

Microsoft announces 'game-changing' feature on Word and PowerPoint

Microsoft is enhancing Word and PowerPoint with AI-generated alt text, providing more accurate and contextual descriptions of images. Available now to Microsoft 365 Insiders.

Microsoft just announced a new feature for Word and PowerPoint that could be a bigger hit than the big upgrades at Ignite 2025.

The Microsoft Office suite is so popular in personal, educational, and business environments that it's no surprise that new features are being added for Microsoft 365 users. At this year's Ignite conference, Microsoft introduced a series of Copilot Agents for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, along with a free Copilot Chat feature built directly into the apps. However, there's a small but practical feature that hasn't been mentioned much.

Specifically, Microsoft said that the creation of alternative text (alt text) for images in Word and PowerPoint on Windows will switch to using generative AI models, instead of Azure Vision as before. For those unfamiliar, alt text is the description embedded in the image, helping screen readers describe the content for blind or low vision people. This is a mandatory requirement for accessibility.

While important, adding alt text can sometimes be manual and time-consuming. Azure Vision previously automatically generated default descriptions for images, but the content was often generic. The new GenAI model will generate much more detailed and contextual descriptions. For example, an image that Azure Vision described simply as 'Drawing of a house with solar panels' might be described by GenAI as:

'Diagram illustrating the design principles of a passive solar house, including photovoltaic panels on the south-facing side, well-insulated walls and roof, adjustable ventilation windows and a heat-absorbing concrete floor with insulation underneath.'

The biggest difference is that instead of automatically generating alt text for every image like before, users will now have to proactively request the creation of descriptions when needed. You can do this by going to **Picture Format > Alt Text > Generate alt text for me**. Microsoft believes that this way gives authors better control over the content.

For perpetual Office users, alt text will no longer be generated by default. However, you can still turn it back on via **File > Options > Accessibility > Automatically generate alt text**. Future perpetual versions will incorporate the same GenAI model as Microsoft 365.

The new feature is now available to Microsoft 365 Insiders using Word and PowerPoint version 2510 (**Build 19328.20000**) or later.

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