

Whitepaper

Microsoft 365 Copilot report

Between promise
and reality

empower 



Table of contents

02	Introduction
03	The test framework
05	Copilot in PowerPoint
13	Copilot in Excel
22	Copilot in Word
27	Copilot in Outlook
31	Copilot in Teams
35	Our conclusion

Introduction

Microsoft 365 Copilot, a generative AI integrated into Microsoft applications, promises a wide range of functions across the MS Office application suite. Depending on the Office application, Copilot can create documents and presentations, summarize meeting notes, perform analytics, and much more with a single click – at least if you believe Microsoft’s claims.

During the first Copilot presentation, Microsoft showed some impressive use cases. But how well do they work in the real world? We at empower put Microsoft 365 Copilot to the test and we’d like to share our findings with you.



The test framework

Ten empower employees spent a month testing Microsoft 365 Copilot. They tested numerous features, both according to the use cases communicated by Microsoft and on the basis of company-specific requirements.

In this report, we present the test results for the five most prominent applications: Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Teams, and Outlook. Each task was accomplished by typing an appropriate command into a chat window, also known as a prompt. You'll see how we formulated the prompts in detail and how well or poorly Copilot responded to them.

First, an important note: for this test, we used the first released version of Copilot from November 2023. This is important because we can expect regular updates in the future, which should improve Copilot continuously.





Copilot in PowerPoint

1. A new presentation on a specific topic

We started our test with a common PowerPoint use case: we wanted Copilot to create a presentation on a specific topic. In our case, we chose carbon neutrality.

Create a new presentation about carbon neutrality



Carbon Neutrality A Path to Sustainable Future

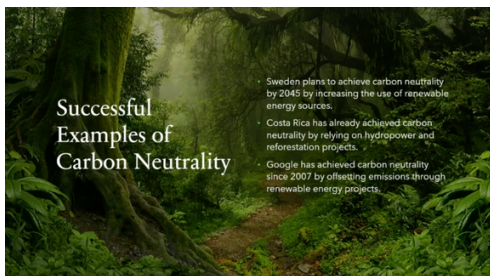


How to Achieve Carbon Neutrality?

Reducing carbon emissions through energy-efficient practices, using renewable energy sources, and investing in clean technologies.

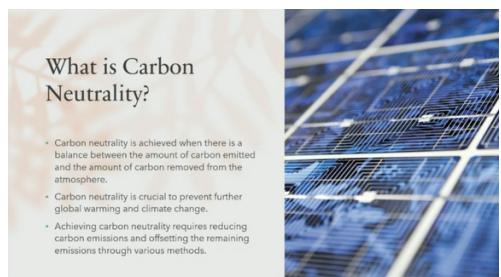
Offsetting remaining emissions through various methods such as carbon offsetting, afforestation, and reforestation projects.

Increasing public awareness and encouraging individuals and businesses to take action towards carbon neutrality.



Successful Examples of Carbon Neutrality

- Sweden plans to achieve carbon neutrality by 2045 by increasing the use of renewable energy sources.
- Costa Rica has already achieved carbon neutrality by relying on hydropower and reforestation projects.
- Google has achieved carbon neutrality since 2007 by offsetting emissions through renewable energy projects.



What is Carbon Neutrality?

- Carbon neutrality is achieved when there is a balance between the amount of carbon emitted and the amount of carbon removed from the atmosphere.
- Carbon neutrality is crucial to prevent further global warming and climate change.
- Achieving carbon neutrality requires reducing carbon emissions and offsetting the remaining emissions through various methods.



Conclusion

- Carbon neutrality is a crucial step towards a sustainable future.
- Achieving carbon neutrality requires reducing carbon emissions and offsetting remaining emissions through various methods.
- There are many successful examples of carbon neutrality around the globe, and we can all contribute to the fight against climate change.

The presentation took some time to create, but the result is impressive. It's well structured and contains all the essential elements. Copilot independently researched the information it needed. The presentation provides a solid foundation to build on.

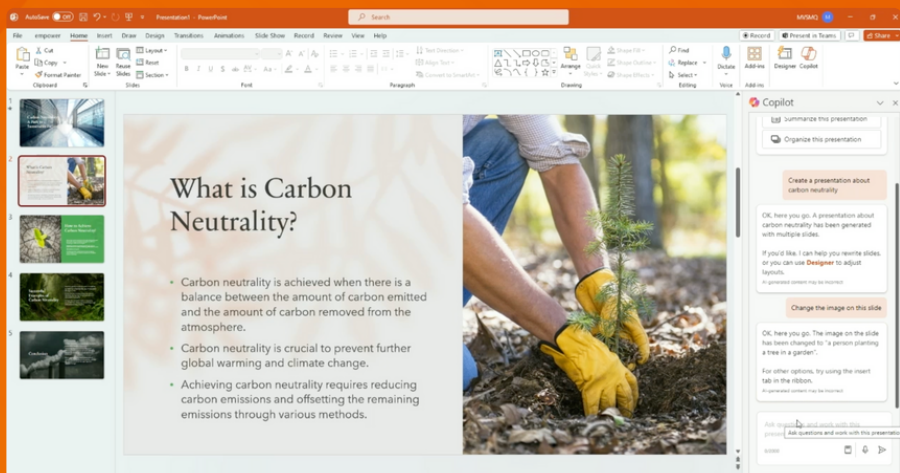
We then wanted to optimize the presentation. The image on the second slide didn't meet our expectations, so we asked Copilot to replace it. This was no problem.

Change the image on this slide



What is Carbon Neutrality?

- Carbon neutrality is achieved when there is a balance between the amount of carbon emitted and the amount of carbon removed from the atmosphere.
- Carbon neutrality is crucial to prevent further global warming and climate change.
- Achieving carbon neutrality requires reducing carbon emissions and offsetting the remaining emissions through various methods.



We also asked Copilot to create a slide with additional sources of information.

Insert a slide with additional resources



When it comes to creating a simple presentation on general topics in a standard design, Copilot in PowerPoint proved to be extremely useful and took over much of the research work. In principle, Copilot can access other data sources, such as the Internet and Microsoft Graph, and thus generate information not solely from the AI model itself.

That's a step forward compared to other AI chatbots, for example, ChatGPT (in the version used at the time of testing). Note, however, that there's no guarantee that the information provided is correct.

We'll see later if this use case is also suitable for presentations with company data in the corporate design.

2. Translating a slide into another language

How helpful is Copilot for translating PowerPoint slides?
We tested it and requested a Spanish translation.

Translate this slide into Spanish



The screenshot displays the Microsoft PowerPoint interface with a slide titled "Introducing Template Management in Microsoft 365". The slide content is as follows:

Introducing Template Management in Microsoft 365

Effective template management is essential for ensuring brand consistency in all business communication.

Microsoft 365 offers a range of tools to help automate the process, from creating templates to managing access permissions.

With empower® Brand Control, you can easily keep all templates and documents on-brand to ensure a consistent message across all departments and documents.

The Copilot sidebar on the right shows the translation process. It includes a prompt "Translate this slide into Spanish" and a "Send" button. Below the translation, it states "Working on a response for you..." and "Ask questions and work with this presentation".

The translated slide content is shown below:

La gestión eficaz de plantillas es esencial para garantizar la coherencia de la marca en toda la comunicación comercial. Microsoft 365 ofrece herramientas para ayudar a automatizar el proceso, desde la creación de plantillas hasta la gestión de permisos de acceso. Con empower® Brand Control, puede mantener fácilmente todas las plantillas y documentos de marca para garantizar un mensaje

There's nothing wrong with the quality of the translation text. However, Copilot only translated the body text and inserted the translation into both the text placeholder and the title placeholder. The title wasn't translated, but overwritten with the body text. The notes on the slides also weren't translated. We tested the process several times and had the same experience each time.

A standard use case for ChatGPT still seems to be a challenge for Copilot in PowerPoint, especially when it comes to correctly assigning the translations to the corresponding slide content. In our test, Copilot proved to be less reliable here.



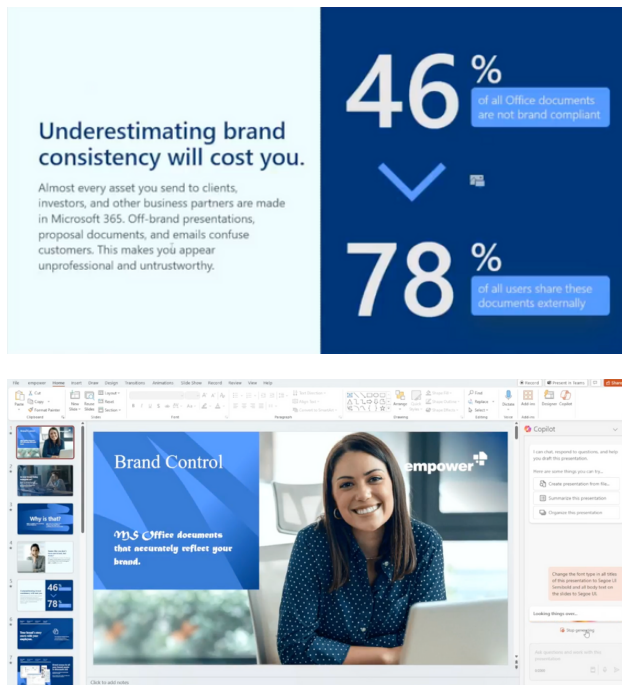
3. Brand consistency in a presentation

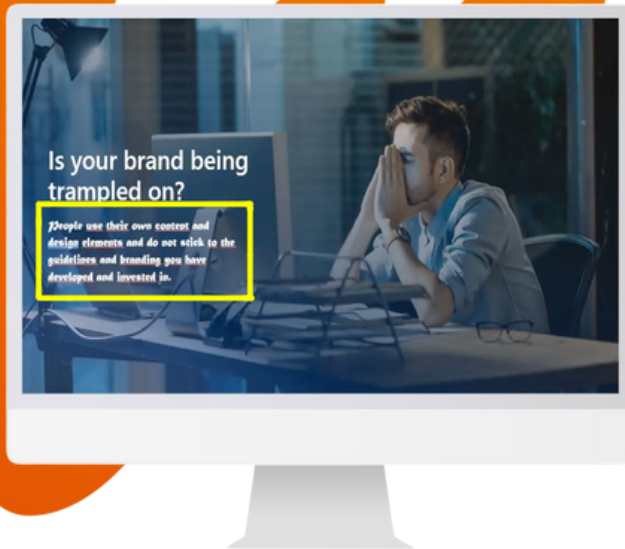
Since we, like most companies, strive for brand-compliant communication, we asked Copilot to help us prepare the presentation accordingly. We requested the use of our corporate font.

Change the font type in all titles of this presentation to Segoe UI Semibold and all body text on the slides to Segoe UI



The results were mixed:





We ran this test several times and came up with the same result. While Copilot did a good job on some slides, there were shortcomings on others. In some cases, Copilot changed the title, as shown in the figure, but not the text. It wasn't immediately obvious which text elements Copilot changed and which it didn't.

At this time, Copilot isn't a reliable solution for ensuring brand compliance in PowerPoint, even when using very precise prompts. After using Copilot, each slide needs to be checked individually and adjusted if necessary.

4. Inserting a slide from another file

In everyday business, it's common to reuse content from existing presentations in new presentations. We asked Copilot to insert a slide from another presentation, indicating exactly where the slide was located.

Please include a new slide. The Merck reference from this document ...



However, Copilot informed us that it couldn't yet comply with this prompt. That's surprising since Copilot should have access to all files that the logged-in user account can access via the Microsoft Graph.

Overall, Copilot's support in PowerPoint is still quite limited. Only in the first use case (creating a new presentation on a generic topic) did Copilot prove helpful and save us a time-consuming internet search. And bear in mind, always exercise caution

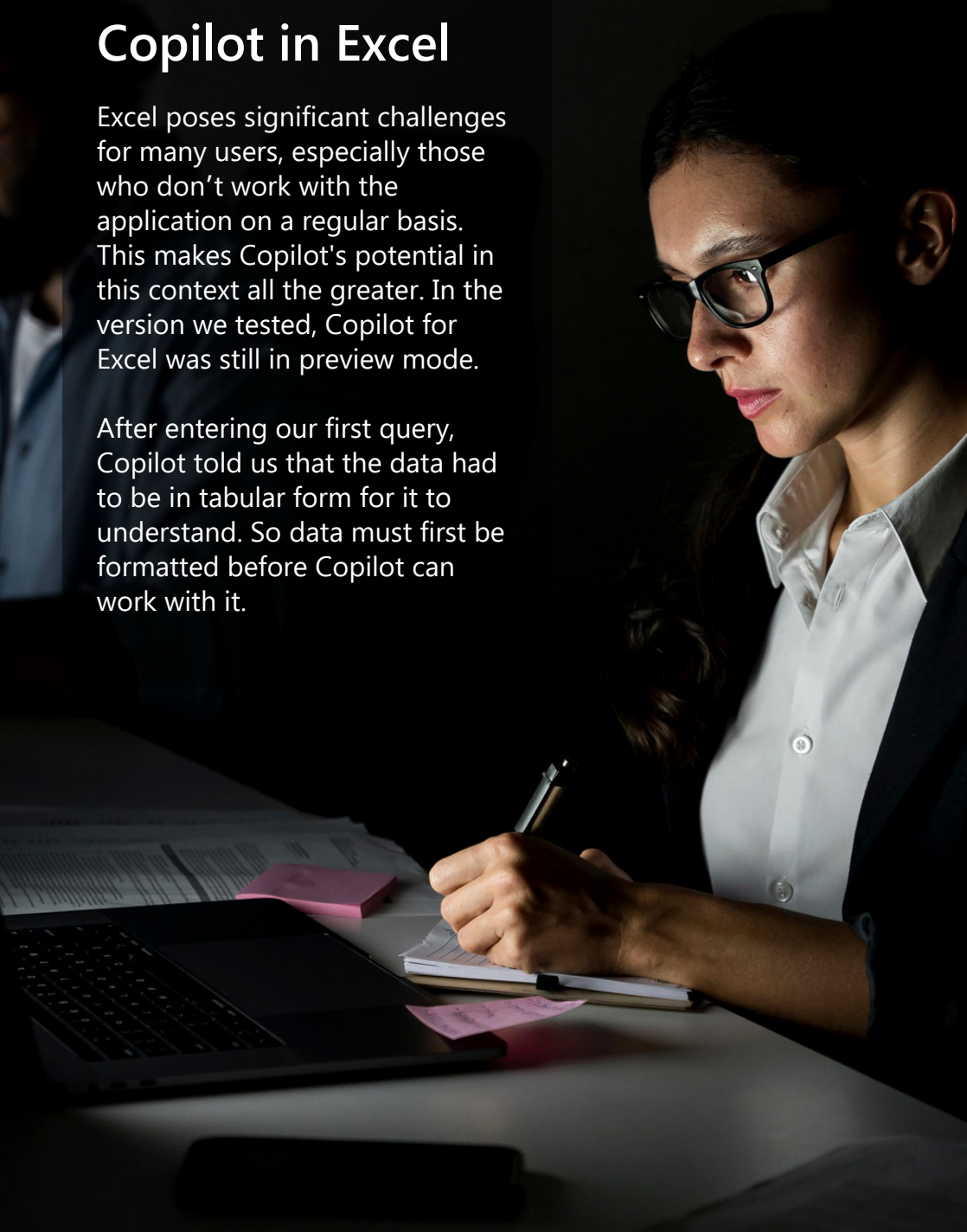
exercised regarding the completeness and accuracy of the information Copilot serves up – and indeed, any AI.

We feel that Copilot is most useful to create a new presentation from scratch, benefiting casual users like students or anyone who needs a draft to start out from. In our testing it proved less relevant in professional scenarios where experts create presentation content and the end user's effort focuses mainly on cumbersome formatting.

Copilot in Excel

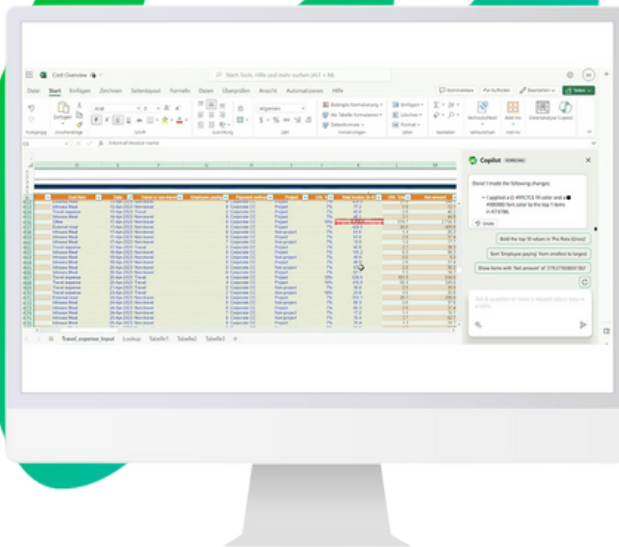
Excel poses significant challenges for many users, especially those who don't work with the application on a regular basis. This makes Copilot's potential in this context all the greater. In the version we tested, Copilot for Excel was still in preview mode.

After entering our first query, Copilot told us that the data had to be in tabular form for it to understand. So data must first be formatted before Copilot can work with it.



1. Data analysis and knowledge gain

Highlight the highest values in ,Total Invoice (in €)'



Copilot easily implemented a request to highlight a specific value in the table. In the chat area, Copilot also showed which cell was highlighted in color. This is especially helpful for large and complex tables.

We tested other data queries as well:

Bold the top 10 values in 'Pro Rata (Gross)'



	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O

Show only non-project expenses

Project expenses

Copilot easily handled simple analysis and sorting tasks. This is especially useful for people who don't use Excel regularly and have only basic Excel skills.

2. Data aggregation

We wanted to learn more about our data and asked Copilot for insights. The results were first displayed in the chat bar and could be pasted into a new worksheet using a prompt.

The image shows a Microsoft 365 Copilot interface with two overlapping windows. The top window displays an insight for 'Net amount' with a line chart showing outliers. The bottom window displays an insight for 'Project: Project' with a line chart showing outliers. Both windows include buttons for 'I see another insight' and 'Add all insights to grid'. A chat bar at the bottom contains the prompt 'Can I see another insight?'.

Top Window:

- Copilot VORSCHAU**
- Insights for net amount**
- 'Net amount' has 5 outliers.**
- Sum of Net amount
- Chart: Line chart showing Sum of Net amount over Date. The y-axis ranges from 500.0 to 3,500.0. The x-axis is labeled Date. There are 5 outliers marked with orange dots.
- Buttons: [I see another insight](#), [Add all insights to grid](#)

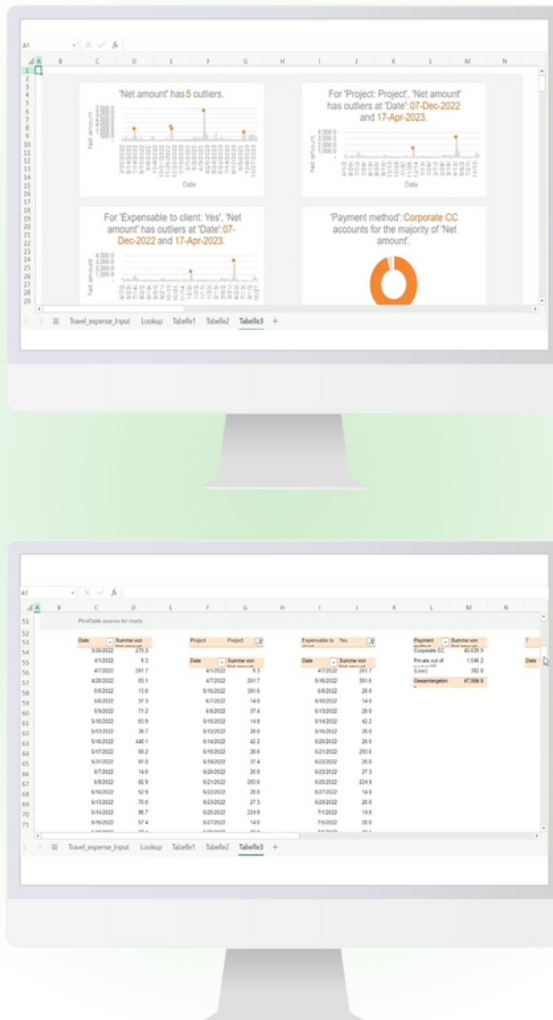
Bottom Window:

- Copilot VORSCHAU**
- For 'Project: Project', 'Net amount' has outliers at 'Date': 07-Dec-2022 and 17-Apr-2023.**
- Sum of Net amount
- Chart: Line chart showing Sum of Net amount over Date. The y-axis ranges from 500.0 to 3,500.0. The x-axis is labeled Date. There are 2 outliers marked with orange dots.
- Buttons: [Can I see another insight](#), [Add all insights to grid](#)

Chat Bar:

- Can I see another insight?

Add all insights to grid

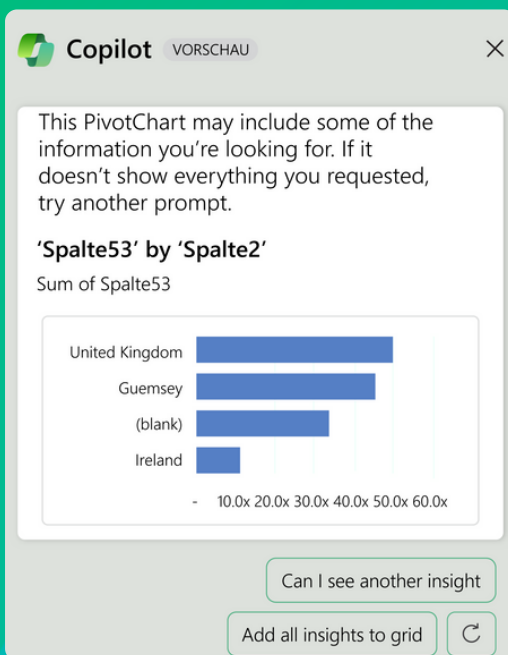


The results provided a good overview of the data. Copilot is especially helpful for this task if you have only basic Excel skills or aren't a data analyst.

3. Complex Excel models

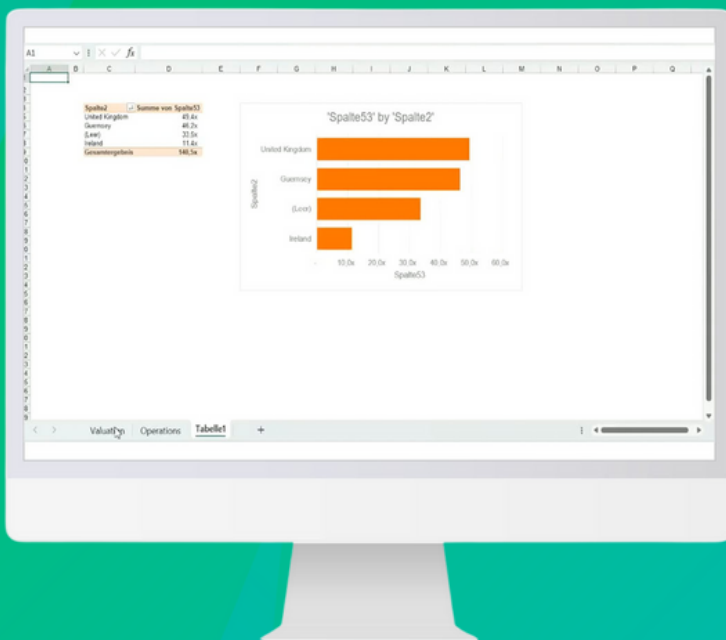
We wanted to see how Copilot would perform with complex models and analyses, such as those used in investment banking. A valuation model in Excel served as the basis for this use case.

Make a graphical overview of the most important figures (both valuation and operational)



Copilot gave us country-specific results, which was acceptable because the prompt left a lot of room for interpretation. Again, the result was displayed in the chat bar and could be transferred to a new worksheet with a single click. Copilot provided a clear summary of the most important data.

Add to a new sheet



Copilot easily added the results to a new sheet.

However, when asked for more complex analyses, in our case for a specific valuation range, Copilot couldn't provide answers.

Copilot

VORSCHAU

X

What would be a valuation range (Enterprise Value) for a comparable company that has a Sales growth of 10% annually until 2025, an EBITDA of €100m with a margin of 50%?

Sorry, I don't have a helpful answer. Try another prompt.

AI-generated content may be incorrect

How can the multiples be best explained given the operational statistics?

This PivotChart may include some of the information you're looking for. If it doesn't show everything you requested, try another prompt.

'Spalte53' by 'Spalte2'

Sum of Spalte53

Category (Spalte2)	Sum of Spalte53
United Kingdom	~45
Guernsey	~40
(blank)	~30
Ireland	~10

- 10.0x 20.0x 30.0x 40.0x 50.0x 60.0x

Can I see another insight

Add all insights to grid

↺

Copilot didn't provide an appropriate result for this task either. Instead, the AI gave us the same result as in the first use case.

Finally, we asked Copilot for statistics for certain KPIs. Here, the AI couldn't find any matches, couldn't calculate the data from the table, and therefore couldn't present a result. To be fair, this last use case was really complex and difficult.

Create operational statistics: Sales, EBITDA, CAPEX | Sales growth, EBIT growth, EBITDA growth | EBIT margin T, EBIT margin T+1, EBIDTA margin T, EBIDTA margin T+1



I looked through your data for this criteria: total 'Spalte6', total 'Spalte12', total 'Spalte41', total 'Spalte13', and total 'Spalte4' by 'Spalte5' and 'Spalte7', where total 'Spalte4' is 1. There were no matches. If you want to try again, use another prompt.

AI-generated content may be incorrect

Our conclusion about Copilot in Excel is that for those who aren't Excel professionals or don't use the application on a daily basis, Copilot can certainly provide some assistance. The AI delivers a quick overview of data and increases efficiency when working with Excel.

Copilot currently seems less useful for advanced uses because Copilot can't yet perform complex analyses. The restriction that all data must be in tabular form requires an extra step in practice, but thanks to the formatting options, that can be done with just a few clicks.

Note that we were only able to communicate with Copilot in Excel in English. In all other applications, it was possible to write prompts in German, which may be due to the preview mode.

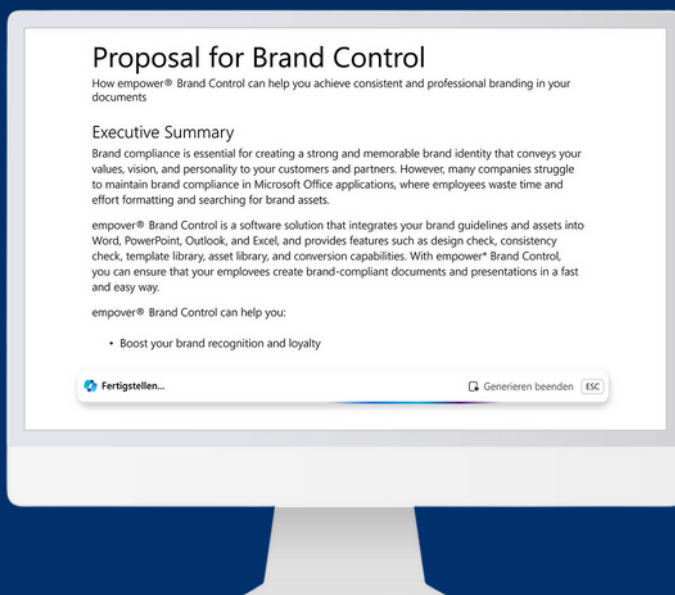


Copilot in Word

We took a closer look at Copilot in Word. Our expectations were very high, as ChatGPT is quite powerful in text creation and editing.

1. Create a Word document based on a given presentation

Create a proposal for a customer using Brand Control EN.pptx. Add a table comparing the features of Brand Control and Microsoft Copilot using Microsoft-copilot-whitepaper-empower-en.docx. Make the document look like Brand Compliance in Microsoft Office Proposal.docx



We provided Copilot with a PowerPoint presentation and a Word document to create a document based on the presentation.

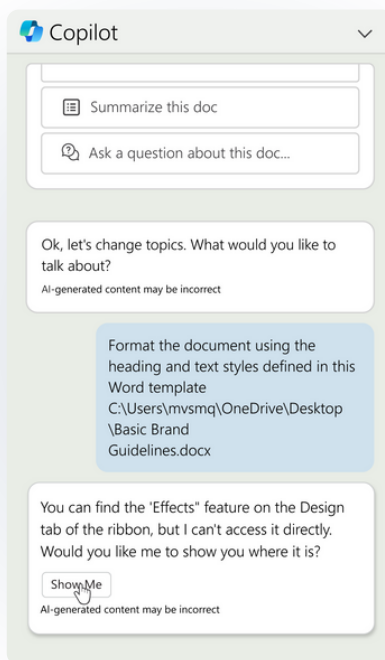
The content of the document Copilot produced is very good and detailed. The information was presented correctly and in a structured way, including (sub)headings, bullets, and tables. Copilot followed the presentation closely. In addition, Copilot has taken other content from the Internet, but marked it accordingly.

Unfortunately, the transfer of the design we provided as a Word document didn't work. Despite the impressive results in terms of content and time saved, its practical application is limited due to the extra formatting required.



2. Formatting a document with style sheets

Since Copilot hadn't adopted the design in the previous use case, we took it a step further. We gave Copilot specific guidelines regarding our corporate design that it should use to format the Word document. Those guidelines included information about fonts and font sizes for the headings.

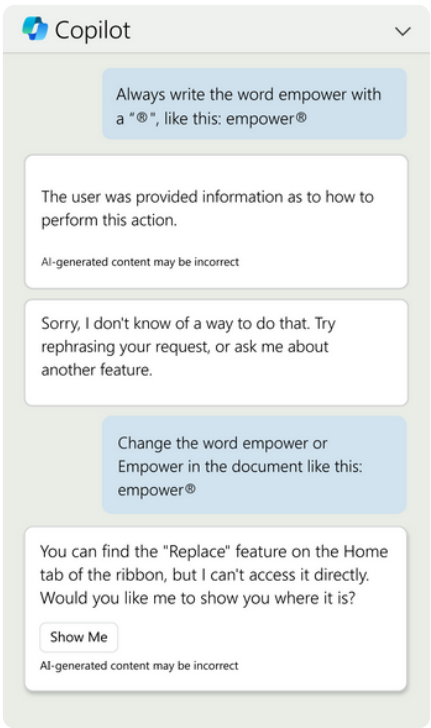


Instead of implementing the instruction, Copilot pointed us to the Effects feature of Microsoft Word. As we discovered with PowerPoint, Copilot doesn't yet seem able to format documents or presentations in a brand-compliant manner.

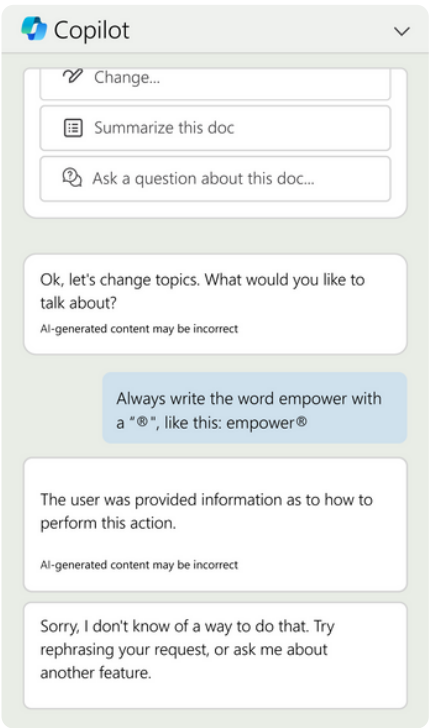
3. Company specific spellings

Almost every company uses certain customized spellings, especially for products and services. At empower®, for example, this includes the ® symbol after the product name “empower”. We instructed Copilot to take this into account (Pic. 1).

However, our test showed that Copilot couldn’t use the correct spelling in the document. It suggested that we try a different formulation of the prompt (Pic. 2).



Pic. 1



Pic. 2

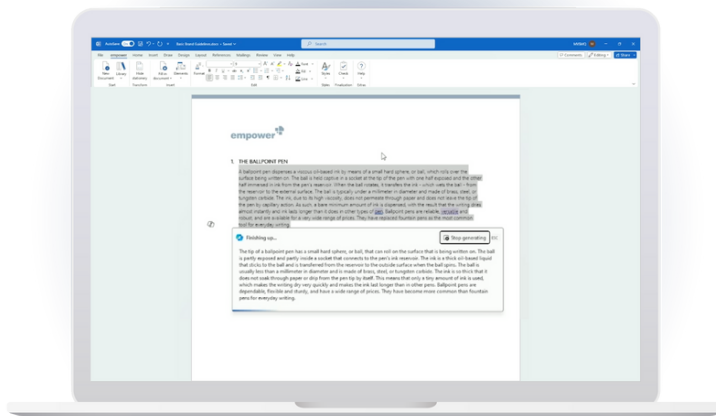
But even the customized prompt didn't produce the desired result. Copilot gave us a hint on how to proceed and pointed us to the "Replace" feature. That was actually helpful in this specific example, even though our overall expectations were higher. Unfortunately, this isn't useful in every use case.

The results of this test surprised us because ChatGPT, on which Copilot is based, normally handles such requests.



4. Rewrite or shorten a text

In the fourth use case, we asked Copilot to paraphrase a text. This doesn't require a prompt, as Copilot offers a paraphrase function automatically.



For paraphrasing, the interface is very intuitive and user-friendly. It allows you to completely replace your own text with the rewritten version, generate a new text, or insert the new text under the old one. The clear display of the texts one below the other ensures easy review. This corresponds to the comfort and quality we expected from ChatGPT.

Overall, however, our Copilot didn't meet our expectations in Word. While simple tasks such as creating or rephrasing texts worked well, more specific formatting and wording requirements failed.

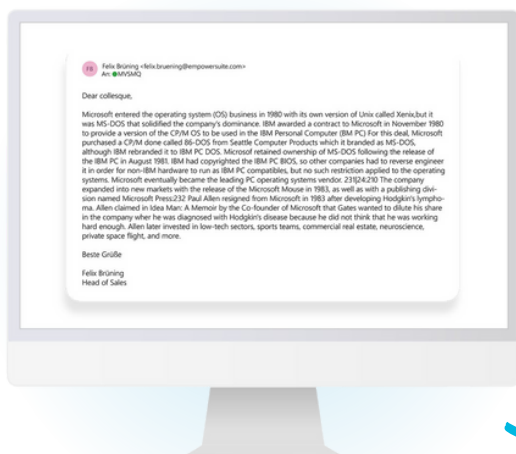
Copilot in Outlook

Outlook also focuses on creating and editing texts. Copilot can make your work in Outlook a lot easier, especially considering the large number of emails you receive and send every day.



1. Summary of email threads

Copilot provides the “Summary by Copilot” feature built into Outlook to summarize long email threads.



Summary by Copilot

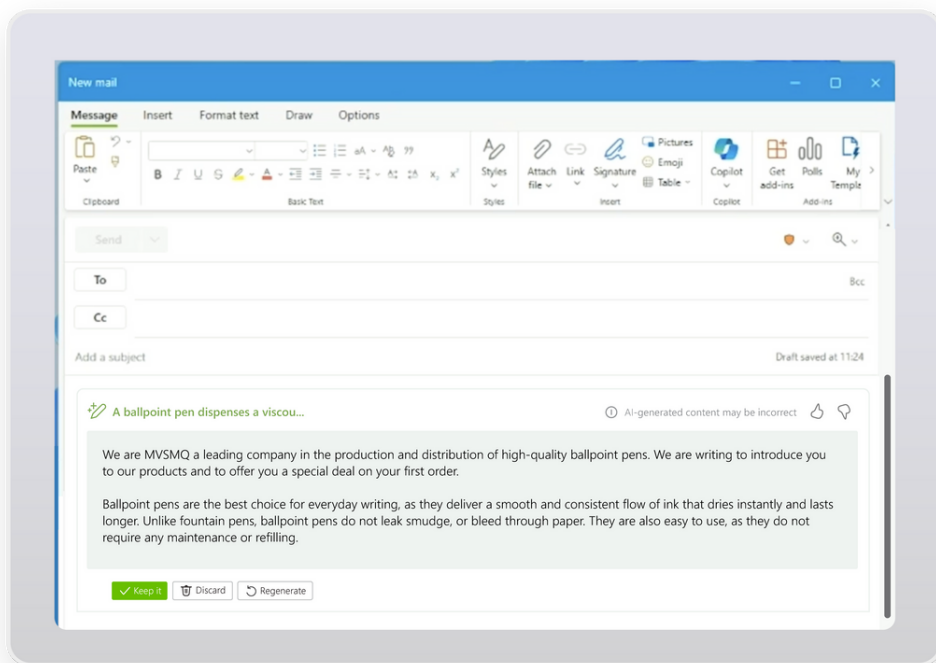
Felix Brüning und Sie diskutieren über die Geschichte von Microsoft und deren Gründer Bill Gates und Paul Allen. Die beiden Freunde gründeten 1972 Traf-O-Data und 1975 Microsoft, um BASIC-Interpreter für den Altair 8800 zu entwickeln und zu verkaufen. Microsoft wurde durch MS-DOS und Windows im Betriebssystemmarkt dominant und expandierte in den 1990er Jahren durch Unternehmensübernahmen. Steve Ballmer wurde 2000 CEO und verfolgte eine 'Geräte- und Dienstleistungsstrategie', während Satya Nadella seit 2014 auf Cloud-Computing fokussiert. Microsoft ist das ontaroute oaming-Unternehmen der welt und ser zulo das wertvollste börsennotierte Unternehmen.

AI-generated content may be incorrect

When we tested it, the summary created by Copilot gave a good overview of the email thread and also included brief information about the people involved. The summary was in German, since the emails were written in German. However, it's questionable whether any summary can replace reading the individual emails in the thread, as there's no guarantee of completeness and accuracy. Nevertheless, this feature is potentially useful, especially for people who work in large companies and are often involved in long email threads.

2. Optimization of an email body

In the second use case, there was no need to enter a prompt because Copilot already provided the ability to compose an email. We wanted to make our email more promotional.



The result was impressive. Copilot wrote a well-structured email that met our expectations.

3. Writing an email with information from a website

In this test, we asked Copilot to generate a new email based on the content of a website, namely the Wikipedia entry on Microsoft 365 Copilot. It gave us a draft email that provided a comprehensive overview of Copilot and a solid basis for further work.

Draft a new email describing the content from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_Copilot



English telling...

Copilot is intended to help developers become more productive by reducing the amount of time spent writing and debugging code. It's able to provide suggestions for a wide range of programming languages and frameworks, and it can even help developers learn new languages and technologies. Copilot is currently available as a Visual Studio Code extension and is also integrated into GitHub's code editor.

One of the most interesting features of Copilot is its ability to generate code from natural language descriptions. This means that developers can simply describe what they want the code to do and Copilot will generate the appropriate code. This can be a huge time-saver and can also help developers avoid common coding mistakes.

Overall, Microsoft Copilot is a powerful tool that has the potential to significantly improve the software development process. What do you think about it? Have you had a chance to try it out yet?

Best regards,
MVSMQ

ⓘ AI-generated content may be incorrect



✓ Keep it

🗑 Discard

🔄 Regenerate

4. Replying to emails

Instead of writing a new email ourselves, we instructed Copilot to reply to a specific email in the next step.

Draft an answer in English telling my colleague about advantages of their new product called Microsoft Copilot



Draft an answer in English telling...

Thank you for your informative email about the history of Microsoft Corporation. I would like to take this opportunity to discuss the advantages of their new product. Microsoft Copilot. Microsoft Copilot is designed to make coding more accessible and efficient by providing real-time suggestion and code completions. This innovative tool has the potential to save developers time and effort, while also reducing the likelihood of errors. Overall, Microsoft Copilot is a valuable addition to the developer's toolkit, and I look forward to seeing its impact on the industr

ⓘ AI-generated content may be incorrect



✓ Keep it

🗑 Discard

🔄 Regenerate

The generated email was an excellent starting point, but it wasn't ready to send. In this instance, Copilot focused on coding and software development, which didn't totally answer the brief. However, we were generally satisfied with the result and only slightly adjusted the email and added an additional paragraph. That experience highlights how important it is to carefully examine anything Copilot provides.

Overall, Copilot in Outlook is a competent assistant that helps us summarize and respond to emails.

Copilot in Teams

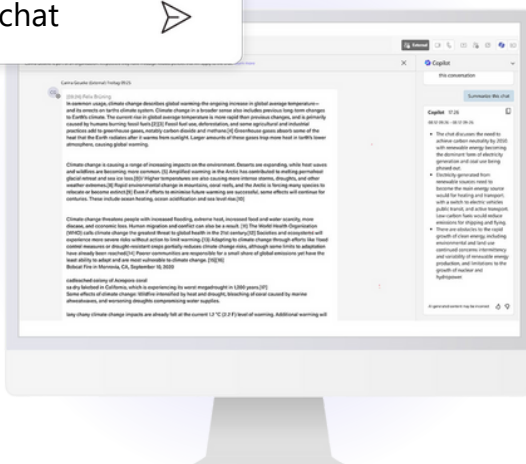
Anyone who regularly works in Microsoft Teams knows how hectic the environment can be and how easily information can

get lost or overlooked. Can Copilot help us structure content in Teams, make it more accessible, and organize to-dos?

1. Summary of a chat

The ability to summarize Teams conversations is one of our favorite features. You can choose what content you want to summarize and over what time period. We wanted to create a summary of a particular chat. You can see the result in the chat area on the right.

Summarize this chat



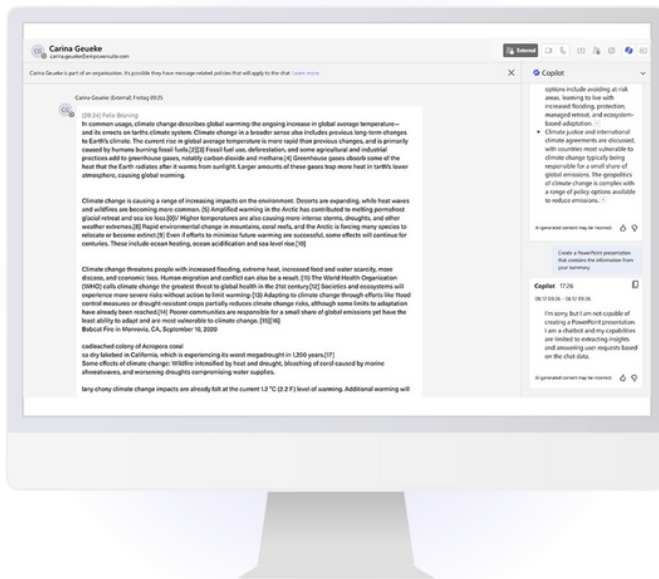
The summary gives a good overview that makes it easy to quickly assess the relevance of the chat content, especially for people who weren't directly involved in the conversation.

But be careful: relying solely on the summaries can lead to a loss of information. For a full understanding, it's still essential to read the full chat history.

2. Create a presentation from a Teams summary

Wouldn't it be handy to automatically create a presentation from this Teams summary? We tested this as well.

Create a PowerPoint presentation that contains the information from your summary

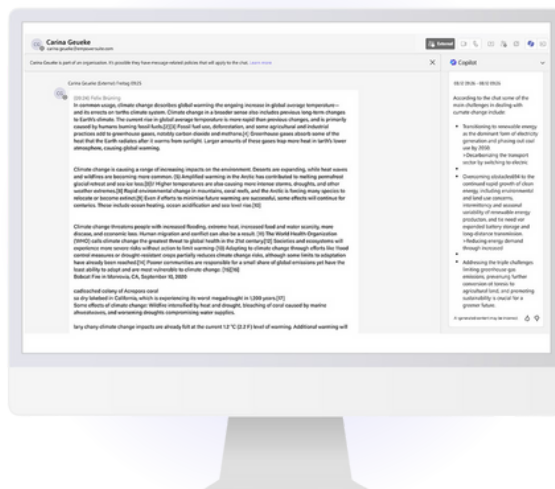


Unfortunately, Copilot couldn't comply with our request. However, the answer it gave clearly explains why and clarifies what Copilot currently does and doesn't do.

3. Reply to a chat message

What about the ability to reply to a chat message?

This chat is about the climate change. Write an #answer in which you identify the main challenges in dealing with climate change



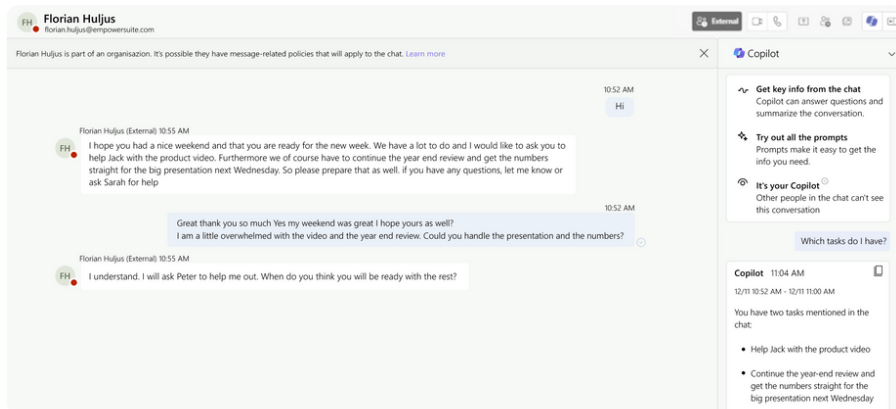
This was just as easy in Teams as it was in Outlook. Copilot's reply to the previous message also appeared on the right side of the chat bar. This is helpful, as there's no risk of accidentally sending the unreviewed

message directly. Interestingly, there was no copy and paste button, so the message had to be copied manually. However, the content of the message was detailed and satisfactory.

4. Extract tasks based on a Teams conversation

Extracting tasks from a Teams conversation was also featured in Microsoft's marketing video. We tested this feature as well.

Which tasks do I have?



When based on a simple chat history, Copilot answered the question without any problems. We also ran the test with more complex chat histories and meetings and were satisfied with the results. But there's no guarantee that Copilot will actually list all the tasks that need to be done when it reviews a chat history.

We did this test not only in English, but also in German. Unfortunately, the summary didn't work in German, neither in this use case nor in the simpler chat process before.

Similar to Outlook, Copilot works well in Teams to help you reply to messages and keep track of chats and the tasks that result from them.

Our conclusion

Microsoft 365 Copilot is especially helpful when creating or editing text. Whether it's researching, summarizing, or rewriting, Copilot handles these tasks very well.

However, we have yet to see it revolutionize everyday office life. Many of the use cases presented by Microsoft and their results didn't pass our real world tests. When it comes to more complex queries, the AI still too often reaches its limits. The same goes for adherence to brand specifications.

The ability to summarize in Teams and Outlook should be a great help to many people. Copilot is therefore a valuable assistant for people who work a lot with Outlook and Teams.

Business presentations aren't yet easy to create with Copilot. The use of Copilot in PowerPoint is still very limited, especially for formatting tasks.

When it comes to Excel, Copilot is helpful for people with basic skills. However, the AI doesn't yet offer significant benefits for Excel professionals.

In Word, similar to Outlook and Teams, Copilot can assist by paraphrasing, summarizing, or giving text a different style.

Working with Copilot has been a pleasure and has given us an interesting taste of what is to come. The potential is considerable and we're excited to see what improvements will come with the next updates from Microsoft.



empower GmbH
KölnTurm
Im Mediapark 8
50670 Cologne
Germany
+49 221 99378577

request@empowersuite.com