

TOP STORIES #72

Just when I thought we would have a really quiet week because the northern hemisphere is on summer holidays, we ended up with a huge news story!

The Massive CrowdStrike Outage on Microsoft Systems

BUI, FTG's security and Azure Expert division has let me know that Microsoft has JUST released a recovery tool to help with the CrowdStrike Disaster. [You can get the tool here.](#)

The story that overshadowed everything this week was the CrowdStrike debacle, which caused systems worldwide to fail.

This was hot on the heels of a major Azure Microsoft outage.

It's important to recognise that ANY system can fail.

This time it was CrowdStrike, next time, it could be somebody or something else. There are ALWAYS single points of failure in your business that can really hurt you if they stop working, **and at some point, they will.**

If you weren't taken out by this, heave a sigh of relief as you dodged a bullet this time, but there **will** be a "next time," and you might not be so lucky.

What is important to ponder is that in times of crises, when all hell is breaking loose, who can you phone that REALLY has your back 24/7/365? In South Africa, who can do that?

Don't wait for a disaster to "take you out"; make sure you have your DR in place (which we can help with), including backing up everything, not forgetting Azure. [Even W365 virtual machines in Azure](#) were taken out!

First Tech Group does have the engineers and resources to help you 24/7/365 through an appropriate support agreement.

As Microsoft's most certified partner in Africa and home to BUI, the Partner of the Year winner for the past two years, First Tech Group is well-equipped to support you in crises with real resources who can communicate in clear, understandable English.

Actually, it's interesting to note that there were warning signs - [CrowdStrike broke Linux months ago, but nobody noticed.](#)

When Microsoft systems break, EVERYBODY notices!

Of course, there is [always a funny side to this devastating outage!](#)

This is a bit extreme, but SouthWest airlines was not affected because they are still [running Windows 3.1!!!!](#) This is not a typo! read the article!

Of course any company not running CrowdStrike was also not affected (this time).

I suppose this is taking the idea of if it ain't broke, don't fix it a bit far, but in SouthWest's case THIS time they were saved.

Unfortunately for SouthWest, every single bad guy out there now knows that SouthWest is wide open to attack!! I do not recommend downgrading to Windows 3.1 for any possible reason!

[Contact your First Tech account manager to connect you with our Technical and Security divisions to review your 24/7/365 support options.](#)

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

You can find [TOP STORIES #71](#) here - in #71 we talk a lot more about our services.

Hardware

Intel's CPU's to get hotter

It seems a way to boost performance is to allow CPU's to run even hotter, which is fine if they are designed for it. You can [read more about this here.](#)

AMD and Intel are back in the AI game

The very first AMD Ryzen and Intel Lunar Lake notebooks are starting to appear, and we will soon find out how well they stack up against the Snapdragon Elite X notebooks. [You can read more here,](#)

[As I have said many times in past few months because things are changing so fast it is really important to be planning your roadmap with our hardware specialists](#) to make sure you do not accidentally lock yourself into a model based on a previous generation for too long (of course price can play a big role in the decision as well!)

Microsoft

Microsoft Designer hits GA

Microsoft's AI-powered design tool has reached General availability, meaning you can get support from Microsoft along with new capabilities for CoPilot subscribers. You can read [more about the announcement here](#).

Office 2021 for Life! (Really??!!)

How do you tell the truth and mislead at the same time?

Easy - you leave out a critical piece of information!

Here is a once-in-a-lifetime Prime Day deal to buy [Office 2021 FOR LIFE for \\$79.99](#).

This is 100% true - well sort of.....

Once bought, the software will run forever without needing to pay for anything more, but the website making the offer fails to clarify that Office 2021 will [end support in 2026](#). This means you only have 2 years of security updates, and then no more.

That can be a problem because you could be compromised by an attack that takes advantage of the fact that vulnerabilities in Office 2021 after October 2026 may remain unpatched.

There ARE cases where buying a perpetual license makes sense, but they need to be considered carefully while fully understanding the implications. If you are going to buy a perpetual license, it is also important to note that Office 2024 will be [released before the end of 2024](#) so maybe you are able to delay your purchase?

This is an example of how when looking to buy software, especially where the offer is unusually attractive, it is actually a good idea to consult a licensing specialist. There are many in First Tech Group who have been around for years and have seriously good licensing experience that can help navigate these challenges.

[Please contact your First Tech licensing account manager to help you understand your options and whether there are any hidden surprises.](#)

Purview Data Governance Solution Launching in September

This is Microsoft's AI-powered solution that addresses governance and security challenges under one umbrella will reach General availability 1 September. [You can read more about it here](#); if you would like to know more about this, [please contact your First Tech account manager, who will put you in touch with our security experts to take this further for you.](#)

NB! we will be announcing a new workshop for Purview soon.

Security

How to spot and act on an email scam

Here is a [very interesting story from Wired](#) on how to react on a scam. It gives some very good guidance that could be shared with your users.

It is a good read - I recommend it.

Dangerous Cybercrime Update from Microsoft

in line with the Wired article, Microsoft is warning that one of the most dangerous outfits in Cybercrime is getting even more dangerous. [You can read more about this here](#).

Cloud & AI

CoPilot can summarise much longer documents

[Microsoft has announced that CoPilot can now summarise a single document up to 80 000](#) words in length (which would be around 133 pages),

This is a lot more than ChatGPT at the moment which says it can only handle 10 000 words at a time.

It is super important that the correct security protocols need to be in place before activating CoPilot in your environment.

[To ensure you are implementing the correct security protocols and services, please ask your First Tech Account manager to connect you with our Purview Security specialists.](#)

Gigabyte releases AI software to help train your OWN AI

We are going to see a lot more of this where you will be able to use hardware purpose-built for AI being used to train LLM in your own environment and not in the cloud. It will increasingly become more user-friendly. [NVIDIA Chat with RTX](#) is a good example of that.

Now, Gigabyte has released a utility to help you do just that - help train your own AI model on their hardware. You can read [more about this 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](#) (unfortunately one member of the team suffered a personal loss - so the 2nd video will only be out next week) - 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

Well..... the biggest movie of the year is coming up - at it may even eclipse Dune! DeadPool hits the screens with a bang..... The entire industry is hoping DeadPool will be the blockbuster we all hope it will be..... [Here is an interesting story](#) of how they got Madonna to let them use "Like a Prayer"

Now Playing: [The Bad Bishop](#)

Now Playing: [Gundam Seed Freedom](#)

26 July: [DeadPool & Wolverine](#)

26 July: [The Fabulous Four](#)

26 July: [Storm Crashers](#)

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