

# TOP STORIES #112

Welcome to TOP STORIES, which has been published for more than 22 years!  
It is now 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.

I recommend you scan through "**Don't Forget**" which is now a separate document for you to download - it was making TOP STORIES too long to read through.

**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](#).**

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 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 #111 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 at the bottom of the mail.

## Upcoming Shows

The next big computer show of the year is [Computex](#), coming up in May. This is a significant show for the world's leading manufacturers to make announcements about future releases, and we can expect more hype to build over the next few weeks, which I'll share here.

## Account Manager?

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

## Don't Forget!

**This an important section - it summarises all of Microsoft Products that are coming up for End of Support and/or End of Life.** The sheer volume of changes and products coming to EoL and EoS is so long that I have made this a separate document, [which you can download here](#).

It will be updated at least quarterly (or as necessary) to try and keep you up to date with the ever-changing Microsoft release roadmap.

**I recommend you take a look at the document, it provides a lot of detail about what is ending, changing and updating!**

Feedback on making it easier to read along with things I may have missed will be appreciated as well!

### Updates for this week

There are some new announcements from Microsoft that you need to be aware of. These will be added to the PDF next week, which you can [download](#).

**No more updates for Microsoft Maps** - this is now being deprecated and will be removed from the Microsoft Store by July 2025. You can [read more about this here](#).

## What is "Did you Know?"

"Did you Know?" is a dedicated segment within the First Technology Group communications, designed to spotlight key services, specialised capabilities, and remarkable achievements across the group that many may not yet be aware of.

**With a 40-year legacy, over 2,500 permanent employees, and a wide spectrum of**

expertise spanning cloud, licensing, infrastructure, security, communications, and innovation, First Technology Group (FTG) has built an extraordinary portfolio.

However, the sheer breadth and depth of what FTG offers often goes beyond the immediate visibility of even our own teams, customers, and partners.

"Did you Know?" exists to close that gap.

Each entry in "[Did you Know?](#)" uncovers something exceptional — whether it's a world-first digitisation of the entire blood donation process, FTG's leadership as South Africa's largest Cloud PBX provider, or the fact that FTG boasts the largest SAM/ITAM/FinOps team in Africa, certified to the highest international standards.

## Why "Did you Know?" Matters

- **Expands Understanding:** It helps internal teams, customers, and partners discover the full extent of FTG's capabilities, enhancing cross-sell and up-sell opportunities.
- **Builds Confidence:** Reinforces why FTG is trusted to deliver complex and critical solutions both in South Africa and globally.
- **Opens Conversations:** Provides credible, certified facts that can easily be used as conversation starters when engaging with clients.
- **Demonstrates Innovation and Scale:** Showcases how FTG leads not only in traditional IT but also in cutting-edge fields like FinOps, multi-cloud cost management, unified communications, AI-driven platforms, and more..

You can [download a summary of all 14 "Did you Know" articles to date here](#).

Please contact your First Technology account manager who will be happy to give you an even broader overview of the services available from the First Technology Group, focusing on those that could be relevant YOU.

## Hardware

### Lenovo Refreshes it's ThinkPads for AI

Coinciding with Microsoft's release of CoPilot Wave 2 and Recall, Lenovo has announced a new lineup of Intel and AMD-based ThinkPad notebooks that are CoPilot+ compliant. As Microsoft releases more AI features, these types of notebooks (and you will see ones from HP and Dell as well) will become increasingly interesting. You can [read more about these releases here](#).

Please contact your First Technology Account manager to connect you with our hardware specialists and discuss when you can start migrating your procurement roadmap to CoPilot+ based computers.

## Microsoft

### Recall is finally released.

This is finally rolling out to all CoPilot+ PC's. Although everyone is worried about privacy issues, the natural language search feature will be very useful for anyone needing to search for information in a large number of files - this feature was first mentioned in [TOP STORIES #83](#). You can [read more about the Copilot+ release here](#).

### Dynamics 365 ERP License Management changes.

Microsoft has announced upcoming changes to managing licenses for Dynamics 365 ERP applications. From 30 April 2025, improved licence reporting will be available in the Power Platform Admin Centre, providing greater visibility of licence usage across all security roles.

Following this, from 30 August 2025, all users must have their licences assigned through the Microsoft 365 Admin Center. Users without correctly assigned licences will lose access to the Dynamics 365 ERP applications.

The Microsoft announcement with a guide on [preparing for the transition can be found here](#).

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our Dynamics experts to assist in understanding the implications and preparing for the change.

### Copilot in Azure is generally available

Microsoft has announced that Copilot in Azure is now generally available.

Accessible through the Azure Management Portal, Copilot helps you answer questions,

complete tasks, and explore Azure services more easily.

The service, which was free during its preview phase, remains free to use. However, customers making excessive use of Microsoft's generative AI services may experience temporary throttling to ensure fair access for all users. You can [find the Microsoft Announcement here](#).

## Office 365 Startup Boost

This new feature that is rolling out is a new way to make Office Apps like Word startup faster - with a bit of trickery - it gets preloaded in the background. You can [read more about how it works here](#).

## Dynamics 365 April Licensing Guide

There is only one change relating to Customer Insights attach license on Page 13. You can [download the latest guide here](#).

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our Dynamics experts to ensure you get the maximum benefit from your licensing. How Dynamics licensing gets applied cost-effectively in practice needs to be constantly re-evaluated.

## CoPilot Wave 2 Spring release

This big release brings new capabilities with more advanced models, adaptive memory, and reasoning agents. You can [read more about what capabilities are brought to CoPilot with these improvements here](#).

## Windows 11 25H2 coming

Most of us have finally managed to upgrade to Win11 24h2 after much drama, and now, just having heaved a sigh of relief, here comes news that the 25H2 update s now being prepared. At the moment it's sounding like it may be (thankfully) a small update compared with 24H2 (which could easily have been called Windows 12 in another universe). There is very limited information about 25H2, but it makes sense that it will be a small update not requiring a full install.

Most importantly, it is not going to be such a big update with new features to delay your 24H2 rollout. You can [read more about it here](#).

It is critical that you do get 24H2 rolled out, and that you do your best to get your computers upgraded to 32 Gig RAM. With new features like Startup Boost being released, more memory will result in a better user experience. Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our Windows 11 deployment experts to assist you in getting Win 11 24H2 rolled out as smoothly as possible.

## Security

### The Debris on your network is your weakness.

Network edge devices are becoming growing points of intrusion, especially the ones that are old, and out of date, no longer being supported. These EoL devices are being increasingly targeted combined with Phishing attacks for attacked to gain access to corporate networks faster. IoT devices are extremely vulnerable. I think every company has many cameras on their network that have been running for AGES - and nobody has even check to see if they have been updated or can even be updated!

It is very important to run a full scan of your network to find these devices dotted all over your network that can become vectors for a nasty attack. You can [read more about such nasty attacks here](#). We have experts who can do these scans! Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our experts to see the best way we can engage to initiate such a scan, which, for example, can be part of a SAM engagement.

## Cloud & AI

### ChatGPT-4o gets smarter

The AI now exhibits better "vibes" and better intuition for a user's needs, along with OpenAI suggesting that updates are accelerating. Given that CoPilot is based on OpenAI's models, it is likely we will see these improvements with CoPilot soon, though there has been no announcement. As these models advance, and with the Turing Threshold been passed (see [TOP STORIES #111](#)) it is extremely important that you make an effort to experiment with AI, and even the [free tier has lots of capability](#) - albeit with limitations, so there is truly no excuse to be experimenting with it. The more you experiment, the more

familiar you will feel with putting the AI to work to help you do things better or differently. Please Contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our AI experts to show you what is possible with AI in your business and even how it can help you personally!

## What's up at FTG

### 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 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!

### FT-KZN Upgrades Senate Chambers

The chambers at Mangosuthu University have been completely upgraded with state-of-the-art technology to facilitate how modern meetings and presentations are conducted. This is one of many examples of what the team in KZN is able to achieve. You can [read more about this here](#).

If you think your installation might be a bit complicated and needs integration with multiple vendors, contact your First Technology account manager, who can connect you with a team that can help.

### 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 - 6th and 7th Videos Available

FTG's Azure and security division, BUI's Video Blog, has been updated with 2 more videos.

The [6th Edition addresses improvements to Defender XDR](#), and the 7th Edition is crucial to review, as it provides an [overview of the Microsoft Entra Suite](#).

### Joint Standard 2 on Cyber Security and Resilience

BUI has published a 1-page guide for you to gauge your compliance and, if you have

concerns, to reach out to the BUI specialists for assistance. The [guide is available here](#).

## BUI Opens 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 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 2 Pvt School Holidays 05-APR-25 until 05-MAY-25

Now Playing: [Until Dawn](#)

Now Playing: [The Penguin Lessons](#)

Now Playing: [The Accountant 2](#)

Now Playing: [Jungle Beat 2: The Past](#)

02 May: [Thunderbolts](#)

02 May: [Fight or Flight](#)

02 May: [Die KwikSilwers](#)

02 May: [Riff Raff](#)

09 May: [Juliet & Romeo](#) (Trailer) [IMDB Summary here](#).

09 May: [Sabbatical](#)

09 May: [Shadow Force](#)

16 May: [The Salt Path](#)

16 May: [Final Destination: Bloodlines](#)

16 May: [Hurry up Tomorrow](#)

23 May: [Lilo & Stitch](#)

23 May: [Mission Impossible: The Final Reckoning](#)

23 May: [Die Dekonstriksie van Retta Blom](#) trailer is [here](#)

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