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10th August #179

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** patchmypc, padlet and arctera are added.
 - **Microsoft EoL section updated for April 2027** - New update coming in August
 - **DarkWeb Weekly Intelligence Report #179**- No rest for the wicked, now AI powered
 - **Did you Know?** - We have the nuclear DFIR option!
 - **Microsoft Promotions** - Some are out, and surprisingly they have to do with AI.
 - **Win10 LTSC is dying** - it's not leaving ICU alive!
 - **Microsoft deletes the advice** - Problem is still there.
 - **Azure Reservation Policy changes** - It's not going back.
 - **New Outlook gets planner** - Maybe a few will take the bait!
 - **Your Hotels WiFi is under attack** - at the very least use a VPN.
 - **OpenAI reveals how scammers use AI** - Humans are SO gullible.
 - **Your asset register is exposed** - and it's not pretty.
 - **Qwen 3.8 Leads** - the AI leaderboard changes again.
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Microsoft Modernisation April 2026-2027

Microsoft Modernisation strategy has been updated. This addresses key EoL dates, price increases and updates up to 1 April 2027

New report in August.

DarkWeb Weekly Intelligence Report #179

We scan the DarkWeb continuously for Hacker signals and Ransomware attacks. Click above for the 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 as of Sunday Afternoon.**

TOP STORIES #178

Click button above for last weeks news.

Visit FirstMarketPLace Link here for New Additions

patchmypc, padlet and arctera have been added for this week. See below for LinkedIn [Try out our AI](#) to see whats been added since launch.

Our LinkedIn

Movie releases

Get all the releases for the next 4 weeks in South Africa. **July marks summer blockbuster season with The Odyssey & Moana screening and Spiderman is heading to a Billion Dollar weekend opening.**

TOP STORIES ARCHIVE

Register with the link above and get access to the entire TOP STORIES Archive with an AI to help you find what you want. You can also find all the vendors added to FirstMarketPlace and get a whole lot of detail about them! It's in Beta so it could make mistakes.

Request Account Manager

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STORIES**

Microsoft **New Promotions**

The promotions are here! See the link below!

Microsoft NCE Promotions

Microsoft News This Week

Windows 10 LTSC 2021 is dying in 2027

The EoL wheel keeps grinding. Windows 10 Enterprise LTSC 2021 reaches end of support on 12 January 2027, after which normal security updates stop. Do not confuse it with **Windows 10 IoT Enterprise LTSC 2021**, which remains supported until 2032.

Paid Extended Security Updates can buy up to three more years, but the cost rises annually and **ESU remains a security-only bridge**, not full support.

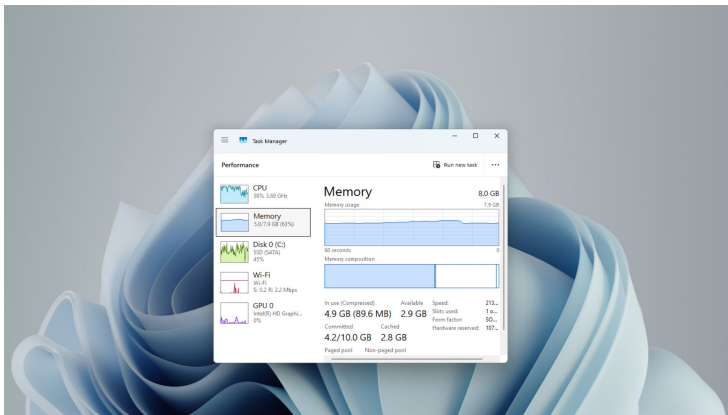
Microsoft's message to Windows 10 Enterprise LTSC 2021 customers is blunt, move to Windows 11 Enterprise LTSC 2024 rather than paying to keep Windows 10 alive.

Windows 11 LTSC provides current security capabilities while retaining the cleaner, more controlled LTSC experience, without much of the consumer clutter found in normal Windows 11.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our Windows specialists, who can identify affected devices, assess hardware, application, driver and peripheral compatibility, plan the migration, replace incompatible devices where necessary, and use Extended Security Updates only as a temporary bridge before Microsoft makes the decision for you!

WindowsLatest: Windows 10 LTSC is dying

Windows 10 LTSC - Give it up - Upgrade to Windows 11



Deleting the Advice, not the Problem!

Microsoft has quietly removed Windows Learning Center articles describing 32GB as the ideal, 'no worries' Windows 11 configuration, while introducing 8GB Surface models as soaring memory prices squeeze the market. PCWorld and Tom's Hardware have independently confirmed the retreat.

Corporate users should ignore the change. Windows, Teams, Outlook, browsers, security agents and the growing stack of background AI still needs headroom. Microsoft's own Copilot+ specification remains 16GB, which is the floor, not a sensible three-to-five-year corporate target. The current Copilot app alone has been measured using up to around 1GB.

TOP STORIES has recommended 32GB since January 2024, and for a new corporate PC, 32GB remains the minimum.

The good news is Microsoft is reducing Windows 11's memory footprint on PCs with 8GB and above. If it delivers, older 8GB and 16GB hardware should remain useful for longer.

That is a life-extension programme, not permission to buy new 8GB corporate machines!

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to optimise your existing fleet and ensure new hardware is specified for the workload it will actually carry.

WindowsLatest: Microsoft Deletes 32GB RAM recommendation



Azure Reservation Exchange Policy Changes

Microsoft first announced this change in October 2022, then postponed it several times. The new date is now 1 February 2027.

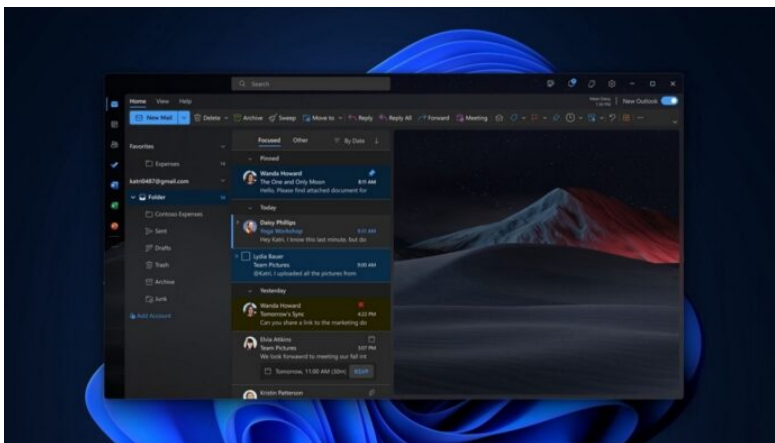
From then, new Reservations for services also supported by Azure savings plans, including Azure

Virtual Machines, App Service and Azure SQL Database, will no longer be exchangeable. Reservations bought before the deadline can still be exchanged freely until then, with one final exchange permitted after 1 February 2027. Any replacement Reservation created through that final exchange cannot be exchanged again.

You can still trade an eligible Reservation into an Azure savings plan, cancellation rules remain unchanged, and virtual machine instance-size flexibility is not affected. Reservations remain suitable for predictable workloads, while savings plans offer greater flexibility across eligible services and regions.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our Azure specialists to review your existing Reservations, future workload requirements, and whether Reservations or an Azure Savings Plan offers the best balance of savings and flexibility before the exchange rules change on 1 February 2027.

Microsoft: Changes to Azure Reservation Policy



Microsoft is using Planner as bait to get you off Outlook Classic

Microsoft is adding Planner directly to New Outlook, with the rollout expected to complete by the end of August 2026. Users will be able to manage team plans alongside email, calendar and Copilot,

without needing a Copilot licence.

Outlook Classic will NOT get the integration, making this another fairly unsubtle shove towards New Outlook.

The awkward loser appears to be Microsoft "To Do". It remains useful for personal tasks, while Planner is designed for team and organisational work, but Microsoft's attention is clearly shifting towards Planner as the broader work-management platform.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our Microsoft 365 specialists to plan the move to New Outlook, rationalise Planner and To Do, and avoid ending up with several task lists that nobody remembers to check.

Using Planner as bait to get you off Outlook Classic

Security

Hotel WiFi Portals are under Active Attack - users beware!

Microsoft has linked a campaign targeting hotel, conference and other guest Wi-Fi portals to Storm-2945, part of the Russia-based Midnight Blizzard group. The attackers manipulate the login portal and redirect travellers to fake Microsoft pages, device-code sign-ins, or convincing Windows and browser update prompts. Microsoft Follow the instructions and the malware can steal Microsoft 365 credentials and session tokens, record keystrokes, access files, monitor the camera and microphone and remotely control the device. Microsoft

The Wi-Fi starts the attack, **but a human still has to approve the code, paste the command or install the fake update. Once again, the human remains the weakest link.**

Users need CONSTANTLY updated training to treat public Wi-Fi as hostile, use a mobile hotspot where possible and NEVER install anything offered by a hotel login page.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our security specialists to review travel policies, Conditional Access, phishing-resistant MFA, endpoint protection and ongoing awareness training.

The tricks keep changing, so last quarters training is already out of date!

ghacks: Microsoft warns that Hotel WiFi portals are under active attack

OpenAI reveals how scammers Use ChatGPT

Phishing used to be easier to spot, poor grammar, strange wording and obviously fake identities. Not anymore.

OpenAI has shut down a Cambodia-based criminal network that used ChatGPT to create believable fake personas, translate and personalise messages, produce forged documents and support romance, investment, gambling and law-enforcement scams.

The criminals used AI to build trust before creating urgency and demanding payment.

The human being remains the weakest link. Technology alone cannot protect the business when an employee trusts a convincing message, shares sensitive information or authorises a fraudulent payment.

Generic awareness training is no longer enough.

Training must be customised around your business, your employees' roles and the threats they are most likely to face. It must also be refreshed regularly because AI is helping criminals change their language, identities and techniques faster than traditional training programmes can keep up.

Speak to your First Technology Group account manager about customised, role-based security training that is continually updated to reflect current threats.

CyberSecurityNews: OpenAI reveals how crooks use AI to Scam users



**Your Asset Register Isn't
What Attackers See,
they see a lot more**

Attackers Don't Need Your Asset Register. They Have the Internet.

SecurityWeek's 2026 analysis of External Attack Surface Management warns that cloud services, SaaS applications, APIs, AI tools and third-party connections are appearing faster than security teams can inventory and secure them.

Attackers only need to find one forgotten system, and AI is helping them find it faster.

This is exactly what [see.tech](https://demo.see.tech/) from BUI was built to address, and you can try out the demo here: <https://demo.see.tech/>

It views your organisation from the outside, without agents, identifying exposed assets, vulnerabilities, weak DNS and SSL/TLS configurations, leaked credentials, impersonation domains and third-party risk.

It then turns those findings into prioritised actions, exposure scores and board-ready reporting.

Your asset register shows what you think you own.

see.tech shows what an attacker can actually see.

Ask your First Technology Group account manager about a see.tech external exposure assessment and try out the demo: <https://demo.see.tech/>

Read the SecurityWeek Analysis

Cloud & AI

The AI Leaderboard Changed Again!

Alibaba claims its new 2.4-trillion-parameter Qwen3.8-Max has beaten GPT-5.6 Sol Max and Claude Fable 5 on agentic computer use, where the AI must actually see the screen, click, type, navigate applications and finish the job..... not just write a clever answer.

That is a VERY big claim, and for now it remains Alibaba's claim rather than a universally proven result.

However, it is another clear warning that Chinese AI models are now competing at the frontier, and the leaderboard is changing faster than most companies can finish a procurement process.

The lesson is NOT to upload your corporate data to whichever model won this week. As AI starts acting inside your systems, security, sovereignty, permissions, governance and

consumption costs become even more important. You need the freedom to select the best model for each workload, inside controls that protect the business.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our Cloud, AI, data and security specialists to categorise and protect your data, evaluate the right models, and build a governed AI platform that can change with the market..... without forcing you to rebuild everything each time the leaderboard changes.

Venturebeat: Qwen 3.8 Max claims it outperforms GTP5.6 Sol Max

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