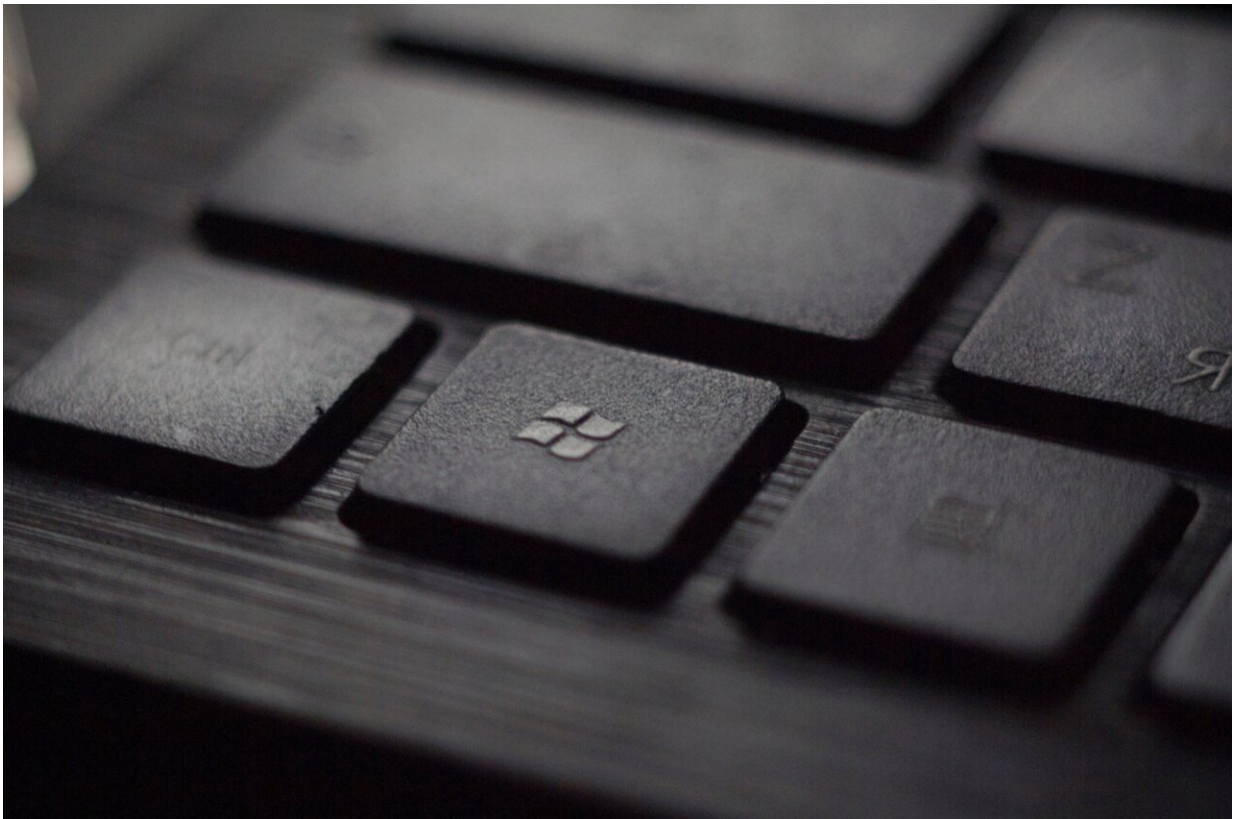


Microsoft expands Office AI Copilot to consumers, smaller companies

January 16 2024, by Dina Bass, Bloomberg News



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

Microsoft Corp. is opening up its artificial intelligence assistant to consumers and making the corporate version available to smaller companies as it tries to increase the number of paying customers for the

new services.

Microsoft is selling a \$20-a-month consumer version of Copilot, with access to OpenAI's latest ChatGPT technology and image-creation features, the Redmond, Washington-based software giant said in a statement. Consumers with a cloud subscription to Office will be able to use Copilot to help answer questions, summarize data and create content in Word, Outlook, Excel and PowerPoint.

The company, which has been selling a similar product to large businesses for a monthly fee of \$30 per user, will get rid of the 300-subscription minimum for its enterprise service.

As Microsoft has revamped nearly all of its products around artificial intelligence tools based on technology from OpenAI, its Office products remain one of the best ways to get customers to pay extra for AI assistance. Executives have said demand is unusually high, with Azure chief Scott Guthrie likening it to the lines outside shops to purchase Windows 95 software nearly three decades ago.

Microsoft has been testing the Office-based copilot, now called Copilot for Microsoft 365, since March. The company began selling it widely in November, as long as companies purchased at least 300 subscriptions. That left out [small businesses](#) and those that wanted to begin with a smaller trial, said Jared Spataro, a Microsoft vice president, in an interview.

"We have just never seen demand in the [commercial space](#) for a product like we are seeing for Copilot from Microsoft 365," he said. "We have had pressure I have never seen from small and medium businesses saying 'why will you not let us buy this? Let us try it.'"

Microsoft announced the new services ahead of the World Economic

Forum in Davos where Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella will speak in an interview with Bloomberg. Microsoft's consumer service, called Copilot Pro, offers similar features to OpenAI's ChatGPT Plus at the same price, though the integration with Office differentiates their product, Spataro said. The [company](#) plans to roll out a builder tool, similar to what OpenAI unveiled last year, that will let individuals create their own Copilots for a specific topic, a service that's already available to enterprises.

Microsoft's privacy rules for the consumer version also differ from the business one. Unlike data from [corporate customers](#), Microsoft said it will retain a portion of prompts and responses from the consumer model to retrain models and improve the product.

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Citation: Microsoft expands Office AI Copilot to consumers, smaller companies (2024, January 16) retrieved 10 May 2024 from

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