

TOP STORIES #96 HAPPY 2025!!!

This is the first edition of 2025, and everybody at First Technology and I want to wish you an AWESOME 2025!

On the technology front, it will be an exciting year.

As always, CES 2025 kicks off the year with a plethora of announcements from the world's biggest tech companies. There is something exciting for everybody, but LG seems to have managed to get everybody's attention with the first [bendable 45" OLED Gaming monitor](#).

This monitor is not just for gamers but will also be the ultimate work monitor. Of course, all major Internet publications are covering CES and have published [their views on what to expect](#). Predictably, AI will be everywhere. NVIDIA will definitely dominate the press — [see here for instructions on how to follow](#).

Next Week's TOP STORIES is going to be packed with news.

Q1 is "show season", and the next big show is NAMM at the end of January, which will [focus on Professional sound, recording and music technology](#). This has more relevance in the IT space because of the technologies we install in our meeting rooms with Teams and Zoom.

Other big shows coming up are:

- ISE Europe - 4-7 February
- Mobile World Congress: 3-6 March
- Computex Taipei: 20-23 May

You can find the last [TOP STORIES #95 of '24](#) here (interesting stuff about AI), the one before that, [TOP STORIES #94 is here](#).

If colleagues would like to join the newsletter, [they can click here to sign up](#).

Did you Know?

Let's start 2025 with a recap of the editions published to date.

No.1 - 4 [TOP STORIES #88](#)

This summarises the 1st 4 "Did You Know" stories (listed below).

No. 1 [IoT Solution for MAHLER](#) to prevent leaky radiators from being installed in your fancy new car!

No. 2 [The most Certified SAM Partner](#) in South Africa and what they can do for your Asset Management challenges.

No. 3 [CoPilot Awareness Campaigns](#) and what they can do for you. 2025 is the year when it is SO important to start experimenting with AI.

No. 4 One of SA's Oldest ISPs, with the most certified engineers, [is adding even more capabilities to its portfolio](#).

Did You Know? 5-7

These finish 2024, and for 2025, we have a new "Did you Know" every two weeks.

No. 5 [TOP STORIES #90](#) - [First Digital Demonstrates PEXA](#) an **award-winning AI-powered assistant** for the City of Cape Town. It can be adapted to any company's HR communications needs. **A demo is highly recommended!**

No. 6 [TOP STORIES #92](#) - Galton Data is the ONLY Teams and Zoom Phone certified partner in South Africa. Are you worried about Teams no longer bundled with M365? Read about how they can show you many options for saving money.

No. 7 [TOP STORIES #94](#) - A brief overview of License Pulse, a tool from First Digital that you can use to discover if you are overlicensed or "underconsuming" for Microsoft M365xx licenses and to use it to improve your negotiation position and drive better consumption. **It is highly recommended that you schedule a demo of this system. Once the team can access your tenant(s) Graph API data, results can start flowing in a day.**

Hardware

Microsoft compares Intel and AMD CoPilot+ benchmarks with MacBooks

These benchmarks are already only last year's results, but they do show how they stack up against each other, Snapdragon and MacBooks.

These results will only get a lot better in 2025. [You can read more about them here.](#)

Of course, CES 2025 needs to happen as well.

These latest Microsoft updates underscore the importance of keeping up with your hardware refresh plans for 2025.

Please talk to your First Technology Account manager to connect you with our hardware specialists to assist with keeping your plans up to date. Everything is changing - the CPUs, memory, cables, Docking stations (hubs), and display interconnect standards.....

TSMC Is Getting Ready to Launch Its First 2nm Production Line

TSMC is on track to fully produce 2nm (20 Angstrom) wafers by 2026. [This announcement can be read here.](#) This aligns with the story I published in [TOP STORIES #87](#), which noted that ASML is already shipping 10 Angstrom lithography machines.

This confirms the roadmap to 2030, which will see completely different technology from what we know today. With these advancements, AGI will almost certainly be achieved well before 2030.

Robovac with a mechanical Arm

CES 2025 will not be complete without [massage chairs](#) (they are a very serious business) and vacuum cleaners. A new model has been launched for CES that includes an arm to pick up dirty socks or whatever else you have left lying around. [It's cool to watch in action!](#)

I suppose we will find out what the price is soon.....it won't be cheap!

Microsoft

Microsoft is spending \$80 billion on data centres this year.

More than half of this budget will be spent on data centres in the USA. This is a massive investment and underscores the extent to which Microsoft believes customers will adopt AI and be prepared to pay for it. This type of investment is sure to be replicated by Google, Amazon, OpenAI, Anthropic etc..... Maybe there is a connection with some information that has leaked about OPenAI achieving AGI when it is able to generate \$100 billion in profits. This is speculation, but you can [read more about this here.](#)

What will you be prepared to pay for an AGI enhancing everything you do? With investment at such a scale, [which you can read about here](#), it will be practically impossible to avoid using AI (and paying for it) in your business. Therefore, it is SO IMPORTANT to start experimenting with AI to see where it can benefit your business.

Please contact your First Technology account manager, who will connect you with our AI specialists. They can demonstrate some of the amazing things they are already doing with AI and discuss with you what may be possible for your business.

Another team can also discuss preparing to adopt CoPilot more broadly in your business and assist with impressive [AI-driven awareness training initiatives.](#)

What mattered to Corporate customers about Microsoft?

Directions on Microsoft has published an interesting list of the top 10 most-read articles for 2024. Despite the CoPilot barrage, customers remained very interested in many non-AI topics, too. I'm pleased to say that if you have been reading TOP STORIES for 2024, I have already made you aware of almost all of these, especially the issue relating to the retirement of the "classic Outlook." Nevertheless, [Directions on Microsoft](#) provides a handy summary of the top 10 issues concerning companies in 2024.

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our experts in the relevant divisions to discuss further what specific issues may interest you for 2025.

Security

Beware of Tax-themed emails.

These attacks happen in all countries and any language. No matter where you are, you must be especially careful of emails relating to Taxes and/or rebates with attachments or

links you are asked to click. A new attack has popped up trying to deliver management console files to your computer (which can then be executed). KnowBe4 has [published a new warning about attacks like this](#).

This serves as a reminder that you can never let up on training. Please contact your First Technology account manager to talk about planning your training schedule for your users to ensure they are always kept up to date and to watch out for new ways to be tricked into letting the bad guys gain access to your environment. It is important to remind them that the training helps them protect their personal devices at home as well.

Cloud & AI

VERY Smart AI's are now here

We are only a few years into AI, and models as smart as GPT 4 can now run on your gaming PC—for example, Llama 3.3 from Meta can do that today.

Numerous examples exist of really smart AIs that can run offline and perform impressive tasks. You may have read about the Jetson from NVIDIA and seen Dave's Garage on YouTube, where he shows him putting it to work. I covered this in [TOP STORIES #94](#).

Thinking AIs (you can see them as the GPT-5 increment), like o1, spend time problem-solving like humans before answering questions and are becoming smart enough to make meaningful contributions.

For example, o1 found the mistake in the paper that concluded that spatulas made from e-waste would poison people who used them—this caused quite a er....stir!

o1 was able to find it by being given the PDF and told to "carefully check the math in this paper."

The lesson is that AI advancement is not slowing down; rather, AI capability is advancing inexorably and faster than ever. We have a unique opportunity to contribute to this advancement and move the needle in the direction we want. Now is the time to seriously embrace AI and experiment with it. [You can read all about this and more here](#) (including the spatula story).

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our AI specialists. They are already working with these models and can demonstrate some cool implementations. Please talk with us to assist in preparing your environment (securing it) so that your users can start experimenting with AI and CoPilot.

Please let us work with you to raise awareness and educate your users about AI, especially CoPilot. 2025 is the most important year in the journey with AI; do not get left behind.

What's up at FTG

Microsoft AI Tour in Johannesburg

First Technology Group will have a major presence at the Microsoft AI Tour in Johannesburg. You will be able to meet our experts in all fields of AI. These experts from First Technology, BUI, CRM Team and First Digital will be there to introduce, explore and demonstrate business-centric AI-powered solutions to boost creativity and productivity.

(Noting all the points made in the sections above) These include out-of-the-box solutions and custom designs developed by First Technology Group companies.

When: 23 Jan 2025 7:00am to 1:45pm

Where: Sandton Convention Centre

[Register here](#)

Pure Storage event - Special Guest speaker - PSG Wealth

This is a special in-person event to start the new year. It introduces the Pure Storage and First Technology partnership, takes you behind the scenes of the technology, explains how you can benefit from it, and discusses what the future looks like with Containers and Kubernetes.

When: 23 Jan 2025 at 8:00am

Where: Pencil Club, 1 Ncondo Pl, Umhlanga Ridge, Durban, 4320

[Register Here](#).

There are limited seats, so please register ASAP

CoPilot Security Demo

BUI, FTG's security division, can present CoPilot for Security information-sharing sessions, workshops and demos.

In light of ongoing attacks that will only get sneakier, it is essential to contact your First Tech Group account manager to arrange to attend a session. You can also [request a session here](#).

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 - 3rd Video Available

FTG's Azure and security division, BUI, has launched a blog focused on Security—what's new, what changed, and what you need to do to maintain a sound security posture. This one, however, is about a game that Dirk learnt about while attending Black Hat in Vegas.

[All BUI videos have been moved to one YouTube channel, which you can find here](#).

The Security Blog Video #003 is [now available to view here](#).

Movies

School holidays from 6 December to January 25! 50 Days!

Now Playing: [Cellar Door](#)

Now Playing: [Coup de Chance](#)

Now Playing: [We live in Time](#)

10 January: [A Complete Unknown](#)

10 January: [Den of Thieves: Pantera](#)

Movies for 2025

There is a great lineup for 2025 - [here is a list by the release date of some of the big titles](#). Note that the release dates are for the USA.

First Technology | Midrand | Johannesburg, 2191 ZA

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