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PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE: AN INITIAL EXAMINATION OF GENERATIVE AI'S INTEGRATION INTO UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS THROUGH THE LENS OF MICROSOFT COPILOT IN TEAMS

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	This study explores how generative AI is being integrated into unified communications (UC) platforms, focusing specifically on Microsoft Copilot as implemented in Microsoft Teams. It explores how generative AI enhances UC functionalities, identifies key adoption challenges, and provides insights into implementation strategies. Unlike traditional technologies that followed a gradual adoption curve, Copilot's integration into Teams has the potential to accelerate its adoption, necessitating organizations to be proactive in their planning for its use.
Background	UC platforms have transformed enterprise communication by integrating multiple tools into a single interface. The integration of generative AI into UC introduces automation of complex routine and time-intensive tasks, enhanced decision support, and workflow optimization. However, adoption dynamics, user experiences, and long-term organizational impacts remain underexplored.
Methodology	This study employs a meta-analytic approach, synthesizing findings from peer-reviewed articles, conference proceedings, and industry reports. The analysis

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	categorizes user perceptions of AI usefulness, key adoption barriers, and best practices for integration.
Contribution	This study evaluates the emerging literature on generative AI in UC platforms, focusing on initial user impressions and adoption challenges. Given the technology's early stage, the findings provide preliminary insights to help organizations plan for effective AI integration in UC environments.
Findings	The findings indicate that generative AI in UC platforms enhances productivity, streamlines workflows, and improves decision support through features such as meeting summarization, transcription, and AI-driven content generation. However, adoption challenges, including resistance to change, data privacy concerns, and integration complexities, remain key barriers.
Recommendations for Practitioners	Preliminary findings indicate that users recognize the value of UC platforms integrated with generative AI and anticipate increasing benefits over time. However, successful adoption requires strategic planning to address implementation challenges and ensure effective deployment.
Recommendations for Researchers	As AI technologies evolve, further research is needed to assess the long-term impact of generative AI in UC platforms on workplace efficiency, productivity gains, user adaptation, and organizational transformation. Comparative research across industries can provide domain-specific best practices, while investigations into human-AI collaboration should examine the balance between automation and human oversight to optimize AI's role in workplace communication.
Impact on Society	The integration of generative AI in UC platforms has far-reaching implications for enterprise communication, workforce collaboration, and digital transformation. AI-driven automation is poised to enhance workplace efficiency, but responsible governance and deployment are crucial for ensuring fair and transparent adoption.
Future Research	Future research is needed to explore the evolving role of agentic AI and its impact on enterprise workflows and strategic decision-making. Studies should assess its role in reducing cognitive load and enhancing team coordination while also addressing adoption challenges such as ethics, automation reliability, and user trust in autonomous AI systems.
Keywords	generative AI, unified communications, Microsoft Copilot, AI adoption

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Joy Fluker is an IT professional with more than 20 years of experience in the industry, serving in roles including program management, portfolio management, transition management, and business relationship management at Hewlett Packard Enterprise and, most recently, at Microsoft. She holds a Doctor of Science in Information Systems. Her current research focuses on unified communications in the workplace, specifically assessing its impact on perceived productivity and relationship building. Dr Fluker also teaches in higher education in the area of Information Systems.

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Jayant Gupta is the National Director of Copilot for the Health and Life Sciences business at Microsoft. He holds an MBA from the University of Maryland and an undergraduate degree in Computer Science from RV College of Engineering in Bangalore, India. In his current role, Mr. Gupta leads national initiatives to help healthcare and life sciences organizations harness Microsoft's AI offerings, including Copilot, Microsoft Teams, and Microsoft 365. Drawing on his international background and interdisciplinary expertise, he collaborates with diverse stakeholders to develop innovative solutions that optimize workflows, streamline collaboration, and improve patient outcomes