

.top_stories

//barry_neethling

19th January #150

New for This week

- 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.

If you do not want to continue receiving TOP STORIES, click on the unsubscribe link at the bottom of the mail.

- **2026 the Fallout!** Shortages and price increases time to manage expectations
 - **Microsoft EoL section** New update coming Next week
 - **3 New vendors AdminDroid, Asana & MobaXTerm** added to FirstMarketplace
 - **Glass Cloth** - another shortage to impact prices.
 - **Microsoft Deployment Toolkit** has been discontinued.
 - **What Does Microsoft Care about?** - Your engagement needs to change.
 - **Many Shades of CoPilot** - how many and how do you license?
 - **AI is changing the Cyber Threat Landscape** - 2026 is going to be challenging
 - **Digital Arrests - What to do.** This is particularly nasty - you must be ready for this
 - **ChatGPT translate challenges Google** - It does not translate literally
 - **The Desktop is dead - long live the Keyboard!** Time to consider other form factors
-

CES 2026 - The Fallout

What is clear from CES is that 2026 is a year in which we will be able get computers with vastly more computing power, but get frustrated with not being able to get the equipment, and even if

you can get it, not be able to afford it.

It is SO important that you start managing expectations with your colleagues that getting equipment may be fraught with delays and unexpected price increases. Thinking "out of the box", trying to make do with less and make what you have last longer will be important strategies for 2026. In this TOP STORIES alternative form factors for PC's are suggested.....

Upcoming Shows

See this page for a summary of some of the technology announced at the biggest tech show of the Year. Biggest news is Intel's Panther Lake CPU release that beats AMD.

Panther Lake Impact

DRAM prices have already tripled.

Read how Intel's Panther Lake changes the game now that CES is done.

TOP STORIES #149

Click button above for last weeks news.

SA RAM price madness

Visit FirstMarketPLace

AdminDroid, Asana & MobaXTerm have been added for this week. There is now a LinkedIn Page for you to follow as well.

Movie releases

Get all the releases for the next 4 weeks in South Africa. Coming up: **28 years Later: The Bone Temple** Next big movie for 2026 is **Mercy**.

Microsoft EoL

Summary of what to know up to December 2026. Detailed document available for download

NB New update coming for #151

Visit our LinkedIn

Request Account Manager

SUBSCRIBE TO TOP STORIES

Glass Cloth - Another Shortage

Here is another reason why the costs of computers are going to keep going up, making it SO important that you take planning for 2026 very seriously, especially around making the best of what you already have and getting more clever about what you buy going forward.

Start managing expectations NOW with your financial colleagues - prices are going up..... A LOT!!!!!!

Now the story about some glass you have never heard about.....

The most important component in your next smartphone isn't the camera or the screen—it's a microscopic piece of Japanese cloth that AI giants are currently hoarding.

A tiny company, Nitto Boseki has found itself in the centre of an industry fighting to get access to this limited supply. This special type of glass fiber material is known as low-coefficient-of-thermal-expansion (CTE) glass, colloquially known as T-Glass.

The fibres are strong and rigid, facilitating high-speed data transmission, making them ideal for the latest generation processors, component PCBs, and various key AI components for the new data centres that everyone wants to build.

Just while all this is starting to be publicly known, the announcement by NVIDIA below is interesting, and also important to consider what I have shared about Panther Lake, where for many applications going forward you will NOT require a discrete GPU - aren't we all lucky!

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our specialists who can help with planning your roadmap with this new hardware, along with alternative form factors, and to simultaneously implement a program to extend the life of existing hardware through debloating and optimisation.

Glass Cloth Shortage

NVIDIA cuts GPU production 20%

Microsoft News This Week

Microsoft Deployment Toolkit Discontinued

Microsoft has suddenly discontinued the free toolkit while noting that existing installations will continue to function. As an alternative, Microsoft recommends switching to Autopilot, but requires Intune and internet connectivity. There is no direct replacement, so if you are using MDT, figuring out what to do next will require some planning.

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our specialists who will be able to help with what to do next, which in part will depend on what you are licensed for.

MDT Retirement - the full story

Does Microsoft Care about what you Care about?

Directions on Microsoft has published a very interesting article questioning whether Microsoft's priorities align with those of its customers, and the answer is challenging. As a customer, you have to find new ways to engage Microsoft to get what you want while dealing with price increases that you will probably not be able to negotiate away.

More than ever, you need a partner to support you in ensuring that you get the maximum value of what you end up having to spend on Microsoft, not just in the licensing but also in the services - particularly support.

If you have a renewal coming up in 2026 it is CRITICAL that you contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our specialists, especially our technical deployment and support specialists, to help start planning your strategy with Microsoft technologies all the way from procurement, through to ongoing 24/7/365 Support, while always considering alternative technologies along the way.

What does Microsoft Care about?

The Many Shades of CoPilot

Neowin has published an article that tries to summarise just how many CoPilots Microsoft has on offer to consumers - and it is quite confusing, as not only are 16 identifiable products, there are many subsets that could also be seen as products and all of them licensed in different ways, with the most difficult to understand.... metered billing for Agents. Just ask CoPilot Chat to explain, and you will see what I mean!

Please contact your First Technology Group Account manager to connect you with our CoPilot specialists to assist you in understanding how you can benefit from what you are already licensed for, and also start the journey of ensuring your environment is secured so that it is possible to start experimenting with AI. It is so important to not get left behind, but also ensure that AI adds meaningful value to your business.

CoPilots..... and counting...

Security



AI is changing the Cyber Threat Landscape in 2026

AI is forever changing the sophistication of the threats with deepfakes the most worrying that will be able to perfectly mimic people in authority that we know. Increasingly, we will face emergency scenarios that could leave us severely compromised. Increasingly legitimate communications are tampered with to achieve something malicious.

Shadow AI increasingly exposes companies to leaks where employees have connected their mail to AIs like ChatGPT without approval. More than ever, these threats call for the "human firewall" staff who are regularly trained and refreshed in being able to spot attacks and raise the alarm.

AI-driven strategies must be based on education, identity control and continuous AI monitoring (by the good guys).

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our security specialists to help ensure you get the best possible assistance in ensuring that you have the correct guardrails in place before you start activating AI in your business, and your staff are enrolled in regular updates on new ways to trick/scare them. More on that below!

Cyber Threats in 2026

Digital Arrests: How to deal with it. **MUST READ**

This attack is exceptionally malevolent, as it captures you completely with fear.

We ALL have secrets of one sort or another. Remember, the attackers can research your profile on Facebook etc... to find some vulnerability.

The more you reveal about yourself online, the more material you feed to people who mean to harm or extort you in some way.

As the article states: **"When our survival mode is activated, humans don't think better, they think faster, defaulting to compliance"**.

This type of attack on South African citizens could be particularly devastating, and these attacks are going increase, with all sorts of unexpected twists. If you get a call that requires urgent action - your FIRST action is DON'T!!!! Your IMMEDIATE action is read the article below and contact your First Technology account manager

It is very important to ensure that your staff are trained to handle these attacks without going into "panic mode" to protect your company AND your employees families. Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our training

partners to update your staff on how to look out for new ways you could be tricked into doing something that could have terrible consequences!

Digital Arrests: The Social Engineering Scam

Cloud & AI

OpenAI Launches ChatGPT Translate

OpenAI quietly released a competitor to Google Translate, going further than Google and leveraging AI capabilities to ensure translations are more nuanced and accurate for recipients. It will be interesting to see how this will get added to Microsoft's CoPilot.

ChatGPT Translate

It is more important than ever to start experimenting with what AI can do for your company in 2026, so you do not fall too far behind, and how translation may be useful in your company would be important to explore. Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our Google specialists for a demo of Google Ultra capabilities.

The Desktop is dead - Long live the Keyboard!

HP grabbed a lot of headlines with its EliteBoard G1a—a fully functional AI PC built entirely inside a keyboard. It is a fascinating concept that solves the "closed lid" problem, where expensive laptop screens gather dust while docked.

It features the AMD Ryzen AI 300 PRO, giving it the magic 50 TOPS needed for Copilot+.

But is this the trend to follow?

The rest of the industry seems to be moving towards the **NUC** (Next Unit of Computing) form factor.

Since ASUS took over the NUC product line from Intel, we have seen an explosion in these tiny, powerful cubes.

The biggest argument against the Keyboard PC isn't performance—it's risk - you could call it the "Coffee Cup" test.

If a user spills coffee on the EliteBoard, they have destroyed the entire \$1,000 PC, the SSD, and the motherboard.

With the NUC Scenario, if a user spills coffee on their keyboard, you replace a \$20 peripheral.

The computer (safe on the corner of your desk or behind the monitor) is fine.

The "Choice" Factor.

With a NUC (like a Dell OptiPlex Micro), you can keep the computer invisible behind the screen, or tucked into a corner on your desk, but your users have the choice of input device..... ergonomic, mechanical, or compact. A keyboard can be a very personal choice.

With the HP EliteBoard, you are married to that specific keyboard layout and "feel" forever (hopefully without the addition of any coffee). As you may be aware, there are thousands of different types of keyboards to choose from - and a decent keyboard you like can have a direct effect on your productivity!

The HP EliteBoard and NUC's can be creative solutions to combat the massive price increases we are already seeing in 2026 as they allow you to avoid buying parts of a notebook a user may never use - the built-in screen and keyboard.....

If your users travel between offices and homes that already have monitors, the HP EliteBoard is the ultimate "travelling desktop."

The NUC is a variation of this, as it is a tiny "box" that you can plug your keyboard of choice into. Lenovo launched the Yoga Mini i at CES, which had a very interesting design - and will be shipping in June.

Though you may feel that these form factors are easier to steal, they are no different from a notebook, which is a user's responsibility anyway, and if the device gets stolen, the value is lower and excludes the monitor, mouse and in the case of a NUC, the keyboard as well.

Please contact your First Technology account manager to connect you with our hardware specialists to explore different options for your users and help save on costs, combat rising prices, and shortages. When notebooks are out of stock, maybe these other form factors will still be available!

HP's EliteBoard G1a

Lenovo Yoga mini i

First Technology | Midrand | Johannesburg, GAUTENG 2191 ZA

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Our Privacy Policy](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email & social marketing for free!