

.top_stories

//barry_neethling

17th November #141

Thank you!

Thank you so much for your feedback, which is helping me to continue to improve this publication.

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.
- **USB Cables** are a web of different types, colours and.... trouble - find out more!
- **Microsoft Sentinel** Promotion announced
- **Visual Studio 2026** Released.
- **Excel Agent Reviewed** - if you use Excel this is worth a read!
- **AI Browsers** beware!
- **Users of Google and Outlook** are under major attack
- **GPT 5.1** Released.

Technology Shows

Click for an update on the upcoming technology shows like CES 2026

USB Cables De-mystified

USB Cable standards and connector colours are a mystery. I have written this paper to help de-mystify this, with a recommendation for a cable tester which I'm also investigating.

**TOP STORIES
#140**

Click button above for last weeks news

**Visit
FirstMarketplace**

We have added **Splunk** and **CISCO** to the FTG global Marketplace

**Movie
releases**

Get all the releases and trailers for the next month in South Africa
SISU: Road to Revenge next week

**Microsoft End of
Life**

Important to review especially with Windows 10, Exchange and others

SUBSCRIBE

Microsoft **News This Week**

Sentinel Promotion Announced

Microsoft Sentinel's Commitment Tiers do exactly what the name suggests, commit to a fixed amount of daily data ingestion and you drop into a discounted pricing band. **Until now the entry point has been 100 GB a day, but there is a new 50 GB per day tier in public preview with special promotional pricing running until 31 March 2026.**

Sign up during this window and you lock in that promotional rate all the way through to 31 March 2027.

**Sentinel
Promo**

Pricing

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our security and licensing specialists to help assess if you can benefit from this promotion.

**Request Account
Manager**

Dynamics Licensing guide updated for November

There are refreshed Dynamics 365 licensing resources updated for November 2025. The Licensing Guide has been tweaked to reflect the new Business Central storage and pricing changes, and any mentions of Microsoft 365 Copilot for Service and Sales have been stripped out since these are now covered by a Microsoft 365 Copilot User SL.

There is a new appendix for Dynamics 365 Agents in Paid Public Preview from the Copilot Studio Licensing Guide, and there is now more detail packed into the Team Members Use Rights table in Appendix D.

Visual Studio 2026 Now Released

Visual Studio 2026 has now hit general availability and arrives with a snappier UI and performance improvements, while staying fully compatible with your existing Visual Studio 2022 projects and extensions. **As you would expect, the AI additions are the real headline, with integrated capabilities such as the Debugger Agent fixing code in front of you!**

The Product Terms and SPUR have both been updated to reflect this new release.

Microsoft Announcement

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our licensing specialists to help determine which versions of Visual Studio are best suited for your requirements.

Excel Agent for Microsoft 365

Microsoft's new Excel Agent brings powerful AI-driven automation to spreadsheet creation and data analysis.

Office Watch explored how Excel Agent helps you generate budgets, sample data, and insightful reports with simple text prompts, saving time while expanding what's possible inside Excel.

This is a very good article from Office Watch on the new agent. If you are a user of Excel, I really recommend you read it!

This is a powerful new addition!

Office Watch Excel Agent Review

Modern Work (M365) Plan comparison Documents updated

The November 2025 Modern Work Plan Comparison documents are out and now line up with the refreshed naming for the Defender and Purview Add-ons, as well as showing the revived Office and Microsoft 365 licences that include Teams.

In the SMB comparison there is also a new footnote spelling out that you can have a maximum of 300 User SLs across all the Business plans combined.

M365 Enterprise Plans Comparison

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our licensing specialists to help determine which is the best M365 Plan for you going forward, and if you are in the middle of an agreement, how you can get more value from what you are already paying for!

Security



AI Browsers - we are NOT READY!

When an AI Browser is "reading" a website, it is unable to distinguish between legitimate data and malicious commands hidden within the site that a human would never see. There are already alarming demonstrations of how an AI can be tricked into leaking data that it was never intended to disclose. A German publication has posted a very interesting paper on this looming security disaster. Please do not be lulled into deploying AI browsers in your work environment with assurances of security. They are

assuredly NOT Secure!

Please read the article below (in German - use translation) that will help you consider the implication of using these browsers, even on your home PC's!

AI Browsers: We are NOT ready

This is yet another reminder that you should contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our specialist partners, who are experts in helping you train your users to understand these new dangers and the importance of staying away from these browsers, as security experts try to figure out how to handle them.

Outlook and Google under attacks that bypass defences

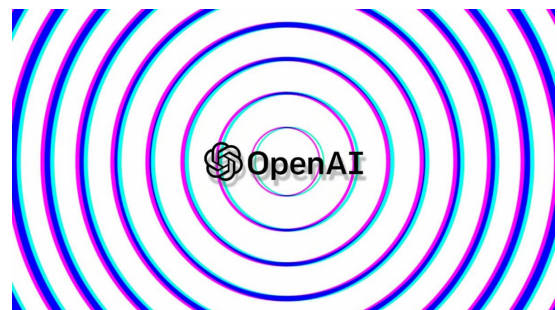
The bad guys are systematically targeting companies by leveraging simplicity in clever ways to slip through conventional defences - and who are they slipping past? The human! They are often using legitimate URL's that they have compromised or create a link that looks similar to a legitimate link. **This is a sobering message that the attacks are only going to get worse, and ensuring that users are being regularly updated on trying to spot the latest tricks.** Contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our specialist partners, who are experts in helping you train your users to stay alert to these attacks.

Google and Outlook under attack

Cloud & AI

GPT 5.1 Released

It turns out that GPT 5.1 is a significant upgrade with a focus on personalisation and a "warmer" tone. OpenAI is also claiming PhD-level intelligence in certain domains. GPT 5.1 is another step towards being more accessible and intelligent. It sure ups the ante for GPT 6 due early next year



First Technology | Midrand | Johannesburg, GAUTENG 2191 ZA

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



Try email & social marketing for free!