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1st June #169

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.
 - **Another 3 New vendors** Cloudflare, JamF & Netskope are added.
 - **Microsoft EoL section Updated for April 2027** - all about modernisation!
 - **DarkWeb Weekly Intelligence Report #169**- M365 is the attack vector.
 - **Microsoft Promotions** - Microsoft REALLY wants to persuade you to buy more!
 - **Application server end of Support dates**. 5 Years - disappears in a blink.
 - **HotPatching is now Free** - Free ALWAYS has a catch.
 - **Visual Studio Licensing Guide** - Clarity at last.
 - **Windows Pony gets a new trick** - maybe it will jump higher?
 - **Microsoft/NVIDIA to announce the N1X**- New era? Maybe that's ambitious.
 - **FBI Warns on Kali365** - A Phishing trick that uses your front door.
 - **Your GPT gets Phished** - beware of what you trust!
 - **Claude Opus 4.8** - Cleverer and faster!
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Microsoft Modernisation April 2026-2027

Microsoft Modernisation strategy has been updated. This addresses key EoL dates, price increases and updates up to 1 April 2027

DarkWeb Weekly Intelligence Report #168

We scan the DarkWeb continuously for Hacker signals and Ransomware attacks. Click above for the report from our live dashboard that we will publish weekly (but actually updated continuously). This is part of the DarkWeb monitoring services included with many of BUI's managed services offerings. **This report is live, and this is a "snapshot" of the top 10 events as of Sunday Afternoon.**

TOP STORIES #168

Click button above for last weeks news.

Visit FirstMarketPLace Link here for New Additions

Cloudflare, JamF & Netskope have been added for this week. See below for LinkedIn [Try out our AI](#) to see whats been added since launch.

Our LinkedIn

Movie releases

Get all the releases for the next 4 weeks in South Africa. The long awaited **Mortal Kombat 2** is now screening in May along with **Masters of the Universe and Mandalorian & Grogu also screening**

TOP STORIES ARCHIVE

Register with the link above and get access to the entire TOP STORIES Archive with an AI to help you find what you want. You can also find all the vendors added to FirstMarketPlace and get a whole lot of detail about them! It's in Beta so it could make mistakes.

Request Account Manager

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STORIES

Microsoft New Promotions

For the 1st time in a decade, Microsoft has added a new Suite known as E7, which is a Step up from E5.

This is Microsoft's big bet on winning over corporate wallets to invest in CoPilot and Azure.

Part of the Microsoft strategy to win over customers will be many offers, incentives, promotions and discounts, some of them could be quite complicated to unpack to see if you really do benefit (or not)!

This is a new section of TOP STORIES dedicated to telling about these promotional offers where almost every offer will need to be unpacked for YOUR specific situation to determine whether you could really benefit (or not), so connecting with your First Technology Account manager will be essential.

Nobody wants to hear afterwards that there was a Microsoft promotion available that you could have benefited from....

There are MANY offers in play right now, but for this week, starting this new section... here is the first one...

Considering moving SQL to Azure?

Microsoft could write you a cheque!

Microsoft has launched the Azure Frontier Offer designed to fund customers moving SQL Server databases and related data workloads to Azure.

This means that if you are planning to modernise your SQL environment, move databases into Azure, start using Microsoft Fabric, or build new AI-ready data platforms, Microsoft could fund the project by subsidising the deployment and initial running cost.

This is not just another “Microsoft has renamed something again” announcement, though of course they have wrapped it in Microsoft terminology to frighten even a licensing specialist!

We may be able to help with this Microsoft offer to cost of the move in two main ways (including decrypting the "Microsoft Speak").

Professional services funding

This can help pay for the specialist work required to plan, migrate, modernise and deploy the solution properly.

According to the offer information shared with us, this can be up to \$500,000 for qualifying projects.

Azure credits

These help offset Azure usage costs.

This is especially useful during the awkward phase where you may need to run your old environment and your new Azure environment at the same time.

Databases do not magically move themselves over a weekend, no matter how optimistic the project plan looks.

Microsoft's public “Azure Accelerate” material explains that Azure credits and partner engagement funding can help lower project costs from planning through deployment, and that Azure Accelerate for Databases includes delivery funding and Azure credits designed for AI-ready data modernisation.

The offer is aimed at genuine Azure data and platform projects.

More than half of the new first-year Azure usage needs to come from database, Microsoft Fabric, or Azure AI Foundry-related workloads.

So, this is not a random “move something small and claim a cheque” type of offer.

Azure Accelerate projects cannot simply be claimed by a customer browsing Microsoft portals.

Customers can register interest, but partner-led Azure Accelerate engagements need to be assessed, structured and nominated through Microsoft's approved partner workflows, either by a qualified Azure partner in Partner Centre or by Microsoft's account team.

Eligible partners include **Azure Expert MSPs** and partners with relevant Azure specialisations, with selected benefits also available to partners holding Azure Solutions Partner designations.

Within First Technology Group, customers have access to Microsoft Azure Expert MSP capability through our group companies, and Microsoft Solutions Partner for the Microsoft Cloud.

This places us in a VERY small, highly differentiated group of Microsoft Azure partners globally.

Contact your First Technology Group account manager so we can connect you with the right Azure specialists, check whether your project qualifies, and help structure it properly before the

opportunity disappears into the Microsoft ether.

If you are already looking at any of the following, you should pause before you sign off the project:

- SQL Server modernisation.
- Database migration to Azure.
- Microsoft Fabric adoption.
- AI-ready data platforms.
- Azure AI Foundry projects.
- Analytics modernisation.
- Dual-running old and new environments while you migrate.

This could be one of those situations where planning a few weeks earlier can make a very material difference to the cost of the project.

"Microsoft Speak"	"Human-friendly" wording
Azure Frontier Offer	Microsoft funding offer for Azure data and AI projects
SQL to Azure PayGo	Move SQL databases to Azure and pay for what you use
ACR	Expected first-year Azure usage/spend
ECIF	Microsoft funding to help pay for professional services
ACO	Azure credits to help offset Azure usage costs
Dual-run costs	The cost of running the old and new environments at the same time
Database/Fabric/Foundry workloads	Databases, analytics, Microsoft Fabric, or AI platform projects
2:1/5:1 ROI	Microsoft needs to see that the funding makes commercial sense against the expected Azure usage. For every \$2 spend on Azure, Microsoft is willing to fund up to \$1 where the first milestone is completed by 30 June 2026. Thereafter, they will invest \$2 for every \$10 spent on Azure

Microsoft Azure Accelerate Assistance

Microsoft News This Week

Application Servers End of Support dates

Microsoft has updated its Lifecycle page for Project, Exchange, SharePoint and Skype for Business Servers with the final EoS dates between December 2031-2035. If you are running

Project Server in particular, you need to start, ummm planning!

The official Microsoft pathway from Project Server is combining Planner Premium with the Power Platform to replicate the capabilities, but of course, may not be the only (or best route).

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our experts to assist in planning and migrating to a newer solution, which could be quite challenging and take a lot of planning.

Application Server Lifecycle Policy

HotPatching for Windows Server 2025 now free!

Microsoft has made a very useful change to Windows Server 2025 Hotpatching for Azure Arc-enabled servers. Until now, the feature was free if your server was running natively in Azure, but Azure Arc-enabled servers sitting on-premises or in other clouds were charged at \$1.50 per core per month. That charge has now been removed for Windows Server 2025 Hotpatching enabled through Azure Arc, which makes the feature a lot easier to recommend without first reaching for the calculator.

If you are planning Windows Server 2025 upgrades, this is a very good reason to include Azure Arc in the conversation.

Not because Microsoft needs another portal for us to stare at, but because fewer reboots and no additional Hotpatch charge is a rare combination of useful and cheaper.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our specialists to look at deploying Windows Server 2025 and taking advantage of the free hotpatching while understanding the implications of implementing Azure Arc.

Azure Arc Hotpatching now Free

Visual Studio Licensing Guide Gets a Useful Clean-up

Microsoft has updated the Visual Studio Licensing Guide, and this one matters if you use the Microsoft 365 E5 developer subscription.

The guide now confirms that this benefit is for development and testing only, not production use.

That sounds obvious, but the previous wording caused confusion, and in licensing, confusion usually ends with somebody paying later.

If you are using Microsoft 365 E5 developer subscriptions for anything that smells like production, now is a very good time to check it.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to get one of our licensing specialists to make sure your dev, test and production environments are properly separated.

Visual Studio Licensing terms

Windows Pony Learns a New Trick

Microsoft has released KB5089573, a preview update for Windows 11 24H2 and 25H2, and the interesting bit is not another shiny button. It is performance.

Another really important feature is the removal of the "one app at a time" camera lock - more than one app can now use the same camera at a time.

The update introduces a Low Latency Profile that gives the CPU a short kick when Windows needs to feel responsive, such as opening the Start menu, Search, Action Centre, or launching apps.

In other words, the old Windows Pony has been taught a new trick.

This is not magic, and it does not turn tired hardware into a racehorse, but it should make Windows feel less sluggish, especially on lower-end PCs where small delays are noticeable. There are also useful extras, including shared Bluetooth audio, better NPU visibility in Task Manager, multi-app camera support, and improvements to Windows Hello, Search, USB4 and File Explorer.

Windows performance is now being improved through software, but hardware still matters. If your Windows 11 estate is already struggling, this helps, but it is not a replacement for proper endpoint planning, clean images, sensible RAM choices, and disciplined patch testing.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our endpoint and Microsoft specialists to help plan your Windows 11 update, hardware refresh, and performance strategy properly.

Windows 11 finally gets performance enhancements

Major NVIDIA/Microsoft announcement at Computex

By the time you read this, the Keynote would have already happened - it is due to start at 05H00 on Monday morning - so we will know.....

It has leaked that this is probably exactly what WILL be announced.

You can [read here](#).

Microsoft and NVIDIA have both posted the same teaser, "A new era of PC", with coordinates pointing to Taipei Music Center.

Nobody has officially confirmed what is being announced yet, but the bets are that it is the long-rumoured NVIDIA N1 and N1X Windows on Arm chip platform.

I true, this could be a very big deal.

Windows on Arm has been largely Qualcomm's playground up to now. NVIDIA entering the market with an Arm CPU and proper RTX-class graphics would change the conversation very quickly, especially for AI PCs, developers, mobile workstations and high-performance notebooks.

It could also mean that the next Surface devices become a lot more interesting than another slightly thinner laptop with a better webcam.

The message is simple, don't rush your next hardware roadmap if this announcement lands properly.

AI PCs are moving fast, and the choice of processor, NPU, GPU, RAM and battery life is becoming a strategic decision, not just a procurement checkbox.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager before refreshing your notebook estate, especially if your next fleet needs to last three to five years in the AI era.

Microsoft & NVIDIA announce the N1X new era CPU

Security



Kali365, The Phish That Uses the Real Microsoft Door

The FBI is warning about Kali365, a phishing-as-a-service kit aimed at Microsoft 365 users.

This one is nasty because the user is not sent to some laughably fake Microsoft login page with spelling

mistakes and a logo from 2007.

They are sent to a real Microsoft device sign-in page.

The email gives them a code, they enter the code, they complete what looks like a legitimate Microsoft sign-in process, and they may then give the attacker access to their Microsoft 365 account.

- No password stolen.
- MFA still happened.
- And the bad guy still gets in.

That is the uncomfortable part.

Kali365 is designed to steal OAuth access and refresh tokens, which can allow access to Outlook, Teams, OneDrive and other Microsoft 365 services without the attacker needing the user's password again.

So yes, MFA is still essential, but no, it is not a magic force shield.

This is another reminder that the human being remains the weakest link, but not always because they are careless. Sometimes the system asks them to do something that looks completely legitimate, on a legitimate Microsoft page, using language they do not fully understand. Technical controls matter. Device code flow should be reviewed, restricted where possible, and monitored properly. Suspicious devices, strange locations, abnormal sessions and unexpected access to mail and files must be investigated quickly.

But the training also has to move on.

Teaching users to look for bad spelling and dodgy links is not enough anymore.

They need to understand unexpected sign-in codes, consent prompts, device approvals, OAuth permissions and why “just enter this code” can be the start of a breach.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our security and training specialists to review your Microsoft 365 defences and update your user training before the next polite-looking Microsoft prompt does the damage.

FBI Says be careful of Kali365

Attackers Turn Web Pages Into ChatGPT Phishing Payloads

Researchers have demonstrated a new attack called ChatGPhish, where a normal web page can hide instructions that influence what ChatGPT shows when a user asks it to summarise the page.

The nasty bit is not that AI can be tricked. We knew that already, it is that everything can still look normal.

The user asks for a summary, gets a useful-looking answer, and hidden inside that trusted AI response could be attacker-controlled links, images, QR codes, or content designed to push the user somewhere dangerous.

In other words, the human being is still the weakest link, but now the phishing lure can arrive dressed as helpful AI output.

Very neat. Very dangerous.

This is why corporates cannot allow random AI tools, browser plug-ins, personal accounts, and unmanaged workflows to become part of business processes just because “it saves time”.

AI must be deployed properly, with identity control, data protection, logging, audit, security policy, user training, and clear governance.

Microsoft is not immune to this problem, nobody is. But for corporates, Microsoft is better positioned because Copilot sits inside an enterprise control plane built around Entra, Purview, Defender, sensitivity labels, audit, Data Loss Prevention, and Copilot governance.

That is why AI must remain a co-pilot, not an autopilot with the keys to the building.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our security and AI specialists to review how AI is being used in your business, before users build their own shadow-AI circus and instead pro-actively build a secure deployment roadmap.

ChatGPT prompt injection technique

Cloud & AI



Claude Opus 4.8 gets smarter, cheaper to steer, and harder to trick

Anthropic has released Claude Opus 4.8, and this is not just another “slightly better chatbot” announcement.

The useful bit is that Claude now gives users more control over how much effort it puts into a task. In other words, quick answer when you need quick, deeper thinking when you need the AI to stop guessing and actually work the problem.

Claude Code also gets dynamic workflows,

allowing it to break large development tasks into parallel pieces, check the work, and report back.

Agentic AI is becoming more practical, not just more impressive in a demo.

The bigger point for business users is this, do not think of Claude as something happening outside the Microsoft world.

Microsoft has already added Anthropic models into Microsoft 365 Copilot, starting with Researcher and Copilot Studio. That means Claude is becoming part of the broader Copilot story, not just a competitor sitting on the other side of the fence.

As always, the licence, model choice, governance and data handling details matter. Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our Cloud & AI

specialists before assuming any of this is automatically included, enabled, or safe to use in your environment.

Anthropic Releases Claude Opus 4.8

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