

Microsoft adds more capabilities to Office 365 as it acquires Genee, developer of an artificially intelligence-powered scheduling service sharing the same name, for an undisclosed sum.

As the company puts it, the buy will "help us further our ambition to bring intelligence into every digital experience," as well as power an experience where "interacting with a virtual assistant is just like interacting with a human on." Using Genee simply requires sending an email with meeting dates written in plain text. The service can follow such instructions to decide on a best time for a meeting, confirm appointments, sync calendars and even reschedule meetings in case of conflicts.

Founded in 2014, the Mountain View, California-based startup specialises in natural language processing and self-learning optimisation. As such it should also be relevant for Microsoft's take on the Siri-style voice-powered assistant, Cortana.

Post-acquisition the current Genee service shuts down on 1 September 2016, although existing calendar entries created by the service will keep on running.

Go Microsoft Acquisition of Genee to Accelerate Intelligent Experiences in Office 365