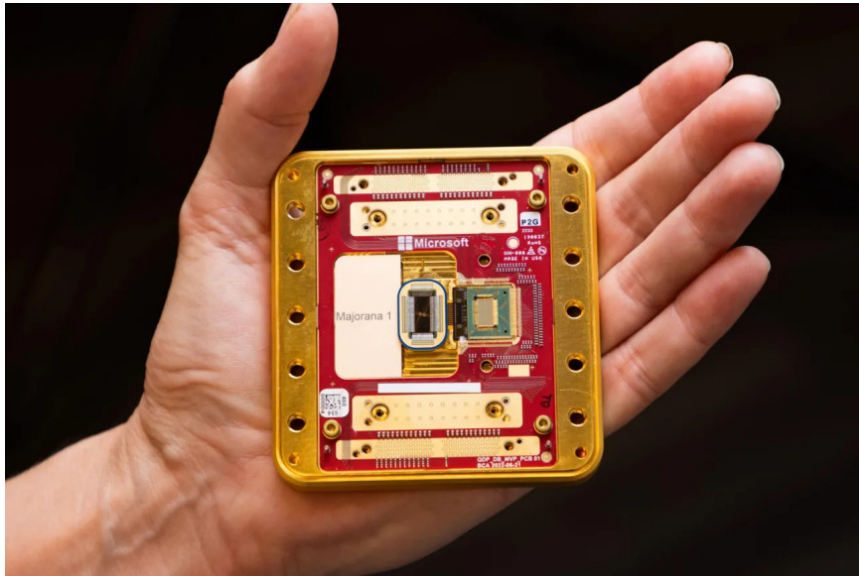




Powerful quantum computers in years not decades, says Microsoft



Microsoft has unveiled a new chip called Majorana 1 that it says will enable the creation of quantum computers able to solve "meaningful, industrial-scale problems in years, not decades"

It is the latest development in quantum computing - tech which uses principles of particle physics to create a new type of computer able to solve problems ordinary computers cannot. Creating quantum computers powerful enough to solve important real-world problems is very challenging - and some experts believe.

Microsoft says this timetable can now be sped up because of the "transformative" progress it has made in developing the new chip involving a "topological conductor", based on a new material it has produced. The firm believes its topoconductor has the potential to be as revolutionary as the semiconductor was in the history of computing. Jensen Huang - boss of the leading chip firm, Nvidia - said in January he believed "very useful" quantum computing would come in 20 years.

Chetan Nayak, a technical fellow of quantum hardware at Microsoft, said he believed the developments would shake up conventional thinking about the future of quantum computers.