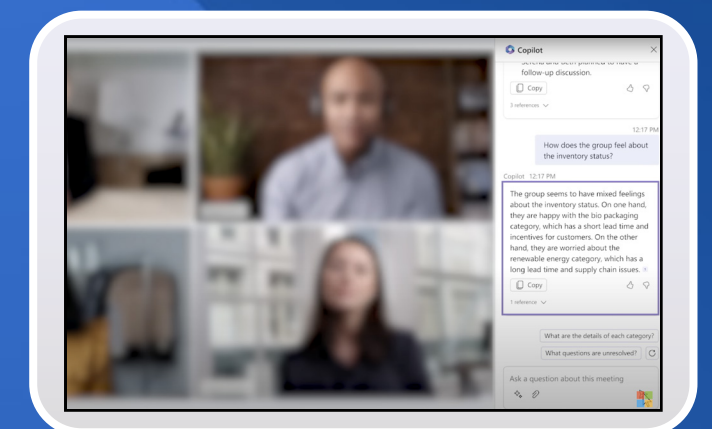
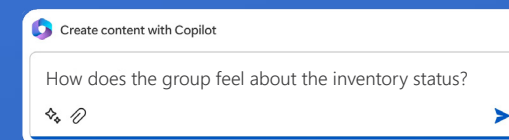
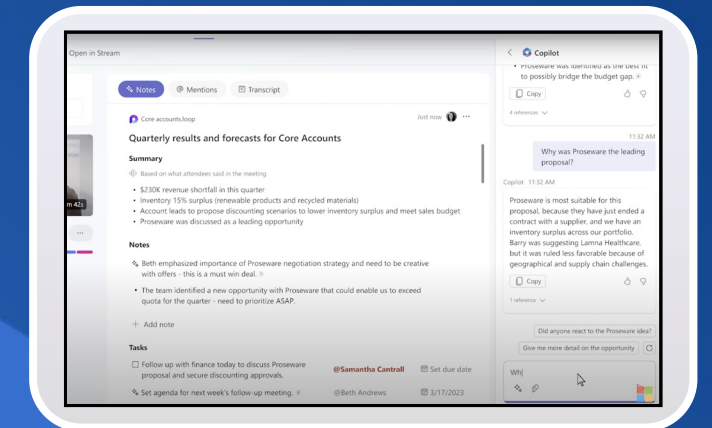
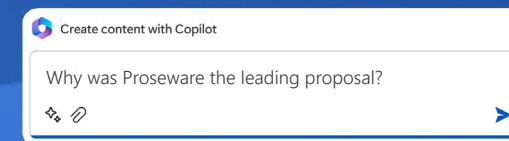
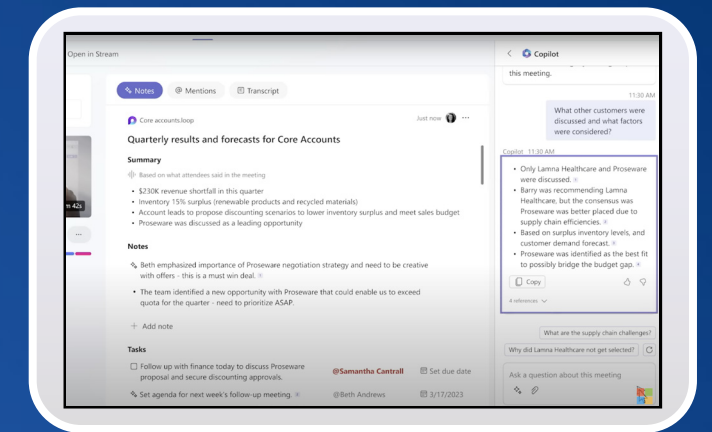
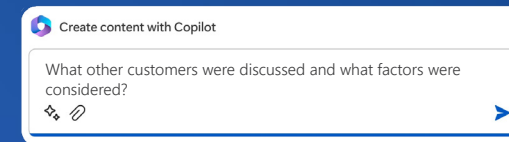
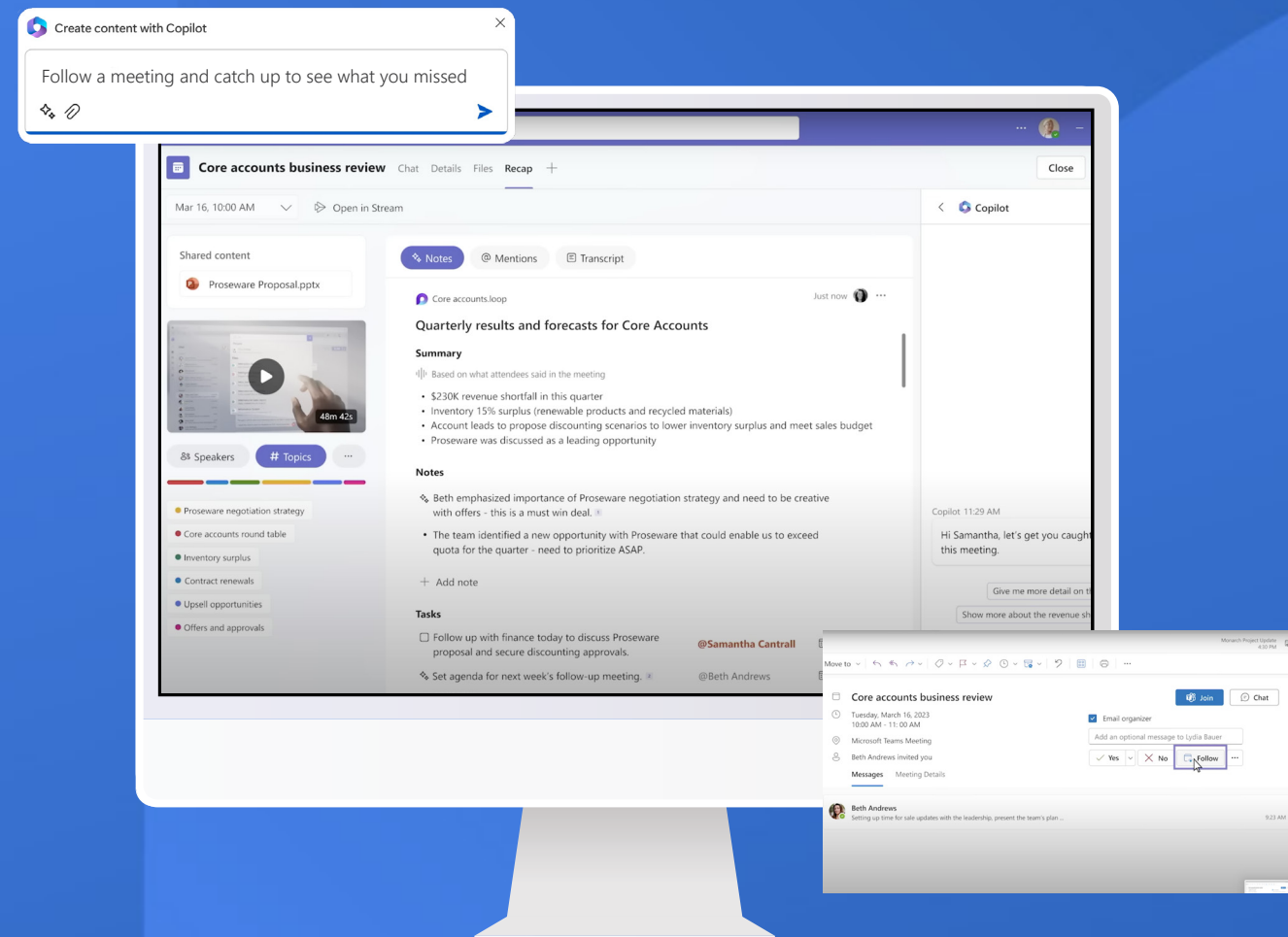
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Products	10%	14%	9%	5%	20%
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Microsoft Teams

Who writes the meeting notes? Copilot to the rescue! Even during a meeting, the AI can write a summary in real time. If you can't attend, Copilot provides a summary of the meeting, including any decisions made. It can even describe the mood during the meeting. How? It relies on the facial expressions and reactions of the participants. After the meeting, the AI creates, tracks, and distributes tasks, and helps you meet deadlines by sending reminders.



Prompts: trust is good, control is better

Caution! Although Microsoft Copilot is promising, keep in mind that the quality of the results depends on the input. This means that you should think carefully about what and how you ask Copilot anything. In many cases, prompts could get so complicated that you'd end up typing more in prompts than if you just created the content yourself. For example, in complex business presentations, how many inputs and corrections are required before the result is achieved? Sometimes long commands would need to be typed when the same result could be achieved with just a few clicks.

In addition, it's essential to manually check the content at the end. The results come from a statistical model, so it's not guaranteed that they're always 100% correct.



Tech insight: Microsoft Copilot and privacy

The ability of artificial intelligence to evolve on its own makes it very interesting, but also raises concerns. As an AI, Copilot uses a large amount of data to develop and train its capabilities. Through Microsoft Graph, Copilot has real-time access to all enterprise content stored in an organization's Microsoft cloud. This includes emails, documents, PowerPoint slides, calendars, chats, contacts, and meeting minutes. The AI generates results from the enterprise's content and the work context. Microsoft's Copilot AI independently operates Office applications and works across applications, increasing its potential efficiency throughout workflows. But this raises concerns about data security, data accuracy, and copyright. Exercise caution with respect to copyright. It isn't always clear on what data the AI training is based and whether it complies with any copyright limitations.

The balancing act of linking language models with corporate data without compromising data protection regulations is achieved appropriately by Copilot, to the best of our knowledge. As Microsoft Copilot will be incorporated into all Microsoft 365 applications, relevant data protection processes, compliance, and security guidelines are automatically followed. Microsoft says it adheres to all relevant compliance guidelines. It's vital to note that Microsoft Copilot doesn't use customer data from all Microsoft 365 tenants, only data from each individual user's Microsoft 365 cloud. Copilot displays information only for which the user has the appropriate access rights, preventing the possibility of data leaks, which are highly unlikely due to its authorization model.

Now it's really important: Cut costs with smart license management

To stay competitive in today's market, companies rely heavily on technological solutions. Software supply and demand in numerous business areas are substantial. Managing various software licenses requires significant administrative effort.

Providing software solutions by the IT department is increasingly complex and sometimes circumvented by business departments. Consequently, obtaining a comprehensive overview of company-wide software use and procurement is increasingly challenging or even unfeasible. Losing track of this fundamental business requirement risks unnecessary expenditure on unused licenses or unauthorized software. Intelligent license management cuts costs and diminishes security risks.

Who's in charge of managing licenses?

Who keeps track of the business' software? Each individual business unit on its own, the IT department, purchasing or management?

This question can't be answered in a blanket manner. Definition of roles and responsibilities in various departments and designation of the employees responsible for them are decisive factors for successful license management. Delegating software management ensures that all areas of the company are involved in license management, and potential risks get identified and assessed from different perspectives.

License managers play a key role. Depending on the company's size and organizational structure, they may be involved in day-to-day operations or strategic planning and coordination of license management. Regardless

of their focus, they serve as the primary contacts for all licensing-related matters in the company.

Effective license management represents a combination of processes, responsibilities, data preparation and processing, with the assistance of appropriate tools and extensive knowledge of licenses and products.

Step by step method to reduce costs

Several steps are needed to achieve savings. These include identifying, monitoring, optimizing, and managing software licenses.

1 Identify software licenses

Identifying all existing software licenses within the company is the first, crucial step. This can be quite challenging since companies often possess multiple software licenses that are dispersed among different departments and locations.

2 Monitoring software usage

The next step involves monitoring software usage to identify which licenses are actively in use and which aren't. It's important to include employee onboarding and offboarding processes in the overall software monitoring process. Are PCs or laptops stored with full a software complement when they're handed over to employees? Do devices get software resets when employees hand them back? Are SaaS licenses transferred when someone leaves, or is the number of licenses reduced?

Actual savings only come from removing unused software. Unfortunately, unused software often isn't uninstalled. That prevents licenses from being returned to the license pool for further use. Instead, new devices for new users are equipped with the same software, and possibly even new licenses are purchased.

To prevent unnecessary licenses, consider implementing an agreement with your provider company wherein licenses automatically return to the license pool after 30 days of inactivity. This will allow for alternative usage by another party if necessary.

3 License optimization

The inventory is followed by license optimization. Companies must ensure they pay only for the licenses they need and use. This involves (re)negotiating agreements, consolidating existing ones, comparing different license models, and cancelling unnecessary licenses. Three months before renewing any contract, check license usage. Ask your vendor for a license report if you can't view license usage.

4

License management

Finally, focus on license management. Companies should always have accurate records of all software licenses and changes. This ensures that expiring licenses are renewed in a timely manner. To ensure you don't get a nasty surprise when you've used up your license quota, you can agree a reserve with your vendor company. In this way, you ensure flexibility even when the agreed license quantity is reached.

An enterprise license can streamline administration by allowing for centralized management across multiple users or devices. This applies to both provisioning and updating as well. In comparison to individual licenses, enterprise licenses also offer a lower cost per user or device.

You don't have to perform the above steps manually. Various solutions for license management – also called Software Asset Management (SAM) – help companies efficiently manage their software licenses. These tools identify and inventory all programs used in the company, indicate underlicensing or overlicensing, and demonstrate potential for savings and optimization.

License models

There are numerous licensing models, which can make it difficult to keep track of them all. Understanding the key differences is essential to identifying targeted savings.

License terminology	Variations
License types	Single-user licenses and multi-user licenses (volume licenses)
License classes	Full version, upgrade, update, add-on, client access
License metrics	(Named) User, concurrent user, configuration item, CPU, core, VM, device, MIPS/MSU, node, session, site, transaction

The two most common licensing models are named licenses and concurrent licenses. Let's delve deeper into them.

Named licenses apply to each individual user.

While concurrent licenses tend to cost more than named licenses, there are often opportunities to save expenses with the concurrent license model. This is because multiple users can use one license code. This model specifically makes sense for companies where employees work at varying times, such as in shifts when staff members may access the software at different times. In contrast to the named model, the concurrent model necessitates only half the number of licenses for two work shifts.

Within the concurrent license model, the „peak model“ has become a popular billing practice. Even if a concurrent license doesn't specify a concurrent use limit, calculating the number of licenses used is necessary for billing purposes. The peak model records the highest number of concurrent resource uses during a specific period.

Modern application deployment solutions allow for monitoring software usage. Access to applications is restricted either to certain individuals or groups, or a defined upper limit of simultaneous accesses is in place. The former variant is typically used with the named license model. However, if the concurrent license model is in effect, the latter variant comes into play. In this case, an intelligent license management system logs the number of users that are currently using a program. When the maximum number of licensed users is reached, additional program initiations will be prevented until a license becomes available.

Everything under control

Software licenses are a significant expense, so companies must manage them systematically, particularly in IT departments. A Capgemini study found that around 58% of surveyed managers from Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in 2022 said that their company's IT budget would increase in 2023 in comparison to the prior year.

The foundation of effective control is software asset management along with a precisely defined procurement process and frequent cost control. This is achieved through an IT strategy that considers not only the business requirements for the next year, but also establishes a methodology and organizational framework for regularly implementing vendor and platform strategies, as well as corresponding policies. This is the best way to avoid hidden costs and risks caused by decentralized or re-coordinated software procurement.

Expenses associated with acquiring software, such as purchase cost, may make up only a small portion of overall costs. Unanticipated and unbudgeted expenses of owning and operating software, from installation to ongoing use, maintenance, and removal, represent a significantly larger cost factor than acquisition costs alone. Additional factors, such as necessary hardware (servers, more robust PCs, etc.), IT expenses (external service providers, consultants, etc.), and internal training, must also be considered.

With more employees working remotely from home, there's a growing need for standardized business software implementations. The focus shouldn't only be on applications that employees install independently on company computers or mobile devices used by field staff for work purposes.

Conferencing tools like Zoom and Microsoft Teams, shared word processing through platforms such as Google Docs, and company software on personal laptops while working from home have become

widespread. While often introduced as a quick fix, these practices are frequently poorly documented and are established as unofficial routines. They may work temporarily, but data protection concerns, cyber-attacks, or potential violation of software license agreements can pose risks.

Intelligent license management prevents the latter and helps reduce costs while efficiently managing IT budgets.

One software suite that can replace many add-ins

Simplify your Microsoft 365 environment by replacing many other add-ins with empower®. The result? Reduced complexity, lower costs, and access to first-class functionality for your users.





Initiate the change:

What to look for when replacing legacy software

Proven and valuable, yet detrimental: legacy software jeopardizes data security and corporate expansion. Many companies possess a historically evolved IT infrastructure, consisting of numerous interfaces, systems, and custom-built solutions. This multifaceted framework frequently hinders innovation and impairs digital transformation.

Legacy systems consist of outdated server and client software and hardware that've been in use for a long time and no longer meet modern standards. Technologically speaking, it's crucial to replace them with contemporary versions as soon as possible. Unfortunately, organizations often cling to these legacy systems.

Never change a winning team

In one out of ten companies, over 75 percent of their existing systems have been in use for a considerable amount of time. 34 percent of companies have a legacy system proportion ranging from 50 to 75 percent. In 10% of companies, over three-quarters of their current systems have been in use long-term. (These metrics derive from the „Legacy Modernization 2022“ study by CIO and COMPUTERWOCHE, which polled 339 executives from the DACH region.)

Legacy systems can cause various problems, such as high maintenance costs, poor usability, non-compliance, insufficient security, and

data silos that hinder integration with other systems. They can make connecting to cloud-hosted systems challenging and inefficient, if even possible at all. Legacy systems increase expenses, impede progress, and decrease agility.

These legacy components are often still in use, whether due to the fear of losing knowledge, the significant work required to implement a new solution, or their individual tailoring to business processes. They frequently serve as key components forming the foundation for more intricate systems and are therefore not easily replaceable.

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Self-made software risks using the example of template management

In numerous business sectors, it’s common to encounter self-developed solutions that serve various purposes, like content creation, data management, communication, and collaboration.

A major category of self-made solutions is template management in Microsoft Office. Home-grown macro-based templates remain prevalent in numerous companies. Does this ring a bell? With appropriate scripts or command sequences, those templates may insert location and profile data, along with text modules, and automatically arrange them in the proper sequence without the need for manual insertion in Word documents and similar applications. Likewise, macros frequently facilitate the insertion of email signatures.

While macros may certainly improve workflow efficiency, they come with their own set of drawbacks and risks that must be considered.

Security risk

Macros may include hazardous code, which can activate viruses, malware, or other malevolent operations. Opening an unfamiliar document with such a macro will compromise the computer and vital information.

Confidentiality issues

Macros can collect users’ sensitive data from a document and transmit it to third parties without their knowledge. That can cause data breaches and confidentiality issues.

Lack of interoperability

Macros are stand-alone solutions that often don’t connect to other systems or communicate in a coordinated way without end users having to do anything.

Compatibility issues

Macros are often tied to specific Office application versions and can only run within the software in which they were developed. This can make it challenging to migrate macros across different systems and applications. Incompatibilities may arise if a macro is used in an older or newer version of the software, leading to potential malfunctions or data loss.

Maintenance effort

Macros require maintenance, especially when requirements change or software is updated. They must be reprogrammed to remain compatible with new versions of Office software.

Troubleshooting and debugging

Finding and fixing errors in macros is time-consuming and challenging. A small error in the code can lead to unexpected problems and even malfunction of the entire application.

Reliance on technical expertise

Creating complex macros usually requires programming skills or at least basic knowledge of scripting languages. This can lead to a dependency on technically skilled employees and cause problems when they leave the company.

Replace home-grown template management solutions

Once the decision has been made to replace home-grown solutions with a new template management system, and the goals and requirements have been clarified, it's critical to develop a migration strategy.

Upgrading to a modern, sustainable template solution requires project management skills and close collaboration between IT and the business departments that use the software daily.

1

Selecting the migration method

There are several approaches to making software replacement as smooth as possible. The choice depends on the company's IT infrastructure and corporate culture.

- **Successive replacement:**
In this approach, software components are gradually upgraded while the legacy system is gradually phased out. This method allows continuous functionality testing, and flexibility if unexpected requirements arise. The business impact of each change can be evaluated to ensure seamless integration into the IT landscape. But this approach requires time and organizational effort, as the legacy solution may not be flexible enough to allow a smooth, sequential replacement.
- **Temporarily running parallel:**
A popular strategy is to run both systems in parallel for a limited time. While this requires simultaneous maintenance of two systems, it provides direct comparisons and a fallback option. Employees can slowly and continuously get used to the new system and the associated workflows. The shorter the parallel operation, the better. Once the new system is fully implemented, the legacy system can be turned off. However, it can also suffer from poor end-user adoption if people continue to use the legacy software because it's what they're used to and don't want to make the effort to change.
- **Immediate replacement:**
In this approach, the new system replaces the old one in a single step without a transition phase. This method is extremely efficient, but also risky. It requires extensive planning and preparation. It's used, for example, when data is processed or stored differently in the new system.

The good news: There are innovative solutions for [managing templates in Microsoft 365](#) that integrate ➡ seamlessly with other systems, are updated regularly, and increase user efficiency.

2 Data migration

Data migration must be carefully planned, prepared, and executed. Extensive data preparation is required to ensure a smooth migration to the new system. The goal is to prepare data and content so that it can be used optimally in the new applications. This includes structuring, cleansing, transforming, and merging data from different sources.

Especially in large companies with many subsidiaries, customization and corporate design are often necessary when setting up a template management solution. All employees must have easy access to up-to-date design-compliant templates, appropriately customized to their business needs and locale.

3 Training and support

Before making the new template management system available to users, an introduction and training session is highly recommended. Address questions such as „Where do I find which template?“ „How do I use them?“ „Who can upload new templates or edit existing ones, and how?“

Both internal and external levels of support should be established, with designated points of contact for further questions and problem resolution.

Full speed ahead into the future

It pays to modernize legacy software or replace home-grown solutions, even if the initial effort and cost is significant. Relying on modern and secure technologies will deliver long-term advantages in terms of scalability, performance, and compatibility. A modern, agile IT infrastructure that can adapt to changing needs is essential to successfully manage digital transformation and keep pace with technological advances.

With careful planning and preparation, and the involvement of the relevant departments, the replacement can be carried out successfully and day-to-day work will be more efficient.

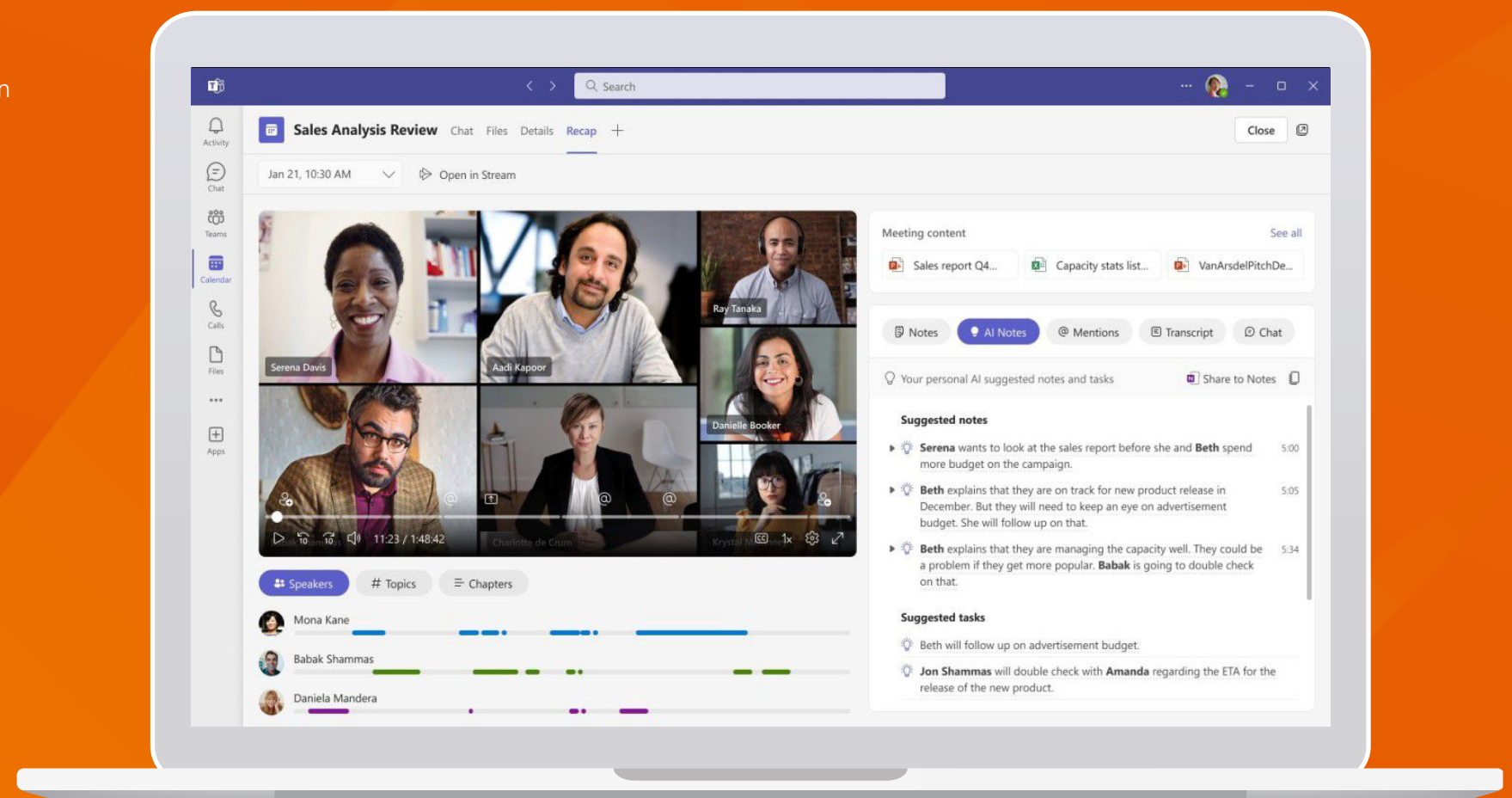
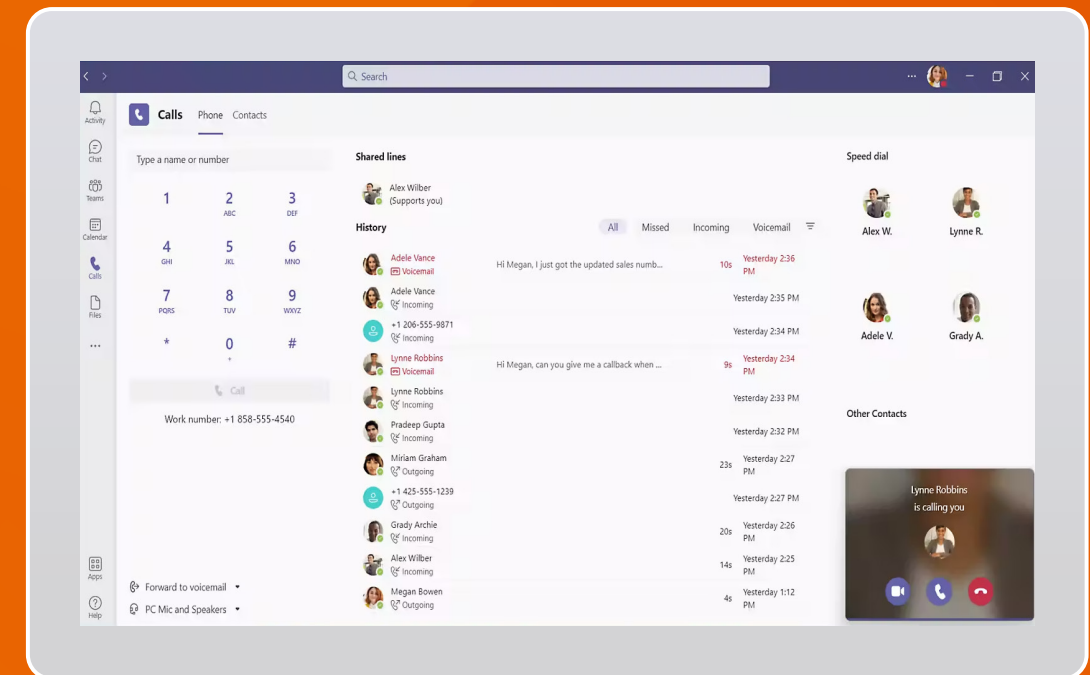


Artificial Intelligence in Teams Premium: Automated protocols in practice

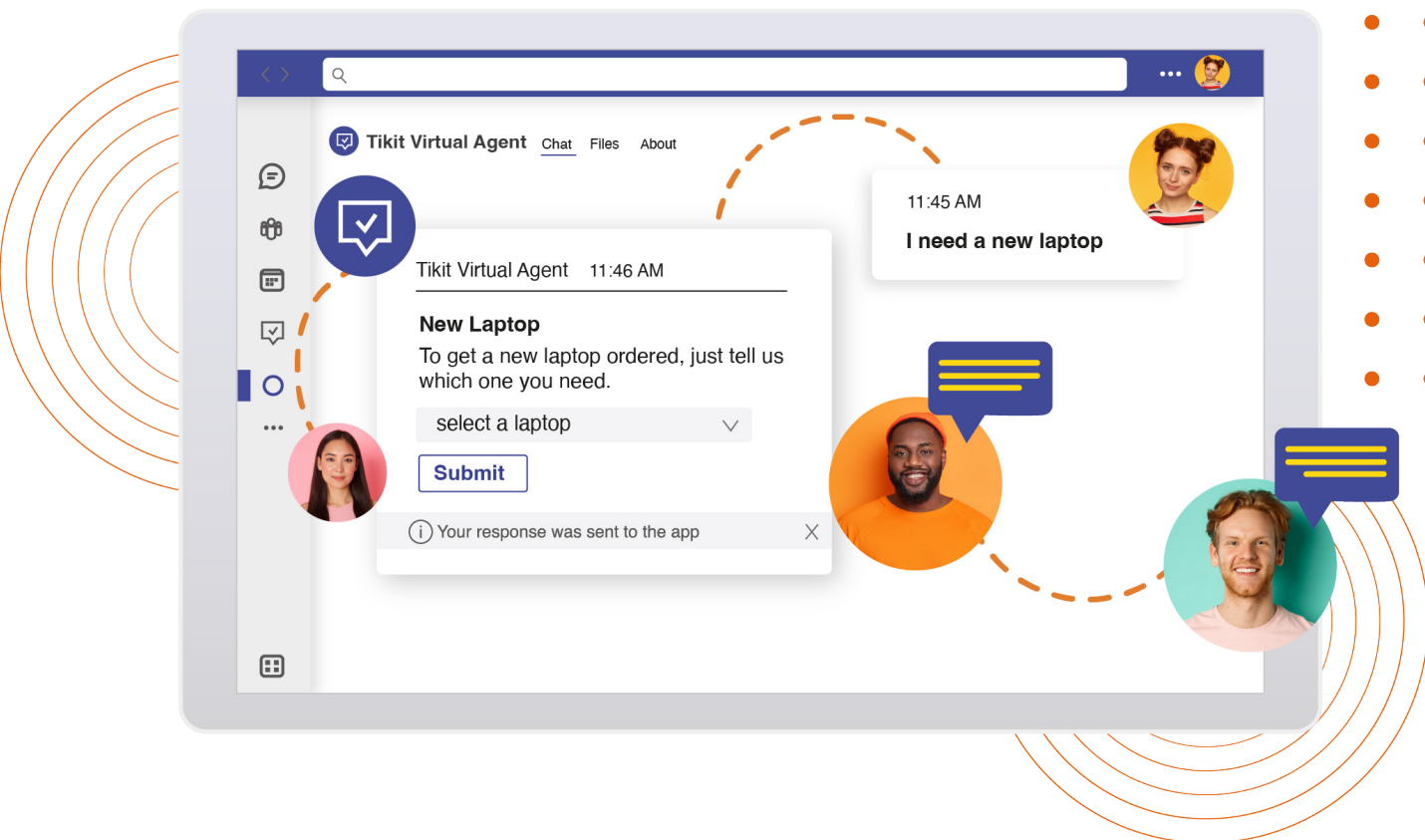
Does this problem sound familiar? A decision is made in a meeting, but after the fact, no one seems to remember the details of the decision. Even worse, disagreement about what was decided leads to new discussions and wasted time. That process can hardly be surpassed in terms of inefficiency!

Taking minutes during or after meetings and sharing them with all participants is common practice in most organizations. Now there's a welcome development in this area: modern AI capabilities in digital meeting tools are taking over the tedious task of taking minutes by hand! This is a great innovation because, frankly, no one is rushing to take over this task.

But how well do these features work in practice? Microsoft Teams Premium uses the latest technologies, such as large language models—in this case ChatGPT from OpenAI—to make meetings smarter, more personal, and more secure. Microsoft Teams Premium requires a paid Teams subscription, which can be upgraded from the regular version for an additional fee. Interested parties can also try a free 30-day trial of Teams Premium (with 25 licenses).



Putting Teams' AI features to the test



At empower, we put Microsoft Teams Premium to the test. Over a period of 30 days, 25 colleagues tested the version in detail. Special attention was given to the auto-generated meeting notes, auto-generated tasks, and transcription.

It should be mentioned in advance that the intelligent summary can only be activated for meetings that are recorded and transcribed. Without transcription and recording, this function isn't possible. The correct language settings are also important.

The speaking time of the individual participants is displayed visually. Unlike transcription, the AI-supported notes should not only record the spoken word, but also interpret it and reduce it to the core statements. The proposed tasks are also derived from the content of the meeting.

Transcription: still room for improvement

In our experience, although the transcription tool recorded meetings in both German and English, the recordings often lacked precision. The tool occasionally distorted statements, leading to interpretation errors. The use of Anglicisms in German further complicated matters as it exacerbated the issue.

The tool achieved limited success in meetings with multiple participants. To ensure accuracy, it's beneficial to speak clearly and distinctly, avoiding any unnecessary complexity or confusion. But people rarely speak that way!

AI-generated meeting notes and tasks: From incomplete to unavailable

In many instances, AI notes weren't generated despite the recording and transcription of the meeting. When generated, the results were remarkably positive despite the questionable transcription quality. Nevertheless, about 50% of the suggested tasks were incomplete or incorrect due to the system's limitations.

These features are currently exclusive to English-only meetings, thus restricting our testing to the English-language AI notes and tasks. However, if the quality of the German AI notes matches that of the German transcriptions, our expectations aren't very high.

No time savings in everyday work yet

To summarize, the AI's transcription and note-taking capabilities proved to be nearly useless in German. On the other hand, notes taken in English-only meetings fared better. It's essential to ensure that the correct language settings are always used to achieve success with transcription and note-taking. Nonetheless, even with this precaution, satisfactory results weren't always guaranteed. Why are manual language settings necessary in AI-powered software and why doesn't the software recognize and adjust them automatically?

Further research is necessary to determine which features are universally available and which may vary depending on language or country. Additionally, companies should consider if it's appropriate to transcribe and make available every meeting and spoken word.

Our conclusion

The transcription and note taking features of Microsoft Teams Premium didn't provide any substantial benefits for our test group's daily work during the trial period. The proven method of actively participating in meetings, listening attentively, and manually creating to-do lists was satisfactory.

Nonetheless, there's significant potential in speech recognition technology for meetings with lengthy to-do lists or for getting a quick summary of the meeting's content when attendance isn't feasible. This hinges of course on substantial improvements in speech recognition capabilities in the applicable languages.

What AI features does Microsoft Teams Premium offer?

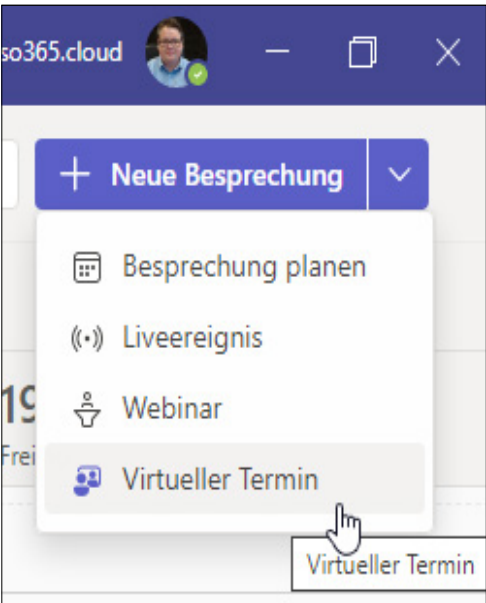
These are the new AI functions for meetings at a glance:

- With Teams Premium’s intelligent summary, participants get auto-generated meeting notes, recommended tasks, and personalized highlights.
- AI-generated chapters can divide meeting recordings into sections for easier content selection. Timeline markers facilitate navigation to identify name mentions, entry and exit times, and other participant contributions.
- Live translations for subtitles use AI technology to provide real-time translations in 40 languages, allowing all participants to read the subtitles in their own language if the meeting is organized by a Premium user.



Settings for confidential meetings

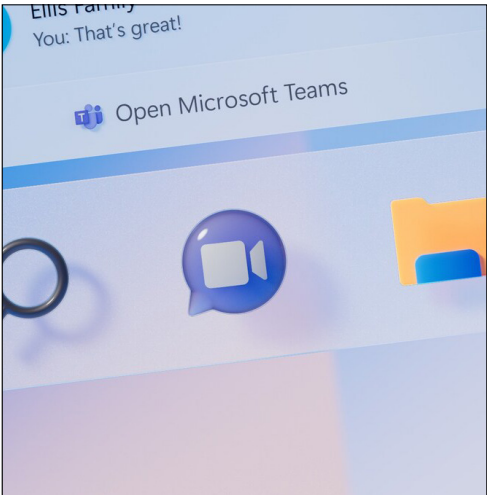
- New security measures, including the ability to add watermarks and limit recording capabilities.



Easier management of virtual appointments

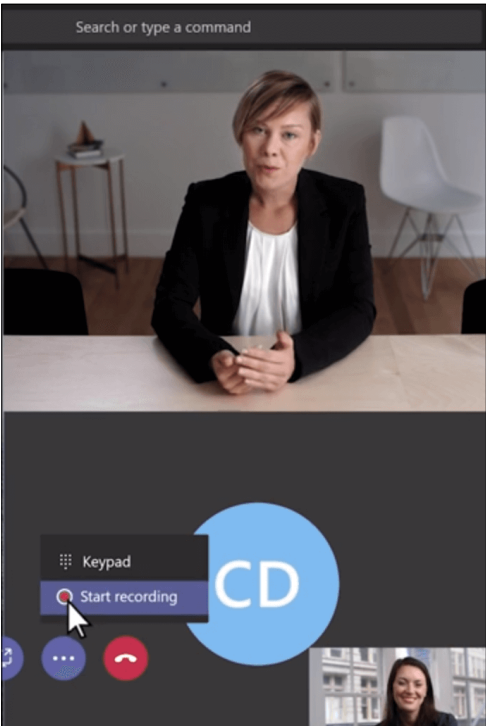
- Personalized customer experience through SMS appointment reminders, a company-branded meeting lobby, and seamless participation via a web browser.
- Simplified overview of virtual appointments enabling tracking of accessions and wait times, with chat features for pre-appointment communication and analysis.

In addition, Teams Premium also provides additional new features:



Company-specific appointment settings

- The option to incorporate corporate branding in meetings is available, including logos, specific colors, and branded backgrounds.
- Custom creation of meeting templates for IT administrators.



New options for webinars

- Virtual green room for preparation, for example for short briefings or test runs.
- Controls for professional event organizers and simplified, more dynamic interaction.
- Waiting list and manual approvals for participants, as well as setting registration start and end times.
- Integrated external media feeds.
- Automated reminder emails at designated intervals.



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