

Microspeak: Informing a product

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Microspeak is not always about changing a word from a verb to a noun or changing a noun to a verb or even changing a noun into a verb and then back into a noun. Sometimes it's about data compression.

| This testing won't inform RC, but we'll need it to inform an RTM release.

First, you need to familiarize yourself with a less-used sense of the verb *to inform*, namely *to guide or direct*. A typical use would be something like "This data will inform the decision whether to continue with the original plan in Product Q." In other words, this data will be used to help decide whether to continue with the original plan. But of course, at Microsoft, it's all rush rush hurry hurry no time for slow sentences just get to the point. So we drop out a few words from the sentence and instead of informing a decision about something, we just inform the thing itself: "This data will inform Product Q." Therefore, the sentence at the start of this article is shorthand for "This testing won't inform [some sort of decision regarding] RC, but we'll need it to inform [that same decision in] an RTM release." In other words, the result of this testing won't have any effect on the release candidate, but it will be used to help make some sort of decision regarding the RTM release.

Another citation, taken from an executive slide deck:

| Other take-aways

What learnings can we get today to inform the release?

I like how that brief snippet combines three pieces of Microspeak: *take-away*, *learnings*, and *inform*.

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