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16th March #158

New for This week

- As a user of Microsoft technologies, you are receiving this publication to stay informed about critical topics such as Microsoft licensing, price increases, end-of-life dates, technical updates, security notices, and more.
If you do not want to continue receiving TOP STORIES, click on the unsubscribe link at the bottom of the mail.
 - **Another 3 New vendors** Trellix, Okta and Cloudfire are added.
 - **Microsoft EoL section Updated for January 2027**
 - **DarkWeb Weekly Intelligence Report** - Nobody wants to get on that list!!
 - **Did You Know** you REALLY need to check those Backups.....Backups????
 - **Microsoft M365 E7 is Official** - now to unpack what it means
 - **Power Platform Licensing Resources**- Help to understand the benefits is useful
 - **Agent Pre-purchase Plan updates** - getting help could save money!
 - **M365 Release roadmap** - Easy lookup for everything coming from Microsoft
 - **New Malware attack via Teams** - That Techie is NOT who he says he is!!
 - **Video Explaining Latest Security updates** - A useful video for your security teams
 - **Claude now automates your Spreadsheet and PPT Workflow**- MS is also on it!
 - **Apple Neo is more amazing** - Not only repairable, but very VERY fast!!!!
-

Microsoft End of Life to January 2027

Summary of what to know up to January 2027.

Click above for the highlights. The detailed PDF to download is at the bottom.

P.S. we DID warn you about EWS retirement.....

DarkWeb Weekly Intelligence Report

We scan the DarkWeb continuously for Hacker signals and Ransomware attacks.

Click above for a report from our live dashboard that we will publish weekly (but actually updated continuously).

This is part of the DarkWeb monitoring services included with many of BUI's managed services offerings. This report is live, and this is a "snapshot" of the top 10 events at 6:00pm Sunday.

TOP STORIES #157

Click button above for last weeks news.

Visit FirstMarketPLace

Trellix, Okta and Cloudfyway have been added for this week.

See below for LinkedIn

Our LinkedIn

Movie releases

Get all the releases for the next 4 weeks in South Africa. "Hoppers" is now screening. Next big movie for 2026 is "Hail Mary" this week and now a new one: The Magic Faraway Tree

Upcoming Shows

Review what happened at CES and see links for NAMM 2026 ISE has wrapped, it was big, and even Microsoft was there with Teams!

Request Account Manager

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Did You Know?

Your M365 data might not be as secure as you think it is!

- Already way back in [TOP STORIES #140](#), we showed that First Technology Group is one of Africa's strongest backup players.
- The tragic war in the Gulf, with some datacenters being damaged, is a reminder that you REALLY need to make sure your data is backed up.
- **Uptime and resilience are not backups!**
- First Technology Group can independently sanity-check that risk across Microsoft 365 and Google Workspace, then match the right solution.

We have a variety of backup solutions across the group, so please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our Backup specialists to help

select the solution best suited for your company, AND it would be a good idea to have your existing backup solution to be reviewed to see if it is actually working the way you think it should be.
Sometimes going to a new doctor for a second opinion could be very beneficial!

Microsoft News This Week

M365 E7 is Official

Now that Microsoft has officially announced M365E7, there is going to be a LOT of discussion on the value proposition and understanding exactly what it is made up of and if it is really going to be worth the \$99 per month investment.

Microsoft is positioning it as the Frontier Suite, with general availability from 1 May 2026. It builds on Microsoft 365 E5 by bundling in Microsoft 365 Copilot, Agent 365 and the Entra Suite, giving customers a single, premium package for AI, identity and security.

As stated, the list price is \$99 per user per month, and it will be offered both with and without Teams. Microsoft has also released launch resources to support the rollout, which you can find by clicking the buttons below.

You will also find below the link to the Directions on Microsoft article giving you deeper insight into this new licensing SKU

[Microsoft E7 Frontier Suite](#)

[M365E7 a New Milestone](#)

[Directions: M365E7 is more than just a licensing Tier](#)

Microsoft Power Platform Licensing Resources

Updated Power Platform licensing resources landed in March 2026, and they make one thing clear, the Agent Pre-Purchase Plan is now getting the main push.

In both the Copilot Studio Licensing Guide and the accompanying deck, it replaces Pay-As-You-Go as the recommended option on page 5.

The refreshed material also introduces new references to Agent Commit Units tiers, which act as the shared consumption currency across Microsoft Foundry, Copilot Studio, Fabric and GitHub Copilot services.

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our Licensing and Power Platform specialists to help understand how you can benefit from these Agent Commit tiers.

[Power Platform March Licensing Guide](#)

[Microsoft Power Platform Licensing Resources](#)

Agent Pre-Purchase Plan update

Microsoft's Agent Pre-Purchase Plan first arrived in November 2025 as a simpler way to buy usage for Agents built in Microsoft Foundry and Copilot Studio. Customers can buy 20,000, 100,000 or 500,000 Agent Commit Units, then draw them down over 12 months across supported services. The update from February 2026 makes the offer more useful, with Microsoft Fabric and GitHub Copilot now added to the list, giving customers more flexibility in where those units can be spent.

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our Fabric, GitHub, Foundry and CoPilot Studio experts to assist in ensuring you are getting the best value from these Purchasing plans,

Microsoft Agent Pre Purchase plan

Microsoft M365 Release roadmap

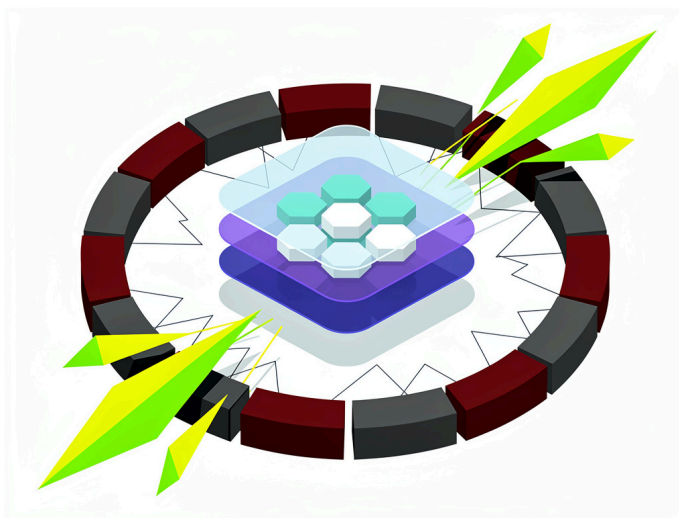
It is almost impossible to keep up with the number of product updates for M365, those in development and rolling out.

Our Cloud and Security specialist division, BUI, has released a portal where you can view in one place everything Microsoft is rolling out and filter by what you are interested in. The data presented on the portal we have created for you makes it a lot easier to see what is coming.

Once you have found what interests you and need more information, please contact your First Technology account manager to provide you with more information.

Microsoft M365 Release Roadmap

Security



Hackers use IT Impersonation in Teams to Deliver Malware

This attack relies on a default setting in teams that allows external accounts to send messages to users, altering the display name to mimic technical support or HR. Because the contact is made via a legitimate Teams channel, communication is more likely to be trusted. Attackers typically take advantage of the fact that, posing as IT support staff, they are more likely to be trusted, and their instructions complied with. If you do.... well, it won't be good!

AS ALWAYS, IT IS THE HUMAN THAT IS THE WEAKEST LINK!

PLEASE contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our training specialists to help ensure everybody is kept up to date to on how handle the latest trickery and NOT to just give into a technician trying to get you to do something you are not supposed to do. Users need to be educated on how to verify whether a call is legitimate within YOUR company's processes.

Teams DarkGate Malware Impersonation attack

New Video on Microsoft's latest Security updates

BUI, First Technology groups Microsoft Services, Cloud and Security division has released a new video addressing the latest developments from Microsoft dealing specifically with:

- Defender Supporting Entra Agent ID's
- AI-Powered incident prioritisation
- Quick Policies in Insider Risk Management

Please contact your First Technology Group Account manager to connect you with our security specialists so you can understand and take advantage of these updates from Microsoft.

New Microsoft Security Features Updates

Cloud & AI

Claude Connects Excel and PowerPoint Workflows

Claude can now remember instructions, data points, and tasks while moving between a spreadsheet and a presentation. Users no longer need to paste information from one application into another or restate their request.

The AI now keeps the full conversation history active across both programs during a session. Remember, Microsoft is also working with Claude, so do not be surprised to see this added to M365E7!

Claude Connects Excel and PowerPoint

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our AI Specialists who can assist you in working out what your AI adoption roadmap looks like for your business, starting with ensuring you have robust security and data categorisation in place.



Apple Neo causes more headaches

Not only is this laptop the cheapest from Apple, but it is also the most repairable, which does make sense for its target market, but not only is it cheap and repairable, it is also faster than anything else in its class. All this means you are going to be getting requests for MACs that will be increasingly harder to say no to!

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our

hardware specialists to help explore all the different form factors and configurations of notebooks going forward, and to VERY CAREFULLY evaluate the value proposition of what Apple has released, which IS getting very good reviews that are getting even better!

Apple beats PC benchmarks

Apple Neo most repairable

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