

TOP STORIES #88

This was a packed week, with a lot of exciting things from Apple, Drama from Microsoft and security becoming an increasingly bigger problem in our lives. [There is also an interesting story from First Digital doing Native Marketing using AI.](#)

You can find Last Week's [TOP STORIES #87 here](#).

Colleagues can join the newsletter by [clicking here](#).

Did you Know?

Did you know we have completed FOUR "Did you Know" stories already? I have already got four more lined up, but before we start with the next four stories, let's update you on the stories so far.....

No.1 - [TOP STORIES #80](#) - First Digital, Experts in IoT solutions, AI and a lot more In addition, FD has been working with MAHLER to prevent you from getting a leaky radiator; they are also working with [OpenAI on Azure to show how AI can be used to find information about services using AI to do some fascinating work helping customers position their products as preferred choices within a natural language response.](#)

No. 2 - [TOP STORIES #82](#) - First Tech. National, the most certified SAM partner in SA! The certifications keep on coming - they now have 2 more, totalling 74. Block64 is getting more sophisticated, and the [SAM team has just completed an Azure cost optimisation assessment](#) and is bringing back a more advanced SQL and Windows Server on-premise compliance assessment process.

No. 3 - [TOP STORIES #84](#) - First Impact, Advanced AI Content Creation and Delivery They have just completed a CoPilot awareness campaign using avatars to an audience of over 2000 people with resounding success [leading to some real use cases for AI to help staff improve service delivery.](#)

No. 4 - [TOP STORIES #86](#) - FirstNet is one of SA's oldest ISPs and security specialists They have the highest number of Fortinet, Mimcast and Sendmarc engineers permanently employed in the country, and now they have added [Netskope, the leader in the Gartner Magic Quadrant and in the Forrester Wave for the Security Service Edge platform.](#)

Hardware

Don't Sit/Stand - MOVE!

I have been thinking of "upgrading" to a sit/stand desk, only to see [this article telling me that it will do nothing for my health](#) and may [even be harmful!](#)

That made me ask GPT to do some more research for me, and yes, it appears to be true - standing only burns slightly more calories than sitting, but it may [improve your mood.](#)

What will improve your health is moving around more, and you do not need to change your desk for that. You are better off investing in a more comfortable chair.

So I guess a fancy sit/stand desk is off the er... table!

Apple M4 takes the performance Crown.

Apple has taken the crown as the leader of the [most efficient and high-performance computers](#). It is such a leap in performance that it may take AMD, Intel, and Qualcomm more than a year to catch up (and then Apple will pull ahead again). So, if you have a preference for MAC's, now is the time to make an investment!

With such a lead, I also do not see Apple reducing pricing anytime soon; in fact, it may [update its entire lineup with M4 CPUs.](#)

This is in stark contrast with what is happening to Intel - [which is not good at all.](#)

Microsoft

New features and performance Boost for System Centre and Windows Server 2025

Microsoft [shared more details about the improvements in System Centre and Windows Server 2025](#), though Windows Server was released a bit overenthusiastically

by Microsoft - [automatically installing on Windows Server 2022 installations](#) as an update!

System Centre 2025 Licensing Datasheet

Microsoft has published a handy licensing datasheet, which you can [download here](#). Please contact your First Technology licensing specialist, who will take you through this document and make sure your licensing aligns with your premise/cloud roadmap.

D365 Licensing Guide updated

Microsoft has [updated the licensing guide for November](#) to include Customer Voice as a standalone product (Page 17)

Next, there are updates to the Business Performance Management table on page 22 to clarify rights for Operations-Activity and Team Members licensed users.

Lastly, amendments for [Dynamics 365 Contact Center Voice specify that Intelligent Voicebot minutes require a bot created with Copilot Studio, and any generative AI features need separate Copilot Studio capacity licensing.](#)

M365 Plan comparison Tables updated

Microsoft has updated the plans by adding some frontline working licenses to match the product terms. You can [download the PDF here](#).

The only thing that is constant is change, so it is very important that you [contact your First Technology Licensing specialist to review your entitlements and the options available to you when looking at renewing your agreement, as you have a variety of contracts to choose from over and above your product choices.](#)

Why \$30 Windows 10 ESU for Consumers is bad for companies

Directions on Microsoft has [published a warning about Microsoft's \\$30 Extended Security Update \(ESU\) offer](#), suggesting it's a risky move.

The publication suggests most people will likely skip paying for an extra year of updates, opting instead to stick with their old devices with no updates, which still work "just fine".

This decision could leave a massive number of computers vulnerable to attacks after October 2025.

With these unprotected systems on home networks where employees connect their work devices, the security risks multiply. Directions on Microsoft is of the opinion that Microsoft should provide these updates free for home users and invest in better incentives to drive upgrades to Windows 11.

This is not a problem yet, but by the end of 2025 will probably start developing into a major security issue. [It is very important that we start planning for this disaster \(unless Microsoft does something smarter\), so please contact your First Technology account manager to connect with our leading Security experts to work on a plan to contain this developing drama.](#)

Security

Phishing attacks surge with the help of AI

Attacks are becoming more sophisticated and harder to detect. There has been a 52% increase in attacks that have successfully bypassed secure email gateways (SEGs). A notable increase is with attacks that impersonate well-known brands to trick you into clicking on fake promotions. You can read more about [this surge in attacks here](#).

Even your DocuSign-ed bill may be dodgy - [read more here](#).

These attacks give attackers the necessary information to simply log in, there is [actually no hacking happening at all!](#)

[It is more important than ever to ensure that you contact your First Tech account manager to arrange for training of your users in partnership with KnowBE4 to be ever more alert for increasingly sophisticated and devious attacks.](#)

Rare programming language used to evade detection

On top of being tricked, malware is evolving, where the bad guys are writing malware using a programming language that is slipping by most detection systems. It is critical to make sure that your system is being [continuously updated to ensure that these new attacks are detected in time.](#)

[This is a good reminder to contact your First Technology account manager to connect you](#)

with our security experts (and we have the best in the country) to recheck your security posture and close any gaps that may be found. **There are always gaps.**

Cloud & AI

Microsoft really wants you to buy AI themes for "New Outlook"

To be clear, this is for the New Outlook, which nobody likes much. So, you need a CoPilot Pro license to get these themes, which [you can read more about here](#). But it gets more interesting, which you can read below.

CoPilot comes to M365 whether you like it or not

At the moment, this is limited to 6 countries (excluding SA), but it is likely that it will be rolled out to the rest of the world. Microsoft is now including CoPilot in M365 family and Personal plans, along with a big (20%) price increase and a bunch of restrictions that are limited to the subscription owner **and not the family members**.

OfficeWatch has published a very good summary of what Microsoft has launched - [you can read it here](#) (go to the bottom and read the "quick thoughts" - we hope Microsoft will not roll it out in its current form to the rest of the world, including SA - it's a trial, right?).

If you have family in Australia, you will [not be happy to read about their special price increases](#).

Where is this heading?

This is speculation, but if Microsoft can remove Teams (triggered by an EU ruling) to charge for it separately for companies (leading to an overall price increase), Microsoft can just as easily include CoPilot in some flavour for companies with a mandatory price increase (because of added value), exactly like it is testing right now.

Let's see where this goes.....

Using AI to refine your native marketing skills

Generative AI is reshaping how consumers find products, making it possible to influence buying decisions in subtle yet effective ways. **The First Digital AI team is already leveraging this capability to benefit our clients. Here's how:**

Imagine a search tool recommending your client's product over competitors simply because it's optimised with AI-driven preferences. Our recent work with an LED client fine-tuned a bot to promote their "FirstBulb" as the top choice over competing bulbs — embedding product preference directly into natural language responses.

Now, each search subtly endorses the "FirstBulb", creating a seamless, influential presence that feels like genuine advice.

Please contact your First Technology account manager to set up a session with First Digital to show you how this Subtle type of Native marketing can be employed by your company to market it's products.

If [Hostetters](#) could [do this in 1901](#) and still be around today, they must have done something right!

AI is so good at doing this that you have no hope of detecting whether the content was AI-generated.

OpenAI [gave up on their own project](#) to detect AI content. They say they will be back with a better tool, but detecting AI content runs counter to the whole AI agenda anyway, so let's see for how long any detection tool remains effective!

What's up at FTG

CoPilot Security Demo

BUI, FTG's security division, can present CoPilot for Security information-sharing sessions, workshops and demos.

In light of the CoPilot story above, it is essential to contact your First Tech Group account manager to make arrangements to attend a session, or you can [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.](#)
This video introduces you to KC7 - a Cyberdetective game!:

Movies

Red One is getting a favourable reception and is still to be released in the USA. Worth going to see with the Kids (and your Inner Kid).

Now Playing: [Overlord: Sacred Kingdom](#)

Now Playing: [Magpie](#)

Now Playing: [Red One](#)

15 November: [Gladiator 2](#) - looks to be quite an epic

15 November: [Hydan](#)

First Technology | Midrand | Johannesburg, 2191 ZA

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