

TOP STORIES #119

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

It has now been 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 bottom of this email. The schedule has been updated to provide you with releases four weeks in advance. It is accurate!

There are some really interesting announcements in the "What's up at FTG" section this week, with some new events and a **major bombshell** from our CyberSecurity division - go take a look below....

Last week's [TOP STORIES #118 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

InfoComm - **the coolest Pro AV gathering has wrapped**. You can [find the best of the show summarised here](#). We will unpack some of the amazing technologies announced in future TOP STORIES.

Apple WWDC wrapped last week, and there were many announcements, starting with a summary of the [top 7 AI announcements](#). and [15 key points from the keynote](#).

What is different is the [Haptic Tailer for F1](#) - only to be experienced on iPhones.

AWS Summit is up next in New York

This is a [major event for AWS](#) on 16 July to showcase to customers and developers what is on the roadmap for AWS.

Black Hat USA 2025

This is a [major security conference for 2-7 August](#) that is a "Must Attend" for everybody who is serious about security. Of course, FTG will have people attending, and there will surely be some interesting feedback.

Account Manager?

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

Don't Forget

This is a list of ALL Microsoft services and products that are "expired" for whatever reason for the next year.

The documents you can download are very detailed, spanning 24 pages, so I recommend searching for what you need in them to stay updated.

The material is presented in a way for you to copy the relevant pieces and send them to teams focused on different aspects of Microsoft technologies.

The April document has been updated to include new additions for May and is [now available for](#)

download.

The complete, detailed guide for May 2025 to May 2026 can be downloaded [here](#)

The most critical update to note is that Microsoft has announced that [security updates for Microsoft 365 Apps \(e.g., Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook\) running on Windows 10 will continue for three years after the Windows 10 end-of-support date.](#)

This means Microsoft 365 Apps **on Windows 10** will receive security updates until October 10, 2028. Now, how do you do that while not supporting the host operating system?

Important Caveats

- This extension applies to security updates for M365 Apps only. The Windows 10 OS itself still reaches end of support on October 14, 2025 (unless ESUs are purchased for the OS).
- If an issue with M365 Apps occurs only on Windows 10 (and not on Windows 11), Microsoft support will advise moving to Windows 11. Troubleshooting assistance may be limited if unable to move to Windows 11.
- Bug reports or feature requests for M365 Apps on Windows 10 will not be accepted after October 2025.

This significantly impacts planning for organisations, offering more flexibility for the M365 Apps component while still necessitating a Windows 11 migration strategy for the underlying OS. More on this below.

Hardware

PCIe 7 spec finalised, PCIe 8 coming, PCIe 6 Delayed

PCIe is the interconnect backbone of all computing systems today (NVIDIA has its own proprietary, more advanced NVLink standard, but it is not a replacement for PCIe). Now that the dust has settled from Computex, we have a clearer view of when we can expect to see PCIe 6 in commercial hardware, [which appears to be 2030](#). I think that will change - 5 years is a very long time, but that's the prevailing view for now.

In data centres, the picture is different, and we will see faster adoption of these higher transfer rates, where we may see 0.5TB/s data transfer rates by the early 2030s and 1TB/s rates not long after.

See the [latest roadmap from PCI-SIG here](#).

This means that PCIe 5 will be with us for quite a while, and we will likely see a rapid transition from PCIe 4 to 5 in 2026. For most applications, you should not be too concerned about whether you are buying PCIe 4 or 5 in your hardware, either will be more than fast enough for most requirements.

However, for your RFI's, focus on transfer rate requirements rather than the version of PCIe, as many tricks will be played with the specification!

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our hardware specialists, ensuring you specify the PCIe standard correctly.

Microsoft

GitHub CoPilot Pro+ announced

There is a new version for individuals. This Pro+ edition provides the features in Pro but also with access to all models (including Claude Opus 4, o3, and GPT-4.5), 1,500 premium requests per month, and priority access to previews, including the in-preview Coding Agent.

You can [find the announcement from Microsoft here](#).

Please contact your First Technology account manager for details on how to order this along with Pricing.

New! CoPilot Studio Licensing Guide

There's now a dedicated Copilot Studio Licensing Guide, fresh off the press in June 2025.

Microsoft has extracted all Copilot Studio details from the Power Platform Licensing Guide and published them in a standalone document.

The new guide adds key sections on Orchestration Mode, Agent Flow Actions, the Paid Public Preview of Copilot Studio Agents, and practical tips on forecasting your agent's message volume. There is also a new Power Platform Licensing guide for June as well.

You can find [ALL the licensing guides to download here](#).

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our Licensing specialists to understand the details of this document and how you could benefit from some of the technologies you may have missed.

M365 Plan Comparison documents updated June 2025

Microsoft has updated the plan Comparison document for June to include [Microsoft Security Exposure Management](#) and other additions. You can [download the latest document here](#). Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our specialists to understand how you could benefit from some of these changes and additions to the suites you may already be licensed for.

Free SQL in Azure

Microsoft has expanded their free SQL perks in Azure. The original offer from February 2025 gave you up to 10 free General Purpose Azure SQL Databases per subscription, with monthly allowances of 100,000 vCore seconds, 32 GB of data, and 32 GB of backup – for the lifetime of the subscription. Now, as of May 2025, they've added a new offer: you can spin up one Azure SQL Managed Instance per subscription with 720 vCore hours and 64 GB of storage each month, but only for 12 months.

You can find the free SQL Database offer [from Microsoft here](#), and the [SQL Managed instance offer announcement here](#).

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our Azure and SQL experts to see how you can best take advantage of these free offers from Microsoft.

Security

Unsubscribe at your peril!

If you receive a new spam email with an "unsubscribe here" option, be VERY careful, as clicking this button takes you onto the internet, where something nasty can be lurking inside that unsubscribe page. There are other, safer ways of unsubscribing, [which can be read about here](#).

You can never allow yourself to fall behind on ensuring that your staff are trained on looking out for the latest tricks to catch them (and you) out into clicking on links that could end badly. Please contact your First Technology account manager to ensure that your training schedule for your staff is updated

Outlook is vulnerable and no patch (yet)

A major vulnerability currently exists in most versions of Outlook, and though designated by Microsoft as "Important", **this is more serious** because once an attacker has access to a machine that is gained by innumerable methods, the attacker can move laterally under the trusted process space of Outlook.exe to do anything they like. You can [read more about this here](#).

To mitigate this, ensure you have patched CVE-2025-47176, released by Microsoft on June 10. The additional method is to [search for the path traversal string in the logs](#).

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our security specialists to assist you in ensuring that you have sufficient countermeasures in place to deal with this serious vulnerability.

That CV is Compromised!

There is a new nasty sneaky attack that takes advantage of the trust inherent in recruitment processes that transforms a routine job application into a really nasty malware delivery mechanism. A cybercrime group, FIN6, has developed an elaborate scheme to manipulate a recruiter into being the entry vector for a malware deployment.

You can [read more about this nasty attack here](#).

This is yet again another example of hackers psychologically manipulating people into doing something that can have dire consequences for the company.

Unfortunately, there is more than one way to trick recruiters, which you [can also read about here](#).

Please contact your First Technology account manager to ensure that you are up to date on training your users to recognise these increasingly manipulative attacks.

Cloud & AI

ChatGPT is more powerful than any human who has ever lived

At least that is what Sam Altman thinks. I think we are in for an exciting five years as we move towards the 2030 milestone. Refer back to the Tale of 32 Otters in [TOP STORIES #118](#) to give you more context as to what the world could look like by the time we reach 2030 (at least with

respect to AI).

I believe his comments serve as a reminder that we need to experiment with AI in every possible way in our daily lives, to explore how it can support and enhance our work. We should not view it as something that will replace us, **but rather as a tool that will enhance our abilities** (see the bit about Job Losses), and to start NOW so as not to be left behind. You can **read more about Sam thinks here**. Please contact your first technology account manager to connect you with our AI specialists to help you start the journey of seeing how AI can make a difference in your company, starting with making sure your environment is secure and the data that AI gets access to is properly categorised (as applicable in your business).

What's up at FTG

First Digital Makes AI History

First Digital just became the first SA-headquartered company to earn Microsoft's Advanced Specialisation for Building AI Apps on Azure — **and nailed the audit**.

This confirms what we already knew: our AI isn't hype. It works. And now Microsoft agrees!

Please contact your First Technology account manager to explore what we can do for you. The AI you use to query the TOP STORIES archive(TSAI) is one of those apps!!

BUI Just Dropped a Bombshell: South Africa's First Cyber Warranty

While other companies are saying you should have this, **BUI has done it!**

BUI, FTG's Cloud and Security division, has become the first Microsoft Cloud Solutions Partner in South Africa to launch a Cyber Security Warranty.

That's right — they're so confident in their security operations, they're backing it with a financial warranty.

Think of it as putting your money where your Security is. If you suffer a cybersecurity incident, they will assist your organisation up to the value of R1,000,000.00.

It's the kind of assistance customers didn't even know they needed — until now.

You can read more about the announcement on ITWeb here.

Please contact your First Technology Group Account manager to connect you with the BUI team to discuss how you can take advantage of this new level of protection.

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!

Free Microsoft Support Ends

Microsoft has ended free technical support for Azure.

The only free support you now get is for billing and subscription issues.

Microsoft now charges \$650 per support incident - NB! Not a typo!!

BUI, FTG's Cloud and Security division has introduced a new support model that mitigates some of this impact - you can **read more and sign up for more information here**.

Please contact your First Technology account manager to discuss your support requirements, as First Technology group can provide **GLOBAL SUPPORT 24/7/365** for a wide range of vendors, **including Microsoft**.

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.

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 (Entra Suite Overview) 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](#).

Movies

How to Train Your Dragon is the big movie for this weekNext week is going to be Animation and lovers of horror - 28 Years is looking to be a good movie (if you like that kind of stuff)

Now Playing: [Materialists](#)

Now Playing: [How to Train your Dragon](#)

Now Playing: [Dangerous Animals](#)

20 June: [Elio](#)

20 June: [28 Years Later](#)

20 June: [Bride Hard](#)

27 June: [Sharp Corner](#)

27 June: [M3GAN 2.0](#)

27 June: [F1](#)

27 June: [A Jungle Beat 2: The Past](#) (Trailer on [YouTube is here](#))

04 July: [Jurassic World: Rebirth](#)

11 July: [SMURFS](#)

11: July: [Superman Legacy](#)

First Technology | Midrand | Johannesburg, GAUTENG 2191 ZA

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email & social marketing for free!