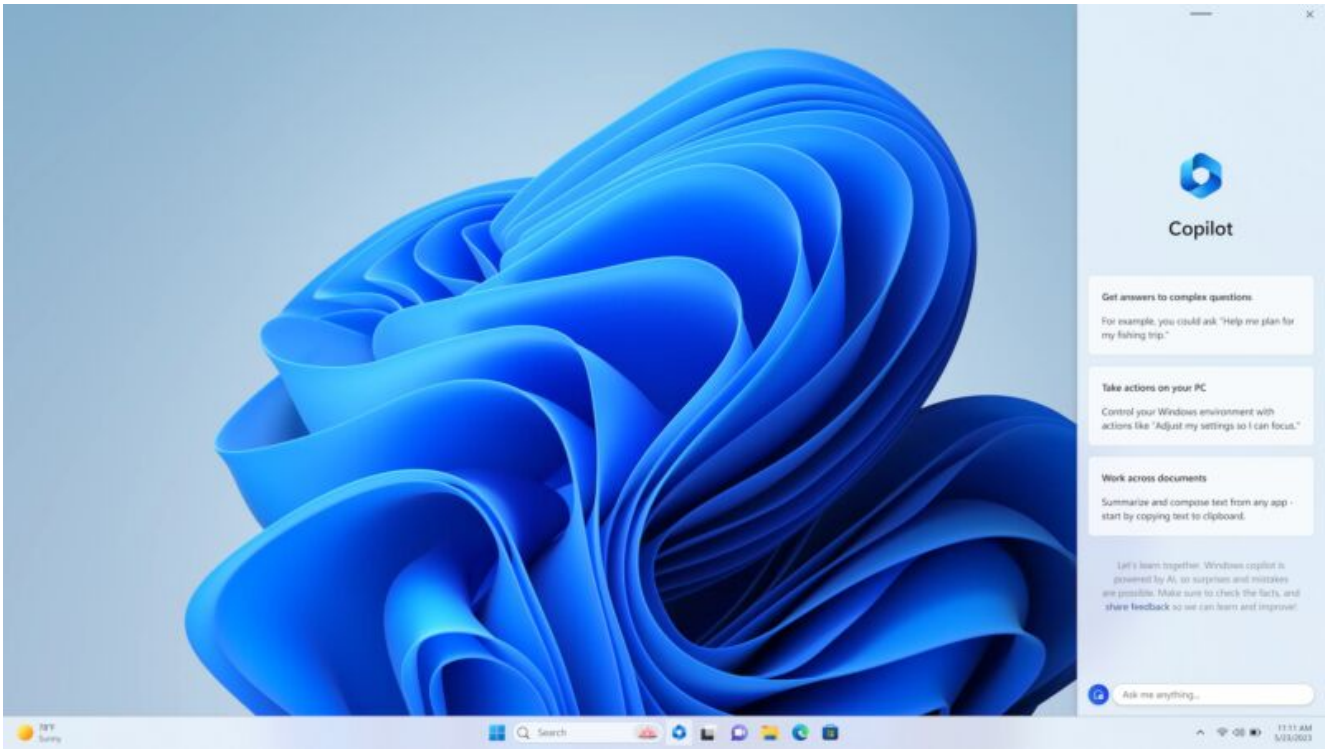
Windows 11’s AI-powered Copilot (and its Bing-powered ads) enters public preview



Enlarge / Windows Copilot is an AI-assisted feature coming to Windows 11 preview builds.

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Last month, Microsoft announced that it would continue its put-ChatGPT-in-everything adventure with a new Windows 11 feature called Copilot. The company added generative AI to Edge and to the Bing-powered taskbar Search field months ago, but Copilot promises to be the most visible and hard-to-ignore version of Microsoft’s big AI push in its most visible and hard-to-ignore product.

This week’s Windows Insider Preview build for Dev channel users, build 23493, will be the first to enable Copilot for

public testers. After installing the update, preview users can press Windows + C to open a Copilot column on the right side of the screen. It will use the same Microsoft account you use for the rest of the OS (it's unclear whether it will work without a Microsoft account, though, to date, the preview has required sign-up and sign-in). And like the other Bing Chat implementations, it has three different "conversation style" settings that either try to rein the chatbot in and keep its answers straightforward and factual or allow it to get "more creative" but more prone to confabulations.

In addition to chatting, Copilot will also support creating AI images using OpenAI's DALL-E 2 model, the same technology used for the Bing Image Creator. Some features announced last month, including third-party plugin support, aren't included in this initial preview, and later versions will also be able to adjust a wider range of Windows settings.

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"Over time, features will be added as we refine the Windows Copilot experience with Windows Insiders," reads the company's blog post.

Integrating Copilot at the operating system level will also allow it to change some Windows settings and execute some commands, which might save less-technical users the effort of digging through the Settings app or learning keyboard shortcuts. Microsoft's examples include turning on dark mode or Do Not Disturb or taking a screenshot.

Copilot will also launch with Bing ads right out of the gate. Microsoft will serve you ads that the company "think[s] is relevant." Copilot is governed by the same privacy statement that applies to the rest of Bing.

As usual, the new Insider Preview build also comes with various other fixes, features, and changes. The Settings app is getting a redesigned "homepage" with "cards" that give you

information about different things or let you quickly change common settings—though of the seven cards Microsoft is introducing today, four are related to Microsoft account services like Microsoft 365, OneDrive, Xbox subscription settings, and account recovery. The others will show you your connected Bluetooth devices, let you quickly change your desktop theme, and make recommendations for tweaking your settings.

This will also be the first Windows 11 build to add native support for compressed archives other than the longstanding .zip format, thanks to the open source libarchive library. Windows 11 will now support reading all kinds of .tar files, plus RAR, 7-zip files, and other formats.

The Settings app homepage and some other features are being rolled out gradually and may not be available to everyone who installs the new preview, at least not immediately. For a full list of changes and known issues, read the blog post here.

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