

TOP STORIES #95

As 2024 comes to a close, I wish you a fantastic 2025 filled with opportunities and success!

I hope you enjoyed a wonderful Christmas and have exciting plans for a spectacular New Year's celebration.

Looking ahead, 2025 promises to be a year of extraordinary technological progress, especially in AI. **If you haven't started exploring AI yet, make it your top New Year's resolution.** Experiment with how AI can enhance your productivity, creativity, and decision-making—it's time to unlock your SuperPower!

AI, now in its third year of widespread use, is becoming an indispensable tool. With [Sam Altman's prediction of Superintelligence emerging within five years](#) (or sooner, perhaps), **there's no better time to embrace and master AI's potential to elevate everything you do.**

Of course, the CES pre-show hype is now reaching a fever pitch, and [technologies related to autonomous driving](#) will most likely dominate the show (though nothing will eclipse NVIDIA).

Hardware

Seagate Launches a 32TB HDD

A hard drive based on [HAMR technology](#) has been in development for over a decade, and finally, we are seeing the first production unit. Now that this technology is reliable enough to be commercially viable, we will soon see drives with even higher capacities. Though we are all encouraged by cloud vendors to store all our data in the cloud (for very good reasons), storing data on-premise remains a viable option. You can [read more about these drives here.](#)

USB-C cables can be a fire hazard

As the world transitions from USB-2 A/B type connectors to USB-C, USB-4 & TB3/4/5, one might expect a simpler experience. However, choosing the cheapest cable isn't always safe. With Power Delivery reaching 240W, poorly made or mislabelled cables can become fire hazards.

Another complication is that not all USB cables have all pins connected. This can cause USB-2 devices, like mice and keyboards, to malfunction or only work in one orientation. Often, users mistakenly blame their notebook or Windows installation, when the real culprit is the cable. [A YouTube video highlights these issues](#), and if you support many users, investing in a cable tester is a smart move to rule out cable-related problems.

Interestingly, the USB-C Cable Implementers Forum does not approve USB-C cable extensions due to Power Delivery capabilities. [The official website is here.](#)

For a deeper dive into the standard's electrical specifications, [refer to the section starting on Page 276.](#)

Contact your First Technology account manager to connect with our hardware experts. They can help ensure you're not only refreshing your notebooks with the latest Core Ultra and Ryzen 9000X3D machines but also equipping them with correctly spec'd hubs and USB cables.

Microsoft

OneDrive - do nothing - loose your Data!

This is an important reminder that you must take action regarding users who are unlicensed but still have data in their OneDrive accounts.

A very good YouTube video explaining what is changing [has been posted here.](#)

Essentially, Microsoft is closing a loophole that allowed you to store unlicensed users' data without paying for it.

In companies, unlicensed users are those who have resigned from the company and had their licenses re-assigned to another user. However, the OneDrive data is still present, i.e., you have done nothing about it.

In addition to the video, the [T-Minus365 blog](#) goes into a lot of detail on the implications and what you can do about it.

Please contact your First Technology Account manager, who can connect you with our experts to help identify the users and then work with you on a plan for what to do with the

data after the Microsoft retention period expires.

Microsoft updates "New Outlook" again.

Microsoft has announced that it will add PST features to the new Outlook in early 2025. The capabilities will start being rolled out in "waves," with the first wave offering read-only capability. It seems Microsoft will have to work hard to improve the New Outlook so it can reach feature parity with the Classic Outlook while removing the legacy parts that are clogging up the old version. You can [read more about the new updates here](#).

If Microsoft does not take this seriously it opens the door for somebody else to create a new email client that we may choose instead. [Directions on Microsoft has also published a roadmap](#) on how this migration will play out up to Q2 2028 when the "Classic" Outlook is removed from O365 (but still available as a separate download).

This is a very risky time for Microsoft!

Please contact your First Technology Account manager, who will connect you with our messaging specialists to discuss the implications and determine what work needs to be done before starting to plan for the cutover. Please do not underestimate how big a deal this is going to be!

Use Win11 24H2 to Include December Patch updates.

Microsoft has confirmed a new issue that could cause significant irritation. If you are building a fresh install of Win11 with CD or USB media, make sure you are using the version that includes the December Patch updates. If you use October or November installs, they will not accept any further updates. [You can read more about this here](#). Microsoft is working on fixing this, but no word yet.

It is very important that you start planning your upgrade to Windows 11. You should do this with Win11 24H2, as using older builds like 23H2 will cause you to repeat the process sooner than you may like. The [lifecycle roadmap is here, and](#) the roadmap for the Windows 11 [Enterprise edition is here](#).

Please contact your First Technology account Manager to connect you with our Licensing and technical specialists to assist with in choosing the correct edition of Windows 11 to deploy based on your technology adoption roadmap AND your licensing. This is not as simple as it may appear!

Microsoft changes CoPilot Branding - Again

As of January, Microsoft will rebrand Bing Chat Enterprise to M365 CoPilot Chat and require Enterprise Data Protection. The M365 app that allows access to OneDrive and Office apps will also undergo a rebrand mid-January and will all be replaced with a new Icon.

Directions on Microsoft has published a detailed blog on all the changes that are coming (and probably even more to come), [which you can read more about here](#).

Understanding what CoPilot you need and how you pay for it (or not) can be complicated. Please contact your First Technology account manager, who will connect you with our licensing and AI specialists. They can help you figure out what you need, for whom, and whether you should pay for it.

Security

Hackers are tricking victims into scam-yourself attacks with fake tutorials.

With AI getting smarter, hackers are using it to trick users into unintentionally installing malware on their computers. These attacks are becoming very sophisticated, so it is important to ensure your users have the latest training to spot them. You can [read more about these new attacks here](#).

Please contact your First Technology account manager to start planning your 2025 training schedule - you can't relax expecting last year's training to be sufficient for what is coming in 2025.

Cloud & AI

AGI in 2025 - will it happen?

The race to achieve AGI is heating up, and there is a lot of speculation about what will happen in the next few years. An interesting way to look into the future is to ask CoPilot and ChatGPT what they think about their predictions for 2025, and they are sure

interesting as [summarised in the article here](#). Being proficient in AI will become increasingly important for your career; as you see in the article, top executives in corporations are already saying they won't hire anyone without an aptitude for AI. This is an echo of what happened when spreadsheets started to replace calculators and slide-rules.

It may be good to take a look at a [short article that was published on this very subject](#) - [make working with AI your New Year's resolution!](#)

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. These include out-of-the-box solutions as well as 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: [Mufasa: The Lion King](#) - Doing well, but [has been beaten by Sonic 3](#)

Now Playing: [Canary Black](#) (Already Streaming on Amazon - reviews not great)

Now Playing: [Sonic the Hedgehog 3](#) - the blockbuster for December!

Now Playing: [Baby Girl](#)

Now Playing: [Werewolves](#) - Already Streaming

3 January 2025: [Cellar Door](#)

3 January 2025: [Coup de Chance](#)

3 January 2025: [We live in Time](#)

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.

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