

## TOP STORIES #134

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.

### New this week (read below for more)

- Did you know: Scytale leader in compliance solutions (ISO etc....)
- Hardware: Qualcomm announces new CPU's to compete with AMD
- Microsoft: Windows 10 End of Life (sort of)  
Windows Server 2025 Licensing guide
- Security: Fake Teams installer pushing Malware
- Cloud & AI: OpenAI launches Pulse- your personal assistant

I recommend you scan through "**Don't Forget**" which is now a separate document for you to download.

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](#).

If you have not tried TSAI yet, I recommend that you do, as it is getting cleverer and faster! 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 independent source in South Africa where you can find a comprehensive list of all the upcoming movies.

Last week's [TOP STORIES #133 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](#).

There is big news this week with us announcing a refined version of our Universal Support Agreements. See under "Did you Know"

Every week, new vendors are being added to First Marketplace - see below for updates.

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

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## Upcoming Shows

The summer holidays now over, and the show schedule for 2026 is set to ramp up again. With NVIDIA buying \$5 billion of Intel stock and admitting they have been secretly working on this for a year is going to cause significant disruption, which will certainly start appearing at CES and shows after that. We're in for an exciting ride!

### AWS re:Invent 2025 - 1-5 December Las Vegas

This is a "MUST ATTEND" for any organisation that uses or competes with AWS. [Register here](#). It is the single most important event for understanding the future of the world's recognised cloud platform.

The product announcements made during the keynote addresses can have immediate and far-reaching implications for technology stacks, budgets, and competitive positioning. The event's structure is notably dual-focused: it provides deep, practical technical training for practitioners who need to implement AWS services, while simultaneously offering high-level strategic sessions and executive networking for leaders making long-term technology decisions. This makes re:Invent a multi-layered and highly efficient event for entire technology teams. **Of course,**

First Technology Group will have representatives attending and will report back on how AWS's announcements will impact business and opportunities in particular for South Africa.

## CES 2026 6-9 Jan 2026 Las Vegas

CES is the event that sets the **consumer technology agenda for the entire year**. Its primary value is not in enterprise strategy but in product launches, generating media buzz, and forming partnerships within the consumer product ecosystem.

If you want to attend, you need to plan now! [Sign up here](#). A more hidden and serious part of the show is that it is also a major destination for startups, with a dedicated area called **Eureka Park** that hosted 1,400 in 2025 - this is actually the most exciting part of CES - what is announced in the main halls, is usually leaked to the internet weeks in advance so attending physically unless you have a specific reason is actually pointless - TOP STORIES gets quite busy for December with all the news leaks!

## NAMM 20-24 Jan 2026 Anaheim

The first big ProAV show of 2026 kicks off with new products, performances and new ideas freshly baked for 2026. You can already [register here to attend](#).

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## Account Manager?

In many cases, the stories below recommend that you contact your First Technology Group account manager. If you are not sure who your account manager is, [click here for us to connect you](#).

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## Don't Forget

### Microsoft starts Phase 2 Mandatory Azure MFA

This is a reminder that Microsoft has started with enforcement at the Azure resource manager layer, and if you are an Admin, you need to prepare for this, [which you can read more about here](#).

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our security specialists to assist with this process.

We all know about the end of Windows 10, which has been documented repeatedly in TOP STORIES over the past year, but there are also changes that have been missed along with new updates, all summarised in the "Don't Forget changes August 2025-2026 complete" document, [which you can download here](#).

Here are a few changes you should pay attention to:

- [The end of trust-based licensing for Dynamics is explained on Page 11](#)
- Note the retirement of the Azure AD Graph API 31 August on [Page 7](#)
- CoPilot Feature enhancements for August 2025 [Page 4](#)
- Azure Services being retired are updated on [Page 7](#)
- Windows Server 2022 ends mainstream support in October 2026 [Page 16](#)
- The end of Windows 10 has implications for Office, summarised on [Page 10](#)

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## Did You Know?

### Scytale with First Technology is the leading provider of Compliance Solutions in Africa!

**One platform.** Automates evidence, continuous controls, vendor risk, privacy, Trust Centre, AI security questionnaires, pen testing, and a built-in audit workspace.

**Covers 40+ frameworks**, including **ISO 27001**, SOC 2, GDPR, PCI-DSS and POPIA, with cross-mapping to avoid duplicate work.

**Proven with enterprises.** For example, Berlitz used Scytale to achieve ISO 27001, speed sales cycles, and simplify renewals.

**Local advantage.** Scytale teams operate in Cape Town and Johannesburg for face-to-face support.

Contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to arrange a consultation and get a view of pricing from [First Marketplace](#).

## Hardware

### Qualcomm announces the most powerful CPU "ever".

Notebooks featuring the Snapdragon X2 Elite and Elite Extreme will be launched in the 1st half of 2026 and will target AMD's AI+ Ryzen 395.

It will feature a massive 128GB on-board memory, targeting CoPilot+ PCs, allowing for multiple AI workloads to run simultaneously. You can [read more about this announcement here](#).

I have been warning that ARM is going to steadily become a more viable alternative to AMD and Intel, as more programs are recompiled to run ARM natively.

Planning your hardware refreshes is going to get more and more interesting as you find a need for AI-type workloads at the endpoint and have to make choices for hardware that will not fit the norm.

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our hardware specialists to assist you along with the hardware vendor of choice to start planning your future purchases.

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## Microsoft

### Windows 10 End of Life - the definitive guide (for now)

We are now entering the final two weeks of official support for Windows 10. There is a lot of confusion about what is going to happen, made worse by Microsoft changing its rules for the EU, as well as the differences between what companies can do and what consumers can do - it is very different.

Windows Central has published an excellent guide, which I [recommend you read through here](#).

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our Hardware, Licensing, Endpoint Support and Remote Managed Services (RMS) divisions to assist you in preparing for the imminent end of Windows 10.

The most important message is **DON'T panic (See point 3)!**

Nothing dramatic will happen after October 14, but you DO need to do [something!](#)

Talk to us about what that could be as machines still running Windows 10 are now REALLY running out of runway!

### Dynamics Licensing guide updated for September

This month, there are only minor updates, focusing mainly on correcting errors from August. You [can download the latest document here](#).

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our Dynamics specialists, who will help keep you updated on the increasingly complex world of Dynamics licensing and its potential impact on your environment.

### Windows Server 2025 Licensing Guide for September.

Microsoft has updated the Windows Server Licensing Guide for September, [which you can download here](#). This is the definitive guide to Windows Server 2025 licensing, which needs to be carefully unpacked to understand the implications for your business which includes:

- A huge price gap between Windows Server Datacenter edition and Standard edition.
- Along with the price gap changing, the breakpoint in the Number of VM's has dramatically increased.
- Understanding the new Pay-as-You-Go model, but being cautious to commit.
- For on-premises implementations, it is essential to understand the potential impact of the CAL Suites' dramatic price increase.

The implications are far-reaching, whether you are in a EA and that is coming to an end, or you are transitioning from an EA to CSP - the impact can be dramatic if you are not prepared. It is VERY important that you contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our Licensing Specialists to assist in unpacking your existing situation and how that will change with Windows Server 2025.

### CoPilot Studio Licensing Guide for September

Microsoft has released an updated guide, where it now more vaguely refers to LLMs as Basic, Standard, or Premium. You [can download the latest document here](#).

It is also important to note that CoPilot Studio is now included in M365 CoPilot licensing. The

terms and conditions (T&Cs) apply, along with a comprehensive table - [see here](#). Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our Licensing and AI specialists to help unpack how this new value add can make a difference in your business. This is especially important to unpack if you are already paying for CoPilot licensing.

## Microsoft Begins Rolling out Model and Agent Options for M365 Copilot

Regardless of the speculation as to why, Microsoft is adding Anthropic models to CoPilot because it seems Claude is generating better results, BUT you need to read the fine print, as your data residency and other protections afforded to you by Microsoft do not apply to Claude - [as the article from Directions on Microsoft explains here](#).

The Article goes further to explain how Microsoft is now rolling out Agents intended to be embedded in Teams, SharePoint and Viva as part of M365 Copilot (for now). Microsoft says there should be an Agent ([like Facilitator](#)) for every Teams meeting, and many others. You can read all about this in the [same article](#).

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our Teams, Licensing and AI specialists to see how these new models and agents can accelerate your implementation of AI in your business.

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## Security

### Serious Entra ID AD Flaw

This flaw given a severity score of 10/10 was officially patched by Microsoft on 4 September. Azure AD Graph API, a deprecated system that's slowly being phased out, was accepting tokens from one tenant and applying them to another, bypassing conditional access policies and standard authentication checks.

This is a reminder that you cannot ignore patches - and you need to check that you have applied this patch ASAP. You can [read more about this problem here](#).

If you need assistance in ensuring that all patches have been applied in your environment and need assistance in keeping them up to date, please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our Security specialists to help ensure that you are always up to date.

### Fake Teams installer pushing malware

Hackers are using malvertising campaigns to push very convincing websites with fake installers. Once installed, it becomes persistent between reboots. This is a very convincing campaign which you can [read more about here along with example of a fake web site](#).

**It is vital that you keep your users trained an up to date on these new tricks and what to look out for, especially in being taught how to proceed carefully when clicking on links, never falling for having to do something a sense of urgency.**

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our training partners to help ensure that your users are being taught how to stay alert.

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## Cloud & AI

### ChatGPT Pulse will proactively prepare you for the day

Pulse offers users five to 10 briefs that can get them up to speed on their day and is aimed at encouraging users to check ChatGPT first thing in the morning — much like they would check social media or a news app. This is currently only available for the \$200 a month pro users, but will be rolled out soon to Plus users as OpenAI gets the service to run more efficiently and they bring more compute capacity online. You can [read more about OpenAI's plans here](#).

It is also very important to understand what Microsoft is doing regarding the rollout of agents across its different services like Teams and SharePoint, as discussed above.

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our AI experts to see how they can help you start implementing AI in your company.

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## What's up at FTG

### FirstMarketplace.com adding Products Weekly

Companies spend on average more than \$4500 per employee per year on SaaS.

**You can be efficient and spend less!**

**Added this week for #134: Scytale and more -read here** for the complete list of additions for this week and who to contact for support.

Check with your account manager to see if you can get a better deal!  
We are adding new products every day - **check with us** before you procure ANYTHING!

- **SIX routes to market** (Azure, AWS, Huawei, private offers, local aggregation and more) – utilising a central catalogue.
- **Procurement in any Geo**, in any currency.
- **For South Africa, Rand-based invoicing**, BEE credits.
- **Zero credit card drama** means finance signs off in minutes, not months.
- **Always-on price intelligence** auto checks your existing cloud commitments and applies the best deal – we'll even work to beat your current quote.
- **Hard to find title sourcing specialists** hunt them down to your exact requirements while you get on with what's really important in your day.

Why wrestle with the how, where and when of software procurement, when **First Marketplace does it all?**

Book a 5-minute meeting with your **First Technology Group Account Manager** and watch “advanced” procurement become effortless.

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### 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 Group 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!

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### The END of all free Microsoft Support

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 Group 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**.

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### 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 Group 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

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## BUI blog - MFA Relay attacks - how they work

FTG's Cloud and Security Division, BUI's Video Blog, has posted a very important video explaining how an MFA relay attack works and how to protect yourself.

You can [watch Video #11 here](#).

**Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our security specialists to help implement ways that are best suited for your company to protect against these attacks that are going to become increasingly common.**

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## Need Branded Gifts?

Sometimes it is a mission for companies to find year-end gifts for their clients.

You need to find some decent and relevant gifts, have them branded with your company logo, ensure that you are not getting ripped off, place the order, and hope to receive them in time for year-end in packaging that matches your expectations, as seen in the mockups.

So, if you are looking for gifts and for people who do this all day to do the heavy lifting, you can go here: <https://impactgifts.co.za/> and look through some options, and of course, you can also call the [Gifting Hub](#) to discuss your requirements.

**You can also contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with the "Gifting Experts" to help come up with the perfect gift for your clients!**

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## Movies

The next big blockbuster coming up in October is TRON

In October, Kanu Reeves Stars in "Good Fortune".

I'm not sure what inspired the change from John Wick?

Now Playing: [The Strangers: Chapter 2](#)

Now Playing: [Gabby's Dollhouse: The Movie](#)

Now Playing: [One Battle after Another](#)

Now Playing: [The Dead of Winter](#)

Now Playing: [Carissa](#)

Now Playing: [Loved Out](#)

3 October: [Avatar: Way of Water \(re-release\)](#)

3 October: [A big bold beautiful Journey](#)

3 October: [Him](#)

3 October: [The smashing machine](#)

10 October: [TRON:ARES](#)

10 October: [Hen](#)

10 October: [Doramon the Movie: Nobita's art world Tales](#)

17 October: [Good Fortune](#)

17 October: [Black Phone 2](#)

17 October: [Shell](#)

24 October: [Springsteen: Deliver me from Nowhere](#)

24 October: [Stitch Head](#)

24 October: [Wicked Part One](#) Sing-Along edition (Lyrics on Screen)

24 October: [Roofman](#)

24 October: [Shelby Oaks](#)