



AGENTIC AI FOR KNOWLEDGE WORK

Claude Cowork

VS.

Microsoft Copilot Cowork

Already using and familiar with Claude Cowork?

With Microsoft's Copilot Cowork now generally available, here's a quick look at how the two compare for the enterprise.

Swipe →

Available Models

Claude Cowork

- Runs on Anthropic's frontier Claude family — Opus, Sonnet, and Haiku.
- Powered by Claude's most capable model with a 200K-token context window.
- One vendor, one frontier model family — you always know what's reasoning over your work.

Copilot Cowork

- Multi-model by design, with Anthropic's Opus 4.8 and Sonnet 4.6 available at launch.
- GPT 5.5 available in the Frontier program; a Microsoft-tuned "Cowork 1" model is coming.
- Copilot Cowork can pick the model per task; a model picker ("Auto") lets you tune cost vs. capability.

THE TAKEAWAY Both can run Anthropic's top models. Copilot Cowork adds model choice and a cost-optimized in-house option coming soon.

Pricing and licensing

Claude Cowork

- Base per seat license \$20/user/month for Teams tier;
- Enterprise tier pricing is custom with a base per seat license + usage-based billing.
- No Microsoft 365 license required to get started.

Copilot Cowork

- Requires a Microsoft 365 Copilot (\$30/user/month) license on top of your Microsoft 365 license, then usage-based billing in Copilot Credits.
- Pay-as-you-go at \$0.01/credit, with discounts available if you commit upfront (pre-purchase credits).
- Microsoft's internal tests claim 30–40% lower cost per prompt than Claude Cowork via its Microsoft 365 connector.

THE TAKEAWAY Both platforms have a base fee and metered usage. Copilot Cowork layers metered usage on top of Copilot + Microsoft 365 licenses.

Where the work runs

Claude Cowork

- Runs locally on your desktop (macOS / Windows).
- Acts directly on local files, folders, and the apps you already use.
- Pro: works on-device, fast, and fully user-controlled.
- Con: tied to the machine it's installed on — the device has to be on.

Copilot Cowork

- Cloud-hosted inside your Microsoft 365 tenant — files aren't stored locally.
- Tasks keep running even when your laptop is off; pick up from web, desktop, or mobile.
- Pro: always-on, scalable, no local footprint.
- Con: cloud- and tenant-bound, scoped to Microsoft 365 data and approved plugins.

THE TAKEAWAY A hands-on local agent installed on your machine vs. an always-on cloud agent that runs in your Microsoft tenant.

Integration, identity & access

Claude Cowork

- Connects through MCP connectors (including a Microsoft 365 connector) and local files.
- Broad access and ecosystem of available tools — not limited to the Microsoft stack.
- Operates at the individual account level.
- Not natively governed by Entra ID groups or Microsoft 365 permissions.

Copilot Cowork

- Born inside Microsoft 365. Work IQ grounds tasks in email, meetings, files, Fabric & Dynamics 365.
- Respects Entra ID, permissions, and data sensitivity labels end-to-end.
- Extends via plugins — limited number available today with many more expected.
- Inherits the identity and access model you already run.

THE TAKEAWAY Copilot Cowork is native to Microsoft 365 and inherits identity & permissions. Claude reaches wider via connectors at the user level.

Security, auditing & centralized control

Claude Cowork

- Approval checkpoints before sensitive actions; strong model-level safety.
- Enterprise plan adds Single Sign In (SSO), admin controls, and audit logging.
- Consumer Pro/Max tiers are individual, not centrally managed.
- Org-wide agent governance and cost controls are still maturing.

Copilot Cowork

- Cowork is Off by default — admins choose who gets access and set spend limits (tenant / group / user).
- Approvals with risk-level indicators; usage reporting and alerts built in.
- Full Microsoft 365 compliance surface: audit logs, eDiscovery, Data Lifecycle, Comms Compliance (DLP coming).
- Sensitivity labels inherited end-to-end.

THE TAKEAWAY Copilot Cowork ships enterprise governance controls on day one. Claude has central controls on its Enterprise tier and is still maturing.

Built-in and customizable Skills

Claude Cowork

- Ships with general document skills and an open SKILL.MD file-based format.
- Can add skills and has a strong ecosystem of providers offering downloadable skills.
- No documented limit in number of skills, and can include reference documents and scripts.
- Plugins available and shared via marketplace.

Copilot Cowork

- Ships with a fixed catalog of Microsoft suite capabilities (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.)
- Can add skills through a guided process or by storing SKILL.md files in your OneDrive folder.
- Scales up to 50 skills/user today with skills up to 1MB in size, and can include reference documents and scripts
- Plugins available and shared Microsoft App Store.

THE TAKEAWAY Copilot Cowork has launch-day limitations that are likely to change. Skills can be added, shared, and customized with either platform.

THE LIKELY OUTCOME

Many organizations will move AI workloads and standardize on Microsoft

- **Same Intelligence – More Powerful Context**
Copilot Cowork runs the Anthropic models, providing the same intelligence with more powerful context. For organizations on Microsoft 365, having the context of your Work IQ is a game changer. This makes Copilot Cowork an easy “yes”.
- **Governance, Identity, Cost controls are built in**
Native Entra ID, Purview, audit, and tenant/group/user level spend controls make security and finance teams comfortable. This is a huge enabler for adoption.
- **Generally Available — and in use**
More than half the Fortune 500 used Copilot Cowork during preview. For Microsoft 365 shops, it's the path of least resistance: no new vendor, no new contract, and your data is already in-platform to be leveraged.
- **Flexibility in Models**
A choice of models from multiple vendors and a fine-tuned, likely cost-optimized Microsoft-developed model (named Cowork 1) coming soon provides best-model-for-task flexibility and hints at Microsoft's shifting AI strategy.



LET'S TALK

Wondering if Microsoft's Copilot Cowork is a fit for your environment?

Katalyst helps you connect, protect, and operate AI agents across your stack — so you adopt the right tool for the right work, with security, cost control, and oversight built in.

Connect



Protect



Operate

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Katalyst 30-Day Satisfaction Guarantee