Product Requirements Document (PRD)

Feature: Intelligent Adaptive Formatting Assistant for Microsoft Word

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Context

Microsoft Word offers powerful authoring tools, but users often struggle with layout and formatting consistency—particularly when switching between templates, integrating content from other Microsoft apps, or managing Word's automated formatting features. While Copilot and pre-made templates exist, many users find these tools either overly rigid or too intrusive. This feature proposes an **adaptive formatting assistant** that intelligently learns from user preferences and past documents to streamline formatting while maintaining user control.

Problem Statement

Users find Word's existing formatting tools inconsistent and unintuitive. Automated features (like Smart Formatting or Styles) often apply unwanted changes, and creating professional-looking documents requires significant manual effort. There's a gap between **AI-driven automation** and **user-driven customization**, leading to frustration and inefficiency.

"Sometimes these features think they're smarter than I am… they take too much control." — *Mary*

"It's kind of like all or nothing — either you have to take all of what AI suggests, or do it all yourself." — *Andrew*

Goals

- Provide an intelligent formatting assistant that:
    - Learns user preferences from prior documents and templates.
    - Suggests layout and formatting changes based on context and content type.
    - Maintains user oversight — suggestions can be reviewed, accepted, or declined.

- Reduce time spent manually formatting documents.

- Improve consistency and professional appearance of user documents.

Non-Goals

- This feature is not designed to generate content (Copilot already supports that).

- It will not replace manual style controls or the existing template gallery.

- It will not store or analyze documents without explicit user consent.

User Stories / Flows

User Story 1:
As a user writing a new report, I want the assistant to automatically match the formatting of my previous reports, so my documents remain consistent across projects.

User Story 2:
As a user editing a long document, I want to fix inconsistent spacing, font sizes, and headings automatically, so I can focus on content rather than layout.

User Story 3:
As a user unfamiliar with advanced Word features, I want a clear preview of suggested formatting changes, so I can feel confident before applying them.

Flow Example:

1. User opens a document and activates the "Adaptive Formatting Assistant."

2. The assistant scans the document and compares it to recent work or templates.

3. It highlights inconsistencies or suggests layout adjustments.

4. User reviews suggestions (Accept / Dismiss / Customize).

5. Word applies accepted changes instantly.

UX Notes

- **Interface:** Panel-based assistant (similar to the Editor pane) on the right side of Word.

- **Controls:** Toggle for "Auto-suggest formatting" and "Learn from my past documents."

- **Preview Mode:** Hovering over a suggestion shows a live preview of the change.

- **Undo Support:** All changes are reversible with a single click.

(Optional wireframe idea: a sidebar showing formatting recommendations such as "Align heading hierarchy," "Fix inconsistent bullet spacing," or "Match template 'Project Report'.")

Success Metrics

- **Adoption Rate:** % of Word users who activate the feature within the first 3 months.

- **Efficiency Gain:** Reduction in time spent on manual formatting (target: 30%).

- **User Satisfaction:** >80% of users report improved workflow or clarity in post-use survey.

- **Error Reduction:** Decrease in documents with inconsistent formatting or misapplied styles.

Risks

- **Overreach:** Users may feel the AI is overriding their preferences ("too much control").

- **Privacy:** Collecting style data could raise concerns if not handled transparently.

- **Complexity:** Integrating adaptive learning may introduce latency or confusion for novice users.

- **Adoption Resistance:** Users comfortable with manual formatting may see little need for automation.

Conclusion

The **Adaptive Formatting Assistant** bridges the gap between automation and control in Microsoft Word. By learning from user behavior and document history, it ensures consistent, professional formatting without compromising user autonomy. As *Andrew*

noted, the key is creating a "happy medium… where it's truly collaborating with you rather than just spitting something out."