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23rd March #159

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** PowerSyncPro, Pinecone and PortSwigger are added.
 - **Microsoft EoL section Updated for January 2027**
 - **DarkWeb Weekly Intelligence Report #2** - Updated Weekly
 - **Microsoft's view of your renewal** - Grow! !Grow Grow!
 - **Another Utility gets retired**- Time to find alternatives
 - **Azure Access Control Services Retire** - getting help could be a good idea!
 - **Windows Server 2025 Licensing Guide** - All in one place as a link
 - **Office Servers FAQ's updated** - all the details in one place
 - **Windows 11 Goes back to basics** - Finally, our OS gets stability and speed
 - **Your AI girlfriend could be REALLY dangerous** - I don't know who is listening!
 - **Impersonation attacks** - Yes, you CAN be fooled!
 - **New Video on Security updates from Microsoft** - for the Security Geeks!
 - **NVIDIA puts a Supercomputer on your desk** - Incredible how far we have come
-

Microsoft End of Life to January 2027

Summary of what to know up to January 2027.

Click above for the highlights. The detailed PDF to download is at the bottom.

P.S. we DID warn you about EWS retirement.....

DarkWeb Weekly Intelligence Report #159

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 at 6:00pm Sunday.

TOP STORIES #158

Click button above for last weeks news.

Visit FirstMarketPLace Link here for New Additions

PowerSyncPro, Pinecone and PortSwigger have been added for this week. See below for LinkedIn [Try out our AI](#) to see whats been added since launch.

Movie releases

Get all the releases for the next 4 weeks in South Africa. **"Hoppers"** is now screening. Next big movie for 2026 is **"Hail Mary" is now playing, and a new one: The Magic Faraway Tree looks like it will be good too.**

Upcoming Shows

Review what happened at CES and see links for NAMM 2026 ISE has wrapped, it was big, and even Microsoft was there with Teams!

Our LinkedIn

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Microsoft News This Week

Your Microsoft Agreement Renewal: The Microsoft view

Mary Jo Foley of Directions on Microsoft has published a very important article to understand how Microsoft now views you, the client, for growth with the introduction of the E7 SKU. Though the Microsoft Lens still looks at the number of users and growth, the licensing tier has now changed, as now E7 is at the front of the adoption curve. All this means that getting a "good deal" is increasingly a combination of YOUR roadmap positioned against Microsoft's and your ability to see value in the technologies and the

preparedness to adopt them.

The negotiation landscape is getting increasingly complex, where you need to understand what Microsoft technologies do, how they integrate, and how AI overlays everything and then with skilled advisors take that back to the negotiating table.

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our experts, who can help you understand your adoption roadmap based on what you have deployed and discuss your future deployment plans. From there, we can assist in determining the resources you need, along with technical support, to enable you to engage with Microsoft from a position of strength.

Microsoft E7 Frontier Suite

M365E7 a New Milestone

Directions: The Microsoft Lens Matters

Microsoft is retiring an important Office utility this year

If you are still using Access, particularly the database compare utility, you need to prepare for its retirement by June 2026. Microsoft says the tool is being removed because the ecosystem the utility depends on is no longer available, and is recommending alternatives

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our experts in First Digital to help with working out the best replacement for this utility. It may be part of an important process that has been ticking away for years, so it is important to see if it is in use before you get taken by surprise.

Access utility being retired

Microsoft announcement and alternatives

Azure Access Control Services for SharePoint Online Retired Soon

This is a BIG DEAL!!!

This is a non-negotiable risk for organisations with legacy SharePoint integrations, as **any solutions still dependent on ACS will cease to function immediately** with no grace period or extension after April 2nd 2026. The impact may include the sudden failure of business-critical integrations, background processes, and custom functionality embedded in daily operations, creating material operational risk.

When ACS is switched off, these solutions may simply stop working overnight.

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our First Digital experts in SharePoint who can help mitigate this issue ASAP. This affects MANY 3rd party applications and even those running Nintex and K2, so please contact your account manager to connect you with our experts to be sure you are OK.

Azure ACS retirement in M365 announcement

Windows Server 2025 Licensing Guide

Microsoft is moving away from publishing its guides as PDF's and like with Windows Server 2025, you can find it now as a Web link which you can click on below.

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our Server Architects to ensure you are getting the correct guidance in terms of what editions to buy and deploy for the most efficient licensing.

Microsoft Office Servers FAQ's updated

Microsoft has updated it's FAQ's on the Licensing Resources and Documents web site.

Note that Microsoft is not publishing PDF's anymore.

It can be a good Idea to take a "snapshot" of the pages as now Microsoft can update them at any time. Note that Guides and FAQ's do NOT override the product terms, and can contain errors, so always to take these documents as GUIDES!

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our licensing specialists for clarification on applying these often confusing licensing rules to your specific situation.

Office Servers Licensing FAQ's

Microsoft to focus on what matters with Windows 11

Directions on Microsoft has published an update about Microsoft changing its priorities with Windows 11. Microsoft will go back to focusing on improving the operating system that gets the Job done, stays our of your way and is more reliable and will work better in 8 Gig of RAM. HOWEVER, I STILL maintain that your machines should have a minimum of 32 Gig, but for machines that you already have and cannot upgrade, this is still good news.

If you are still planning your upgrade to Windows 11, or even in the midst of this, it is important to include in your planning this welcome change in Microsoft strategy. Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our experts to review your deployment and upgrade plans.

Directions: Windows 11 gets a break from AI

Security



Your AI Girlfriend could betray you more than any real one!

There are already over 150 million users with AI girlfriends that they confide in with secrets that dare not ever be shared with their real girlfriends/boyfriends or wives. These secrets could destroy a marriage, a career, or both if they ever "got out". What if a hacker can access your secrets and then use them to extort

you?

To what extent would you go to keep them secret? The possibilities are terrifying!

PLEASE contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our training specialists to help ensure your staff are educated about the risks of having an AI companion you confide in, and how to ensure you are not at risk. Obviously, it is best not to have one at all, but

you do not know what people's individual situations are like, and maybe an AI companion is important.

Your AI Girlfriend is a Privacy and Extortion Time bomb

Protecting your business from Impersonation attacks

When you get attacked like this, it is easy to blame the victim for not realising the engagement was fake. These attackers manipulate the person into dropping their guard by reacting with a surge of urgency and emotion. Your instincts to protect you are effectively side-stepped. These cases are going to become more frequent and sophisticated, increasing the need for specialised training to guard against falling victim, which should include how to verify instructions, challenge them, and expose people to simulations of these attacks so they can experience the process first-hand.

ITWeb has published an excellent article by Tony Christadoulou discussing this issue and what to do about it.

PLEASE contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our training specialists to help ensure everybody is kept up to date to on how handle these impersonation attacks. Users need to be educated on how to react in an "emergency".

Protecting Against impersonation attacks

New Video on Microsoft's latest Security updates

BUI, First Technology groups Microsoft Services, Cloud and Security division has released a new video addressing the latest developments from Microsoft dealing specifically with:

- Defender Supporting Entra Agent ID's
- AI-Powered incident prioritisation
- Quick Policies in Insider Risk Management

Please contact your First Technology Group Account manager to connect you with our security specialists so you can understand and take advantage of these updates from Microsoft.

New Microsoft Security Features Updates

Cloud & AI

A supercomputer on every desk

NVIDIA has announced a supercomputer powerful enough to run models with up to a trillion parameters without relying on the cloud! It allows developers and enterprises to run datacentre-class models entirely securely on-site, without needing to do so in the cloud. The final product only needs to be committed to the cloud for scalability. The scale is astonishing.... in 2018, this compute of 20 Petaflops would have required massive power, the space of a basketball court, and millions upon millions of dollars. Now, it sits on your desk, powered from a wall socket!

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our AI specilists to

help see where you can start applying with Agents in your business. Even though you may feel your business is not ready, it is critical to start experimenting with AI so you are not left behind - especially with what agents could do....



NVIDIA Desktop Supercomputer

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