

A new investigation by The Wall Street Journal sheds light on the dramatic events of November 2023, when Sam Altman was unexpectedly dismissed as OpenAI's CEO. The company behind ChatGPT shook the tech world at the time, and now it emerges that Microsoft—a key partner and multi-billion-dollar investor in OpenAI—was behind the scenes.

According to WSJ, Microsoft unveiled the yet-to-be-released GPT-4 model without consulting OpenAI's safety board, sparking dissatisfaction among the company's leadership. The conflict escalated when an independent board member learned of Microsoft's actions from an employee after a meeting that Altman attended but chose to remain silent. This heightened tensions within OpenAI, where co-founder Ilya Sutskever and CTO Mira Murati were gathering evidence of Altman's "toxic" behavior.

Specifically, he allegedly bypassed joint oversight of GPT-4 Turbo, which OpenAI's legal team deemed non-essential. Further fueling the dispute was Altman's control of the Startup Fund, a fund meant to generate profits for investors but reportedly failed to do so.

Altman's dismissal sparked outrage: 95% of OpenAI employees demanded his return, threatening to leave. Microsoft, unwilling to lose its partner, quickly offered Altman leadership of a new AI team within its ranks. However, five days later, he returned to OpenAI with a new board of directors, where Microsoft secured observer status.