

Some features in Microsoft Office will stop working if not updated.

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Specifically, the three affected features are:

1. Read Aloud
2. Transcribe
3. Dictate

The above features are all part of the **Microsoft 365 Office** suite and will no longer work on older versions after January 2026.

Organizations using these features will need to upgrade to version 16.0.18827.20202 or higher to continue using them, Microsoft says. The features are mostly focused on Word, but Outlook, OneNote, and PowerPoint are also affected.

The tech giant says it's "upgrading the backend services" that support these features, which means it's optimizing Office Intelligent Services. Microsoft has identified this as a "major change" — a warning level reserved for updates that impact users or administrators.

In the official announcement, Microsoft said

To maintain high-quality performance for Read Aloud, Speech-to-Text, and Voice Typing across Microsoft 365 apps, we are upgrading the supporting background service. As a result, these features will stop working on Office versions earlier than 16.0.18827.20202 after January 2026.

"To avoid service disruption, please ensure all devices are updated to version 16.0.18827.20202 ahead of time.

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