

Torian Group Times

“Technology with Integrity”

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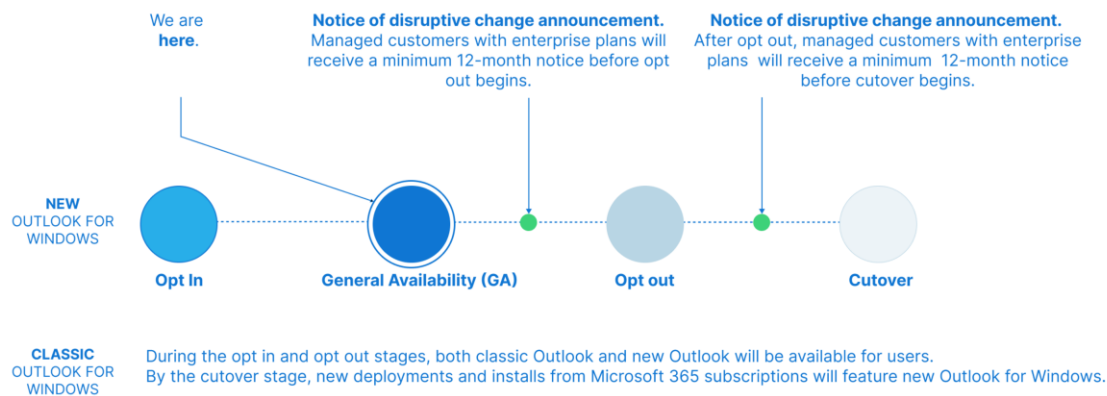
In January, Microsoft will push “New Outlook” to all Microsoft 365 Business Standard or Business Premium customers. New Outlook still has [serious problems](#). It is [missing features](#) (rules, filters, multiple calendars, the ability to sort emails alphabetically), is still buggy (email sometimes doesn’t send, crashes), can be slow (relies on the internet to work), and exposes all your email to Microsoft. There’s also no way to control updates.

If you do not want this new version of Outlook, [you can proactively block it](#). Contact us for assistance.

Microsoft states that [classic Outlook won’t be retired for another five years](#).

At the end of the year, Windows Mail and Calendar users will be forced to use the “New Outlook.”

New Outlook Availability Timeline*



*Timeline not drawn to scale. Updated after GA (August 1, 2024)

End of life for Windows 10 is less than a year away. Review your options and determine what you need in order to do business.

If you plan to replace your Windows 10 PCs that won’t run Windows 11, get enough RAM - at least 16GB, preferably 32GB. Remember that many PCs sold now cannot be upgraded, so you must buy what you need for the entire life of the computer. Consider getting a 1TB SSD. A larger SSD lasts longer and gives you room to grow.

If you want to use new AI features locally (including Recall), you will need a computer with AI hardware – an [NPU \(neural processing unit\)](#). Computers for AI with Snapdragon processors may have some [compatibility issues](#). Verify your programs will work before purchasing. Intel AI processors [are out](#), and computers with the Intel Core Ultra series processors are becoming an option.

The new Chat and Channels Experience in **Microsoft Teams** – [A Complete Guide](#).



[Bluesky](#) is gaining traction as [an alternative to X](#) (Twitter).

[Threads just announced](#) it had more than 35 million signups in November. Threads is Meta's alternative to X.

[Mastadon](#) (another X alternative) [has grown](#), but not as much.

[European Federation of Journalists will stop posting content on X.](#)

[Australia bans social media for people under 16.](#)

The new law is scheduled to come into effect in 12 months, giving social media companies time to meet the requirements.

[Google Chat's new huddles](#) make it even more like Teams and Slack.

Huddles is a Google Meet-powered addition that lets you start a quick call with your coworkers.

Holiday gift guides: [The Verge](#) [NY Times -Wirecutter](#) [The Strategist](#) [Popular Mechanics](#)

[OneDrive accounts left unlicensed for more than 90 days](#) will be automatically archived. You will be charged to regain access. (Message Center ID: [MC836942](#))

This update affects only business and enterprise customers and starts January 25th.

[Microsoft is retiring Delve](#) on December 16th, 2024.

Amazon is [shutting down Freevee](#), its free ad-supported streaming television service, previously known as IMDb TV.

The U.S. Federal Trade Commission published a [paper](#) that found 89 percent of connected devices do not detail how long the item will receive software support. Something to check before you make a purchase.

Microsoft plans to let [Teams users clone their voices](#) so they can have their sound-alikes speak to others in meetings in different languages.

AI

[PlayAI allows you to clone any voice](#). They have been [criticized](#) for their lax approach to safety. The company's voice cloning tool requires that users check a box indicating that they "have all the necessary rights or consent" to clone a voice — but there isn't any enforcement mechanism.

[ElevenLabs](#) also does voice cloning.

At this point, anyone can clone anyone's voice. Be careful when receiving odd phone requests that involve money or security. Per the FTC, losses linked to impersonation scams cost over \$1 billion last year.

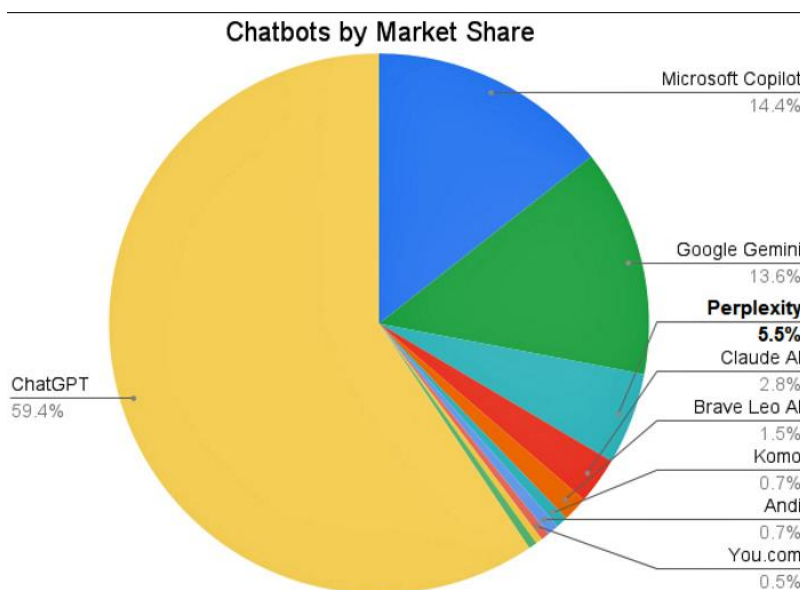
[Voice Phishing Attacks](#): How to Prevent and Respond to Them

Google has been showing its AI overviews a lot less often due to a "disastrously embarrassing launch," as the Futurism blog [reports](#).

Overview of the "big three" chatbots:

- **Perplexity’s free version gives you unlimited queries** and five Pro queries per day. Free queries are fast, with basic search capabilities based on GPT-3.5 and Claude 3’s Haiku model. For \$20 per month, you get 600 Pro searches per day. Pro searches generate more extensive results from several different models. These include Llama 3, Mistral Large, Claude 3’s Opus and Sonnet, and GPT-4/Copilot. (The latter two chatbots usually require separate payments, as discussed below.) I have been using Perplexity for search and am impressed. They also have a [Chrome extension](#).
- **ChatGPT-4 Plus, OpenAI’s premium plan**, currently \$20 per month. OpenAI plans to raise the rate to \$44 by 2029, according to a *New York Times* [report](#) last month. [ChatGPT Search](#) is initially available only to paid ChatGPT Plus and Team subscribers and some OpenAI waitlist users. “We’ll roll out to all Free users over the coming months,” the [announcement](#) says. They also have a [Chrome extension](#).
- **Copilot premium access is available** with a subscription to Microsoft 365. That’s \$70 to \$100 per year for [households](#) and \$6 to \$22 per monthly [business user](#). Copilot adds \$360 per year for businesses ([pricing page](#)).

Like the [ChatGPT app](#) for Apple released several weeks ago, the [Perplexity app](#) for Apple devices adds a keyboard shortcut that allows you to enter a query from anywhere on your desktop.



Top [Generative AI Chatbots by Market Share](#) – November 2024

New [AI experiences for Paint and Notepad](#) begin rolling out to Windows Insiders.

[AI-powered fake news campaign targets Western support for Ukraine and U.S. elections.](#)

SECURITY

Starbucks and other retailers were hit by a [ransomware attack on tech provider](#) Blue Yonder, one of the largest supply chain technology providers.

The Secret Service says [you agreed to be tracked with location data from your phone](#).

Hackers with links to China [breached multiple U.S. telecommunication service providers](#) to access the wiretap systems used by law enforcement to surveil Americans. AT&T, Lumen (formerly CenturyLink), and Verizon are among the telecom providers whose networks were breached, according to [The Wall Street Journal](#). [T-Mobile blocked attempts to infiltrate their routers](#).

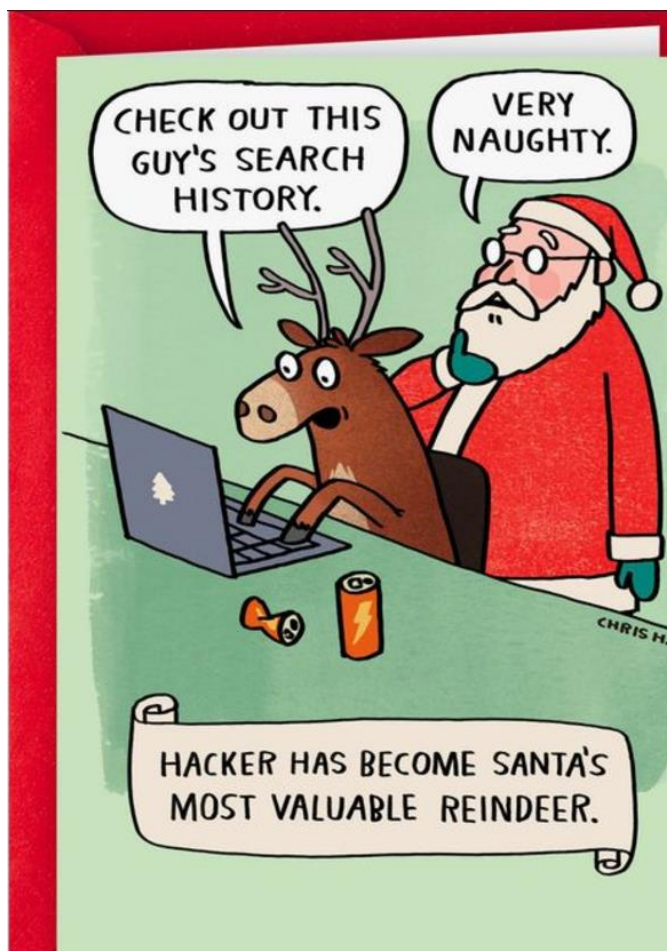
60% of email messages containing a QR code are actually spam or phishing attempts.

[Hot Topic October data breach.](#)

The stolen data includes email addresses, physical addresses, phone numbers, purchases, genders, and dates of birth. Partial credit card data was also included in the breach, including credit card type, expiration dates, and the last four digits of the card number.

[Phishing-as-a-service \(PhaaS\) toolkit called Rockstar 2FA is designed to steal Microsoft 365 account credentials](#). The emails use various lure templates ranging from file-sharing notifications to requests for e-signatures.

HUMOR



TORIAN GROUP

to ensure we continue offering the best products and services possible, we will increase pricing for support and monthly subscriptions by about 3.3%, effective January 1, 2025.

The new rates will be:

Hourly labor \$160 per hour.

Travel time \$85 per hour.

PC Agent: \$7.50

Server Agent: \$12.00

PC Backups: \$13.00

Server Backup: \$62.00

The price increase will be reflected in your January invoice sent in February.

Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions.

As mentioned last month, we will switch to a new ticketing and billing system in January called HaloPSA.

Tim Torian

Torian, Group, Inc.

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