

## TOP STORIES #107

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

It is now 2 years since we have been publishing weekly.

As a user of Microsoft technologies, you're receiving this publication to stay informed about critical topics such as Microsoft licensing, end-of-life dates, technical updates, security notices, and more. I recommend you scan through "**Don't Forget**" below to see if you missed something coming to End of Support (EoS) that may impact your business. **Note a new addition about Publisher.**

Remember to check out the **official movie release dates** in South Africa for all studios at the end of this email. The schedule has been updated to provide you with releases four weeks in advance. It is accurate!

Last week's [TOP STORIES #106 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 right at the bottom of the mail.

**NAB**, the Show for the Entertainment & Education Business and Movie Technology geeks, kicks off in Las Vegas from **5-9 April**. **AI is going to play a huge role at the show**. News of what to expect at the show is **leaking out**, and one of them is that IMAX is set to announce new technologies to improve the quality of streamed content, you can [read the teaser here](#). The Show Daily is [also live here](#).

The big news this week is from the **NVIDIA developer conference**, where NVIDIA announced their next generation of AI technologies, but the most interesting part was the announcement of AI supercomputers for endpoint computing. [Here is a 16 min video summarising the keynote](#)

## Account Manager?

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

## Hardware

### Post Copper era announced by NVIDIA

NVIDIA unveiled new photonic gear at its GTC conference, which will significantly reduce data centre power consumption and increase transfer rates to 1.6Tbps. These data centers will start appearing in 2026 and might just be the first generation to support AGI, something Sam Altman seems to be convinced we will see by 2027. You can [read more about NVIDIA's announcement here](#).

## Microsoft

### CoPilot in Excel to Reference data from sources like Web, PDF, Word, etc..

Though this is only currently available to insiders with CoPilot License, you can use CoPilot to access public and company data to enrich your existing content. Once this becomes generally available, it will be a potent tool to supplement your work in Excel. You can [read more about this here](#).

Please contact your First Technology account manager, who will connect you with our AI specialists. They can help you visualise how these features can benefit your business.

## Security

### Prepare for Joint Standard 2 of 2024 – Resistance is Futile!

The Financial Sector Conduct Authority (FSCA) and Prudential Authority (PA) have published "Joint Standard 2 of 2024," which establishes clear cybersecurity and cyber resilience standards for financial institutions effective 1 June 2025. **This provides financial organisations, including independent advisors, with 12 months to prepare for these vital compliance requirements.**

During this transitional period, institutions should gradually adopt the new cybersecurity standards, facilitating a cost-effective rollout and strengthening their cybersecurity posture against evolving threats. Key compliance points under this Joint Standard include:

- Developing a comprehensive cybersecurity framework.
- Conducting regular cyber risk assessments and continuous monitoring.
- Establishing clear incident response and recovery strategies.
- Ensuring effective board-level oversight and accountability.
- Managing and mitigating third-party cyber risks.
- Promptly reporting significant cybersecurity incidents to regulators.

**Directors and executives now risk personal liability for non-compliance, including potential regulatory sanctions, financial penalties, and reputational damage.**

BUI, a division of the First Technology Group, is well-positioned to support your organisation in navigating these compliance requirements, drawing on expertise in all the aforementioned fields. Detailed information is available through the [FSCA](#) and the [Prudential Authority at the Reserve Bank](#), and [here](#).

To ensure your organisation is resilient, secure, and compliant, [click here](#) to arrange a consultation, or contact your First Technology Account Manager, who can connect you with the BUI Security specialists.

## Fake Meta Mails to Steal Your Logins

A dangerous phishing campaign has been uncovered targeting companies using Meta platforms for advertising. You receive an urgent mail telling you that your ads are temporarily suspended, and if you fall for that, the rest is history. You can [read more detail on how you can be tricked here](#),

This is again a reminder that it can take just "one-click" to take down an entire company. You must never let up on ensuring your users receive training that keeps them up to date with the latest tricks. You are also doing them a favour by helping them improve their vigilance on their personal devices. [Please contact your First Technology account manager to ensure that you are scheduling training sessions for your users.](#)

## Cloud & AI

**Teams using AI are significantly more innovative.**

Harvard Business School has released a new paper called "[The Cybernetic Teammate](#)," based on a study done at Procter and Gamble. [The study was done using previous-generation AI tools that everybody has access to.](#)

**If executives oppose AI, this paper persuasively argues for business leaders to rethink their strategy.**

When working without AI, teams outperformed individuals, but teams **WITH** AI outperformed teams **WITHOUT** AI.

To quote Ethan Mollick: "*The most exciting implication may be that AI doesn't just automate existing tasks, **it changes how we can think about work itself**. The future of work isn't just about individuals adapting to AI, it's about organisations reimagining the fundamental nature of teamwork and management structures themselves.*"

[There are two steps to implementing AI, the first step is to secure your environment so you KNOW what data the AI is accessing, and the second step is to encourage adoption. Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our AI implementation specialists to get you on this journey. It is \*\*SO important to not fall behind!\*\*](#)

## Swedish movie Visually Dubbed with AI

This is the first movie that has been dubbed into English to such an extent that it looks like it was actually made in English (this is called "Vubbing"). This starts a new era in movies made in one language to reach other regions of the world in their local language. You can [read more about the amazing AI technology here](#) and a [short video about it here](#).

## Don't Forget

This new section is dedicated to reminding you about important dates or events in IT. Note that this list is not complete.

## The Microsoft Product Lifecycle Page

[Here is where you can find out when ANY product is ending](#) mainstream or extended

support.

Of course, the list of products is huge, and it's easy to miss important dates and their implications. Even though you can access the list yourself, I'll highlight important dates.....

### **Microsoft Office**

There is a long list of Office EOL dates, including when Publisher will be discontinued (13 October 2026), [Outlook "Classic" EOL \(at least 2029\)](#), and more.

**Outlook Classic for Enterprise switches to "Opt-in" April 2026 (removed from Office install)**

The [complete list of Office EoS is maintained here](#).

It is important to remember that Office 2019/6 and Exchange Server 2016/9 Extended support, along with Windows 10, will end on 14 October 2025.

### **Microsoft Publisher**

Publisher will reach end of Life in October 2026, after which **M365 Subscribers will no longer be able to open or edit Publisher files**. You have until then to save the files in other formats. The perpetual version of Publisher will continue to work (without support). [You can read more detail here](#).

Microsoft notes that *"documents may not be a one-to-one replication of your original Publisher file. If your document has a lot of graphics, you may see significant changes."*

### **Unlicensed OneDrive accounts to lose data**

As advised in [TOP STORIES #95](#), as of now, OneDrive accounts will be archived after 93 days. After another 93 days, they get PERMANENTLY deleted. Up until then, you can still re-activate the accounts. You can [read about how all this is working here](#). **THE FINAL DEADLINE (for a price) is before 29 July 2025!**

(disclaimer - Microsoft can change the rules anytime - so get your data out FAST!!!)

### **Windows 10 - End of Support (EoS) October 2025**

Everyone should be aware of this, but it is important to remember that Extended Support is available if you cannot get rid of Windows 10 in time, albeit very expensive.

It will only protect you from vulnerabilities Microsoft chooses to protect you from. You can get more information on [the program here](#).

Plan "C" comes from a company called [Opatch](#).

**NOTE!!!!!!! ALL support for any product, INCLUDING O365 running on Windows 10, also ends.**

**The exception - Windows 10 LTSC 2019 is supported till 2029.**

**Note the use case for LTSC is very narrow (POS, Medical Devices, ATM's etc.) and not recommended for general use.**

### **Windows 11 - End of Support (EoS)**

It is essential to track the builds, and as you can see, it is very important to make sure you are trying to deploy Win 11 24H2 and NOT earlier builds.....

Win 11 22H2 October 2025 (**Note: Microsoft will force upgrade this version**)

Win 11 23H2 November 2026

**Win 11 24H2 October 2027**

Win 11 Ent. LTSC 2029

### **Windows Server End of Support**

Windows Server 2012 ESU ends October 2026 - **that's 100% the end of the line.**

**Windows Server 2016 Support ends Jan 2027**, ESU ends Jan 2029

### **SQL Server End of Support**

2012 SP4 ESU July 2025

2014 SP3 ESU July 2027

**2016 SP3 July 2026 (this is your next big one to worry about)**

2017 Oct 2027

### **Azure AD and MSOnline End of Support**

Both these services come to **end of support on 30 March 2025**

Microsoft has posted detailed information about this [here](#).

## **What's up at FTG**

**HPE Aruba New Networking Solutions Unveiled**

Join us for an Exclusive First Technology KZN event in partnership with Aruba to discover how our AI-powered, secure, and scalable infrastructure can transform your business with guest speaker Alan Knott-Craig

**When:** 27 March @ 8:30am

**Where:** First Technology, Office 11 Richefond Circle, Ridgeside Office Park, Umhlanga

**RSVP:** [Here](#)

### **Life Healthcare's Seamless Transition, With Support From BUI**

With 63 healthcare facilities in southern Africa, the security of Life Healthcare's data is paramount. A move to the Azure Cloud, facilitated by BUI, became the clear and strategic choice.

As a leading South African private healthcare provider, Life Healthcare plays a key role in the health of our nation. While their primary business occurs in wards, theatres and consulting rooms around the country, it is underpinned by a solid IT foundation.

Read more about how BUI enabled Life Healthcare's move to the cloud..... [Navigating the Cloud: Life Healthcare's Seamless Transition, With Support From BUI - BUI](#)

### **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.

### **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 - 5th Video Available**

FTG's Azure and security division, BUI's Video Blog, is now in its fifth edition, [available here](#). This edition focuses on security news from Microsoft for February. If you work with the Microsoft security stack, this is a handy video to watch—it's only five minutes long.

### **BUI Open 4th Cyber Security Operations Centre in Kenya**

As part of BUI's investment in talent in Africa and the broader East African region, BUI, together with the Microsoft country manager for Kenya, held the inauguration ceremony of the new Cyber SOC. You can read [more about this launch here](#).

**BUI was announced as a Diversity in Security award finalist** in the Microsoft Security Excellence Awards. The company was honoured among a global field of industry leaders who demonstrated success across the security landscape during the past 12 months. You can [read more about this award here](#), where on the 28th April Microsoft will recognise the finalists in 9 categories.

## **Movies**

Grp 1 Pvt School Holidays 21-MAR-25 until 07-APR-25

Public School Holidays 29-MAR-25 until 07-APR-25

Grp 2 Pvt School Holidays 05-APR-25 until 05-MAY-25

Human Rights Day 21-MAR-25

The Line-up for 21 March is going to be INTENSE!!

Now Playing: [Disney's Snow White](#) (It's really not that bad!)

Now Playing: [Som Van Twee](#) - **Please support your local cinema!**

Now Playing: [Black Bag](#)

Now Playing: [Novocaine](#)

Now Playing: [Last Breath](#)  
28 March: [Night of the Zoopacalypse](#)  
28 March: [A working Man](#)  
4 April: [Locked](#)  
4 April: [A Minecraft Movie](#)  
4 April: [Riff Raff](#)  
11 April: [The Amateur](#)  
11 April: [A Kind of Madness](#)  
11 April: [Drop](#)  
11 April: [Warfare](#)  
18 April: [Old Guy](#)  
18 April: [Sneaks](#)  
18 April: [Sinners](#)  
18 April: [King of Kings](#)  
18 April: [Hunting Jessica Brok](#)

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