Microsoft

Microsoft Corporation is an American multinational Microsoft Corporation
corporation and technology conglomerate
headquartered in Redmond, Washington.[2] Founded
in 1975, the company became influential in the rise of
personal computers through software like Windows,
and the company has since expanded to Internet Logo used since 2012
services, cloud computing, video gaming and other
fields. Microsoft is the largest software maker, one of
the most valuable public U.S. companies,[a] and one
of the most valuable brands globally.

Microsoft was founded by Bill Gates and Paul Allen
to develop and sell BASIC interpreters for the Altair
8800. It rose to dominate the personal computer
operating system market with MS-DOS in the mid-
1980s, followed by Windows. During the 41 years Aerial view of the Microsoft
campus in Redmond
from 1980 to 2021 Microsoft released 9 versions of
MS-DOS with a median frequency of 2 years, and 13 Company Public

versions of Windows with a median frequency of 3 type

years. The company's 1986 initial public offering Traded as Nasdaq: MSFT
(https://www.na
(IPO) and subsequent rise in its share price created
sdaq.com/market-activity/stock

three billionaires and an estimated 12,000 millionaires s/msft)

among Microsoft employees. Since the 1990s, it has Nasdaq-100 component

increasingly diversified from the operating system DJIA component

market. Steve Ballmer replaced Gates as CEO in S&P 100 component
2000. He oversaw the then-largest of Microsoft's S&P 500 component
corporate acquisitions in Skype Technologies in ISIN US5949181045
(https://isin.tool
2011,[3] and an increased focus on hardware[4][5] that forge.org/?
language=en&isin=U
led to its first in-house PC line, the Surface, in 2012, S5949181045)
and the formation of Microsoft Mobile through Industry Information technology
Nokia. Since Satya Nadella took over as CEO in Predecessor Traf-O-Data
2014, the company has changed focus towards cloud
computing,[6][7] as well as its large acquisition of Founded April 4, 1975 in

Albuquerque, New Mexico, U.S.
LinkedIn for $26.2 billion in 2016.[8] Under Nadella's
direction, the company has also expanded its video Founders Bill Gates

gaming business to support the Xbox brand, Paul Allen

establishing the Microsoft Gaming division in 2022 Headquarters One Microsoft
Way,
and acquiring Activision Blizzard for $68.7 billion in Redmond, Washington, U.S.

2023.[9] Area served Worldwide

Key people Satya Nadella (chairman &
CEO)

Microsoft has been market-dominant in the IBM PC– Brad Smith (vice chairman &

compatible operating system market and the office president)
software suite market since the 1990s. Its best-known Bill Gates (technical
adviser)
software products are the Windows line of operating Products Software
development
systems and the Microsoft Office and Microsoft 365 Computer hardware
suite of productivity applications, which most notably

Consumer electronics
include the Word word processor, Excel spreadsheet
editor, and the PowerPoint presentation program. Its Social networking service

flagship hardware products are the Surface lineup of Cloud computing

personal computers and Xbox video game consoles, Video games

the latter of which includes the Xbox network; the Internet

company also provides a range of consumer Internet Corporate venture capital
services such as Bing web search, the MSN web Brands Windows · Microsoft 365 ·
portal, the Outlook.com (Hotmail) email service and Teams · Visual Studio · Xbox
·
the Microsoft Store. In the enterprise and Dynamics · Surface
development fields, Microsoft most notably provides Services Edge · Azure · Bing
· LinkedIn ·
the Azure cloud computing platform, Microsoft SQL Viva Engage · Microsoft 365 ·
Server database software, and Visual Studio. OneDrive · Dynamics 365 ·

Outlook · GitHub · Microsoft
Microsoft is considered one of the Big Five American Store · Windows Update ·
information technology companies, alongside Game Pass · Xbox network

Alphabet,[b] Amazon, Apple, and Meta.[c] In April Revenue
US$281.7 billion (2025)

2019, Microsoft reached a trillion-dollar market cap, Operating
US$128.5 billion (2025)
becoming the third public U.S. company to be valued income
at over $1 trillion. It has been criticized for its Net income
US$101.8 billion (2025)
monopolistic practices, and the company's software Total assets
US$619.0 billion (2025)
has been criticized for problems with ease of use,

Total equity US$343.5 billion (2025)
robustness, and security.

Number of 228,000 (2025)
employees

History Divisions Microsoft Gaming
Microsoft 365
Microsoft Research

1972–1985: Founding Windows and Devices Group

Childhood friends Bill Gates and Paul Allen sought to Microsoft Cloud

make a business using their skills in computer Microsoft AI

programming.[11] In 1972, they founded Traf-O-Data, Microsoft Security

which sold a rudimentary computer to track and Microsoft Industry

analyze automobile traffic data. Gates enrolled at Microsoft Business
Applications
Harvard University while Allen pursued a degree in Microsoft Developer
computer science at Washington State University, Subsidiaries GitHub
though he later dropped out to work at Honeywell.[12]

LinkedIn

The January 1975 issue of Popular Electronics ASN 8075
(https://bgp.tools/as/8075)
featured Micro Instrumentation and Telemetry Website www.microsoft.com
(https://ww
Systems's (MITS) Altair 8800 microcomputer,[13]

w.microsoft.com/)

which Footnotes / references
inspired Financials as of June 30, 2025.[1]

Allen to
suggest that they could program a BASIC interpreter for the
device. Gates called MITS and claimed that he had a
working interpreter, and MITS requested a demonstration.
Allen worked on a simulator for the Altair while Gates
developed the interpreter, and it worked flawlessly when
they demonstrated it to MITS in March 1975 in
Albuquerque, New Mexico. MITS agreed to distribute it,

An Altair 8800 computer (left) with the marketing it as Altair BASIC.[10]:108,
112–114 Gates and Allen
popular Model 33 ASR Teletype as
terminal, paper tape reader, and paper established Microsoft on April 4, 1975,
with Gates as
tape punch CEO,[14] and Allen suggested the name "Micro-Soft", short

for micro-computer software.[15][16] In August 1977, the
company formed

an agreement with
ASCII Magazine
in Japan, resulting
in its first
international
office of ASCII
Microsoft.[17]

Microsoft moved
Paul Allen and Bill Gates on October 19, its headquarters to
1981, after signing a pivotal contract with Bellevue, Bill Gates and Paul
Allen's Original
IBM[10]:228 Washington, in Business Cards located in the Microsoft

January 1979.[14] Visitor Center

Microsoft entered the operating system (OS) business in 1980
with its own version of Unix called Xenix,[18] but it was MS-DOS that solidified
the company's
dominance. IBM awarded a contract to Microsoft in November 1980 to provide a
version of the CP/M
OS to be used in the IBM Personal Computer (IBM PC).[19] For this deal,
Microsoft purchased a CP/M
clone called 86-DOS from Seattle Computer Products which it branded as MS-DOS,

although IBM
rebranded it to IBM PC DOS. Microsoft retained ownership of MS-DOS following the release of the
IBM PC in August 1981. IBM had copyrighted the IBM PC BIOS, so other companies had to reverse
engineer it for non-IBM hardware to run as IBM PC compatibles, but no such restriction applied to the
operating systems. Microsoft eventually became the leading PC operating systems vendor.[20][21]:210 The
company expanded into new markets with the release of the Microsoft Mouse in 1983, as well as with a
publishing division named Microsoft Press.[10]:232 Paul Allen resigned from Microsoft in 1983 after
developing Hodgkin's lymphoma.[22] Allen claimed in Idea Man: A Memoir by the co-founder of
Microsoft that Gates wanted to dilute his share in the company when he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's
disease because he did not think that he was working hard enough.[23] Allen later invested in low-tech
sectors, sports teams, commercial real estate, neuroscience, private space flight, and more.[24]

1985–1994: Windows and Office
Microsoft released Windows 1.0 on November 20, 1985, as a
graphical extension for MS-DOS,[10]:242–243,246 despite
having begun jointly developing OS/2 with IBM that
August.[25] Microsoft moved its headquarters from Bellevue
to Redmond, Washington, on February 26, 1986, and went
public with an initial public offering (IPO) at the NASDAQ
exchange on March 13,[26] with the resulting rise in stock
making an estimated four billionaires and 12,000 millionaires
from Microsoft employees.[27] Microsoft released its version
of OS/2 to original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) on
April 2, 1987.[10] In 1990, the Federal Trade Commission
examined Microsoft for possible collusion due to the
partnership with IBM, marking the beginning of more than a
decade of legal clashes with the government.[28] :243–244

Windows 1.0 was released
on November
20, 1985, as the first
version of the
Windows line.

Meanwhile, the company was at work on Microsoft Windows NT, which was heavily based on their copy
of the OS/2 code. It shipped on July 21, 1993, with a new modular kernel and the 32-bit Win32
application programming interface (API), making it easier to port from 16-bit (MS-DOS-based)
Windows. Microsoft informed IBM of Windows NT, and the OS/2 partnership deteriorated.[29]

In 1990, Microsoft introduced the Microsoft Office suite which bundled separate applications such as
Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel.[10]:301 On May 22, Microsoft launched Windows 3.0, featuring
streamlined user interface graphics and improved protected mode capability for the Intel 386
processor,[30] and both Office and Windows became dominant in their respective areas.[31][32]

On July 27, 1994, the Department of Justice's Antitrust Division filed a competitive impact statement that
said: "Beginning in 1988 and continuing until July 15, 1994, Microsoft induced many OEMs to execute

anti-competitive per processor licenses. Under a per-processor license, an OEM pays Microsoft a royalty
for each computer it sells containing a particular microprocessor, whether the OEM sells the computer
with a Microsoft operating system or a non-Microsoft operating system. In effect, the royalty payment to
Microsoft when no Microsoft product is being used acts as a penalty, or tax, on the OEM's use of a
competing PC operating system. Since 1988, Microsoft's use of per processor licenses has increased."[33]

1995–2007: Foray into the Web, Windows 95, Windows XP, and Xbox
Following Bill Gates's internal "Internet Tidal Wave memo" on May 26, 1995, Microsoft began to
redefine its offerings and expand its product line into computer networking and the World Wide Web.[34]

With a few exceptions of new companies, like Netscape, Microsoft was the only major and established
company that acted fast enough to be a part of the World Wide Web practically from the start. Other
companies like Borland, WordPerfect, Novell, IBM and Lotus, being much slower to adapt to the new
situation, would give Microsoft market dominance.[35]

The company released Windows 95 on August 24, 1995, featuring pre-emptive multitasking, a completely
new user interface with a novel start button, and 32-bit compatibility; similar to NT, it provided the
Win32 API.[36][37]:20 Windows 95 came bundled with the online service MSN, which was at first
intended to be a competitor to the Internet, and (for OEMs) Internet Explorer, a Web browser. Internet
Explorer was not bundled with the retail Windows 95 boxes, because the boxes were printed before the

team finished the Web browser, and instead were included in the Windows 95 Plus! pack.[38] Backed by a high-profile marketing campaign[39] and what The New York Times called "the splashiest, most frenzied, most expensive introduction of a computer product in the industry's history,"[40] Windows 95 quickly became a success.[41] Branching out into new markets in 1996, Microsoft and General Electric's NBC unit created a new 24/7 cable news channel, MSNBC.[42] Microsoft created Windows CE 1.0, a new OS designed for devices with low memory and other constraints, such as personal digital

In 1996, Microsoft released Windows CE, a version of the operating system meant assistants.[43] In October 1997, the Justice Department filed a for personal digital assistants and other motion in the Federal District Court, stating that Microsoft tiny computers, shown here on the HP violated an agreement signed in 1994 and asked the court to 300LX. stop the bundling of Internet Explorer with

Windows.[10]:323–324

On January 13, 2000, Bill Gates handed over the CEO position to Steve Ballmer, an old college friend of Gates and employee of the company since 1980, while creating a new position for himself as Chief Software Architect.[10]:111,228[14] Various companies including

Microsoft formed the Trusted Computing Platform Alliance in October 1999 to (among other things) increase security and protect intellectual property through identifying changes in hardware and software. Critics decried the alliance as a way to enforce indiscriminate restrictions over how consumers use software, and over how computers behave, and as a form of digital rights management: for example, the scenario where a computer is not only secured for its owner but also secured against its owner as well.[44][45] On April 3, 2000, a judgment was handed down in the case of United States v. Microsoft Corp.,[46] calling the company an "abusive monopoly".[47] Microsoft later settled with the U.S. Department of Justice in 2004.[26]

While primarily focused on software, Microsoft also produced a number of successful PC accessories, such as the IntelliMouse computer mice shown here

On October 25, 2001, Microsoft released Windows XP, unifying the mainstream and NT lines of OS under the NT codebase.[48] The company released the Xbox later that year, entering the video game console market dominated by Sony and Nintendo.[49] In March 2004 the European Union brought the antitrust legal action against the company, citing it abused its dominance with the Windows OS, resulting in a judgment of €497 million ($613 million) and requiring Microsoft to produce new versions of Windows XP without Windows Media Player: Windows XP Home Edition N and Windows XP Professional N.[50][51] In November 2005, the company's second video game console, the Xbox 360, was released. There were two versions, a basic version for $299.99 and a deluxe version for $399.99.[52]

Microsoft released the first installment in the Xbox series of consoles in 2001. The Xbox, graphically powerful compared to its rivals, featured a standard PC's 733 MHz Intel Pentium III processor.

Increasingly present in the hardware business following Xbox, Microsoft released the Zune series of digital media players, a successor of its previous software platform Portable Media Center. These expanded on previous hardware commitments from Microsoft following its original Microsoft Mouse in 1983; as of 2007 the company sold the best-selling wired keyboard (Natural Ergonomic Keyboard 4000), mouse (IntelliMouse), and desktop webcam (LifeCam) in the United States. That year the company also launched the Surface "digital table", later renamed PixelSense.[53]

2007–2011: Microsoft Azure, Windows Vista, Windows 7, and Microsoft Stores

Headquarters of the European Commission, which has imposed several

CEO Steve Ballmer at the MIX event in

2008. In an interview about his fines on Microsoft

management style in 2005, he mentioned
that his first priority was to get the people Released in January 2007, the next version of Windows,
he delegates to in order. Ballmer also Vista, focused on features, security and a redesigned user
emphasized the need to continue interface dubbed Aero.[55][56] Microsoft Office 2007, released
pursuing new technologies even if initial
attempts fail, citing the original attempts at the same time, featured a "Ribbon" user interface which
with Windows as an example.[54] was a significant departure from its predecessors. Relatively

strong sales of both products helped to produce a record profit
in 2007.[57] The European Union imposed another fine of

€899 million ($1.4 billion) for Microsoft's lack of compliance with the March 2004 judgment on
February 27, 2008, saying that the company charged rivals unreasonable prices for key information about
its workgroup and backoffice servers.[58] Microsoft stated that it was in compliance and that "these fines
are about the past issues that have been resolved".[59] 2007 also saw the creation of a multi-core unit at
Microsoft, following the steps of server companies such as Sun and IBM.[60]

Gates retired from his role as Chief Software Architect on June 27, 2008, a decision announced in June
2006, while retaining other positions related to the company in addition to being an advisor for the
company on key projects.[61][62] Azure Services Platform, the company's entry into the cloud computing
market for Windows, launched on October 27, 2008.[63] On February 12, 2009, Microsoft announced its
intent to open a chain of Microsoft-branded retail stores, and on October 22, 2009, the first retail
Microsoft Store opened in Scottsdale, Arizona; the same day Windows 7 was officially released to the
public. Windows 7's focus was on refining Vista with ease-of-use features and performance
enhancements, rather than an extensive reworking of Windows.[64][65][66]

As the smartphone industry boomed in the late 2000s, Microsoft had struggled to keep up with its rivals
in providing a modern smartphone operating system, falling behind Apple and Google-sponsored Android
in the United States.[67] As a result, in 2010 Microsoft revamped its aging flagship mobile operating
system, Windows Mobile, replacing it with the new Windows Phone OS that was released in October that

year.[68][69] It used a new user interface design language, codenamed "Metro", which prominently used
simple shapes, typography, and iconography, utilizing the concept of minimalism. Microsoft implemented
a new strategy for the software industry, providing a consistent user experience across all smartphones
using the Windows Phone OS. It launched an alliance with Nokia in 2011 and Microsoft worked closely
with the company to co-develop Windows Phone,[70] but remained partners with

long-time Windows
Mobile OEM HTC.[71] Microsoft is a founding member of the Open Networking
Foundation started on
March 23, 2011. Fellow founders were Google, HPE Networking, Yahoo!, Verizon
Communications,
Deutsche Telekom and 17 other companies. This nonprofit organization is focused
on providing support
for a cloud computing initiative called Software-Defined Networking.[72] The
initiative is meant to speed
innovation through simple software changes in telecommunications networks,
wireless networks, data
centers, and other networking areas.[73]

2011–2014: Windows 8/8.1, Xbox One, Outlook.com, and Surface devices
Following the release of Windows Phone, Microsoft
undertook a gradual rebranding of its product range
throughout 2011 and 2012, with the corporation's logos,
products, services, and websites adopting the principles and
concepts of the Metro design language.[74] Microsoft
unveiled Windows 8, an operating system designed to power
both personal computers and tablet computers, in Taipei in
June 2011.[75] A developer preview was released on
September 13, which was subsequently replaced by a Surface Pro 3, part of the
Surface series
consumer preview on February 29, 2012, and released to the of 2-in-1 laptops by
Microsoft
public in May.[76] The Surface was unveiled on June 18,
becoming the first computer in the company's history to have
its hardware made by Microsoft.[77][78] On June 25, Microsoft paid US$1.2
billion to buy the social
network Yammer.[79] On July 31, it launched the Outlook.com webmail service to
compete with
Gmail.[80] On September 4, 2012, Microsoft released Windows Server 2012.[81]

In July 2012, Microsoft sold its 50% stake in MSNBC, which it had run as a joint
venture with NBC
since 1996.[82] On October 1, 2012, Microsoft announced its intention to launch
a news operation, part of
a new-look MSN, with Windows 8 later in the month.[83] On October 26, 2012,
Microsoft launched
Windows 8 and the Microsoft Surface.[78][84] Three days later, Windows Phone 8
was launched.[85] To
cope with the potential for an increase in demand for products and services,
Microsoft opened a number
of "holiday stores" across the U.S. to complement the increasing number of
"bricks-and-mortar"
Microsoft Stores that opened in 2012.[86] On March 29, 2013, Microsoft launched
a Patent Tracker.[87]

In August 2012, the New York City Police Department announced a partnership with
Microsoft for the
development of the Domain Awareness System which is used for Police surveillance
in New York
City.[88]

The Kinect, a motion-sensing input device made by Microsoft and designed as a
video game controller,
first introduced in November 2010, was upgraded for the 2013 release of the Xbox
One video game
console. Kinect's capabilities were revealed in May 2013: an ultra-wide 1080p
camera, function in the
dark due to an infrared sensor, higher-end processing power and new software,
the ability to distinguish
between fine movements (such as a thumb movement), and determining a user's

heart rate by looking at

their face.[89] Microsoft filed a patent application in 2011 that
suggests that the corporation may use the Kinect camera
system to monitor the behavior of television viewers as part
of a plan to make the viewing experience more interactive.[90]

On July 19, 2013, Microsoft stocks suffered its biggest one-
day percentage sell-off since the year 2000, after its fourth-
quarter report raised concerns among investors on the poor
showings of both Windows 8 and the Surface tablet.

The Xbox One console, released in 2013 Microsoft suffered a loss of more than
US$32 billion.[91]

In line with the maturing PC business, in July 2013,
Microsoft announced that it would reorganize the business into four new business
divisions, namely
Operating systems, Apps, Cloud, and Devices. All previous divisions will be
dissolved into new divisions
without any workforce cuts.[92] On September 3, 2013, Microsoft agreed to buy
Nokia's mobile unit for
$7 billion,[93] following Amy Hood taking the role of CFO.[94]

2014–2020: Windows 10, Microsoft Edge, and HoloLens
On February 4, 2014, Steve Ballmer stepped down as CEO of
Microsoft and was succeeded by Satya Nadella, who
previously led Microsoft's Cloud and Enterprise division.[95]

On the same day, John W. Thompson took on the role of
chairman, in place of Bill Gates, who continued to participate
as a technology advisor.[96] Thompson became the second
chairman in Microsoft's history.[97] On April 25, 2014,
Microsoft acquired Nokia Devices and Services for
$7.2 billion.[98] This new subsidiary was renamed Microsoft Satya Nadella
succeeded Steve Ballmer
Mobile Oy.[99] On September 15, 2014, Microsoft acquired as the CEO of Microsoft
in February
the video game development company Mojang, best known 2014.

for Minecraft, for $2.5 billion.[100] On June 8, 2017,
Microsoft acquired Hexadite, an Israeli security firm, for
$100 million.[101][102]

On January 21, 2015, Microsoft announced the release of its first interactive
whiteboard, named Surface
Hub.[103] On July 29, 2015, Windows 10 was released,[104] with its server
sibling, Windows Server 2016,
released in September 2016. In Q1 2015, Microsoft was the third-largest maker of
mobile phones, selling
33 million units (7.2% of all). While a large majority (at least 75%) of them do
not run any version of
Windows Phone — those other phones are not categorized as smartphones by
Gartner – in the same
timeframe 8 million Windows smartphones (2.5% of all smartphones) were made by
all manufacturers
(mostly Microsoft).[105] Microsoft's share of the U.S. smartphone market in
January 2016 was 2.7%.[106]

During the summer of 2015 the company lost $7.6 billion related to its mobile-
phone business, firing
7,800 employees.[107]

In 2015, the construction of a data center in Mecklenburg County, Virginia, led to the destruction of a
historic African American cemetery despite archeological recommendations for preservation.[108]

On March 1, 2016, Microsoft announced the merger of its PC and Xbox divisions, with Phil Spencer
announcing that Universal Windows Platform (UWP) apps would be the focus for Microsoft's gaming in
the future.[109] On January 24, 2017, Microsoft showcased Intune for Education at the BETT 2017
education technology conference in London.[110] Intune for Education is a new cloud-based application
and device management service for the education sector.[111] In May 2016, the company announced it
was laying off 1,850 workers, and taking an impairment and restructuring charge of $950 million.[107]

In June 2016, Microsoft announced a project named Microsoft Azure Information Protection. It aims to
help enterprises protect their data as it moves between servers and devices. [112] In November 2016,
Microsoft joined the Linux Foundation as a Platinum member during Microsoft's Connect(); developer
event in New York.[113] The cost of each Platinum membership is US$500,000 per year.[114] Some
analysts deemed this unthinkable ten years prior, however, as in 2001 then-CEO Steve Ballmer called
Linux "cancer".[115] Microsoft planned to launch a preview of Intune for Education "in the coming
weeks", with general availability scheduled for spring 2017, priced at $30 per device, or through volume
licensing agreements.[116]

In January 2018, Microsoft patched Windows 10 to account
for CPU problems related to Intel's Meltdown security
breach. The patch led to issues with the Microsoft Azure
virtual machines reliant on Intel's CPU architecture. On
January 12, Microsoft released PowerShell Core 6.0 for the
macOS and Linux operating systems.[117] In February 2018,
Microsoft ceased notification support for its Windows Phone
devices which effectively ended firmware updates for the
discontinued devices.[117] In March 2018, Microsoft recalled

The Nokia Lumia 1320, the Microsoft Windows 10 S to change it to a mode for the Windows
Lumia 535 and the Nokia Lumia 530,
which all run on one of the now- operating system rather than a separate and unique operating
discontinued Windows Phone operating system. In March the company also established guidelines
systems that censor users of Office 365 from using profanity in private

documents.[117]

In April 2018, Microsoft released the source code for Windows File Manager under the MIT License to
celebrate the program's 20th anniversary. In April the company further expressed willingness to embrace
open source initiatives by announcing Azure Sphere as its own derivative of the Linux operating

system.[117] In May 2018, Microsoft partnered with 17 American intelligence agencies to develop cloud
computing products. The project is dubbed "Azure Government" and has ties to the Joint Enterprise
Defense Infrastructure (JEDI) surveillance program.[117] On June 4, 2018, Microsoft officially announced
the acquisition of GitHub for $7.5 billion, a deal that closed on October 26, 2018.[118][119] On July 10,
2018, Microsoft revealed the Surface Go platform to the public. Later in the month, it converted
Microsoft Teams to gratis.[117] In August 2018, Microsoft released two projects called Microsoft
AccountGuard and Defending Democracy. It also unveiled Snapdragon 850 compatibility for Windows
10 on the ARM architecture.[120][121][117]

In August 2018, Toyota Tsusho began a partnership with Microsoft to create fish farming tools using the
Microsoft Azure application suite for Internet of things (IoT) technologies related to water management.
Developed in part by researchers from Kindai University, the water pump mechanisms use artificial

intelligence to count the number of fish on a conveyor belt, analyze the
number of fish, and deduce the effectiveness of water flow from the
data the fish provide. The specific computer programs used in the
process fall under the Azure Machine Learning and the Azure IoT Hub
platforms.[122]

In September 2018, Microsoft discontinued Skype Classic.[117] On
October 10, 2018, Microsoft joined the Open Invention Network
community despite holding more than 60,000 patents.[123] In
November 2018, Microsoft agreed to supply 100,000 Microsoft
HoloLens headsets to the United States military in order to "increase
lethality by enhancing the ability to detect, decide and engage before
the enemy."[124] In November 2018, Microsoft introduced Azure
Multi-Factor Authentication for Microsoft Azure.[125] In December
2018, Microsoft announced Project Mu, an open source release of the Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin
Unified Extensible Firmware Interface (UEFI) core used in Microsoft using a Microsoft HoloLens
Surface and Hyper-V products. The project promotes the idea of mixed reality headset in
Firmware as a Service.[126] In the same month, Microsoft announced September 2016

the open source implementation of Windows Forms and the Windows
Presentation Foundation (WPF) which will allow for further movement
of the company toward the transparent release of key frameworks used in developing Windows desktop
applications and software. December also saw the company discontinue the Microsoft Edge [Legacy]
browser project in favor of the "New Edge" browser project, featuring a Chromium based backend.[125]

On February 20, 2019, Microsoft Corp said it will offer its cyber security service AccountGuard to 12
new markets in Europe including Germany, France and Spain, to close security gaps and protect
customers in political space from hacking.[127] In February 2019, hundreds of Microsoft employees
protested the company's war profiteering from a $480 million contract to develop

virtual reality headsets
for the United States Army.[128]

2020–present: Acquisitions, Xbox Series X/S, and Windows 11
On March 26, 2020, Microsoft announced it was acquiring Affirmed Networks for
about
$1.35 billion.[129][130] Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Microsoft closed all of
its retail stores
indefinitely due to health concerns.[131] On July 22, 2020, Microsoft announced
plans to close its Mixer
service, planning to move existing partners to Facebook Gaming.[132]

On July 31, 2020, it was reported that Microsoft was in talks to acquire TikTok
after the Trump
administration ordered ByteDance to divest ownership of the application to the
U.S.[133] On August 3,
2020, after speculation on the deal, Donald Trump stated that Microsoft could
buy the application,
however, it should be completed by September 15, 2020, and that the United
States Department of the
Treasury should receive a portion if it were to go through.[134]

On August 5, 2020, Microsoft stopped its xCloud game streaming test for iOS
devices. According to
Microsoft, the future of xCloud on iOS remains unclear and potentially out of
Microsoft's hands. Apple
has imposed a strict limit on "remote desktop clients" which means applications
are only allowed to
connect to a user-owned host device or gaming console owned by the user.[135] On
September 21, 2020,

Microsoft announced its intent to acquire video game company ZeniMax Media, the
parent company of
Bethesda Softworks, for about $7.5 billion, with the deal expected to occur in
the second half of 2021
fiscal year.[136] On March 9, 2021, the acquisition was finalized and ZeniMax
Media became part of
Microsoft's Xbox Game Studios division.[137] The total price of the deal was
$8.1 billion.[138]

On September 22, 2020, Microsoft announced that it had an exclusive license to
use OpenAI's GPT-3
artificial intelligence language generator.[139] The previous version of GPT-3,
called GPT-2, made
headlines for being "too dangerous to release" and had numerous capabilities,
including designing
websites, prescribing medication, answering questions, and penning articles.
[140]

On November 10, 2020, Microsoft released the Xbox Series X and Xbox Series S
video game
consoles.[141]

In February 2021, Microsoft released Azure Quantum for public preview.[142] The
public cloud
computing platform provides access to quantum software and quantum hardware
including trapped
ion, neutral atom, and superconducting systems.[143][144][145][146]

In April 2021, Microsoft announced it would buy Nuance Communications for
approximately $16
billion.[147] The acquisition of Nuance was completed in March 2022.[148] In

2021, in part due to the
strong quarterly earnings spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic, Microsoft's valuation came to nearly $2
trillion. The increased necessity for remote work and distance education drove demand for cloud
computing and grew the company's gaming sales.[149][150][151]

On June 24, 2021, Microsoft announced Windows 11 during a Livestream. The announcement came with
confusion after Microsoft announced Windows 10 would be the last version of the operating system.[152]

It was released to the general public on October 5, 2021.[153]

In September 2021, it was announced that the company had acquired Takelessons, an online platform that
connects students and tutors in numerous subjects. The acquisition positioned Microsoft to grow its
presence in the market of providing online education to large numbers of people. [154] In the same month,
Microsoft acquired Australia-based video editing software company Clipchamp. [155]

In October 2021, Microsoft announced that it began rolling out end-to-end encryption (E2EE) support for
Microsoft Teams calls in order to secure business communication while using video conferencing
software. Users can ensure that their calls are encrypted and can utilize a security code that both parties
on a call must verify on their respective ends.[156] On October 7, Microsoft acquired Ally.io, a software
service that measures companies' progress against OKRs. Microsoft plans to incorporate Ally.io into its
Viva family of employee experience products.[157]

On January 18, 2022, Microsoft announced the acquisition of American video game developer and
holding company Activision Blizzard in an all-cash deal worth $68.7 billion. [158] Activision Blizzard is
best known for producing franchises, including but not limited to Warcraft, Diablo, Call of Duty,
StarCraft, Candy Crush Saga, Crash Bandicoot, Spyro, Tony Hawk's, Guitar Hero, and Overwatch.[159]

Activision and Microsoft each released statements saying the acquisition was to benefit their businesses
in the metaverse, many saw Microsoft's acquisition of video game studios as an attempt to compete
against Meta Platforms, with TheStreet referring to Microsoft wanting to become "the Disney of the
metaverse".[160][161] Microsoft also named Phil Spencer, head of the Xbox brand since 2014, the
inaugural CEO of the newly established Microsoft Gaming division, which now houses the Xbox

operations team and the three publishers in the company's portfolio (Xbox Game Studios, ZeniMax
Media, Activision Blizzard). Microsoft has not released statements regarding Activision's recent legal
controversies regarding employee abuse, but reports have alleged that Activision CEO Bobby Kotick, a
major target of the controversy, will leave the company after the acquisition is

finalized.[162] The deal
was closed on October 13, 2023.[163]

In December 2022, Microsoft announced a new 10-year deal with the London Stock Exchange Group for
products including Microsoft Azure; Microsoft acquired around 4% of LSEG as part of the deal.[164]

In January 2023, CEO Satya Nadella announced Microsoft would lay off some 10,000 employees.[165]

The announcement came a day after hosting a Sting concert for 50 people, including Microsoft
executives, in Davos, Switzerland.[166]

On January 23, 2023, Microsoft announced a new multi-year, multi-billion dollar investment deal with
ChatGPT developer OpenAI.[167]

In June 2023, Microsoft released Azure Quantum Elements to run molecular simulations and calculations
in computational chemistry and materials science using a combination of AI, high-performance
computing and quantum computing.[168] The service includes Copilot, a GPT-4 based large language
model tool to query and visualize data, write code, initiate simulations, and educate researchers.[168]

At a November 2023 developer conference, Microsoft announced two new custom-designed computing
chips: The Maia chip, designed to run large language models, and Cobalt CPU, designed to power general
cloud services on Azure.[169][170]

On November 20, 2023, Satya Nadella announced that Sam Altman, who had been ousted as CEO of
OpenAI just days earlier, and Greg Brockman, who had resigned as president, would join Microsoft to
lead a new advanced AI research team.[171][172] However, the plan was short-lived, as Altman was
subsequently reinstated as OpenAI's CEO and Brockman rejoined the company amid pressure from
OpenAI's employees and investors on its board.[173] In March 2024, Inflection AI's cofounders Mustafa
Suleyman and Karen Simonyan announced their departure from the company in order to start Microsoft
AI, with Microsoft acqui-hiring nearly the entirety of its 70-person workforce. As part of the deal,
Microsoft paid Inflection $650 million to license its technology.[174][175]

In January 2024, Microsoft became the most valued publicly traded company. Meanwhile, that month, the
company announced a subscription offering of artificial intelligence for small businesses via Copilot
Pro.[176][177]

In April 2024, Microsoft made a $1.5 billion investment in the Emirati AI firm G42. As part of the deal,
G42 said it would use the Microsoft Azure platform for its AI development and deployment.[178][179]

Later that month, Microsoft unveiled plans to invest $1.7 billion in developing AI and cloud
infrastructure in Indonesia. The plan includes establishment of data centers and

partnerships to support
digital transformation efforts.[180]

In May 2024, Microsoft announced a $3.3 billion investment to build an artificial intelligence hub in
southeast Wisconsin, tripling its initial proposal. This initiative, unveiled by President Joe Biden in
Racine County, includes constructing a data center, creating 2,300 construction jobs by 2025, and 2,000
permanent jobs over time, alongside establishing an AI co-innovation lab at UW-Milwaukee to train up to
1,000 individuals by 2030.[181]

In June 2024, Microsoft announced it would be laying off 1,000 employees from the company's mixed
reality and Azure cloud computing divisions.[182][183]

In June 2024, Microsoft announced that it was building a "hyperscale data centre" in South East
Leeds.[184] In July 2024, it was reported that the company was laying off its diversity, equity, and
inclusion (DEI) team.[185][186]

On July 19, 2024, a global IT outage impacted Microsoft services, affecting businesses, airlines, and
financial institutions worldwide. The outage was traced back to a flawed update of CrowdStrike's
cybersecurity software, which resulted in Microsoft systems crashing and causing disruptions across
various sectors. Despite CrowdStrike's CEO George Kurtz clarifying that the issue was not a cyberattack,
the incident had widespread consequences, leading to delays in air travel, financial transactions, and
medical services globally. Microsoft stated that the underlying cause had been fixed but acknowledged
ongoing residual impacts on some Microsoft 365 apps and services.[187][188]

In September 2024, BlackRock and Microsoft announced a $30 billion fund, the Global AI Infrastructure
Investment Partnership, to invest in AI infrastructure such as data centers and energy projects. The fund
has the potential to reach $100 billion with debt financing, and partners include Abu Dhabi-backed MGX
and Nvidia, which will provide AI expertise. Investments will primarily focus on the U.S., with some in
partner countries.[189] Microsoft also announced relaunch of its controversial tool, Recall, in November
2024 after addressing privacy concerns. Initially criticized for taking regular screenshots without user
consent, Recall was changed to an opt-in feature instead of being default on. The UK's Information
Commissioner's Office monitored the situation and noted the adjustments, which included enhanced
security measures like encryption and biometric access. While experts regarded these changes as
improvements, they advised caution, with some recommending further testing before users opted in.[190]

On February 28, 2025, Microsoft announced that Skype would be shutting down on May 5, 2025, to
streamline its focus on Microsoft Teams. The company stated there would be no job cuts due to the

shutdown.[191]

On April 4, 2025, it celebrated its 50th anniversary.[192]

On May 30, 2025, it was reported that Microsoft's Russian division would be preparing to file for
bankruptcy, days after President Vladimir Putin stated that foreign services providers should be throttled
in Russia to make way for domestic software, which included Microsoft. The company previously
restructured operations in Russia in June 2022 after being significantly impacted by the Russian invasion
of Ukraine, but stated those restructuring efforts have failed.[193]

On July 2, 2025, Microsoft announced to cut nearly 4% of its workforce, around 9,000 jobs, to control
costs amid heavy AI infrastructure spending, while also restructuring management and streamlining
operations.[194]

Corporate affairs
Microsoft is ranked No. 14 in the 2022 Fortune 500 rankings of the largest United States corporations by
total revenue;[195] and it was the world's largest software maker by revenue in 2022 according to Forbes
Global 2000. In 2018, Microsoft became the most valuable publicly traded company in the world,[196] a

position it has repeatedly traded with Apple in the years since.[197] In April 2019, Microsoft reached a
trillion-dollar market cap, becoming the third U.S. public company to be valued at over $1 trillion.[d] As
of 2024, Microsoft has the third-highest global brand valuation. Microsoft is one of only two U.S.-based
companies that have a prime credit rating of AAA.[198]

Board of directors
The company is run by a board of directors made up of mostly company outsiders, as is customary for
publicly traded companies. Members of the board of directors as of December 2023 are Satya Nadella,
Reid Hoffman, Hugh Johnston, Teri List, Sandi Peterson, Penny Pritzker, Carlos Rodriguez, Charles
Scharf, John W. Stanton, John W. Thompson, Emma Walmsley and Padmasree Warrior.
[199]

Board members are elected every year at the annual shareholders' meeting using a majority vote system.
There are four committees within the board that oversee more specific matters. These committees include
the Audit Committee, which handles accounting issues with the company including auditing and
reporting; the Compensation Committee, which approves compensation for the CEO and other employees
of the company; the Governance and Nominating Committee, which handles various corporate matters
including the nomination of the board; and the Regulatory and Public Policy Committee, which includes
legal/antitrust matters, along with privacy, trade, digital safety, artificial intelligence, and environmental
sustainability.[200]

On March 13, 2020, Gates announced that he is leaving the board of directors of Microsoft and Berkshire
Hathaway to focus more on his philanthropic efforts. According to Aaron Tilley of The Wall Street
Journal this is "marking the biggest boardroom departure in the tech industry since the death of longtime
rival and Apple Inc. co-founder Steve Jobs."[201]

On January 13, 2022, The Wall Street Journal reported that Microsoft's board of directors plans to hire an
external law firm to review its sexual harassment and gender discrimination policies, and to release a
summary of how the company handled past allegations of misconduct against Bill Gates and other
corporate executives.[202]

Chief executives
1. Bill Gates (1975–2000)
2. Steve Ballmer (2000–2014)
3. Satya Nadella (2014–present)

Financial
When Microsoft went public and launched its initial public offering (IPO) in 1986, the opening stock
price was $21; after the trading day, the price closed at $27.75. As of July 2010, with the company's nine
stock splits, any IPO shares would be multiplied by 288; if one were to buy the IPO today, given the splits
and other factors, it would cost about 9 cents.[10]:235–236[204][205] The stock price peaked in 1999 at
around $119 ($60.928, adjusting for splits).[206] The company began to offer a dividend on January 16,
2003, starting at eight cents per share for the fiscal year followed by a dividend of sixteen cents per share
the subsequent year, switching from yearly to quarterly dividends in 2005 with eight cents a share per

quarter and a special one-time payout
of three dollars per share for the
second quarter of the fiscal
year.[206][207] Though the company
had subsequent increases in dividend
payouts, the price of Microsoft's stock
remained steady for years.[207][208]

Standard & Poor's and Moody's
Investors Service have both given a
AAA rating to Microsoft, whose Five year history graph of Nasdaq: MSFT (https://www.nasdaq.co
assets were valued at $41 billion as m/market-activity/stocks/msft) stock on July 17, 2013.[203]

compared to only $8.5 billion in
unsecured debt. Consequently, in
February 2011 Microsoft released a corporate bond amounting to $2.25 billion with relatively low
borrowing rates compared to government bonds.[209] For the first time in 20 years Apple Inc. surpassed
Microsoft in Q1 2011 quarterly profits and revenues due to a slowdown in PC sales and continuing huge
losses in Microsoft's Online Services Division (which contains its search engine Bing). Microsoft profits

were $5.2 billion, while Apple Inc. profits were $6 billion, on revenues of $14.5 billion and $24.7 billion
respectively.[210] Microsoft's Online Services Division has been continuously loss-making since 2006 and
in Q1 2011 it lost $726 million. This follows a loss of $2.5 billion for the year 2010.[211]

On July 20, 2012, Microsoft posted its first quarterly loss Sales by region (2023)[212]

ever, despite earning record revenues for the quarter and Region Sales in billion $ share
fiscal year, with a net loss of $492 million due to a
writedown related to the advertising company aQuantive, United States 106.7 50.4%

which had been acquired for $6.2 billion back in 2007.[213] Other countries 105.2 49.6%
As of January 2014, Microsoft's market capitalization stood
at $314B,[214] making it the 8th-largest company in the world by market capitalization.[215] On
November 14, 2014, Microsoft overtook ExxonMobil to become the second most-valuable company by
market capitalization, behind only Apple Inc. Its total market value was over $410B—with the stock price
hitting $50.04 a share, the highest since early 2000.[216] In 2015, Reuters reported that Microsoft Corp
had earnings abroad of $76.4 billion which were untaxed by the Internal Revenue Service. Under U.S.
law, corporations do not pay income tax on overseas profits until the profits are brought into the United
States.[217]

The key trends of Microsoft are (as at the financial year ending June 30):[218][219]

Year	Revenue in billion US$[220]	Net income in billion US$[220]	Total Assets in billion US$[220]	Employees[221]
2005	39.7	12.2	70.8	61,000
2006	44.2	12.5	69.5	71,000
2007	51.1	14.0	63.1	79,000
2008	60.4	17.6	72.7	91,000
2009	58.4	14.5	77.8	93,000
2010	62.4	18.7	86.1	89,000
2011	69.9	23.1	108	90,000
2012	73.7	16.9	121	94,000
2013	77.8	21.8	142	99,000
2014	86.8	22.0	172	128,000
2015	93.5	12.1	174	118,000
2016	91.1	20.5	193	114,000

2017 96.5 21.2 250 124,000

2018 110 16.5 258 131,000

2019 125 39.2 286 144,106

2020 143 44.2 301 163,000

2021 168 61.2 333 181,000

2022 198 72.7 364 221,000

2023 211 72.3 411 238,000

2024 245 88.1 512 228,000

2025 282 101.8 619 228,000

In November 2018, the company won a $480 million military contract with the U.S. government to bring
augmented reality (AR) headset technology into the weapon repertoires of American soldiers. The two-
year contract may result in follow-on orders of more than 100,000 headsets, according to documentation
describing the bidding process. One of the contract's tag lines for the augmented reality technology seems
to be its ability to enable "25 bloodless battles before the 1st battle", suggesting that actual combat
training is going to be an essential aspect of the augmented reality headset capabilities.[222]

Subsidiaries
Microsoft is an international business. As such, it needs subsidiaries present in whatever national markets
it chooses to harvest. An example is Microsoft Canada, which it established in 1985.[223] Other countries
have similar installations, to funnel profits back up to Redmond and to distribute the dividends to the
holders of MSFT stock.

Ownership
The 10 largest shareholders of Microsoft in early 2024 were:[212][224]

Shareholder name Percentage

The Vanguard Group 8.9%

BlackRock 5.6%

State Street Corporation 4.0%

Steve Ballmer 4.0%

Fidelity Investments 2.9%

Geode Capital Management 2.1%

T. Rowe Price International 1.9%

Eaton Vance 1.7%

JP Morgan Investment Management 1.6%

Bill Gates 1.4%

BlackRock Life 1.4%

Others 68.5%

Marketing

In 2004, Microsoft commissioned research firms to do
independent studies comparing the total cost of ownership
(TCO) of Windows Server 2003 to Linux; the firms
concluded that companies found Windows easier to
administrate than Linux, thus those using Windows would
administrate faster resulting in lower costs for their company
(i.e. lower TCO).[225] This spurred a wave of related studies;
a study by the Yankee Group concluded that upgrading from
one version of Windows Server to another costs a fraction of
the switching costs from Windows Server to Linux, although Windows 8 Launch
Event in Akihabara,
companies surveyed noted the increased security and Tokyo, on October 25, 2012
reliability of Linux servers and concern about being locked
into using Microsoft products.[226] Another study, released by
the Open Source Development Labs, claimed that the Microsoft studies were
"simply outdated and one-
sided" and their survey concluded that the TCO of Linux was lower due to Linux
administrators
managing more servers on average and other reasons.[227]

As part of the "Get the Facts" campaign, Microsoft highlighted the .NET
Framework trading platform
that it had developed in partnership with Accenture for the London Stock
Exchange, claiming that it
provided "five nines" reliability. After suffering extended downtime and
unreliability[228][229] the London
Stock Exchange announced in 2009 that it was planning to drop its Microsoft
solution and switch to a
Linux-based one in 2010.[230][231]

In 2012, Microsoft hired a political pollster named Mark Penn, whom The New York
Times called
"famous for bulldozing" his political opponents[232] as Executive Vice-
president, Advertising and
Strategy. Penn created a series of negative advertisements targeting one of
Microsoft's chief competitors,
Google. The advertisements, called "Scroogled", attempted to make the case that
Google is "screwing"
consumers with search results rigged to favor Google's paid advertisers, that
Gmail violates the privacy of

its users to place ad results related to the content of their emails and
shopping results, which favor Google
products. Tech publications like TechCrunch were highly critical of the
advertising campaign,[233] while
Google employees embraced it.[234]

Layoffs

In July 2014, Microsoft announced plans to lay off 18,000 employees. Microsoft
employed 127,104
people as of June 5, 2014, making this about a 14 percent reduction of its
workforce as the biggest
Microsoft layoff ever. This included 12,500 professional and factory personnel.

Previously, Microsoft had eliminated 5,800 jobs in 2009 in line with the Great Recession of 2008–2017.[235][236] In September 2014, Microsoft laid off 2,100 people, including 747 people in the Seattle–Redmond area, where the company is headquartered. The firings came as a second wave of the layoffs that were previously announced. This brought the total number to over 15,000 out of the 18,000 expected cuts.[237] In October 2014, Microsoft revealed that it was almost done with eliminating 18,000 employees, which was its largest-ever layoff sweep.[238] In July 2015, Microsoft announced another 7,800 job cuts in the next several months.[239] In May 2016, Microsoft announced another 1,850 job cuts mostly in its Nokia mobile phone division. As a result, the company will record an impairment and restructuring charge of approximately $950 million, of which approximately $200 million will relate to severance payments.[240]

Microsoft laid off 1,900 employees in its gaming division in January 2024. The layoffs primarily affected Activision Blizzard employees, but some Xbox and ZeniMax employees were also affected.[241] Blizzard president Mike Ybarra and chief design officer Allen Adham also resigned.[242]

In May 2025, Microsoft announced that it is laying off more than 6,000 employees, around three percent of the company's entire workforce.[243] In July 2025, Microsoft announced another round of layoffs, cutting approximately 9,000 employees in its largest workforce reduction in over two years. The cuts affected multiple divisions, including Xbox, with 830 positions eliminated at its Redmond, Washington headquarters.[244][245] Amid the layoffs, Microsoft also announced that it was quitting Pakistan after 25 years of operations.[246][247] While the exit was part of shift in business strategies and preference for cloud based models, the company's exit from Pakistan was also reportedly attributed to "growing difficulties" with the country's business environment.[248]

Unions
Microsoft recognizes seven trade unions[e] representing 1,750 workers in the United States at its video game subsidiaries Activision Blizzard and ZeniMax Media.[249] U.S. workers have been vocal in opposing military and law-enforcement contracts with Microsoft.[250] Bethesda Game Studios is unionized in Canada.[251] Microsoft South Korea has recognized its union since 2017.[252][253] German employees have elected works councils since 1998.[254]

United States government
Microsoft provides information about reported bugs in its software to intelligence agencies of the United States government, prior to the public release of the fix. A Microsoft spokesperson stated that the corporation runs several programs that facilitate the sharing of such information with the U.S. government.[255] Following media reports about PRISM, NSA's massive electronic surveillance program,

in May 2013, several technology companies were identified as participants, including Microsoft.[256]

According to leaks of said program, Microsoft joined the PRISM program in 2007.[257] However, in June 2013, an official statement from Microsoft flatly denied its participation in the program:

"We provide customer data only when we receive a legally binding order or subpoena to do so, and never on a voluntary basis. In addition, we only ever comply with orders for requests about specific accounts or identifiers. If the government has a broader voluntary national security program to gather customer data, we don't participate in it."[258]

During the first six months of 2013, Microsoft received requests that affected between 15,000 and 15,999 accounts.[259] In December 2013, the company made a statement to further emphasize that it takes its customers' privacy and data protection very seriously, saying that "government snooping potentially now constitutes an 'advanced persistent threat,' alongside sophisticated malware and cyber attacks".[260] The statement also marked the beginning of three-part program to enhance Microsoft's encryption and transparency efforts. On July 1, 2014, as part of this program, it opened the first (of many) Microsoft Transparency Center, which provides "participating governments with the ability to review source code for our key products, assure themselves of their software integrity, and confirm there are no "back doors."[261] Microsoft has also argued that the United States Congress should enact strong privacy regulations to protect consumer data.[262]

In April 2016, the company sued the U.S. government, argued that secrecy orders were preventing the company from disclosing warrants to customers in violation of the company's and customers' rights. Microsoft argued that it was unconstitutional for the government to indefinitely ban Microsoft from informing its users that the government was requesting their emails and other documents and that the Fourth Amendment made it so people or businesses had the right to know if the government searches or seizes their property. On October 23, 2017, Microsoft said it would drop the lawsuit as a result of a policy change by the United States Department of Justice (DoJ). The DoJ had "changed data request rules on alerting the Internet users about agencies accessing their information."

In 2022 Microsoft shared a $9 billion contract from the United States Department of Defense for cloud computing with Amazon, Google, and Oracle.[263]

Security challenges
On a Friday afternoon in January 2024, Microsoft disclosed that a Russian state-sponsored group hacked into its corporate systems. The group, accessed "a very small percentage" of Microsoft corporate email accounts, which also included members of its senior leadership team and employees in its cybersecurity

and legal teams.[264] Microsoft noted in a blog post that the attack might have been prevented if the
accounts in question had enabled multi-factor authentication, a defensive measure which is widely
recommended in the industry, including by Microsoft itself.[265]

Corporate identity

Corporate culture

Technical references for developers and articles for various Microsoft magazines such as Microsoft
Systems Journal (MSJ) are available through the Microsoft Developer Network (MSDN). MSDN also
offers subscriptions for companies and individuals, and the more expensive subscriptions usually offer
access to pre-release beta versions of Microsoft software.[266][267] In April 2004, Microsoft launched a
community site for developers and users, titled Channel 9, that provides a wiki and an Internet forum.[268]

Another community site that provides daily videocasts and other services, On10.net, launched on March
3, 2006.[269] Free technical support is traditionally provided through online Usenet newsgroups, and
CompuServe in the past, monitored by Microsoft employees; there can be several newsgroups for a single
product. Helpful people can be elected by peers or Microsoft employees for Microsoft Most Valuable
Professional (MVP) status, which entitles them to a sort of special social status and possibilities for
awards and other benefits.[270]

Noted for its internal lexicon, the expression "eating your own dog food" is used to describe the policy of
using pre-release and beta versions of products inside Microsoft to test them in "real-world"
situations.[271] This is usually shortened to just "dog food" and is used as a noun, verb, and adjective.
Another bit of jargon, FYIFV or FYIV ("Fuck You, I'm [Fully] Vested"), is used by an employee to
indicate they are financially independent and can avoid work anytime they wish.
[272]

Microsoft is an outspoken opponent of the cap on H-1B visas, which allows companies in the U.S. to
employ certain foreign workers. Bill Gates claims the cap on H1B visas makes it difficult to hire
employees for the company, stating "I'd certainly get rid of the H1B cap" in 2005.[273] Critics of H1B
visas argue that relaxing the limits would result in increased unemployment for U.S. citizens due to H1B
workers working for lower salaries.[274]

The Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index, a report of how progressive the organization
deems company policies towards LGBT employees, rated Microsoft as 87% from 2002 to 2004 and as
100% from 2005 to 2010 after it allowed gender expression.[275]

In August 2018, Microsoft implemented a policy for all companies providing subcontractors to require 12
weeks of paid parental leave to each employee. This expands on the former

requirement from 2015
requiring 15 days of paid vacation and sick leave each year.[276] In 2015,
Microsoft established its own
parental leave policy to allow 12 weeks off for parental leave with an
additional 8 weeks for the parent
who gave birth.[277]

Environment

In 2011, Greenpeace released a report rating the top ten big brands in cloud
computing on the sources of
electricity for their data centers. At the time, data centers consumed up to 2%
of all global electricity, and
this amount was projected to increase. Phil Radford of Greenpeace said, "We are
concerned that this new
explosion in electricity use could lock us into old, polluting energy sources
instead of the clean energy

available today",[278] and called on "Amazon, Microsoft and other leaders of the
information-technology
industry must embrace clean energy to power their cloud-based data centers".
[279] In 2013, Microsoft
agreed to buy power generated by a Texas wind project to power one of its data
centers.[280]

Microsoft is ranked on the 17th place in Greenpeace's Guide to Greener
Electronics (16th Edition) that
ranks 18 electronics manufacturers according to its policies on toxic chemicals,
recycling, and climate
change.[281] Microsoft's timeline for phasing out brominated flame retardant
(BFRs) and phthalates in all
products was 2012 but its commitment to phasing out PVC is not clear. As of
January 2011, it has no
products that are completely free from PVC and BFRs.[282]

Microsoft's main U.S. campus received a silver certification from the Leadership
in Energy and
Environmental Design (LEED) program in 2008, and it installed over 2,000 solar
panels on top of its
buildings at its Silicon Valley campus, generating approximately 15 percent of
the total energy needed by
the facilities in April 2005.[283] Microsoft makes use of alternative forms of
transit. It created one of the
world's largest private bus systems, the "Connector", to transport people from
outside the company; for
on-campus transportation, the "Shuttle Connect" uses a large fleet of hybrid
cars to save fuel. The
"Connector" does not compete with the public bus system and works with it to
provide a cohesive
transportation network not just for its employees but also for the public.[284]

Microsoft also subsidizes regional public transport, provided by Sound Transit
and King County Metro,
as an incentive.[283][285] In February 2010, however, Microsoft took a stance
against adding additional
public transport and high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes to the State Route 520
and its floating bridge
connecting Redmond to Seattle; the company did not want to delay the
construction any further.[286]

Microsoft was ranked number 1 in the list of the World's Best Multinational
Workplaces by the Great
Place to Work Institute in 2011.[287]

In January 2020, the company announced a strategy to take the company carbon negative by 2030 and to remove all carbon that it has emitted since its foundation in 1975.[288][289][290] On October 9, 2020, Microsoft permanently allowed remote work.[291] In January 2021, the company announced on Twitter to join the Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact, which engages the cloud infrastructure and data centers industries to reach carbon neutrality in Europe by 2030, and also disclosed an investment in Climeworks, a direct air capture company partnered with Carbfix for carbon sequestration.[list 1] In the same year, it was awarded the EPA's Green Power Leadership Award, citing the company's all-renewable energy use since 2014.[297]

In September 2023, Microsoft announced that it purchased $200 million in carbon credits to offset 315,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide over 10 years from Heirloom Carbon, a carbon removal company that mixes calcium oxide from heated crushed limestone with water to form carbon hydroxide to absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to mineralize back into limestone while the released carbon dioxide is stored underground or injected into concrete.[298][299] Despite spending spent more than $760 million through its Climate Innovation Fund by June 2024 on sustainability projects—including purchases of more than 5 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide removal with carbon offsets and more than 34 megawatts of renewable energy—Microsoft's Scope 3 emissions had increased by 31% from the company's 2020 baseline, which caused the company's total emissions to rise by 29% in 2023.[300]

In 2023 Microsoft consumed 24 TWh of electricity, more than countries such as Iceland, Ghana, the Dominican Republic, or Tunisia.[301]

Headquarters
The corporate headquarters, informally known as the Microsoft Redmond campus, is located at One Microsoft Way in Redmond, Washington. Microsoft initially moved onto the grounds of the campus on February 26, 1986, weeks before the company went public on March 13. The headquarters has since experienced multiple expansions since its establishment. It is estimated to encompass over 8 million ft2 (750,000 m2) of office space and 30,000–40,000 employees.[302] Additional offices are located in Bellevue and Issaquah, Washington Building 92, home to the Microsoft Visitor (90,000 employees worldwide). The company is planning to Center upgrade its Mountain View, California, campus on a grand scale. The company has occupied this campus since 1981. In 2016, the company bought the 32-acre (13 ha) campus, with plans to renovate and expand it by 25%.[303]

Microsoft operates an East Coast headquarters in Charlotte, North Carolina.[304]

In April 2024, it was announced that Microsoft would be opening a state-of-the-art artificial intelligence 'hub' around Paddington in London, England. It was announced that the division

would be led by Jordan
Hoffman, who previously worked for Deepmind and Inflection.[305]

Flagship stores
On October 26, 2015, the company opened its retail location
on Fifth Avenue in New York City. The location features a
five-story glass storefront and is 22,270 square feet.[306] As
per company executives, Microsoft had been on the lookout
for a flagship location since 2009.[307] The company's retail
locations are part of a greater strategy to help build a
connection with its consumers. The opening of the store
coincided with the launch of the Surface Book and Surface
Pro 4.[308] On November 12, 2015, Microsoft opened a Microsoft's Toronto
flagship store
second flagship store, located in Sydney's Pitt Street
Mall.[309]

Logo
Microsoft adopted the so-called "Pac-Man Logo", designed by Scott Baker, on
February 26, 1987, with
the concept being similar to InFocus Corporation logo that was adapted a year
earlier in 1986. Baker
stated "The new logo, in Helvetica italic typeface, has a slash between the o
and s to emphasize the "soft"
part of the name and convey motion and speed".[310] Dave Norris ran an internal
joke campaign to save
the old logo, which was green, in all uppercase, and featured a fanciful letter
O, nicknamed the blibbet,
but it was discarded.[311]

Microsoft's logo with the tagline "Your potential. Our passion."—below the main
corporate name—is
based on a slogan Microsoft used in 2008. In 2002, the company started using the
logo in the United
States and eventually started a television campaign with the slogan, changed
from the previous tagline of
"Where do you want to go today?"[312][313][314] During the private MGX
(Microsoft Global Exchange)

conference in 2010, Microsoft unveiled the company's next tagline, "Be What's
Next."[315] It also had a
slogan/tagline "Making it all make sense."[316] The Microsoft Pac-Man logo was
used for 25 years, 5
months, and 28 days until August 23, 2012, being the longest enduring logo to be
used by the company.

On August 23, 2012, Microsoft unveiled a new corporate logo at the opening of
its 23rd Microsoft store
in Boston, indicating the company's shift of focus from the classic style to the
tile-centric modern
interface, which it uses/will use on the Windows Phone platform, Xbox 360,
Windows 8 and the
upcoming Office Suites.[317] The new logo also includes four squares with the
colors of the then-current
Windows logo which have been used to represent Microsoft's four major products:
Windows (blue),
Office (orange), Xbox (green) and Bing (yellow).[318] The logo also resembles
the opening of one of the
commercials for Windows 95.[319][320]

Microsoft logo history

ca. 1975 – 1980: First Microsoft 1980–June 25, 1982: Second
logo. Microsoft logo.

June 25, 1982 – February 26, February 26, 1987 – August 23,
1987: Third Microsoft logo. 2012: Microsoft "Pac-Man" logo,

designed by Scott Baker.[312][313]

August 23, 2012–present: Fifth
and current Microsoft logo.[321]

Sponsorship
The company was the official jersey sponsor of Finland's
national basketball team at EuroBasket 2015,[322] a major
sponsor of the Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT (2017–2020) and a
sponsor of the Renault F1 Team (2016–2020).

Philanthropy
In 2015, Microsoft Philanthropies, an internal charitable
organization, was established to bring the benefits of Toyota Yaris WRC with sprayed on
technology and the digital revolution to areas and groups that Microsoft logos
lack them. The organisation's key areas of focus are: donating
cloud computing resources to university researchers and
nonprofit groups; supporting the expansion of broadband access worldwide;
funding international
computer science education through YouthSpark; supporting tech education in the
U.S. from kindergarten
to high school; and donating to global child and refugee relief organizations.
[323][324]

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Microsoft's president, Brad Smith, announced that
an initial batch of
supplies, including 15,000 protection goggles, infrared thermometers, medical
caps, and protective suits,
was donated to Seattle, with further aid to come soon.[325]

During the Russian invasion of Ukraine Microsoft started monitoring cyberattacks
originating from the
Government of Russia and Russia-backed hackers. In June 2022, Microsoft
published the report on
Russian cyber attacks and concluded that state-backed Russian hackers "have
engaged in "strategic
espionage" against governments, think tanks, businesses and aid groups" in 42
countries supporting
Kyiv.[326][327]

Microsoft also supports initiatives through its AI for Accessibility grant
program, providing funding to
various global organizations that create technologies to enhance accessibility
for individuals with
disabilities. Among grant recipients from the Asia-Pacific region are Sri Lankan
IT company Fortude,
Thailand-based Vulcan Coalition, and Indonesian organization Kerjabilitas.[328]

Controversies
Criticism of Microsoft has followed various aspects of its products and business
practices. Frequently
criticized are the ease of use, robustness, and security of the company's

software. It has also been criticized for the use of permatemp employees (employees employed for years as "temporary", and therefore without medical benefits), the use of forced retention tactics, which means that employees would be sued if they tried to leave.[330] Historically, Microsoft has also been accused of overworking employees, in many cases, leading to burnout within just a few years of joining the company. The company is often referred to as a "Velvet Sweatshop", a term which originated in a 1989 Seattle Times article,[331] and later became used to describe the company by some of Microsoft's own employees.[332]

This characterization is derived from the perception that Microsoft provides nearly everything for its employees in a convenient place, but in turn overworks them to a point where it would be bad for their (possibly long-term) health.

As reported by several news outlets,[333][334] an Irish subsidiary of Microsoft based in the Republic of Ireland declared £220 bn in profits but paid no corporation tax for the year 2020. This is due to the company being tax resident in Bermuda as mentioned in the accounts for 'Microsoft Round Island One, a subsidiary that collects license fees from the use of Microsoft software worldwide. Dame Margaret Hodge, a Labour MP in the UK said, "It is unsurprising – yet still shocking – that massively wealthy global corporations openly, unashamedly and blatantly refuse to pay tax on the profits they make in the countries where they undertake business".[334]

PRISM is a clandestine surveillance program under which the NSA collects user data from companies like Microsoft and Facebook.[329]

In 2020, ProPublica reported that the company had diverted more than $39 billion in U.S. profits to Puerto Rico using a mechanism structured to make it seem as if the company was unprofitable on paper. As a result, the company paid a tax rate on those profits of "nearly 0%". When the Internal Revenue Service audited these transactions, ProPublica reported that Microsoft aggressively fought back, including successfully lobbying Congress to change the law to make it harder for the agency to conduct audits of large corporations.[335][336] In 2023, Microsoft reported in a securities filing that the U.S. Internal Revenue Service was alleging that the company owed the U.S. $28.9 billion in past taxes, plus penalties related to mis-allocation of corporate profits over a decade.[337]

"Embrace, extend, and extinguish" (EEE),[338] also known as "embrace, extend, and exterminate,"[339] is a phrase that the U.S. Department of Justice found[340] that was used internally by Microsoft[341] to describe its strategy for entering product categories involving widely used standards, extending those standards with proprietary capabilities, and then using those differences to

strongly disadvantage
competitors. Microsoft is frequently accused of using anticompetitive tactics and abusing its monopolistic
power. People who use their products and services often end up becoming dependent on them, a process
is known as vendor lock-in.

Microsoft was the first company to participate in the PRISM surveillance program, according to leaked
NSA documents obtained by The Guardian[342] and The Washington Post[343] in June 2013, and
acknowledged by government officials following the leak.[344] The program authorizes the government to
secretly access data of non-US citizens hosted by American companies without a warrant. Microsoft has
denied participation in such a program.[345]

Jesse Jackson believes Microsoft should hire more minorities and women. In 2015, he praised Microsoft
for appointing two women to its board of directors.[346]

In 2020, Salesforce, the manufacturer of the Slack platform, complained to European regulators about
Microsoft due to the integration of the Teams service into Office 365. Negotiations with the European
Commission continued until the summer of 2023, but, as it became known to the media, they reached an
impasse. Microsoft is now facing an antitrust investigation.[347]

In June 2024, Microsoft Corp. faced a potential EU fine after regulators accused it of abusing market
power by bundling its Teams video-conferencing app with its Office 365 and Microsoft 365 software. The
European Commission issued a statement of objections, alleging Microsoft's practice since 2019 gave

Teams an unfair market advantage and limited interoperability with competing software. Despite
Microsoft's efforts to avoid deeper scrutiny, including unbundling Teams, regulators remained
unconvinced. This action followed a 2019 complaint from Slack, which was later acquired by Salesforce.
Microsoft's Teams usage soared during the pandemic, growing from 2 million daily users in 2017 to 300
million in 2023. The company has a history of antitrust battles in the U.S. and Europe, with over €2
billion in EU fines previously imposed for similar abuses.[348]

In October 2024, Microsoft fired two employees, software engineers Ibtihal Aboussad and Vaniya
Agrawal,[349] who organized an unauthorized vigil at its Redmond headquarters to honor Palestinians
killed in the Gaza war. The employees, part of the group "No Azure for Apartheid", sought to address the
company's involvement in the Israeli government's use of its technology.[350] On March 20, 2025, before
an event at Seattle's Great Hall with Brad Smith and Steve Ballmer, protestors projected "Microsoft
powers genocide" on the wall. Subsequently, two employees interrupted AI executive Mustafa Suleyman
at a speaking event on April 4, 2025, in protest at the company's support of Israel.[351] The Boycott,

Divestment and Sanctions movement added Microsoft to its list of targets for partnering "with the
apartheid regime of Israel and its prison system".[352] In February 2025, the Associated Press reported
that the Israeli military was utilizing Microsoft-developed artificial intelligence tools in its military and
intelligence operations against the people of Gaza. In May 2025, Microsoft issued an unsigned statement
confirming that these services had been made available to Israel, while denying that these tools were
employed during the massacre of the people of Gaza.[353] In August 2025 it was reported that Microsoft
provides storage for mass-surveilled Palestinian phone calls that have been used to identify bombing
targets in Gaza.[354]

In November 2024, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) launched an investigation into Microsoft,
focusing on potential antitrust violations related to its cloud computing, AI, and cybersecurity businesses.
The probe scrutinized Microsoft's bundling of cloud services with products like Office and security tools,
as well as its growing AI presence through its partnership with OpenAI. This inquiry is part of broader
efforts by the U.S. government to curb the power of major tech companies, especially under FTC chair
Lina Khan. Concerns were raised about Microsoft's licensing practices potentially locking customers into
its services and its AI investments possibly sidestepping regulatory oversight.
[355]

In June 2025 Microsoft helped suspend the email account of an International Criminal Court (ICC)
prosecutor in the Netherlands who was investigating Israel for war crimes in order to comply with a
Trump executive order.[356][357] In June 2025, a UN expert's report named Microsoft as being "central to
Israel's surveillance apparatus and the ongoing Gaza destruction."[358]

See also
List of mergers and acquisitions by Microsoft
Microsoft engineering groups
Microsoft Enterprise Agreement

Notes
a. After Apple and Amazon, respectively
b. Parent company of Google

c. Parent company of Facebook
d. After Apple and Amazon, respectively
e. Game Workers Alliance (Raven Software)

Game Workers Alliance Albany
Activision Quality Assurance United-CWA
ZeniMax Workers United/CWA
OneBGS (Bethesda Game Studios)
World of Warcraft
Texas Blizzard QA United-CWA

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