Microsoft is looking at OpenAI's GPT for Word, Outlook, and PowerPoint



Microsoft has been reportedly experimenting with building OpenAI's language AI technology into its Word, PowerPoint, and Outlook apps. *The Information* reports that Microsoft has already incorporated an unknown version of OpenAI's text-generating GPT model into Word in its autocomplete feature, and has been working on integrating it further into Word, PowerPoint, and Outlook.

Microsoft has reportedly been using OpenAI's GPT technology to improve Outlook search results so users can find what they're looking for without having to search using keywords in emails. Microsoft is also said to have looked at how these AI models could suggest replies to emails or recommend document changes to improve Word users' writing. It's not clear if Microsoft plans to launch these features, or if it's just experimentation for now.

If Microsoft leans more towards building in functionality

that’s present in ChatGPT, the conversational AI that made headlines last year, then Outlook could compose entire emails based on simple queries. Imagine Outlook writing an email to your colleagues explaining you’re unwell, based purely on a “write an email to my team explaining I’m out sick” query. Microsoft is also reportedly planning to launch a version of Bing that uses ChatGPT to answer search queries. This new feature could be available as soon as March, in a bid to make Bing more competitive with Google.

Microsoft faces challenges building GPT into Office apps

Microsoft will face many challenges bringing more advanced AI text-generation features to its productivity apps. Chief among them is accuracy. ChatGPT still has a tendency to present incorrect information as fact, which would make any type of document creation or advanced integration difficult.

The other major hurdle is privacy. Microsoft will need to customize its models for individual users without compromising their data. *The Information* reports that Microsoft has been working on privacy-preserving models using GPT-3 and the as-yet-unreleased GPT-4. Microsoft researchers have reportedly achieved early successes in training large language models on private data.

Microsoft could use these models to scrape and summarize information from Teams Meetings transcripts, and then add images generated from OpenAI’s Dall-E 2 image generation model to PowerPoint presentations. Researchers have reportedly presented their Office integration work to Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, but it’s not clear if and when these GPT- or Dall-E 2-powered models would be available in Office products.

Microsoft already uses a variety of AI in its productivity apps. Word and PowerPoint automatically suggest image and slide deck captions using AI algorithms, Microsoft Teams uses AI to improve echo, interruptions, and acoustics, and

Microsoft built an AI-powered autocomplete for code using GPT-3 two years ago. Microsoft Editor also makes your writing better by using AI to perform spellchecking, grammar checking, and text predictions.

Microsoft purchased an exclusive license to the underlying technology behind GPT-3 in 2020 after investing $1 billion into OpenAI in 2019. It has built a deep relationship with OpenAI ever since, including plans to add an AI text-to-image model to Bing powered by OpenAI's DALL-E 2.

"AI is going to reinvent how you do everything on Windows," said Panos Panay, Microsoft's Windows and Surface chief, on stage at CES last week. Microsoft's Surface team has been willing to build new hardware to take advantage of AI, including the new Surface smart camera. Several members of the Surface team discussed the impact AI will have on Windows and hardware in a recent *Verge* interview.

If Microsoft does push ahead with GPT-powered versions of Word, Outlook, and PowerPoint then it will represent a rapid commercialization of OpenAI's GPT models. Bing looks set to join PowerApps (Microsoft's first commercial use case of GPT) with its own AI-powered search results soon. Both Office and Bing integration of OpenAI's language models would put a lot of pressure on Google, which dominates search and has been making inroads with its Workspace offerings to businesses.

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