

Mizuho gives about 45,000 staff in Japan access to Microsoft's Azure OpenAI service

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Mizuho rolls out generative AI to Japan bank staff - Taipei Times

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Mizuho rolls out generative AI to Japan bank staff

‘POKING A BEEHIVE’: The banking firm is to give 45,000 staff access to Azure OpenAI so that they can experiment and come up with useful ways to harness the technology

Bloomberg

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Mizuho Financial Group Inc is giving all of its Japan bank employees access to Microsoft Corp's Azure OpenAI service this week, making it one of the country's first financial firms to adopt the potentially transformative generative artificial intelligence (AI) technology. The banking giant plans to allow 45,000 workers at its core lending units in the country to test out the service, said Toshitake Ushiwatari, general manager of Mizuho's digital planning department. Already, managers and rank-and-file employees at Japan's third-largest bank are submitting dozens of pitches for ways to harness the technology even before the software is installed.

Mizuho Financial Group Inc signage is pictured outside one of its branches in Tokyo on Jan. 25.

Photo: Bloomberg

There are many staff who are embracing ChatGPT in their private lives, Ushiwatari said in an interview. "It's like poking a beehive," he said, referring to the enthusiastic response the firm's move has sparked.

"They think it will completely reset the world, triggering disruptive innovation," he added. The developments at Mizuho and its peers come as Wall Street grapples with the unfolding AI revolution and its effects. Within global banks, some have clamped down on ChatGPT for employees, even as they use AI for business purposes such as

scanning wealthy client portfolios and screening for potential defaulters. Japanese financial firms, by contrast, appear to be adopting a more permissive stance internally. Ushiwatari's team plans to hold a so-called "ideathon" within the firm in Japan as early as next month, and is brainstorming ways to encourage employees to experiment with the technology. The tool would be introduced to its brokerage unit in the country next month, he said. So far, one of the ideas being floated is to use generative AI — in which AI models analyze volumes of data and use them to generate new images, texts, audio and video — as a one-stop reference point for the bank's vast trove of internal rules, processes and other manuals. Ushiwatari said he is well aware of the risks of generative AI, and the bank is introducing guidelines when it rolls out the technology to employees, such as information management, intellectual property and ethics. Still, generative AI is something that would lift society and the bank cannot shy away from, Ushiwatari said. "This is something we have to do, otherwise, we get left behind," he said.

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LOPSIDED DEVELOPMENT: While AI firms are riding the wave as far it can take them, traditional industries and their workers are not floated by the same flood. While Taiwan is benefiting from a global artificial intelligence (AI) boom, many traditional industries have seen little of the benefit, widening the country's "K-shaped" economic divide, an economist said. A "K-shaped" economy is one in which some sectors expand rapidly while others struggle, head of the commerce development and strategy research division at the Commerce Development Research Institute Ju Haw (朱浩) said in an interview. In Taiwan's case, high-tech and AI-related industries have continued to grow while traditional industries have come under increasing pressure, he said. AI development has created crowding-out effects, as large high-tech firms generating strong profits are better able

Micron Taiwan accelerating expansion

2026-10-02

BOOMING BUSINESS: Memory supply constraints would be even more severe in 2027 and 2028, prompting customers to sign long-term supply agreements, Micron said. Micron Memory Taiwan Co (台灣美光) yesterday said it is accelerating memorychip capacity expansion amid growing artificial intelligence (AI)-driven demand, with its accumulated investment in Taiwan reaching NT\$1.6 trillion (US\$50.2 billion) as of June. The company's investment in Taiwan has surged over the past four years, with recent spending equaling the total invested over the past 25 years, Micron Taiwan chairman Donghui Lu (盧東暉) told a media briefing in Taipei. "The launch of ChatGPT and the outbreak of COVID triggered increasing demand for memory chips. Since then, demand has gathered pace rapidly, with only a brief pause in 2023 when a major downturn"

By Lisa Wang

Bill Gates joins calls for AI safeguards, legislation

2026-09-29

Artificial intelligence (AI) requires safeguards that go beyond self-regulation, Microsoft Corp cofounder Bill Gates said in an interview that aired on Sunday, calling for legislation to be passed in US Congress. "You need law enforcement and the politicians to get into the discussion about what safeguards and monitoring look like," Gates said in a taped interview on NBC's Meet the Press program. "And that has to be a required thing." A sudden groundswell has risen in favor of federal intervention after OpenAI in July said that an autonomous AI agent went rogue during a security test and hacked into another company, subverting

Apple's iPhone Duo sales predicted to hit 6m units

2026-10-01

Apple Inc is set to sell about 6 million units of the iPhone Duo this year, Counterpoint Research said, offering the first estimate for how the company's inaugural foldable device would fare. The figure, more typical of the niche foldable segment than Apple's usual smartphone sales, is contingent on how well the company ramps up production of the new hardware, Counterpoint senior analyst Ivan Lam (林科宇) said. Priced at US\$1,999 and set for a release this month, the iPhone Duo sits atop the Apple lineup and carries industry wide hopes for stoking greater interest and sales of foldables. Market researcher IDC Corp

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