

TOP STORIES #97

2025 is now underway - and looking like it is going to be quite a roller coaster. A colleague pointed out that 2025 is "perfect square year" $20+25=45^2$. The next one is in 2116. Let's see what will make 2025 special, not just square!

The week has been completely dominated by news from CES, which has now ended. I'll focus on some really big news and then direct you to summaries on YouTube, the web for [even more news](#) and will continue to cover stories for a few more weeks.

There is no rush, as most of this new tech will only be coming off production lines from March onwards.

CES is always [packed with crazy stuff](#), and vacuum cleaners got a lot of coverage. They can do a lot more than just pick up your dirty socks.

[Here is a summary](#) of some of the others out there so you can do your homework if you plan to buy, and [another video about other gadgets here](#). I sure like the pool cleaner! To get a good idea of what was on show at CES, you can browse through the Show Daily publications for [Days 1, 2, and 3](#).

Also, search YouTube for the "Best of CES 2025", and you will get a long list of videos to watch. There is a really amusing one on the [Weirdest Tech](#),

Of course, we cannot leave out news about [some of the robots launched at CES](#).

The Previous Week's [TOP STORIES #96 is here](#)

If you would like to invite colleagues to join, they can [click here](#).

Hardware

Dell revamps it's Branding.

We have always known Dell, not just for the Dell brand but also for its famous sub-brands, such as Inspiron, Precision, Vostro, etc. Well, **THEY ARE GONE!!!**

You now have only three ranges, and the [new lineup is impressive](#).

The consequences are huge for companies. You have to completely rewrite your RFQ/RFP documentation, make sure you understand the [Intel Core Ultra](#) and [AMD Ryzen](#) naming conventions, and ensure you are not buying units that are mismatched to the user requirements (Be careful of Laptop and Desktop CPUs as the **naming is confusing**). Desktop CPUs will also find their way into high-end notebooks.

It is time to ditch your current documentation and do a rewrite, and the reason to do so is clear - **Dell has done it**.

While you are rewriting, please consider increasing your **minimum** memory requirement to 32 Gig RAM (see the story below on Win11 24H2).

You can watch the [Dell Keynote at CES announcing all this here](#).

In addition, these new NPU-enabled CPUs from Intel will enable [Dell Pro AI Studio](#), which helps you get LLM's working without learning a whole new skill set.

Linus Tech has probably got the best summary of the new Dell branding, [which you can watch here](#). I recommend watching it to anyone working with or buying Dell products.

Dell has also announced some impressive [monitors for the workplace](#) to reduce eye strain, so not only is it important to review your computer's specifications, but you need to do the same for the monitors - and figure out if it is better to get a monitor with a hub built-in or separately - the Dell monitors may appear expensive, but remember their hubs are built-in.

Most importantly, I recommend you urgently contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our Dell Experts to help you create your roadmap for 2025. The availability of all this new technology in South Africa may present challenges, and it is very important to address any issues ASAP.

Regardless, you need to start re-writing your specifications of the PC's you are planning to buy. I have been saying that it will all change, and now it's here along with the mandatory upgrade from Windows 10 to Windows 11 - all happening this year.

LG 5K2K OLED bendable monitor

One product that stood out at CES, was the [LG 45" 800R bendable monitor - you can watch the video here](#) that takes you through all LG's products announced at CES, 45" 800R 124 PPI is the "sweet spot" when it comes to size and curvature to be able to keep the entire screen in focus without eyestrain. This is going to be the "maximum" in productivity and gaming!
Samsung has a [bigger one](#), but the big difference with the LG is the 800R curve @ 45". We don't have pricing yet, but based on its specifications, this monitor looks like it will be a winner!

NVIDIA 50 Series GPU's and AI

This was definitely the biggest news of CES, and I recommend you catch up on the keynote - [here is a 14min recap](#) if you do not want to watch the [whole keynote](#).

Microsoft

Win24H2 needs more RAM

Neowin has been conducting tests (mostly on games) to determine whether Win 11 24H2 is faster than 23H2.

However, they have discovered that 24H2 consistently allocates more memory to tasks. Therefore, they advise that you consider 32Gig as a minimum—something that I have been urging for some time. [You can read the report here](#). The memory comment is right at the end. If you have Windows 10 and Windows 11 23H2 computers that you are preparing to upgrade to 24H2, which you **HAVE** to do this year, [see the support lifecycle here](#), and if you only have 16 Gig, which almost everybody will have, everything is pointing to that it will be a **very good idea** to upgrade to 32 Gig - especially when you are going to have more apps (probably things like CoPilot etc..) running on your PC's going forward.

As with the Dell announcement, please contact your First Technology account manager to see how we can assist with an inventory of your environment to determine the cost-effectiveness of upgrading to Windows 11 24H2 with 32Gig RAM. It is very important to get started ASAP, as there will be a rush for parts, and prices could start climbing.

New Outlook for Windows - what you need to know

News and commentary about the New Outlook will intensify as Microsoft starts enforcing its installation in favour of the "Classic Outlook".

There is much you need to know to prevent panic and also, while not panicking, to start planning your migration to the New Outlook.

There is even an app that [blocks the installation of the New Outlook!](#)

It is really early days, and there is still a lot missing and wrong with the New Outlook.

Office-Watch has published an excellent summary of where we are now, and I

[recommend you read it](#). Imagine - you cannot move messages between mailboxes!

To make 2025 even more interesting, not only does Windows 10 go out of support, but so do [Office 2016 and 2019](#)

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our messaging experts so you can start planning how you handle this migration to the New Outlook. There are many areas where you could possibly "downgrade" to the New Outlook to start testing it. Many people use email in their companies in very simple ways: They have one mailbox, no plugins, etc. We also have tools that can help you determine whether a user "qualifies" for the New Outlook.

Security

Credential phishing attacks surging

KnowBe4 has published an alarming paper suggesting that credential phishing attacks have surged in 2024 and will continue. This trend will be assisted by increasingly advanced AI, which will make the attacks harder to detect while broadening them to SMS, collaboration tools (Teams), and social media. [You can read more about this here](#).

This is a sobering reminder that the bad guys do not take holidays. While we are relaxing, they are improving their attack methods, meaning we have to constantly stay up to date.

Please contact your First Technology account manager to discuss your users' 2025 training schedule. You can never let your guard down!

Cloud & AI

Nvidia Project DIGITS - should we be excited?

Nvidia pretty much stomped all over Intel and AMD at CES, especially with the launch of its 50-series GPUs, but one product that attracted a LOT of interest was the "Super Computer in the palm of your hand". In 2016, something like this sold for \$129 000 - now it's \$3000. You can [read more about this here](#).

This is all about putting NVIDIA AI in the hands of developers worldwide, placing an AI supercomputer on the desks of every data scientist, AI researcher, and student, and empowering them to engage with and shape the age of AI not only in the cloud but also as sovereign AI solutions outside of the cloud (or maybe tapping into it).

Of course, there are also people who are not impressed - they say just "buy a gaming PC with a GPU" - [and they have a point](#).

Recently, an [article was published that provided instructions](#) on how to run Llama 3.3 70B (A model comparable to GPT-4) on a MacBook Pro M2 with 64 Gigs of RAM.

We are already experimenting with most of the AI models, and have some cool things to demonstrate (especially with the Microsoft AI Tour coming up). Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect with our AI teams to demonstrate what we are doing and discuss ideas about implementing them in your business. 2025 is the year when AI starts to get real.

What's up at FTG

Microsoft AI Tour in Johannesburg

First Technology Group will have a major presence at the Microsoft AI Tour in Johannesburg. You will be able to meet our experts in all fields of AI. These experts from First Technology, BUI, CRM Team and First Digital will be there to introduce, explore and demonstrate business-centric AI-powered solutions to boost creativity and productivity. (Noting all the points made in the sections above) These include out-of-the-box solutions and custom designs developed by First Technology Group companies.

When: 23 Jan 2025 7:00am to 1:45pm

Where: Sandton Convention Centre

[Register here](#)

Pure Storage event - Special Guest speaker - PSG Wealth

This is a special in-person event to start the new year. It introduces the Pure Storage and First Technology partnership, takes you behind the scenes of the technology, explains how you can benefit from it, and discusses what the future looks like with Containers and Kubernetes.

When: 23 Jan 2025 at 8:00am

Where: Pencil Club, 1 Ncondo Pl, Umhlanga Ridge, Durban, 4320

[Register Here](#).

There are limited seats, so please register ASAP

CoPilot Security Demo

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

In light of ongoing attacks that will only get sneakier, it is essential to contact your First Tech Group account manager to arrange to attend a session. You can also [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](#).

Movies

Schools re-open on January 14 (I made a mistake with the 25th) - thanks to all for correcting me

The lineup is not for the younger audiences - who are thankfully back at school.

Now Playing: [A Complete Unknown](#)

Now Playing: [Den of Thieves: Pantera](#)

17 January: [Luther: Never too much](#)

17 January: [Nosferatu](#)

17 January: [Wolf Man](#)

Movies for 2025

There is a great lineup for 2025 - [here is a list by the release date of some of the big titles](#). Note that the release dates are for the USA.

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