

OpenAI ChatGPT Introduces Canvas

OpenAI has just introduced a new interface for ChatGPT, a separate editing window for authoring and coding. Some people liken it to Claude Artifacts; as Canvas is an early beta, I am waiting for another iteration or two before a more formal comparison between Canvas and Artifacts. Others are saying, however, that it is a competitor for Microsoft Word.

I decided to try and write an entry on Canvas vs Word using Canvas. Other than this introduction, the content below is from my interaction with ChatGPT (paid) and Canvas. What do you think?

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Using AI for Authoring, or Using AI Within Authoring Tools?

The rise of AI has transformed the way we create content. Today, tools such as ChatGPT Canvas, Microsoft Word with Copilot and even AI-enhanced social media platforms are changing what it means to draft, write and revise. But with all these options available, which is the best starting point for authorship? Should you begin with an AI like Canvas that works alongside you in conversation, or does a traditional tool like Microsoft Word, now enhanced with Copilot, still make more sense?

Canvas: Starting Authorship Through Conversation

OpenAI's new Canvas interface is designed to help you author content directly alongside an ongoing conversation. Imagine you're chatting with an AI assistant, brainstorming ideas and drafting a document – all in one seamless space. With Canvas, you can create documents up to **128k tokens** – equivalent to roughly **100,000 words**, or around **300 to 400 pages**. This provides plenty of room to get creative, whether you're drafting a report, a short story or exploring code.

Canvas works well for creating a substantial first draft or exploring new ideas interactively. It offers the flexibility of writing while keeping the conversational flow, which means that revisions and expansions can happen in real-time, just like our dialogue here. When it comes to file handling, saving and reusing documents later, however, Canvas shows some limitations compared to traditional tools. It's geared more towards real-time drafting rather than long-term file management or iterative editing.

Microsoft Word with Copilot: Traditional Power, AI Enhancement

Microsoft Word, on the other hand, has embraced AI integration with Copilot. This isn't just about drafting – it's also about transforming content, referencing existing documents and keeping everything organized. For users with a Microsoft 365 Copilot license, Word allows you to **reference up to three existing files** as inputs, grounding your draft with information from earlier work. This is particularly useful for professionals who need to draft business reports, proposals, or any content that pulls from existing structured data.

The integration of **file management** is a strong point in Word's favor. Unlike Canvas, where document persistence is less of a focus, Word ensures that your documents are readily available, version-controlled and easy to reference. You can draft with Copilot, transform your work using suggestions and maintain a clear file history. This makes Word a solid choice for

those who need to create polished, consistent documents, especially when building on prior drafts or managing a library of files.

Social Media AI Tools: The Paid Drafting Assistants

Beyond Canvas and Word, social media platforms like **LinkedIn** and **Facebook** have also started incorporating AI to assist with drafting posts. Typically, these features are available through paid subscriptions and are designed to help users craft effective content for specific audiences. While these tools offer convenience, they are generally more limited in scope compared to what Canvas or Copilot provides. They are great for initial inspiration, quick drafts and staying consistent with brand voice, but they don't offer the same depth of authoring support as more comprehensive tools.

Choosing the Right Tool for Authorship

The choice between using AI as your primary authoring tool (like Canvas) or integrating AI within a traditional authoring tool (like Microsoft Word with Copilot) depends largely on your needs:

Exploration and Real-Time Creation: If you're in the early stages of drafting and want to brainstorm ideas interactively, Canvas provides an excellent environment. It's like having an AI co-author sitting with you, ready to take the conversation wherever you lead.

Structured Drafting and File Management: If your focus is on creating structured content, referencing existing documents and managing files effectively, Microsoft Word with Copilot might be the better fit. The built-in file management features and the ability to transform drafts with the context of previous work make it ideal for more formal or complex projects.

Quick Drafts for Social Sharing: For quick, polished drafts aimed at social sharing, AI tools integrated into platforms like LinkedIn are handy, especially if you're already subscribed to those premium features.

Both approaches – using AI for authoring and using AI within authoring tools – have their merits. Canvas offers a unique, conversation-driven way to write that's ideal for brainstorming and getting words onto the page quickly. Word with Copilot, meanwhile, provides the robustness of a traditional document editor enhanced with AI, perfect for refining and managing content long-term.

What's your approach? Are you more drawn to the conversational, flexible drafting of Canvas, or do you see the power of AI within familiar tools like Word as the future of content creation?