

Human + AI Working Together



Going Beyond
Technology

INNOVATE
INFORM
INSPIRE

Chapter 2: Understanding Microsoft's Digital Workforce

In Chapter 1, we explored Microsoft's journey from Copilot to Agent First and introduced the concepts of Frontier Firms, digital labour and Human-Agent Teams.

We learned that Agent First is not a replacement for today's AI investments but the next stage in Microsoft's broader vision for the future of work.

The next question is naturally:

"What exactly are these technologies, and how do they work together?"

Terms such as Copilot, Agents, Scout, OpenClaw and Autopilot are becoming increasingly common in Microsoft's AI strategy, yet many organisations are still trying to understand the role each capability plays.

In this chapter, we break down Microsoft's emerging digital workforce, explaining what each capability does, how they differ from one another and how they combine to create a new model for work built around humans and intelligent agents working together.



How Copilot, Agents, Scout, OpenClaw and Autopilot Work Together - The Next Generation of Work

Imagine asking a colleague to organise a project review. Within minutes they gather updates from multiple teams, review project risks, analyse budget information, identify actions requiring attention, prepare a summary report and schedule follow-up meetings.

Now imagine that colleague never sleeps, never forgets a task and can work across hundreds of projects simultaneously.

This example illustrates the direction Microsoft is moving towards with Agent First. For years, technology has supported work. The next generation of technology is increasingly participating in work. This does not happen through a single product or capability. Instead, Microsoft is building an ecosystem of AI-powered technologies designed to work together.

Some help people complete tasks.

Some perform tasks independently.

Some gather information.

Some operate systems.

Some coordinate entire processes.

Understanding how these capabilities fit together is essential because they represent different layers of the same vision. A future where every employee has access to a team of intelligent digital workers.

Understanding the AI Workforce

One of the easiest ways to understand Microsoft's Agent First strategy is to compare it to a traditional organisation. In a typical team, people perform different roles.

Some conduct research.

Some manage projects.

Some process transactions.

Some coordinate activities.

Some provide leadership and direction.

The same principle is beginning to emerge within Microsoft's AI ecosystem.





Different AI capabilities are being designed to perform different responsibilities.

Rather than one AI trying to do everything, multiple specialist capabilities work together. This creates a more flexible and scalable model. The result is something Microsoft increasingly describes as digital labour.

Not because AI replaces people.
But because AI contributes capacity.

To understand how this works, let's look at the key components.

What is Microsoft 365 Copilot? Your Personal AI Assistant

For most organisations, Microsoft 365 Copilot is the starting point. It is the capability employees interact with most frequently and remains the foundation of Microsoft's AI strategy.

Copilot sits inside familiar Microsoft applications including:

- Word
- Excel
- PowerPoint
- Outlook
- Teams
- OneNote
- Microsoft 365 Chat

Its primary purpose is simple. Help users complete work faster. When an employee asks a question, requests a summary or needs support creating content, Copilot responds.

Examples include:

- Drafting reports and communications
- Summarising meetings
- Creating presentations
- Analysing spreadsheets
- Finding information across Microsoft 365
- Generating action lists
- Supporting decision-making





The key characteristic of Copilot is that it remains user-driven. The employee initiates the interaction. The employee remains responsible for the work. The employee decides what happens next. This is why Copilot is often described as an assistant. It enhances productivity. It does not own outcomes.

Best Suited For

- Individual productivity
- Information discovery
- Content creation
- Knowledge work
- Decision support

Key Limitation

Copilot helps perform work.

It does not independently manage work.

What are Copilot Agents? Your Specialists with a Purpose

As organisations become more confident with AI, they often want capabilities tailored to specific business needs. This is where Copilot Agents come into play.

Created through Copilot Studio, agents can be designed to perform specific functions or support particular processes.

Examples include:

- HR policy agents
- Service desk agents
- Procurement agents
- Project support agents
- Customer service agents
- Knowledge management agents

Unlike Copilot, agents are designed around objectives. Rather than answering general questions, they focus on specific areas of expertise. For example, a policy agent may answer questions about governance procedures while a project agent may monitor delivery milestones and highlight risks. This creates greater consistency and organisational relevance.





Best Suited For

- Department-specific support
- Business process assistance
- Knowledge management
- Service delivery

Key Limitation

Agents typically focus on a defined scope rather than broader organisational outcomes.

What is Scout? Your Organisational Researcher

Every organisation has information. The challenge is finding it.

- Policies.
- Reports.
- Emails.
- Meeting notes.
- Project documentation.
- Case records.
- Data repositories.

Most organisations possess vast amounts of knowledge but struggle to access it efficiently. This is the challenge Scout is designed to solve. Think of Scout as a highly capable organisational researcher.

Its role is to:

- Locate information
- Analyse content
- Connect insights
- Provide recommendations
- Support decision-making

Unlike traditional search tools, Scout does not simply return documents. It helps users understand information. For example, a manager might ask:

"What commitments were made regarding this programme during the last six months?"

Scout can gather information from multiple sources, identify relevant content and provide a consolidated answer.





The difference is significant. Users spend less time searching. More time acting.

Practical Applications

- Policy analysis
- Regulatory monitoring
- Research activities
- Programme management
- Knowledge discovery
- Decision support

Think of Scout As: The organisational intelligence specialist.

What is OpenClaw? The Digital Operator

One of the biggest challenges facing organisations is that many important processes still span multiple systems.

Employees frequently:

- Log into websites
- Complete forms
- Update records
- Access portals
- Transfer information
- Manage transactions

While these activities are often repetitive, they can be difficult to automate because systems do not always integrate easily. This is where OpenClaw becomes important. OpenClaw is designed to interact with systems much like a human user.

It can:

- Navigate interfaces
- Read information
- Enter data
- Complete actions
- Operate applications

Think of OpenClaw as the hands of the digital workforce. If Scout provides intelligence, OpenClaw provides execution.





Examples include:

- Updating external portals
- Processing routine transactions
- Completing compliance checks
- Moving information between systems
- Supporting operational processes

Practical Value

Many organisations have accepted manual administration as unavoidable. OpenClaw challenges that assumption.

Think of OpenClaw As: The digital operator.

What is Autopilot? The Digital Employee

If Copilot assists and agents perform specific tasks, Autopilot operates at a different level.

Autopilot is best understood as a digital employee. Its purpose is not simply to complete tasks. Its purpose is to deliver outcomes. An Autopilot can:

- Understand objectives
- Create plans
- Coordinate activities
- Delegate work to agents
- Gather information
- Monitor progress
- Escalate issues
- Drive completion

This makes Autopilot fundamentally different from previous AI experiences. Rather than responding to instructions, it actively manages work. For example: A project delivery Autopilot could:

- Monitor project status
- Request updates
- Review risks
- Gather financial information
- Create reports
- Escalate concerns

All while keeping human managers informed and in control.



Microsoft Partner of the Year
Copilot & Agents

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Practical Applications

- Programme management
- Service coordination
- Compliance monitoring
- Case management
- Operational delivery

Think of Autopilot As: The manager of the digital workforce.

How They Work Together

The true power of Microsoft's vision emerges when these capabilities work together.

Consider a simple example. A new regulatory change is announced.

- **Scout** > Identifies the change and analyses its implications.
- **Copilot Agent** > Reviews relevant policies and procedures.
- **OpenClaw** > Updates records and systems where required.
- **Autopilot** > Coordinates activities, tracks progress and ensures actions are completed.
- **Human Employee** > Reviews recommendations, makes decisions and provides oversight.

Together they create a Human-Agent Team. This is the essence of Microsoft's Agent First vision.

Comparing the Digital Workforce

Capability	Primary Role	Best At
Microsoft 365 Copilot	Personal Assistant	Productivity and content creation
Copilot Agents	Specialist Worker	Specific Business Tasks
Scout	Researcher	Knowledge discovery and analysis
OpenClaw	Operator	Working across systems
Autopilot	Digital Employee	Coordinating outcomes

The important point is that these capabilities complement each other. They are not competing technologies. They are different parts of the same ecosystem.





What This Means for Organisations

Many organisations will not deploy all of these capabilities immediately. Most will begin with Copilot. Some will introduce agents. Others will explore advanced automation.

Over time, these technologies will increasingly converge. The organisations that gain the greatest value will be those that view AI as an organisational capability rather than a collection of individual tools. This requires a shift in thinking.

Instead of asking:

"How can we use AI?"

Leaders will increasingly ask:

"How should work be shared between people and digital workers?"

That question sits at the heart of the Agent First organisation.

Key Takeaways

Microsoft's Agent First vision is built on a collection of complementary capabilities rather than a single product.

Microsoft 365 Copilot remains the primary productivity assistant for employees. Copilot Agents perform specific business functions.

Scout helps organisations discover and understand knowledge.

OpenClaw interacts with systems and applications to execute tasks.

Autopilot coordinates activities and delivers outcomes across the digital workforce.

Together, these capabilities create Human-Agent Teams capable of increasing organisational capacity while allowing employees to focus on the work that requires human expertise, judgement and leadership. The future workplace is not built around a single AI. It is built around a team of intelligent digital workers operating alongside people.





How CPS Can Help

Understanding the difference between Copilot, Agents, Scout, OpenClaw and Autopilot is only the first step. CPS helps organisations identify where these capabilities can deliver the greatest value and how to design Human-Agent Teams that align with business priorities, governance requirements and operational goals.

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