

## TOP STORIES #137

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.

### New this week

- Upcoming shows [have their own page](#)
- **Dynamics License enforcement** schedule changes... again
- **Intel Panther Lake CPU SKU's leak** - new hardware is coming!
- **Microsoft launches Computer Use** in Copilot Studio.
- **A prank today, tragedy tomorrow** - be warned - trouble incoming!
- **Only 5%** of users pay for AI
- [AvePoint and BitTitan](#) added to First Marketplace
- BUI [Video Blog #12](#) with **what's new in Security** for September - Blast Radius?

**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](#).**

If you have not tried TSAI yet, I recommend that you do, as it is getting cleverer and faster! **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 provides you with releases four weeks in advance. It is accurate!

**I believe this is the only independent source in South Africa where you can find a comprehensive list of all the upcoming movies.**

Last week's [TOP STORIES #136 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.

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## Upcoming Shows

- **AWS re:Invent 2025** - 1-5 December Las Vegas
- **CES 2026** 6-9 Jan 2026 Las Vegas
- **NAMM 20-24 Jan 2026** Anaheim
- **NAB April 18-22** Las Vegas

[You can read more about the shows here](#) .

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## Don't Forget

**Windows 10, Exchange 2016/9 and Office 2016/9 are Now EOL**

.....and others as well

You can buy M365 with or without Teams - full story [from Microsoft is here](#)

License Enforcement for Dynamics 365 ERP rules have changed again (see below)

**Microsoft starts Phase 2 Mandatory Azure MFA**

This is a reminder that Microsoft has started with enforcement at the Azure resource manager

layer, and if you are an Admin, you need to prepare for this, [which you can read more about here](#).

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our security specialists to assist with this process.

We all know about the end of Windows 10, which has been documented repeatedly in TOP STORIES over the past year, but there are also changes that have been missed along with new updates, all summarised in the "Don't Forget changes August 2025-2026 complete" document, [which you can download here](#).

Here are a few changes you should pay attention to:

- [The end of trust-based licensing for Dynamics is explained on Page 11](#)
- Note the retirement of the Azure AD Graph API 31 August on [Page 7](#)
- CoPilot Feature enhancements for August 2025 [Page 4](#)
- Azure Services being retired are updated on [Page 7](#)
- Windows Server 2022 ends mainstream support in October 2026 [Page 16](#)
- The end of Windows 10 has implications for Office, summarised on [Page 10](#)

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## Hardware

### Intel Panther Lake SKU's leak

The lineup of Panther Lake CPUs [has leaked](#), indicating that hardware with these CPUs is expected to start releasing this year with widespread availability in 2026. This makes it VERY important to update your procurement roadmaps for 2026. The CPUs built on the [18A node](#) perform far better than the current Lunar Lake generation, meaning that CoPilot+ is going to be part of your experience on your new notebook for next year!

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our hardware specialists to review what to expect next year, and to adjust the specifications for what you may be lining up to buy in 2026.

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## Microsoft

### CoPilot Studio Licensing Guide October 2025

The licensing guide for October has added a new section: **Computer Use**.

This is the capability for agents to interact with websites and applications by selecting menus, clicking buttons, and entering data into fields. in Windows 11 of W365. You can [read more about this public preview announcement here](#).

The [licensing guide for October is here](#).

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our AI and security specialists who can assist you with getting access to this feature securely for your users.

### CoPilot can draft your Agendas

Agenda Autodraft in the New Outlook and OWA is now available for everybody who has a valid CoPilot license.

This feature is NOT available in Classic Outlook. It depends on CoPilot being able to access all your data (it is better integrated than having to use connectors), and it seems from early testing that it could be quite useful, [which you can read more about here](#).

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our CoPilot specialists, who can help you test this new feature and determine who could benefit from it.

### Defender for Windows 10 will not keep you safe.

Even though Windows Defender will continue to be updated for Windows 10, it is very important that you do not [rely only on Windows Defender](#), which will continue to 2028, as the cumulative updates play an even more important role, and THOSE have stopped coming, with the [last one just being released](#).

Clearly, planning to move off Windows 10 should be a priority as the OS will become increasingly vulnerable as the months tick by.

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our Security and Windows deployment specialists to help map out your transition from Windows 10 to 11.

# Security

## F5 Suffers a massive breach

Networking giant F5 Networks disclosed a breach by a sophisticated nation-state actor, who penetrated F5's internal systems and stole some source code and vulnerability data.

The attackers (identified by Mandiant as the BRICKSTORM group) likely sought to exploit F5's code for downstream supply-chain attacks.

U.S. and U.K. cyber authorities responded swiftly: CISA issued an emergency directive for federal agencies to audit and patch F5 appliances, and NCSC urged UK operators to verify firmware integrity.

F5 coincidentally released patches for 44 new vulnerabilities on Oct 16 and is strongly advising customers to apply them immediately, since the intruders gained knowledge of unpublished flaws that could be weaponised. You can [read more about this breach here](#).

**This is a stark reminder that NOBODY is safe, ANY vendor could be attacked tomorrow. It is also important to remember that increasingly, the bad actors are getting access through "hacking the human" through trickery and extortion.**

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our specialist partners who are experts in helping train your users to ensure that they are also educating their family members in looking out for hacking and extortion attempts and to speak out and **NEVER to overlook your IT department, the people may be clever technically but as humans that can be manipulated just as easily as anybody else.**

## An innocent prank today, a tragedy tomorrow

A new viral prank has surfaced where teens are using AI to create images of themselves inviting homeless people into their homes and then sharing these images as a joke, causing some parents to panic. You can [read about this "prank" here](#).

Though this may seem like a prank and "harmless", the connotations are very concerning, as this could easily be turned into a kidnapping or a ransom attack by someone with criminal intent.

What if this AI trickery is used in the workplace to gain access to secure systems or harm people's credibility or reputation?

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our specialist partners who are experts in helping you prepare to deal with these situations that are going to become more serious VERY quickly!

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## Cloud & AI

### Only 5% pay for ChatGPT

It is very concerning that such a small percentage of OpenAI's 800,000 users are actually paying for the service. It means that most are not experiencing the benefits that a really powerful AI can bring to their lives. Even CoPilot is getting more powerful, making the paid version more attractive, like being able to use Claude for research. "Free" is really just a demo of the "real thing". You can read [more about the free vs. paid debate here](#).

When it comes to implementing AI in your business, although there are MANY choices, CoPilot remains the most secure choice. Of course, Sovereign AI solutions are completely different.

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our AI and security specialists to help start the journey to implementing AI in your business.

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## What's up at FTG

### FirstMarketplace.com adding Products Weekly

Companies spend on average more than \$4500 per employee per year on SaaS.

**You can be efficient and spend less!**

**Added this week for #137: BitTitan and more -[read here](#)** for the complete list of additions for this week and who to contact for support.

Check with your account manager to see if you can get a better deal!

We are adding new products every day - [check with us](#) before you procure ANYTHING!

- **SIX routes to market** (Azure, AWS, Huawei, private offers, local aggregation and more) – utilising a central catalogue.
- **Procurement in any Geo**, in any currency.

- **For South Africa, Rand-based invoicing**, BEE credits.
- **Zero credit card drama** means finance signs off in minutes, not months.
- **Always-on price intelligence** auto checks your existing cloud commitments and applies the best deal – we'll even work to beat your current quote.
- **Hard to find title sourcing specialists** hunt them down to your exact requirements while you get on with what's really important in your day.

Why wrestle with the how, where and when of software procurement, when **First Marketplace does it all?**

Book a 5-minute meeting with your **First Technology Group Account Manager** and watch "advanced" procurement become effortless.

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### 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 Group 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!

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### The END of all free Microsoft Support

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 Group 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**.

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### New Asset Visibility Assessment Available

The most certified SAM team in the country has announced a new service, which every company should be interested in, even if it is to validate inventories that you already have.

- **One scan**, full picture of every on-prem, cloud, HW & SW asset
- **Block64 tech** → shows what's installed, licensed and actually used
- **Pin-point over/under-licensing** & the real cloud cost drivers
- **Built-in FinOps** actions to kill idle spend, right-size, reserve & save
- **Results land in a single Power BI dashboard**

You can also contact the SAM division to participate in a 7-10-day PoC with First Intel and apply Real World FinOps practices.

Please contact your **First Technology Group account manager** to connect you with our SAM specialists to see how their service can best be applied to the challenges in your business, to gain insight into all assets.

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### BUI blog - Microsoft Security News for September

FTG's Cloud and Security Division, BUI's Video Blog, has posted a summary of Microsoft's security updates, including **Blast Radius analysis**

You can **watch Video #12 here**.

Please contact your **First Technology Group account manager** to connect you with our

security specialists. They will help you understand how the new Microsoft announcements may impact your environment and determine if any additional licensing requirements apply.

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## Movies

**TRON:ARES** Is getting mixed reviews for the acting, but excellent reviews for effects  
Kanu Reeves Stars in "Good Fortune" and it seems it is Good!!

Now Playing: [Good Fortune](#)

Now Playing: [Black Phone 2](#)

Now Playing: [Shell](#)

24 October: [Springsteen: Deliver me from Nowhere](#)

24 October: [Stitch Head](#)

24 October: [Wicked Part One](#) Sing-Along edition (Lyrics on Screen)

24 October: [Roofman](#)

24 October: [Shelby Oaks](#)

31 October: [Chainsaw Man: The movie](#)

31 October: [Bugonia](#)

31 October: [Regretting you](#)

31 October: [Time Hoppers](#)

7 November: [Predator: Badlands](#)

7 November: [I wish you all the best](#)

14 November: [Coyotes](#)

14 November: [Paw Patrol Holiday Special](#)

14 November: [The Running Man](#)

24 November: [Now you see me: Now you Don't](#)

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