

## TOP STORIES #121

Welcome to TOP STORIES, which has been published for more than 22 years!

It has now been more than 2 years since we have been publishing weekly.

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.

I recommend you scan through "**Don't Forget**" which is now a separate document for you to download - it was making TOP STORIES too long to read through.

**Reminder that you can access [TOP STORIES AI \("TSAI"\)](#) to search for anything in the archive. You can read more about TSAI in [TOP STORIES #108](#).**

**You will need an MS ID to sign in**, and if you are using your corporate ID, this might require organisational permission.

Check out the **official movie release** dates in South Africa for all studios at the bottom of this email.

The schedule provides you with releases four weeks in advance. It is accurate! **I believe this is the only place in South Africa where you can find a comprehensive list of all the upcoming movies.**

There are some really interesting announcements in the "What's up at FTG" section this week, with some new events and a **major bombshell** from our CyberSecurity division - go take a look below....

Last week's [TOP STORIES #120 is here](#)

If you would like to invite other colleagues to join this newsletter (even if it is just for the movie release dates), they can [click here](#).

If **you do not want** to continue receiving TOP STORIES, click on the unsubscribe link at the bottom of the mail.

## Upcoming Shows

InfoComm - **the coolest Pro AV gathering has wrapped**. You can [find a summary of the best parts of the show here](#). The [Show Dailies can be found here](#). It will open on Day 1, but look below the magazine you have opened, and you will see a selection of magazines at the bottom of the site for the rest of the publications. rAVe has [extensive coverage of Infocomm here](#).

### AWS Summit is up next in New York

This is a [major event for AWS](#) on 16 July to showcase to customers and developers what is on the roadmap for AWS.

### Black Hat USA 2025

This is a [major security conference for 2-7 August](#) that is a "Must Attend" for everybody who is serious about security. Of course, FTG will have people attending, and there will surely be some interesting feedback.

## Account Manager?

Not sure who is your account manager? [Click here for us to help sort that out!](#)

## Don't Forget

This is a list of **ALL Microsoft services and products that are "expired" for whatever reason for the next year.**

The downloadable documents are very detailed, spanning 24 pages, so I recommend searching for what you need within them to stay up to date.

The material is presented in a way for you to copy the relevant pieces and send them to teams focused on different aspects of Microsoft technologies.

**The guide for July 2025 to July 2026 can be downloaded [here](#)**

The July guide is focused on the changes relating to the end of Windows 10. This should be read in conjunction with the [previous guide here](#).

**The most critical update to note is that Microsoft has announced that [security updates for Microsoft 365 Apps \(e.g., Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook\) running on Windows 10 will continue for three years after the Windows 10 end-of-support date.](#)**

This means Microsoft 365 Apps **on Windows 10** will receive security updates until October 10, 2028. Now, how do you do that while not supporting the host operating system?

**UPDATE:** It appears we are receiving a partial answer to this, with Microsoft now stating that you will receive free security updates for 1 year under certain conditions (see the Microsoft section below). However, this still does not address the issue for enterprises.

### Important Caveats

- This extension applies to security updates for M365 Apps only. The Windows 10 OS itself still reaches end of support on October 14, 2025 (unless ESUs are purchased for the OS).
- If an issue with M365 Apps occurs only on Windows 10 (and not on Windows 11), Microsoft support will advise moving to Windows 11. Troubleshooting assistance may be limited if unable to move to Windows 11.
- Bug reports or feature requests for M365 Apps on Windows 10 will not be accepted after October 2025.

This significantly impacts planning for organisations, offering more flexibility for the M365 Apps component while still necessitating a Windows 11 migration strategy for the underlying OS. More on this below.

## Did you Know - Special Edition!

**First Technology Group is SOPHOS's biggest partner in Africa!**

**FTG is by miles the biggest and most certified partner on the continent, with almost 200 certified Sophos specialists and a 40% share of the national MDR market.**

Our joint Sophos-FTG SOC is the largest in the world, backing every MDR deployment with a \$1 million breach warranty and drawing telemetry from 350+ third-party integrations to protect any environment – Microsoft, Palo Alto, Fortinet and beyond.

The partnership with SOPHOS delivers priority threat intelligence, exclusive pricing, and fully funded risk assessments that expose the misconfigurations behind more than 60% of breaches. One conversation with FTG can slash incident response times, compliance headaches, and even cyber-insurance premiums.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our Cybersecurity specialists, who can facilitate a detailed discussion on how to improve your security posture, regardless of your current vendor.

## Hardware

### Intel's Nova Lake to have big improvements

Though this is all rumour, it seems that Nova Lake is going to be a huge upgrade for CPU's for notebooks which is great news as it keeps the competition going between Intel and AMD, accelerating innovation. Intel has quite a bit of catching up to do on the NPU computing side, and in Nova Lake, we will have CPUs exceeding 40 TOPS while also being powerful gaming CPUs. You read [more about all the rumours here](#),

The CPU roadmap is constantly changing so it is important to keep refreshing your specifications for what you are planning to procure in the future. Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our hardware specialists to help keep you up to date.

## Microsoft

### Windows 11 25H2 is official

We now know that it will be released later this year, but no date has been announced yet. It will be easy to upgrade from 24H2, but more arduous from older builds. The most important part is that it resets the support clock to 36 months for companies. [You can read more here](#).

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to assist with planning your refresh of your Windows builds. Unfortunately, you cannot avoid upgrading to Win11 25H2, but for now, it is not urgent.

It is more important to get everything off Windows 10 and upgrade to Windows 11 24H2 at the very least.

## Blue Screen of Death goes Black

I suppose after the CrowdStrike disaster, the pictures of a "[sea of blue screens](#)" were too much for Microsoft, so now we are getting a Black Screen of Death that will be more useful.

One of the more important features will be Quick Machine Recovery, which allows for recovery from problems that previously would have required manual intervention. You can [read more here](#).

## Windows 10 updates for free?

As the deadline approaches and the number of people still stuck on Windows 10 remains alarmingly high, some loopholes appear to be emerging that allow individuals to continue receiving support without incurring any additional costs.

You can now get 12 months of Security Updates if you use Windows backup to sync your settings with the cloud, or pay 1,000 Microsoft reward points, or pay \$30.

These options are clearly aimed at individuals and small companies, not enterprises. For larger companies, the end-of-support for Windows 10 remains a brick wall! You can [read about these announcements here](#).

Directions on Microsoft has also published a detailed summary on these changes and others relating to the "black screen of death" - which you can [read all about here](#).

Please contact your First Technology Account manager to connect you with our Hardware and Security specialists, who can help you best navigate taking advantage of these changes. Note that Microsoft has previously announced that M365E3/5 will continue to be supported for 3 years on Windows 10.

## Security

### AI-Enabled Deepfake Malware is incoming.

The level of sophistication in using AI to deceive users into letting attackers compromise their company is going to increase dramatically.

It will become increasingly essential to utilise AI to protect your company, as the bad actors are also leveraging AI to launch attacks. You can read [more about what to expect here](#). Above this, you need to ensure that you are regularly updating your users with training to ensure that they are alert to any attempts to psychologically attack them.

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our security specialists to ensure that your users are being continuously updated with the latest tricks.

## Cloud & AI

### Microsoft Struggling to Sell CoPilot

While chatbots like CoPilot and ChatGPT are gaining huge traction, users tend to ask more of OpenAI than CoPilot. This makes sense given that ChatGPT launched first, followed by Microsoft with a confusing array of CoPilot names, and then made it worse by changing the names. [It is a problem when it comes to AI alternatives in the enterprise, as only Microsoft has ensured deep integration with corporate data for AI to access it securely.](#)

You can read more about the issues Microsoft is having in selling Copilot [here](#) and [here](#).

HOWEVER - there are MANY MANY options to CoPilot, but it really depends on what you are doing and how AI can be of use. There are some things that CoPilot excels at, and for others, it's not quite as effective.

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our AI specialists, who can advise you on which AI is best suited to the task or explore with you how AI could be used in your company. We have amazing examples of our work that are great for giving you ideas on what could work for you.

## What's up at FTG

### First Digital Makes AI History

First Digital just became the first SA-headquartered company to earn [Microsoft's Advanced Specialisation for Building AI Apps on Azure](#) — **and nailed the audit.**

**This confirms what we already knew: our AI isn't hype. It works. And now Microsoft agrees!**

Please contact your First Technology account manager to explore what we can do for you.

The AI you use to query the TOP STORIES archive(TSAI) is one of those apps!!

## **BUI Just Dropped a Bombshell: South Africa's First Cyber Warranty**

While other companies are saying you should have this, **BUI has done it!**

BUI, FTG's Cloud and Security division, has become the first Microsoft Cloud Solutions Partner in South Africa to launch a Cyber Security Warranty.

That's right — they're so confident in their security operations, they're backing it with a financial warranty.

**Think of it as putting your money where your Security is.** If you suffer a cybersecurity incident, they will assist your organisation up to the value of R1,000,000.00.

It's the kind of assistance customers didn't even know they needed — until now.

**You can read more about the announcement on ITWeb here.**

Please contact your First Technology Group Account manager to connect you with the BUI team to discuss how you can take advantage of this new level of protection.

## **Cloud costing you more than expected?**

First Technology Group is stepping up your cloud financial management game with Umbrella (formerly Anodot Cost) — our preferred platform for FinOps and Cloud Cost Management. Umbrella unlocks faster innovation, deeper insights, and robust cost optimisation, empowering you to proactively manage your cloud spend and enhance financial efficiency.

**As a Platinum preferred partner across Africa, FTG brings you unmatched expertise and tailored support, ensuring a smooth integration of Umbrella into your current systems with minimal operational disruption.**

**Here's what Umbrella means:**

- Enhanced Cost Management: Full visibility of your cloud expenses to pinpoint savings.
- Improved Financial Efficiency: Powerful analytics to guide smarter cloud investments.
- Seamless Integration: Effortlessly combines with your existing infrastructure.

**Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect with our SAM or FinOps teams to see how they can help you optimise your cloud costs. Even if you may think you have your costs under control, there is no harm in asking somebody else to take a look.... just in case!**

## **Free Microsoft Support Ends**

Microsoft has ended free technical support for Azure.

The only free support you now get is for billing and subscription issues.

**Microsoft now charges \$650 per support incident - NB! Not a typo!!**

BUI, FTG's Cloud and Security division has introduced a new support model that mitigates some of this impact - you can **read more and sign up for more information here**.

**Please contact your First Technology account manager to discuss your support requirements, as First Technology group can provide GLOBAL SUPPORT 24/7/365 for a wide range of vendors, including Microsoft.**

## **New Asset Visibility Assessment Available**

The most certified SAM team in the country has announced a new service, which every company should be interested in, even if it is to validate inventories that you already have.

- One scan, full picture of every on-prem, cloud, HW & SW asset
- Block64 tech → shows what's installed, licensed and actually used
- Pin-point over/under-licensing & the real cloud cost drivers
- Built-in FinOps actions to kill idle spend, right-size, reserve & save
- Results land in a single Power BI dashboard

You can also contact the SAM division to participate in a 7-10-day PoC with First Intel and apply Real World FinOps practices.

**Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our SAM specialists to see how their service can best be applied to the challenges in your business, to gain insight into all assets.**

## **Pitfalls with Dynamics 365**

The CRMTeam, of First Technology Group **have published a document on ITWeb** about avoiding the pitfalls of a D365 Customer engagement implementation. If you are looking to dive down the D365 rabbit hole, this is a good article to read. Then, contact our Dynamics 365 specialists on the **CRM Team website** or through your First Technology account manager.

## **What does a World Class SoC look like, and how does it work?**

You are invited to book a tour of one of our SoC (Security Operations Center) nodes (and there are still parts we can't show you). You can **book for the tour here**.

## BUI blog - 8th, 9th and 10th Videos Available

FTG's Cloud and Security Division, BUI's Video Blog, has posted 3 new videos focusing on Entra ID. It is highly recommended that you review these videos as they give you an understanding of how to squeeze value out of the Microsoft suites as opposed to buying alternative products which may not be necessary.

**No. 8:** Streamlining employee onboarding

**No. 9:** Modernise Remote Access

**No. 10:** Secure Internet access based on business requirements.

## Joint Standard 2 on Cyber Security and Resilience

BUI has published a 1-page guide for you to gauge your compliance and, if you have concerns, to reach out to the BUI specialists for assistance. The [guide is available here](#).

## Movies

As AI becomes more widespread, some see it as bringing frightening implications about our future, and M3GAN 2.0 is sure to terrify you quite a lot!

Now Playing: [Sharp Corner](#)

Now Playing: [M3GAN 2.0](#)

Now Playing: [F1](#)

Now Playing: [A Jungle Beat 2: The Past](#) (Trailer on [YouTube is here](#))

04 July: [Jurassic World: Rebirth](#)

11 July: [SMURFS](#)

11 July: [Superman Legacy](#)

18 July: [I know what you did last Summer](#)

18 July: [Four Letters of Love](#)

25 July: [Fantastic Four: First Steps](#)

25 July: [Don't let's go to the Dogs tonight](#)

25 July: [Lucky Fish](#)

First Technology | Midrand | Johannesburg, GAUTENG 2191 ZA

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email & social marketing for free!