

TOP STORIES #139 - 3 November 2026

Breaking News!! Microsoft Suspends Development of New Outlook

Welcome to TOP STORIES, which has been published for more than 22 years!

It has now been more than 2 years since we have been publishing weekly.

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.

New this week

- Merger creates **ONLY Zoom and Teams phone partner** in Africa
- **Office Online Server** is EOL December 2026 (see "[Don't Forget](#)")
- **Read this before you buy your new TV!** What's the resolution limit of your eye?
- **Microsoft suspends development** of the New Outlook!!
- **Microsoft Defender for Office P2** Licensing confusion addressed.
- **LinkedIn scam targets executives:** The C-suite under attack!
- **81% of router passwords** are still the factory default!
- **SUSE Linux and Proofpoint** added to First Marketplace
- BUI [Video Blog #12](#) with **what's new in Security** for September - Blast Radius?

Reminder that you can access [TOP STORIES AI \("TSAI"\)](#) to search for anything in the archive. You can read more about TSAI in [TOP STORIES #108](#).

If you have not tried TSAI yet, I recommend that you do, as it is getting cleverer and faster! You will need an MS ID to sign in, and if you are using your corporate ID, this might require organisational permission.

Check out the **official movie release** dates in South Africa for all studios at the bottom of this email.

The schedule provides you with releases four weeks in advance. It is accurate!

I believe this is the only independent source in South Africa where you can find a comprehensive list of all the upcoming movies.

Last week's [TOP STORIES #138 is here](#)

If you would like to invite other colleagues to join this newsletter (even if it is just for the movie release dates), they can [click here](#).

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

Upcoming Shows

- **AWS re:Invent 2025 - 1-5 December Las Vegas**
- **CES 2026 6-9 Jan 2026 Las Vegas**
- **NAMM 20-24 Jan 2026 Anaheim**
- **NAB April 18-22 Las Vegas**

[You can read more about the shows here](#).

Did you know?

Galdon Data + TechSonic have merged, creating the **most-certified Teams and Zoom partner in Africa!**

- **Zoom Platinum!** 200+ accreditations! Biggest licensing partner!
- **Microsoft Teams Calling Specialisation** with 50,000+ Teams Phone seats.

Galdondata is the ONLY certified partner in South Africa for both **Teams Phone and Zoom Phone**, so you can run one platform or both, fully integrated, often at lower cost. The AV install team is larger and has a national presence, so rooms are designed, installed, and tuned to spec. even faster!
GaldonData is also building AI contact-center Agents with clean hand-off to humans.

Please contact your **First Technology Group account manager** to connect you with the GaldonData experts to address ALL your Zoom and Teams requirements right the way through to major Contact Center implementations!

Don't Forget

Windows 10, Exchange 2016/9 and Office 2016/9 are Now EOL

.....and others as well

Office Online Server also comes to the end of support on 31 December 2026

This is a BIG problem for some companies that have depended on Office Online Server to keep operations in-house ([read more here](#))- moving to the cloud will be challenging!

Please contact your **First Technology Group account manager** to connect you with our Server and M365 specialists to start reviewing your options.

You can buy M365 with or without Teams - full story [from Microsoft is here](#)

License Enforcement for Dynamics 365 ERP rules have changed again (see below)

We all know about the end of Windows 10, which has been documented repeatedly in TOP STORIES over the past year, but there are also changes that have been missed along with new updates, all summarised in the "Don't Forget changes August 2025-2026 complete" document, [which you can download here](#).

Here are a few changes you should pay attention to:

- [The end of trust-based licensing for Dynamics is explained on Page 11](#)
- Note the retirement of the Azure AD Graph API 31 August on **Page 7**
- CoPilot Feature enhancements for August 2025 **Page 4**
- Azure Services being retired are updated on **Page 7**
- Windows Server 2022 ends mainstream support in October 2026 **Page 16**
- The end of Windows 10 has implications for Office, summarised on **Page 10**

Hardware

Resolution limit of the eye — how many pixels can we see?

[Here is a link to a dedicated page I have written on this subject](#), including how to request a business case to save money at home and to make a good case for larger (or more) monitors at work! **READ THIS BEFORE YOU BUY YOUR NEW TV!!!!**

Microsoft

"New Outlook" Development on hold

Microsoft Pulls the Emergency Brake

This is a [major development](#), which is no surprise, as the "New Outlook" has been consistently poorly received with many complaints about it's performance and lack of functionality, especially with it no longer supporting COM add-ins.

The new leader, Gaurav Sareen, seems to think that Outlook must be fundamentally rebuilt around CoPilot. The previous leader is on "Sabbatical".

As a "long game", this strategy (albeit vague) makes sense, but the reality is that "Classic Outlook" carries with it a HUGE history of features and add-ins critical to the functioning of legacy corporate systems that keep companies running today.

AI is still a great idea - but it is FAR AWAY from replacing that legacy workflow to get an invoice approved via an account system that may be 10 years old, using a COM add-in written by a developer long lost to the mists of time.

The dream of AI replacing email remains just that - a dream. It will happen, but not in the next few years, as AI needs to become significantly smarter.

You can read more about this [change in direction here](#) (use translation). And [another article here](#).

By destabilising Outlook (which is already wobbly), Microsoft is risking the powerful inertia that has secured its enterprise dominance.

This moment of transition provides a rare opportunity for competitors like Zoom to challenge the narrative of ecosystem lock-in and **offer enterprises a compelling reason to re-evaluate their entire collaboration stack**.

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our Teams, messaging, and Zoom specialists to consider your options for the future.

This is a major inflexion point to reconsider your future strategy.

Microsoft Q1 FY'26 earnings

Directions on Microsoft has published a summary of the Q1 FY'26 earnings call where it seems Microsoft is continuing to accelerate it spend on cloud compute capability, although Microsoft is still being secretive about it's CoPilot revenue. The outage [just before the earnings call](#) was not very helpful!

You can [read more about the earnings call here](#).

CoPilot Studio Licensing Guide October 2025

The new Copilot Studio Licensing Guide has been released with useful tweaks.

- **New:** Copilot Credit Pre-Purchase Plan.
- **Clarified:** Copilot Credit Commit Units (CCCU), plus how they stack up against other ways to buy Credits.
- **Handy extras:** Dataverse capacity add-on and meter tables now live in this guide (they used to sit only in the Power Platform Licensing Guide).
- **Removed:** the "Dynamics 365 Agents in Paid Public Preview" section, and the "Agent Flow Actions" detail.

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our Dynamics specialists to see if any of these changes may affect or benefit you and it is always useful to hear about what is new with Dynamics, something is always changing!

Azure Hybrid Benefit for Linux

You can bring your existing Red Hat or SUSE Enterprise Server Subscriptions to Azure, enabling you to pay only for the infrastructure costs of the VM on Azure. Microsoft has [published an interactive guide here on how to do it](#).

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our Azure and Linux experts to help ensure you get the most benefit from this announcement, noting that SUSE is now available on the marketplace...

New Copilot Credits Pre-Purchase Plan

The currency for many Microsoft Agents.

- **Existing options:** Capacity Pack (25,000 for \$200/month) or PAYG at \$0.01 per credit.
- **New:** Pre-Purchase Plan for 300,000+ credits, usable any time in the next year. Useful for spikes in consumption.
- **Pricing:** nine volume tiers, with 5% to 20% off versus PAYG.

You can find the [Microsoft announcement here](#).

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our CoPilot specialists to explore how you may be able to benefit from the discounts offered on these credits.

Microsoft Defender for Office P2 licensing Confusion addressed.

Microsoft has now clarified that MDO P2 is NOT required for all mailboxes and is applying "if you benefit from a feature, you pay for a feature" principle that already applied to MDO P1 licensing. You can [read more about the change here](#).

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our licensing and SAM specialists to assist in ensuring that this new (and more sensible) rule is correctly applied and any perceived compliance risk is removed.

LinkedIn Phishing Scam Targets Executives with Fake Board Offers

A sophisticated phishing scam on LinkedIn targets executives with fake board position offers in South American investments, using credible fake profiles to lure victims to phishing sites mimicking Microsoft logins for credential theft. This exploits platform trust, risking data breaches. Mitigation includes multi-factor authentication and identity verification. You can [read more about this devious scam here](#).

Do not expect this scam to be restricted to South America, EVERYBODY must be on alert.

Executives must treat every opportunity with scepticism, verifying through independent channels before engaging.

This is yet another reminder that you should contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our specialist partners, who are experts in helping you train your users to stay alert to these attacks. **Unfortunately, it seems we have to approach all communication with ZERO trust!**

81% Router Users Have Not Changed Default Admin Passwords!!!!!!!

In late 2025, a staggering 81% of broadband users were found to have never changed their router's default administrative password, opening the door to significant malware risk.

This widespread negligence was [revealed in Broadband Genie's fourth major router security survey](#), where 3,242 users were polled to gauge progress on consumer cybersecurity awareness. If you have a router on your home network NOT controlled by your ISP who has hopefully used a strong password, PLEASE change it!

You will also be shocked to find many IoT devices hidden on your corporate network sporting default passwords too!

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our IoT security specialists who are expert in hunting down these hidden devices on your network.

Cloud & AI

AI Browsers: The Invisible Threat Lurking in Every Click

When it comes to working with AI browsers like Comet and Atlas it is so important to proceed with caution as it is already proving that these AI's can be tricked into revealing details that can compromise the user. Prompt injection attacks are becoming a key vector of attack. What is clear, do not rush to into using these new browsers in your corporate environment just yet!

You can [read more about the risks associated with these new browsers here](#).

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our AI and security specialists to help start the journey of implementing AI in your business - **STARTING WITH SECURITY!!!!**

What's up at FTG

FirstMarketplace.com adding Products Weekly

Companies spend on average more than \$4500 per employee per year on SaaS.

You can be efficient and spend less!

Added this week for #139: SUSE Linux and more -[read here](#) for the complete list of additions for this week and who to contact for support.

Check with your account manager to see if you can get a better deal!

We are adding new products every day - [check with us](#) before you procure ANYTHING!

- **SIX routes to market** (Azure, AWS, Huawei, private offers, local aggregation and more) – utilising a central catalogue.
- **Procurement in any Geo**, in any currency.
- **For South Africa, Rand-based invoicing**, BEE credits.
- **Zero credit card drama** means finance signs off in minutes, not months.
- **Always-on price intelligence** auto checks your existing cloud commitments and applies the best deal – we'll even work to beat your current quote.
- **Hard to find title sourcing specialists** hunt them down to your exact requirements while you get on with what's really important in your day.

Why wrestle with the how, where and when of software procurement, when **First Marketplace** does it all?

Book a 5-minute meeting with your [First Technology Group Account Manager](#) and watch “advanced” procurement become effortless.

Cloud costing you more than expected?

First Technology Group is stepping up your cloud financial management game with Umbrella (formerly Anodot Cost) — our preferred platform for FinOps and Cloud Cost Management. Umbrella unlocks faster innovation, deeper insights, and robust cost optimisation, empowering you to proactively manage your cloud spend and enhance financial efficiency.

As a Platinum preferred partner across Africa, FTG brings you unmatched expertise and tailored support, ensuring a smooth integration of Umbrella into your current systems with minimal operational disruption.

Here's what [Umbrella](#) means:

- Enhanced Cost Management: Full visibility of your cloud expenses to pinpoint savings.
- Improved Financial Efficiency: Powerful analytics to guide smarter cloud investments.
- Seamless Integration: Effortlessly combines with your existing infrastructure.

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect with our SAM or FinOps teams to see how they can help you optimise your cloud costs. Even if you may think you have your costs under control, there is no harm in asking somebody else to take a look.... just in case!

The END of all free Microsoft Support

Microsoft has ended free technical support for Azure.

The only free support you now get is for billing and subscription issues.

Microsoft now charges **\$650** per support incident - **NB! Not a typo!!**

BUI, FTG's Cloud and Security division has introduced a new support model that mitigates some of this impact - you can [read more and sign up for more information here](#) .

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to discuss your support requirements, as First Technology group can provide [GLOBAL SUPPORT 24/7/365](#) for a wide range of vendors, **including Microsoft**.

New Asset Visibility Assessment Available

The most certified SAM team in the country has announced a new service, which every company should be interested in, even if it is to validate inventories that you already have.

- **One scan**, full picture of every on-prem, cloud, HW & SW asset
- **Block64 tech** → shows what's installed, licensed and actually used
- **Pin-point over/under-licensing** & the real cloud cost drivers
- **Built-in FinOps** actions to kill idle spend, right-size, reserve & save
- **Results land in a single Power BI dashboard**

You can also contact the SAM division to participate in a 7-10-day PoC with First Intel and apply Real World FinOps practices.

Please contact your [First Technology Group account manager](#) to connect you with our SAM specialists to see how their service can best be applied to the challenges in your business, to gain insight into all assets.

BUI blog - Microsoft Security News for September

FTG's Cloud and Security Division, BUI's Video Blog, has posted a summary of Microsoft's security updates, including **Blast Radius analysis**

You can [watch Video #12 here](#) .

Please contact your First Technology Group account manager to connect you with our security specialists. They will help you understand how the new Microsoft announcements may impact your environment and determine if any additional licensing requirements apply.

Movies

The next big release is **Predator: Badlands**. Judging from the trailers, it seems that having a plot is optional!

Now Playing: [Chainsaw Man: The movie](#)
Now Playing: [Bugonia](#)
Now Playing: [Regretting you](#)
Now Playing: [Time Hoppers](#)
7 November: [Predator: Badlands](#)
7 November: [I wish you all the best](#)
14 November: [Coyotes](#)
14 November: [Paw Patrol Holiday Special](#)
14 November: [The Running Man](#)
14 November: [Now you see me: Now you Don't](#)
21 November: [Jujutsu Kaizen: Execution](#)
21 November: [Wicked: for Good](#)
21 November: [Keeper](#)
28 November: [Zootropolis 2](#)
28 November: [Anniversary Christmas Karma](#)
28 November: [Eternity](#)
28 November: [Bird Boy](#)

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