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MICROSOFT 365 COPILOT

YOUR GUIDE

INTRODUCING AI INTO YOUR BUSINESS

BRINGING THE BENEFITS OF AI INTO YOUR TEAMS

Copilot is Microsoft's generative artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot. Like the ubiquitous ChatGPT, it takes the user's prompts, retrieves and processes relevant data, then converts it into an appropriate response.

AI has been around for many years, initially in online chat bots, chess bots and other specific functions. It's becoming more prominent now because it's able to generate content reasonably well and, crucially, we can communicate with it in natural language. It's potentially extremely powerful and useful, but like many new technologies, it's also controversial and often polarising.

So let's debunk a couple of myths. AI is neither 'the end of the world as know it' nor 'the answer to everything'. It can do certain things extremely well – in the same way a calculator does sums much faster and more accurately than most people can in their head - but there are many things it can't do at all.





M365 COPILOT GENERATIVE, NOT GENERAL

THE POWER OF COPILOT

At present, AI - including Copilot - is generative: it responds to the prompts it's given, using only the data to which it has access. We're still a long way from general AI, where a machine can think and reason for itself, ask questions back, create ideas from nowhere and all the other things we associate with human cognition.

Contrary to popular belief, AI doesn't actually learn as we understand the term. With each new prompt, it starts from scratch: it doesn't remember or refer to what you asked it before, or whatever it told you in response. And as with everything in computing, the old GIGO principle still applies: garbage in, garbage out.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR WORLD

What makes Copilot different from ChatGPT is that it's grounded in your own data, not just search results pulled from the web. When you make requests, it will add your SharePoint files and folders, emails, Teams groups and other specific information sources from your business to the dataset it's searching. This means its responses are more relevant, accurate and useful - and of course, the more data it has to work with, the better its responses become.

Because users log in using their Microsoft 365 credentials, Copilot will follow all your company security policies, and refer only to the data the user has permissions for.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Copilot is now integrated into the various Microsoft Office suite applications where it acts as a kind of 'personal assistant' performing different tasks according to the context.

In Word, for example, you can use it to generate documents, rewrite sections of existing ones, or change the tone of voice.

In Outlook, it can write, rewrite and summarise emails for you, while in Excel, you can simply ask it to analyse and format data, create graphs and pivot tables and perform other calculations: you don't have to know or remember the necessary formulas.

FROM HOURS TO MINUTES

For many SMEs, Copilot's greatest benefit is the time it can save. We've all had the experience of trying, and failing, to find a particular piece of information, knowing only that 'it's in my e-mails somewhere'.

Copilot can search through long chains of emails and find it in seconds. It's also ideal for producing and summarising meeting notes and transcripts from recordings, replacing hours of laborious editing and analysis with responses that generally require just a few minutes' review.



A large, detailed image of a rocket launching from Earth. The rocket is orange and white, with a large plume of fire and smoke at its base. In the background, the planet Mars is visible, showing its characteristic reddish-orange surface and dark, cratered terrain. The sky is a deep black with scattered stars.

AGENTS OF CHANGE

THE NEW GENERATION OF AI

The new-generation SharePoint Agents are specific Copilot chatbots you create to perform a specific task or return responses in a particular format.

They can answer questions about the content on any SharePoint site or document library for which the user has the relevant permissions.

For example, if you have a large PDF library you're constantly referring to, you can create an Agent that will look and provide responses only from that material. You can also ask Copilot to always present its responses as tables or in a professional tone of voice.

SharePoint Agents are available if you have a Business Premium licence for Microsoft 365, which you'll need anyway if you're managing your files and folders through SharePoint in the Modern Workplace environment.



BRIDGING THE SKILL GAP

By acting as the user's personal assistant, Copilot can fill in skills gaps, too. Someone can be brilliant at using Excel and use it every day, but struggle when it comes to writing reports and emails.

Similarly, a confident writer may have problems extracting relevant data from a spreadsheet.

With Copilot, you can simply ask it to do these things for you, in natural, conversational terms.

It's a huge benefit to those who use an application only occasionally, or know what they want to do but can't remember (or never knew) the relevant commands.



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GET IN TOUCH WITH OUR TEAM

At Acora One, we are committed to empowering your business with the best IT solutions.

If you would like to learn more about how partnering with Acora One can help transform your business you can contact us via phone, email, or through our website.

Our team will be happy to help.



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Let's work together to secure your business's future success.