

TOP STORIES #68

- This is a very big week for news, the most important is that there is a possibility for some companies you will not be able to renew your EA going forward. Yikes!
- Software Audits are a concern - more on that below
- Lots of SQL is coming out of support - one of many products coming out of support - will talk about the rest next week.
- More stories below.....

If colleagues want to subscribe, they can [click here](#).

Previous [TOP STORIES #67 is here](#).

Hardware

CoPilot+ Snapdragon PC's are released

The first reviews are coming in, and as is usual, the actual experience is not as "incredible" as what was promised, but what is certain is that going forward there are three different types of PC's to choose from when it comes to notebooks with the Snapdragon CPU's giving overall better battery life, [but Intel is not far behind](#).

When it comes to the AI features, the reviewers are generally underwhelmed, especially since the most hyped feature, Recall being absent, but what was a game changer was the notebook's ability to go for days without a recharge, [for the first time eliminating "range anxiety" almost all Microsoft notebook users suffer from](#).

If the Snapdragons maintain their lead, this is truly a game changer for Windows PC's and definitely an option for users going forward.

[It is REALLY important that you contact your First Tech account manager to connect with our hardware specialists to arrange for evaluations. These notebooks are probably going to be in short supply in SA for a while, so it is important to get on the waiting list.](#)

According to Tom's Hardware, and remember, this is NOT FOR SOUTH AFRICA, [here is a list of Snapdragon Laptops currently shipping](#).

[Here is a short review of the DELL XPS 13](#) (please consider 32Gig, not the minimum of 16).

Microsoft

Audits remain a major worry

[An interesting article has been published](#) that suggests that in more than 50% of companies, IT teams are having difficulty understanding whether their IT investments are correctly utilised, leading to waste and compliance risk.

[All vendors are intensifying their audit efforts, and if you have not been audited in the last 3 years, you have more than a 50% chance of getting an audit letter in the next year!](#)

The problem is that installing and then running a permanent Software Asset Management tool can be very expensive indeed, as it requires experienced "SAM people," too.

Sometimes, a point-in-time view could be all you need to be ready for the inevitable audit.

[For assistance in understanding how to address this, please contact your First Tech Account manager who will then connect you with our SAM teams to discuss what specific issues you may have.](#)

[We do have the tooling to allow for "point in time" assessments, avoiding the ongoing expense of a permanent installation. However, for larger companies a permanent installation is actually a necessity and we also have the necessary tools and systems including our own very interesting systems to support your SAM efforts as well.](#)

Almost 32% of SQL Servers will be out of Support by August

The Register, quoting data from LanSweeper, says that 12% of all SQL running out there is still on SQL 2014, which is coming out of support on July 9, so by August, 32% of all SQL running will not be supported! [You can read more here](#).

Our Development Division, First Digital, [has published a paper on the different options available to you](#) to migrate from these older editions of SQL coming out of support. What's especially interesting are the options to migrate your application to Fabric, eliminating your dependency on SQL. [Please contact your First Tech account manager to put you in touch with our specialists at First Digital to start discussing your options.](#)

This could be your last Enterprise Agreement (EA)

[If your EA is bigger than 2399 seats \(ie NOT level A\) seats then you can stop reading](#)

further!

NOTE! There is no official communication from Microsoft about this, but when Directions on Microsoft publishes a paper [suggesting we can expect changes from Microsoft](#), it is best we pay attention.

Directions on Microsoft has rarely been wrong about changes coming from Microsoft! Microsoft has been making incremental changes to EA's where it is has been raising the minimum entry point over the years, and it seems that Microsoft may be considering phasing out Level A EA's completely.

If you have just re-signed your EA on level A, you are good for another 3 years, if you are going to be renewing in the next 6 months to a year, there is definitely cause for concern, and **the possible impact of not being able to renew on an EA has to be evaluated.**

The bottom line is that your total licensing bill will probably go up and be more complicated to manage UNLESS you start planning for this possibility now.

It is critical that you meet with our licensing specialists to understand the options open to you going forward (there are many) and what can be done to make sure that your licensing bill does not go up, as there are many issues to consider and plan for including the possible impact of the agreement being deemed as "new" and thus your price for Teams goes up, and many other issues like not being able to renew on SA in MCA agreements etc.....

If we have not contacted you already, please contact your First Technology account manager to make arrangements to start looking at your options going forward—there are many, but we have to get started ASAP to work with you to make sure your bill with MS does not go up. As always, it is very important to try and consume as many features within the suite you are buying as they play a big role in what you end up renewing (or not).

Viva Feature Comparison Table May 2024

The latest Viva comparison table [is available here](#).

It is important to note that most of the features in the Viva Suite are an add-on to M365E3 or E5, so it is **very important that you ask your First Tech Account manager to connect you with our Viva Team to understand how you can take advantage of the features Microsoft is offering in the Viva Suite.** Here is a [2min Microsoft Video on what Viva is about](#).

Power Platform Licensing Guide June 2024

The latest [guide can be downloaded here](#).

Page 23 has a summary of Power Pages entitlements

The AI Builder rate card on page 25 has some changes

Power Pages Capacity licenses accrue to Dataverse Log capacity.

This can get quite complicated and it is very important that you speak to your First Tech Account Manager to connect you with our [Power Platform experts](#) to go through these changes to understand if they may impact you.

Dynamics 365 Licensing Guide June 2024

The latest [Guide can be downloaded here](#). All the different guides for Dynamics [get updated in one place here](#). Note that the dates are not always updated, so you need to actually download the file to check when it was last updated.

To see all the changes, you can go to page 63 for the changelog, but there is one big change on page 43 that is worth noting: the definition of an external user, like a contractor who does not work onsite every day **or** for more than an average of 30 hours per week. **These "external users" do not require a license to access Dynamics 365.**

Please contact your First Tech. account manager to connect you with our specialists in the CRM Team division to take you through all the changes in terms of risk and benefit.

Cloud & AI

A tale of deception

This is an interesting [story told by the BBC](#) about AI taking your job, and another by Linus Tech. on YouTube - and [his story is about AI being a Lie](#).

Both stories, taken together, are worth pondering because, on the one hand, the stories in different ways confirm to us that as we may idealise what AI may be, as presented in Science Fiction, AI IS a lie.

On the other hand, it is a reality that is starting to take people's jobs away unless we adapt as a society, as eventually, AI will become what we see in Science fiction.

For all these reasons it is essential that we dive into AI, for as much as it may appear to be a

"lie", but as with the story told in the BBC article, it IS starting to take jobs away (and create new ones), we MUST be learning what is good and bad about it, and as we learn about it to sift out the lies from the truth.

To be able to do all this, we need to be playing with AI in our lives and in our businesses, and especially in our businesses it is important to prepare allow for AI access to our data securely. It is really important to start.

Please contact your First Technology AM to connect you with our AI Security specialists to work with you on starting the journey with CoPilot securely!

With AI, We are all in R&D

This story connects with the one above. As much as it may be a lie, it is also a reality in some form, so we have to dive in.....

A well known researcher in AI, Ethan Mollick, **has put forward a very important argument that we can't just hang around waiting for the next big AI breakthrough to come knocking.**

AI tech is accelerating too fast, and we've all got to jump in right now.

We need to figure out how to make AI work for us, and there is no time for somebody else to tell us how.

What we DO need are people who can help us adopt AI faster by preparing our environments to allow AI to be experimented with safely.

This is what FTG is concentrating on providing. **Please contact your First Tech account manager to put you in touch with our AI and AI security specialists (the Purview Team) to start talking about how we help you get on with this journey.**

Preparing the environment to use AI safely is only one part of the story, the rest of the story is how about you reshape your organisation for AI, and for that story, **here is a very interesting paper to consider for your company.**

Security

Microsoft overhauls security, and so must you.

Directions on Microsoft has published a podcast that addresses Microsoft security issues, and what customers should be doing about them. Microsoft was accused of overselling it's ability to securely run large cloud services and lacked transparency.

Microsoft responded by committing to make security its top priority and focusing more on security in the conferences as well.

Customers (you) should also be proactively making sure staff are trained and up to date with security practices and are actively using multiple layers of technologies to monitor logs. **Our premier security division, BUI, is ideally positioned to help you maintain the highest possible security posture.**

Please contact your First Tech account manager to connect you with our security experts—security is something you can never compromise on.

A Powershell Fix that is'nt

This uses fake error messages to trick you into running some nasty malware after accessing what appears to be a legit web site. It is again a reminder to always stay alert and to remind colleagues never to let their guard down. **The Register has the full story here.**

Nasty VMware bug

These are two particularly nasty bugs for which there are no workarounds, so please patch NOW. **The full story is here.**

What's up at FTG

CoPilot Readiness Workshops

They are available.

You can register for them **here** or **here**.

Copilot for Security

Join BUI, (FTG's Azure, Cloud and Security specialists) for an exclusive one-on-one demo session featuring Microsoft Security Copilot!

This is a prime opportunity for your team to experience the forefront of technology with our latest release. Dive into discussions about defining and understanding the consumption needs specific to your organisation.

Reserve your spot now! **Sign up here.**

NEW! FTG's BUI Monthly Security Blog

FTG's Azure and security division has launched a blog focused on Security - what's new, what changed and what you need to do to maintain a good security posture. The blog will be published monthly - [and here is the 1st one](#) - it's only 4mins long, and has some interesting information about:

- New Recommendations in Entra ID
- Entra Admin Center Updates
- Conditional Access Policies Renaming
- Phasing Out Legacy Identity Protection Policies

Movies

A week later and the results are in - [INSIDE OUT 2 is a blockbuster!](#)

This coming week has a solid slate as well that is expected to do well topped by Despicable Me 4

Now Playing: [Girl you know it's True](#) (No reviews yet)

Now Playing: [Chief of Station](#) (Already Streaming - and getting [pretty "OK" ratings](#))

28 June: [Despicable Me 4](#)

28 June: [A Quiet Place: Day 1](#)

28 June: [Treasure](#)

28 June: [He's not ready](#)

28 June: [Kalki 2898 AD](#)

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