

Hey Smart Scoopers

Hope you had a great week!

This time, we've scooped up five stories that travel from sky high mountain rivalries, to the engines powering smart AI models, and understanding how polar bears are navigate thinning ice. A brain teaser awaits at the end to keep your gears turning. Here are your fresh picks for the week:

Scoop 1: The tallest mountain: The battle for the top (I)

Scoop 2: The tallest mountain: The battle for the top (II)

Scoop 3: What makes AI smarter?: A look at AI chips and Maia 200

Scoop 4: Polar bears in warming arctic: Adapting in thinning ice

Scoop 5: Puzzle of the Week: Time for toast

Dig in and enjoy!

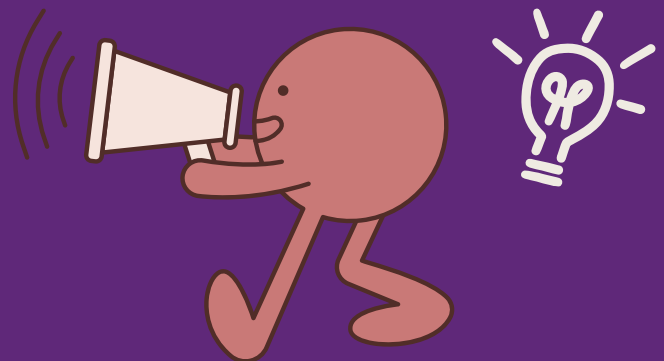
Happy Reading,
The SmartScoop Team

Our mascot, Blurt
will follow us
along the way.

Blurt /blurt/

noun:

A loud, round, super-curious character who just can't keep a fact in.



The Tallest Mountain

THE BATTLE FOR THE TOP

Ask someone to name the tallest mountain on Earth and "Mount Everest" pops out almost automatically. Full stop. But that "full stop" might need an asterisk. Because once you start asking how we're measuring tall, the answer gets surprisingly complicated. In fact, there are three different ways to define "tallest," and each one points to a different mountain.

Turns out 'tallest' comes with terms and conditions.

1 Mount Everest: The Highest Above Sea Level

Measured as: Highest elevation above sea level

Standing at **8,848.86 meters** (29,032 feet), Everest is the undisputed champion if we start measuring from where the waves hit the sand.

Fun Facts: Everest is a bit of a "living" mountain.

Because of the tectonic plate collision between India and Asia, the mountain grows about 4mm (0.16 inches) every year. Also Scientists have found marine fossils (like ancient sea lilies) at the summit. This means the highest point on Earth was once the bottom of the ocean.



Everest: winning the above sea level contest since forever."

2 Mauna Kea: The Tallest From Base to Peak

Mauna Kea

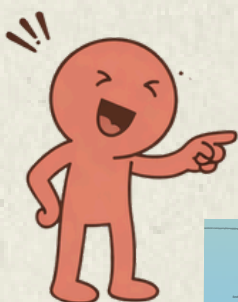


But here's where it gets interesting. If you measure a mountain from its absolute base to its peak, the way you'd measure the height of a building: Mount Everest isn't the winner. That title belongs to Mauna Kea in Hawaii! Mauna Kea rises about 10,200 meters (33,500 feet) from its base on the Pacific Ocean floor to its summit. That's over 4,000 feet taller than Everest! The catch?

Most of Mauna Kea is hidden underwater. Only about 13,800 feet of the mountain pokes above the ocean's surface, which is why it doesn't look nearly as impressive as Everest when you see it.

Excuse me, I'm taller... you just can't see most of me.

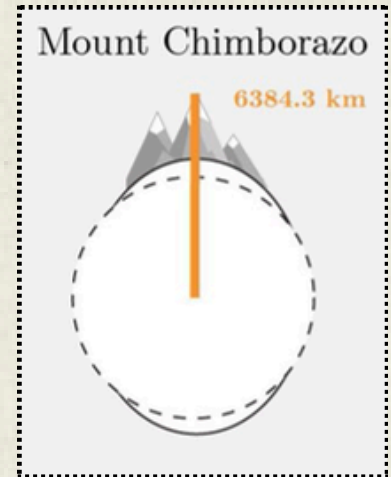
Mauna Kea



THE BATTLE FOR THE TOP

③ **Chimborazo: The Farthest Point From Earth's Center**

Wait, there is another one! If you measure from the center of the Earth, Ecuador's Mount Chimborazo wins the gold medal. Because the Earth isn't a perfect sphere, it bulges at the equator like a spinning water balloon: mountains near the equator are physically further away from the Earth's core. The Math: Even though Chimborazo is "only" 6,263 meters high, its position on the equatorial bulge puts its summit 2,133 meters (7,000 feet) further into space than Everest's summit.



Hmm...Chimborazo: not the highest, just standing slightly closer to space.

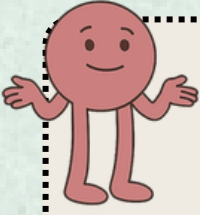
Comparison at a Glance

Mountain	"Tallest" Category	Height/Measurement
Mount Everest	Highest (Above Sea Level)	8,849 meters
Mauna Kea	Tallest (Base to Peak)	10,210 meters
Chimborazo	Furthest (From Earth's Center)	6,384 km (from core)

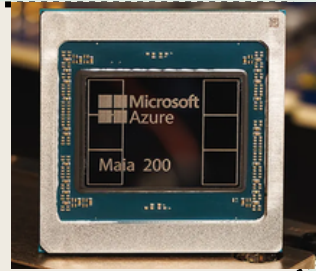


So next time someone asks for the tallest mountain, just smile and say, 'By which measurement?'


A LOOK AT AI CHIPS AND MAIA 200



On January 26, 2026, Microsoft officially released the Maia 200, its second-generation AI chip designed to make services like ChatGPT and Copilot faster and cheaper. Built using advanced 3nanometer(or 3nm) technology*. It is currently being rolled out in Microsoft's massive data centers to handle the heavy math required for the world's most advanced AI models.



*3nm technology is a manufacturing process that allows engineers to pack billions of microscopic transistors onto a single chip by making them just a few atoms wide. It essentially means fitting more "brainpower" into a smaller space so devices run faster while using less battery.



Let's first understand, what is an AI chip?

An AI chip is a specialised chip (like a computer brain) designed to do one thing really, really well: **high-speed math**. While a normal computer chip (CPU) is like a "Jack of all trades" that can handle typing, browsing the web, and running apps, an AI chip is like a professional athlete trained specifically for one sport. AI chips are specially built for the huge math jobs that AI needs especially when AI is answering questions, drawing pictures, or understanding language.



AI work usually happens in TWO big steps:

TRAINING

Training is like teaching the AI everything it needs to know. This is when companies feed millions of examples into the AI so it can learn patterns. It's like studying for a huge test by reading thousands of textbooks. This takes a LOT of power and is super expensive.

INFERENCE

Inference is when the AI actually uses what it learned to answer questions or do tasks. This is like taking the test after you've studied. You're not learning anymore: you're just using what you know to respond. This is what happens every time you chat with an AI.

Microsoft's Maia200 chip is specifically designed for inference: making AI work faster and cheaper when you're actually using it. The Maia 200 is already being used in Microsoft's data centers.

The Maia 200 may be tiny, but it's incredibly powerful. Built with super-small 3-nanometer technology, it packs 140 billion tiny switches called transistors onto a chip about the size of your thumb.

It uses much less electricity than many other AI chips, which saves energy, reduces costs, and is better for the planet.

It has a huge amount of super-fast memory, 216 gigabytes, so it can keep lots of information ready at once and answer questions quickly.

It's amazingly fast, performing over 10 petaFLOPS, meaning it can do quadrillions of calculations every single second. A petaFLOP means one quadrillion (that's 1,000,000,000,000,000) calculations per second!

Microsoft isn't the only company making custom AI chips. Google(TPUs), Amazon(Trainium3), and Nvidia (H200,B200) are all in this race too, and they're all trying to build the fastest, most efficient chips possible to stay ahead in the race.

ADAPTING IN THINNING ICE



An image of polar bears napping along the Hudson Bay coast in Canada has been shortlisted for the Wildlife Photographer of the Year Nuveen People's Choice Award 2026. This image feels quiet and tender: a mother curled protectively around her cubs, resting under a warming Arctic sky. But behind that peaceful moment lies a fast-changing world. In 2026, new scientific studies revealed something unexpected about how polar bears are responding to climate change.

Let's first understand Polar Bear's Natural Habitat

A polar bear's natural habitat is the **Arctic sea ice**. They live across the Arctic, in countries including Canada, Norway, Greenland, Russia, and the United States (Alaska). Their true home is not land. It is **sea ice**.

Sea ice forms over the Arctic Ocean during winter and melts back in summer. Polar bears use this floating ice as a hunting platform. From it, they catch their main prey: ringed and bearded seals.

They also use sea ice to travel long distances, find mates, and, in some regions, access maternity dens.



Without sea ice, polar bears struggle to hunt. And without hunting, they lose the fat reserves that keep them alive..



But in a research published in January 2026,, scientists studying polar bears in Svalbard, Norway, reported surprising results. Despite rapid Arctic warming, shrinking sea ice, and longer ice-free seasons, the bears were not in worse condition as expected. However, this does not mean the situation is all good.

Scientists suggest possible reasons for healthy polar bears...

Seals may be concentrated in smaller ice areas, making them easier to catch.

Reindeer populations have recovered, providing extra food during summer.

Bears have shown flexibility, eating seabird eggs and walrus carcasses.

However, researchers warn that body condition is only one measure of health. It does not guarantee stable population numbers or long-term survival for polar bears!



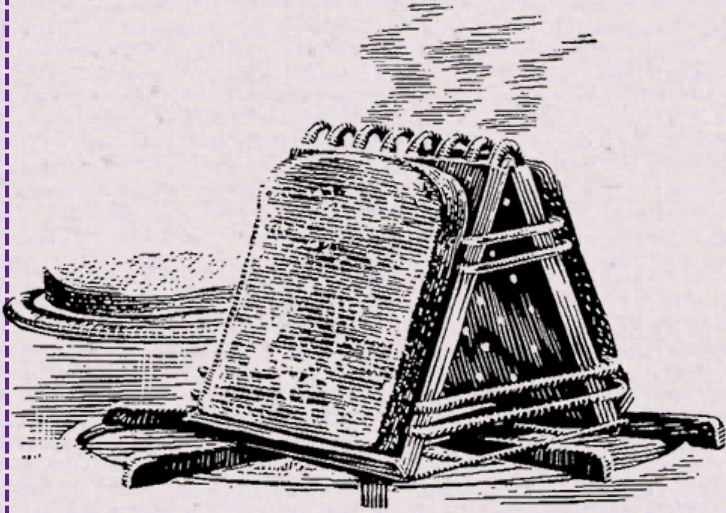
We need to protect our fluffy friends and the Arctic habitats they depend on, before it's too late.



Across the Arctic, polar bear populations are declining as sea ice melts. While 2026 research shows some behavioural adaptation in few areas, these changes have limits. Without sea ice, their long-term survival remains uncertain. Scientists estimate that many polar bear populations could face severe decline by 2050. Sea ice remains the foundation of their survival. Without it, even the strongest mother bear resting beside her cubs faces an uncertain future. The Arctic is warming. The ice is thinning. And the fate of polar bears depends on how quickly the world responds.

TIME FOR TOAST

TIME FOR TOAST



The Smiths own an old-fashioned toaster that takes only two slices of bread at a time, toasting one side of each. To toast the other sides, you have to remove the slices, turn them over, and put them back into the toaster. It takes exactly one minute for the toaster to toast one side of each piece of bread that it contains.

One morning Mrs. Smith wished to toast both sides of three slices. Mr. Smith watched over the top of his newspaper and smiled when he saw how his wife went about it. It took her four minutes.

“You could have toasted those three slices in less time, my dear,” he said, “and kept down the cost of our electric bill.”

Was Mr. Smith right, and if so, how could his wife have toasted those three slices in less than four minutes?

SOLUTION

It is a simple matter to toast all three slices, on both sides, in three minutes. Let's call the slices A, B, and C. Each slice has side 1 and side 2. This is the procedure:

First minute: Toast sides A1 and B1. Remove the slices, turn B around and put it back into the toaster. Put A aside and put C in the toaster.

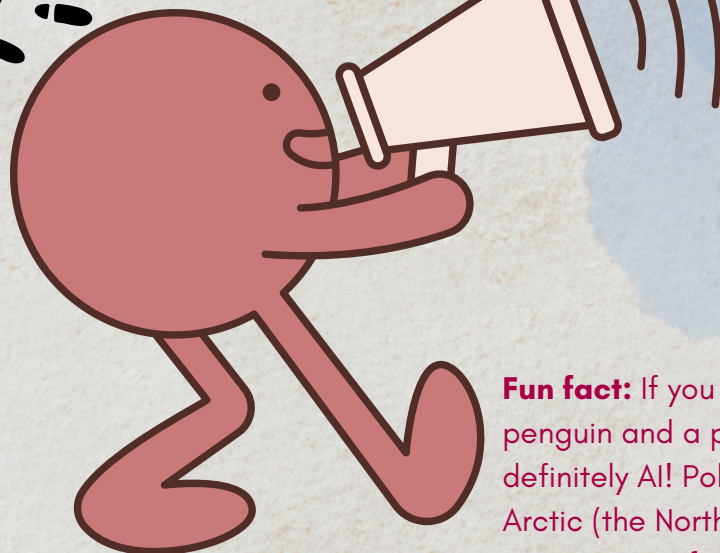
Second minute: Toast sides B2 and C1. Remove the slices, turn C around and put back in the toaster. Put B aside (it is now toasted on both sides) and put A back in the toaster.

Third minute: Toast sides A2 and C2. All sides of all three slices are now toasted.

Blurt's

Did you know...?

Polar bears have black skin underneath their thick fur. Interestingly, their fur isn't actually white. It's made of transparent, hollow hairs that scatter light, which makes the bear look white against snow and ice. Underneath that snowy camouflage is dark skin soaking up precious sunlight like a natural solar panel.



Fun fact: If you see a picture of a penguin and a polar bear together, it's definitely AI! Polar bears are only in the Arctic (the Northern hemisphere) and Penguins are found in Antarctica (and other regions in Southern hemisphere)



That's all for this week folks! Until next time, keep your brain gears turning!

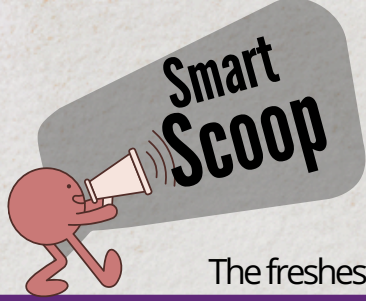


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smartscoopteam@gmail.com

We'd love to hear from you! Mostly Blurt tbh..



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