TOP STORIES #56

I hope you are having a great Easter weekend break!

Microsoft financial Q4 is now starting, so there is quite a bit of news as the company prepares to try and meet (and exceed) it's revenue collection targets.
Be very wary of **any news on 1 April**, though some are working up to be quite funny.
Last week's **TOP STORIES #55 can be found here**
If you would like to invite colleagues to join the maillist, they can **click here**.

Hardware

Intel and Microsoft Announce the new AI PC Specification

This is a long story, but it is important to read.
Some of this is "old news", as, back in **TOP STORIES #46** I wrote that Microsoft had already indicated that the new AI PC specification will need to have a **minimum** of 16Gig RAM and 40 TOPS (see more on that below).
Clearly, when Microsoft specifies a minimum of 16Gig, you should at least double it in practice to give you some realistic breathing room, (To my point - Microsoft **still** says 4Gig RAM and 64Gig Storage is the **minimum requirement for Windows 11** - which is clearly not realistic anymore - just try do anything with 4 Gig RAM other than booting it!)

What's now changed is that Microsoft says you need to have the CoPilot Key to allow the machine to be called an "**AI PC"**.
This key is going to matter!! It's a status symbol, just like a badge on a brand new car!

But there is a problem!
The current Meteor Lake generation from Intel which does have an NPU, is less than half of the minimum performance requirement set by Microsoft to allow for **CoPilot AI to run locally**.
You can **read more about this announcement here**, and you can read **even more detail on what to expect in an AI PC as defined by Microsoft and Intel**.
Furthermore, it looks like AMD is beating Intel in the race to achieve 40 TOPS first, and it is looking like the first high-performance AI PCs will be available from AMD long before Intel is able to get chips in any volume on the market.
The YouTube Channel "Moores Law is Dead" has just **released a bunch of leaks about all this** which seems to verify that AMD is ahead of the game.
What's clear is that we will **only see production volumes for Arrow Lake and Lunar Lake** from intel in 2025 - where only the Lunar Lake generation will easily meet the Microsoft Specification.
Because things are moving quickly it is clear that you must not be in a hurry to buy new AI PC-compliant hardware right now, however this new type of AI PC is exactly the hardware you NEED to buy because once you have bought it, you are stuck with it for at least 3 years, and AI is going to be even more of a big deal a year from now.

This means it is important to start planning what you are going to buy and not to lock yourself into buying a specific model for any extended period right now.
You will undoubtedly be able to buy Meteor Lake notebooks soon, but they will quickly transition to Arrow Lake and then Lunar Lake in 2025.
Regardless of the AI PC specification, it is very clear that the minimum memory requirement has changed dramatically, and it is important to reconsider increasing that to 32Gig (16Gig as an absolute minimum).

Taking everything into consideration above, it is a good time to review your hardware specifications and start planning your next refresh cycles.
These new notebooks for your business will come with specifications that you haven't considered before, such as TOPS, as a reminder that it's important to start taking this new world of AI PC's into consideration.

To get insight on what to do, please contact your First Tech AM to schedule a planning session to discuss what's on the horizon with your specific hardware vendor.

The Race to the TOP(S)

TOPS, which stands for Tera Operations per Second is a metric, not a benchmark - which you

can read **more about here** is important to understand as this is going prominently feature as part of the minimum requirements for the PC going forward.

Microsoft

March Dynamics 365 Licensing Guide

The new Guide, revised in March 2024, incorporates a handful of modifications.
The table detailing Base and Attach licences on pages 4 and 5 has been amended, excluding Field Service Contractor, Guides, and Remote Assist as these are not eligible for Base licence categorisation. Furthermore, updates have been made to the capacities for Supply Chain Management on page 31, expanding them to encompass Electronic Invoicing and Intelligent Order Management.
You can **download the latest guide here**.

CoPilot for Education delayed to 1 May

This service was supposed to roll out on 1 April but instead, has been delayed to 1 May. You can **read more here**.

CoPilot for Security released 1 April
This a reminder that Microsoft is releasing CoPilot for Security on Monday, You can find the **details about the release here**. This will be billed as a consumption model per hour (Security Compute Unit - SCU).

Microsoft Licensing guide for 1 Feb 2024 with "from SA" Changes added
Microsoft has published a new guide which you can **download here**. It is important to note that from 1 Feb 2024 no new "From SA" licenses can be purchased by new or existing customers. The change was originally communicated in **TOP STORIES #49** where you can find the details of the change in the Product Terms.

M365 Plan Comparison documents updated for March
The Modern Work Plan Comparison Document for Enterprise has been updated. You can download it **here**.
Note that the Intune Suite now consists of three plans which you can **read all about here** and **here**.

Teams gets even Smarter
Microsoft is adding more smarts to Teams where CoPilot will be able to add more insights into what is being discussed in the meeting. Additionally, Intelligent Recap in Calls is being added to Teams Premium, with even more features being added for Hybrid meetings; you can **read more here**.
Of all the add-ons Microsoft is offering, Teams Premium with CoPilot also demonstrates how big a difference AI can make to your business, with new features being added all the time.
I urge you to reach out to your First Technology account manager to arrange a demonstration of these new features our Unified Communications specialists - it is really worth it!

Power BI licensing switching to Fabric licensing
Everybody that is using Premium P1 to P5 SKU's is affected.
One of the big changes is that the dual-use benefit is going away, and you will have to cover your on-premise deployments with SQL Enterprise on-premise licensing.
The impact of recent changes could significantly affect your ongoing strategy to adopt Power BI.
If you are working with or considering Power BI, I suggest that you spend some time with our Power BI specialists to understand the impact and assess if you could benefit from the changes.
PLEASE reach out to your First Tech account manager to schedule a meeting to unpack this.
You can **read more about this change here** and on the **Microsoft Blog here**.
The clock is ticking! You have 9 months!

Cloud & AI

ChatGPT is better than CoPilot
A fairly consistent complaint is that ChatGPT is better than CoPilot. This is because ChatGPT was first and has thus gotten smarter than CoPilot, **at least that is according to Microsoft - read here**.
There is also a deeper issue that can further explain this difference: Microsoft is putting more emphasis on ensuring that proper security guardrails are in place before CoPilot can be used in

the corporate environment, leading to slower general adoption.
Ultimately I think CoPilot will catch up, but this is a marathon,, not a sprint - **as explained by the research institution - Directions on Microsoft**.
This situation is temporary, and CoPilot WILL catch up and ultimately probably end up being the most extensively integrated AI offering you will be able to get. It is thus very important to prepare now to ensure that CoPilot can be enabled for some users in your environment.
If you have not already, please see about signing up for FTG's CoPilot workshop detailed below .

Nervous about AI in your Business? You not alone.
According to a new report, almost all tech. executives are slowing down the adoption of AI, while still feeling pressurised to adopt AI as soon as possible. This connects with the story about CoPilot above, and actually confirms that the emphasis should be on preparation. Please refer to our workshops to help you prepare for the inevitable arrival of AI in your company below...

Don't bet your life on AI (yet)
Here is a story warning people to not rely on AI to tell you if mushrooms are safe to eat - it can get it fatally wrong!

Security

Sharepoint Vulnerability under attack
This patch has been available for a year, but since this vulnerability is now being exploited, it is a good idea to be 100% sure that you have this patched. **Read more about this here**.

What's up at FTG

CoPilot Readiness FTG is offering an **M365 CoPilot Readiness Workshop** to help you get ready. You can **register here**

Copilot for Security You and your team are invited to a one-on-one demo session we are hosting featuring Microsoft Security Copilot. It's a fantastic opportunity for us to showcase this cutting-edge technology to you. **Sign up here**.

Movies

Now Playing: **Asphalt City**
Now Playing: **Godzilla X Kong: The New Empire**
Now Playing: **The Chosen Spy X Family Code: White**
5 April: **The First Omen**
5 April: **Ordinary Angels**
5 April: **Monkey Man**

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