



# .top\_stories

//barry\_neethling

## 5th January #148

### Happy New Year!

As we step into 2026, trust in digital content, systems, and supply chains will be tested globally. Hardware scarcity and economic pressures mean technology teams must do more with less. Geopolitical instability has become a very real factor in IT planning, underscoring that creative adaptation and resilience will define success.

In the face of these challenges, working with First Technology Group is a strategic advantage. Our federated model and deep redundancy across divisions ensure robust support with no single point of failure.

With certified expertise and an unmatched breadth of skills across our teams, we bring the creativity and agility needed to help you thrive in 2026.

**On behalf of everyone at First Technology Group, we wish you a successful and resilient 2026. We enter the new year with quiet confidence and stand ready to support you every step of the way.**

---

### 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.
- **CES 2026 Show guide** New updates 1 Day before the show starts.

- **2026 is going to get expensive! DRAM prices triple! Please Read!**
- **Microsoft EoL section** published to see what's EoL'ng up to December 2026
- **3 New vendors Scytale, DataDog and Fortinet** added to FirstMarketplace
- **Did You Know guide** for the best stories since September
- **2026: The Year our Trust is challenged - Zero Trust - Always!**
- **Windows and Office phone activation** support ended.
- **Android Malware surges** - You REALLY need to be careful!
- **Disable SMS fallback for iMessage.** Having an iPhone does make you safe!
- **Avoiding Online Shopping Scams.** Please share with your relatives.
- **Noiseless cooling for laptops** - New Technology shown at CES 2026
- **Allergic to certain Foods?** You MUST read this!

## News for Next Week - CES 2026 - The Show, the Hangover

Next week will be a big issue because we will be unpacking all the relevant announcements from CES, and try to make sense of how we will be affected.

### Upcoming Shows

Click for a summary of **AWS re:Invent** which ended on 5 December.  
**A new update on CES 2026 has been added for this week.**

### DRAM Price Increase

**DRAM prices have already tripled**, Dell & Lenovo announced price increases  
 Read this paper on what to do as 32Gig is the new minimum!

### TOP STORIES #147

Click button above for last weeks news.

### Visit FirstMarketPLace

**Scytale (featured in Did you Know), Datadog and Fortinet** have been added for this week.  
 There is now a LinkedIn Page for you to follow as well.

### Visit our LinkedIn

### Movie releases

Get all the releases for the next 4 weeks in South Africa.  
**AVATAR: Fire and Ash is a hit of course, but will James Cameroon lead the next production?**  
 Coming up:  
**28 years Later: The Bone Temple**  
 Next big movie for 2026 is **Mercy.**

### Microsoft EoL

**Summary of what to know up to December 2026.**  
 Detailed document available for download



## Did you know?

Here is a summary of some the best achievements for FTG Since September and there ARE some very interesting stories!

If you click on the number, you will be taken to the article.

- [#132](#) — **Universal Support** - 24/7/365 + Sev A
- [#134](#) — Scytale Automates Compliance
- [#136](#) — **See.Tech** Cyber Risk and monitoring
- [#139](#) — Galdon & Techsonic
- [#140](#) — M365 Backups - No.1 in Africa
- [#142](#) — FD Global Partner of the Year Finalist
- [#144](#) – FTG took CoCT from zero to HERO-5!

[Request Account Manager](#)

[SUBSCRIBE TO TOP STORIES](#)

## 2026: The Year our Trust is challenged

In [TOP STORIES #147](#), the last for 2025, I talked about being "Cloud Smart" in favour of "Cloud First".

Now, let's take that further and not only be "Cloud Smart" but also "Vendor Smart". Infoworld has published a very important article that emphasises how redundancy, not relying on a single cloud provider, and relocation is no longer a passing thought as you leave "sleeping dogs lie".

You actually HAVE to do things differently, knowing that the world we are now entering is based on Zero Trust. Cloud has stealthily become a single point (or region) of failure.

2026 is going to be the year where resilience is getting REAL funding where multi region, cloud, and hybrid continuity become deliberate design choices not just good ideas that "we will get to".

This is where considering ecosystems like HPE's Greenlake is "Vendor Smart" as it brings a cloud operating model to **your** own data centre, co-location, and edge, with a common control plane and central governance for hybrid estates - this is a better fit in 2026 and beyond for workloads that MUST NOT be forced into public cloud only designs.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our specialists who can help with planning a future that is NOT Cloud First and Vendor Locked, but Cloud & Vendor Smart and running where it makes the most financial sense with the optimal resiliency. The world is changing and we are perfectly placed to help navigate the challenges.

[Trust in Single Clouds ends](#)

[HPE GreenLake](#)

## Microsoft News This Week

### Windows and Office Phone Activation ended

As part of Microsoft's ongoing effort to force users to activate Windows and Office with an online account, users are still able to activate legacy software through a portal - provided you have a Microsoft account.

Volume license users are not affected by this change.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our Windows specialists to assist you if you are having activation challenges, as this change has just taken effect.

## Phone Activation ended

---

## Security



### Android Malware Surges

This is a sobering reminder that you can never be too careful! There is Malware spreading through deceptive apps that allow the bad guys to take over your phone as though they are holding it in their hands. The implications are terrible! Again, you, the human is the weakest link as you need to be tricked into installing this malware. Unfortunately, if you are using an Android device, you are more at risk, so it is important to make your family aware of these challenges.

**Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our training partners to update your staff on how to look out for new ways you could be tricked into losing your money to a scammer or allowing a hacker to gain access to your company.**

## Account Takeovers on Android

---

### Disable SMS Fallback for iMessage on iPhone

Unfortunately using an iPhone does not protect you from the criminals. Though the iPhone is regarded as more secure, being lulled into a false sense of security is even more dangerous. Though iMessage is one of the most secure messaging platforms it can be compromised entirely with it's integration with legacy SMS messaging systems.

Adapting to these warnings requires a cultural shift in how we communicate. Professionals are encouraged to audit their messaging habits and prioritise encrypted channels for confidential exchanges.

**Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our training partners to update your staff on how to look out new ways you could be tricked into installing apps or clicking links that can compromise your security and/or privacy.**

## Disable SMS fallback for iMessage

---

### Avoiding Online Shopping Scams

Online Shopping Scams are always around and getting more sophisticated all the time. The Festive season makes you even more vulnerable because you are under pressure to make hasty purchasing decisions, which means you drop your guard in the interests of speed.

CyberDexterity has published a really good guide to help reduce your chances of getting caught out. Even if you are sure you know how not to be caught, it is still a good idea to read it - there is always a new "angle" that you have not thought about!

Remember, there are millions of people out there, some of whom may be smarter than you, whose full-time job is to find new ways of tricking you!  
Contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our specialist partners like [CyberDexterity](#) and others, who are experts in helping you train your users to stay abreast of the latest attack methodologies.

## Avoiding Online Shopping Scams

## Cloud & AI

### An Office where keyboards are optional?

NB - Lots of inline links here for more detail.....

Imagine an Office (or your home computer) where the primary way of interaction is with your voice?

Well, there are a bunch of initiatives underway with OpenAI, Wispr, [Pickle](#), [Meta](#), and others that suggest things are going to change dramatically in how we interact with computers and how they help us enhance our lives, and that they will fundamentally challenge our perspective on privacy. OpenAI has gone all in on developing a product that will be able to record everything we interact with and seamlessly interact with the wearer - we should see something from them during 2026. Meta is doing the same with some very impressive sound isolation technology and with the acquisition of [Limitless](#).

Microsoft has it's [Fluid Dictation Voice Typing Solution](#) along with Recall.

You can also experiment with a completely free version of this technology on your computer today, called [OmniDictate](#) (enabling GPU support needs some manual installation).

### Post Keyboard Office of the Future

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our AI experts to show how these new technologies can help employees improve productivity - and start experimenting with voice as a more effective productivity tool than a keyboard.

## Noiseless Cooling for Laptops

It is early days, but you can always trust some technologies to appear at CES that could very well show up in hardware in the next year or so.

Cooling of computers has always been a big, noisy and dusty problem, but finally, we are seeing advances in cooling that are completely silent that could end up in products we can buy.

The other technology that will also start appearing in devices is from [Frore](#) - called Airjet cooling.

**In the meantime, we wait for the BIG announcements from Intel at CES, and then we need to start planning what our hardware roadmap is going to look like for 2026, which is almost certainly going to be dominated by price increases and product shortages. In markets like Africa, these issues will be aggravated making engaging with our hardware specialists to plan your RFP's even more urgent!**

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our enterprise hardware specialists to help plan your endpoint and server acquisition strategy for 2026 - it is possible that lead times on hardware could be as much as 8 months! Planning NOW is really important!

### Plasma Cooling Technology

---

# Allergen Detection Technology

Occasionally, something appears at CES that can take one by surprise, and this is one of them that people with food allergies should really take notice of!

One of the listed exhibitors at an early press event on 4 January, is developing a portable system to test food allergens in real time. Allergens can sneak into a dish with just a sprinkle of flour, or a dash of soy sauce—especially when you're traveling or eating out. For many people with severe allergies, a device like this could be a lifesaver.

**Allergen Alert**

---

First Technology | Midrand | Johannesburg, GAUTENG 2191 ZA

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



Try email & social marketing for free!