

TOP STORIES #48

Welcome to all the new members of TOP STORIES!

Thank you for signing up!

I hope you will find it interesting and use it as a way to navigate the overwhelming flood of news every week, where I try to draw your attention to some of the more important stuff that is going on.

I tend to lean towards news related to Intel, Microsoft, AWS, Google, AMD, NVIDIA, OpenAI, and, of course, Movie Releases!

As usual, there are also specific updates relating to Microsoft licensing as they become available.

For the newcomers, there are two previous TOP STORIES I recommend you read that may be especially interesting.

[#44](#) - check out "[Signs and Portents](#)" - this is about AI

[#46](#) - How do you end up buying a car with no seats?

[NAMM](#) - the annual show for music and studio gear has ended.

It was an impressive show, and you can [read about it here](#), and of course, you can search YouTube for videos summarising all the new gadgets for 2024.

The other big Tech Show was [ISE](#) - the world's biggest audiovisual expo, which ended yesterday and was extensively covered by [rAVE publications](#). It is definitely the best coverage of this enormous show!

FTG had representatives at the shows, so we may have some interesting things to share later.

There are a lot of Microsoft updates!

Hardware

Intel Arrow Lake information leaked

We are still waiting to receive our first Shipments of Meteor Lake computers, and already we are hearing about the NEXT generation CPU's in Intel's roadmap and are expected to ship in H2 of 2024. What is interesting is that Intel may be dropping hyperthreading. You can [read more about this leak here](#).

Stick to Well-known USB Stick Brands. Here is why

Increasingly, dodgy manufacturers are re-using chips from manufacturers that failed QC or using microSD cards inside USB sticks. The result of all this is that the data you store on the sticks is at risk. [The full story is here](#).

Apple Vision Pro Released

With it being really early days, and with the "early adopter Tax" really high, it may be an idea to wait to see what Apple's competitors do. Apple will probably stay the leader, but let's see....

[Here is some news about some competing products in the works](#).

Microsoft

Microsoft releases CoPilot for Sales and CoPilot for Service

[Microsoft is selling both the Sales and Service Copilots for \\$50 per user per month each, inclusive of Copilot for Microsoft 365 licensing.](#)

It is important to understand what these AI services from Microsoft actually offer and how they could be used to add value to your business. You can [read more about the services here](#).

Microsoft has hinted that CoPilot for OneDrive is expected in May 2024, but things are still a bit vague as to what it will be.

It is so important to start engaging our specialists to understand these technologies (not to buy them, but to learn about them) and how they could add value to your business in any type of customer engagement process. [Please reach out to your account manager in FTG. If you are not sure who to call, just reply to this mail asking for assistance.](#)

How many Shades of CoPilot?

Why buy one when you can buy more?

Microsoft's CoPilot offering is split into 6 broad categories, but still all just different shades of AI. Microsoft's foray into AI is not easy to follow!

There is much publicity around CoPilot, but that is only really focused on one aspect - the one you can buy for \$20 (Pro) or \$30 per month, and there is still access to a free version as well. [Here is a summary of some of the different types of CoPilots](#) that you can get from Microsoft (noting that there is more detail below).

It is very important to consider whether your business is ready for CoPilot. With a monthly fee of \$30 per user, you must assess if CoPilot for Microsoft 365 aligns with the scale, requirements, and financial capacity of your organisation. Beyond the subscription cost, additional expenditures for gathering and preparing accurate, valuable data for the AI and Large Language Models (LLMs) to learn from must be taken into account.

This significant effort requires a dedicated commitment to decide on adopting the CoPilot platform. **Notwithstanding this comment, it is so important to start playing with CoPilot in some way for yourself and also your business as well as trying to figure out how to measure the benefit (see "Signs and Portents" above). Please talk to us about starting the journey, even if it is just about figuring out how to start playing with what you can use for free.**

Larger organisations need to evaluate if the gains in productivity from utilising the CoPilot for Microsoft 365 platform justify the initial investment and ongoing expenses.

Conversely, individuals and smaller enterprises without sufficient data for LLMs can access consumer-grade versions of Microsoft CoPilot at no charge, including Bing Chat within Microsoft Edge or even other LLM's such as ChatGPT, Bard, etc.....

CoPilot - Dive in or Wait?

When it comes to AI, you will get a lot of opinions. I think it is important to start playing with it as early as possible while at the same time figuring out how to use this new technology safely. [Here is an excellent little article](#) written by the former CTO of Microsoft, now working for Directions on Microsoft, that mostly agrees with my approach. **Please note that we have workshops to help you navigate this** - read down below..

Microsoft is announcing new CoPilot stuff practically every two weeks, and it is getting very confusing, as it seems there is always one more CoPilot!

[ZDNET has published a nice summary here](#) (it is already a little out of date)
[TechRepublic has also published a cheat sheet here](#) . (more up to date)

If colleagues want to join the maillist they can click [here to subscribe](#) .

NO Windows 12 in 2024

It is starting to look like we ARE getting a big update to Windows, but it will fall under the Windows 11 banner - 24H2. [Windows 10 comes to the end of Support in October 2025](#) , and it is THEN we will probably see Windows 12 which will be ready to see in Panther Lake on Intel's roadmap onwards (and we currently do not have much information beyond Panther Lake). [Here is a more detailed story as to what we can expect for 2024](#) . Of course, [The Register has its own commentary!](#)

What is not changing is the demise of Windows 10, and we need to prepare for that.

Microsoft Entra ID Governance

This serves as an identity governance solution designed to enhance security measures and facilitate compliance with regulatory standards for organisations. Naturally, there are several methods through which you can obtain licences for this solution, and the [Microsoft licensing guide provides a detailed explanation of the available options](#)

Exchange Server 2019 end of Mainstream support (sort of)

Even though Exchange Server has reached the end of Mainstream support, there are still two more updates planned - [read more about this here](#) .

Visual Studio End-of-Life Dates

This is a particularly important reminder for those of you still using older versions of Visual Studio. [Microsoft has published a summary here](#) .

Microsoft 365 Plan Comparison Table

Microsoft has just updated this handy table as of 1 Feb 2024! [You can download it here](#) .

Updated Viva Feature Comparison Table

Microsoft has updated this useful table as of January 2024 to help you keep up with what is included in what suite. [You can download it here](#).

Product Terms Updated as of 2 Feb 2024

The [Summary of the changes can be found here](#).

Cloud & AI

Gemini Pro now powers Bard

It is now smarter in more languages and now includes image generation. Read [more about the update here](#). Bard may also be [renamed to Gemini](#).

Custom GPT's to make ChatGPT more powerful

There are thousands of Custom GPT's to make your use of ChatGPT even more effective. [Here is a list of some of them](#) to consider next time you want to do something.

Security

How Audio-jacking can subvert a Live Audio transaction

This is just plain scary - [but here is story about how it is done](#) demonstrated by IBM showing that it is quite easy to hijack an audio conversation and replace the words with different words in the same voice with nobody noticing the difference!

What's up at FTG

[With the ability to now buy one CoPilot license at a time](#), getting ready for CoPilot is very important, as utilising AI in your business will become increasingly relevant - especially when the AI can use your own data to support you.

FTG is offering an [M365 CoPilot Readiness Workshop](#) to help you get ready. You can [register here](#).

Movies

Now Playing: [Dogs at the Opera](#) (A Russian produced animation!)

Now Playing: [Argylle](#)

Now Playing: [Zone of Interest](#)

9 February: [Land of Bad](#)

9 February: [Holdovers](#)

9 February: [Dune Part 1](#) - Re-release as a reminder for Dune Part 2 on 1 March

9 February: [Teri Baatoon Mein Asia Ujha Jiya](#)

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