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EDITOR'S *Comment*



Phil Nicholls | Editor

ANOTHER EVENTFUL EDITION

Editor Phil Nicholls notes the extensive events coverage within the latest issue.

Hello, and welcome to the latest edition of Inside Technology. As I worked to pull together the second issue of this magazine, I noticed that we have an extensive selection of events profiled within this issue.

Industry events are a vital part of any sector, offering commercial opportunities, educational experiences and a wonderful chance to network with people from all around the world. Of course, they are also a fantastic excuse to travel, especially in a global industry like technology.

As readers of our sister magazines might guess, this naturally reminds me of yet more lines from the sublime Ulysses, by Tennyson: 'For always roaming with a hungry heart, much have I seen and known; cities of men and manners, climates, councils, governments.'

I am sure that any trip to an industry event, bolstered by the visitor's hungry heart, will offer much to see and know. Indeed, the phrase 'climates, councils, governments' seems like a perfect summary of GITEX GLOBAL, or any other high-level global event where ministers and senior executives gather.

For this edition, our roster of 'cities of men' includes events in Abu Dhabi, Amsterdam, Birmingham and Manchester. To visit all of these would be an impressive amount of roaming, although I am sure the trip would be inspirational.

Those of us with less hunger for travel are blessed with the alternative option of simply reading through the articles found in this edition. Within these pages, we have plenty for readers to see and know, and all without needing a passport or having to face extensive delays in an airport departure lounge.

A journey through this issue of Inside Technology will quell your hungry heart with an impressive selection of news stories and company profiles from around the world. This edition has climates, councils and governments aplenty. **Happy roaming!**

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UNITED KINGDOM

NEXT-GEN CLIMATE TECH

Fourteen of the UK's most promising climate tech companies have been selected for EarthScale's second cohort, spanning biomaterials, energy, carbon removal, the built environment and the circular economy.

EarthScale's 12-month programme is UK-wide and supports IP-rich climate tech ventures to scale, navigate manufacturing and raise Series A funding. Among those selected for the programme's second year: sustainable sequins grown from cellulose, a mechanical stomach engineered to separate food waste at source and thermal drone technology described as the 'Google Maps' of building heat loss – with each company representing a considered and impactful response to a specific dimension of the climate crisis.

Collectively, the companies employ over 100 people and have raised in excess of £20 million. More than a third are based outside London, reflecting EarthScale's commitment to cultivating climate innovation across the whole of the UK.

The companies selected are Arda Biomaterials, Cellcraft, Radiant Matter, SAGES, Anzen, Blast Studio, Kestrix, Nellie Technologies, CircKit, Danu Robotics, PulpaTronics, Sorted, Vuala and Keep Energy Systems.

EarthScale exists to bridge the critical gap between prototype and commercialisation, a stage often underserved by traditional funding and support structures. The programme supports pre-Series A startups and spinouts, helping them advance their technical, manufacturing, and commercial readiness to secure Series A investment.

Led by Imperial College London and co-funded by the Research England Development Fund, EarthScale brings together a network of UK universities – Cranfield University, the University of Derby, the University of Exeter, the University of Leeds and the University of Nottingham – with further regional expansion planned.

The ventures enter the programme with meaningful commercial traction, working alongside some of the world's most recognised organisations, among them energy majors including E.ON and EDF; major retailers such as Amazon, M&S and Tesco; and global fashion brands including Stella McCartney, Balenciaga and Adidas. This depth of traction speaks to the real-world demand for the solutions they are building.

USA

FIFA WORLD CUP ROBOTICS

Hyundai Motor Company has announced its largest-ever deployment of mobility and robotics solutions for the FIFA World Cup 2026™, extending the legacy of its 27-year partnership with FIFA.

AS a long-standing FIFA partner, Hyundai Motor continues to build on nearly three decades of collaboration by expanding its role beyond mobility to include robotics and next-generation technologies, supporting tournament operations across 16 host cities in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

The 2026 tournament also marks the first major activation under Hyundai Motor's renewed role as FIFA's Official Robotics Partner, reinforcing the company's vision for smart mobility and innovation on the world stage.

"As FIFA prepares to host the largest World Cup ever – spanning three countries and 16 host cities – our 27-year partnership reflects a shared commitment to excellence, innovation and global collaboration," said Sungwon Jee, Executive Vice President and Global Chief Marketing Officer at Hyundai Motor Company.

As both a mobility and robotics partner, Hyundai Motor is proud to support tournament operations through seamless transportation and advanced robotics solutions that enhance the overall event experience."

The fleet, which includes 994 passenger vehicles and 506 buses, will support transportation for national teams, officials, tournament operations and media across 16 host cities in the United States, Canada and Mexico, helping enable seamless logistics and showcasing Hyundai Motor's large-scale mobility capabilities.

The FIFA World Cup 2026™ marks a transformative moment for Hyundai Motor's robotics strategy, with the first official deployment of Boston Dynamics Spot® robots at tournament venues – reflecting the company's expanded role as FIFA's Official Robotics Partner and its vision for the future of smart mobility and robotics.

This deployment highlights Hyundai Motor's focus on scalable, real-world robotics applications, improving operational efficiency and safety in complex, high-density environments.



COUNTRY FOCUS

Latest developments from the Japanese industry

JAPAN

NEW KICKS LAUNCHED IN JAPAN

Nissan Motor Co, Ltd. has announced the launch of the all-new Kicks in Japan. The Kicks has earned strong customer support thanks to its SUV-like presence, refined exterior design, as well as the powerful and smooth acceleration and high level of quietness delivered by Nissan's proprietary e-POWER hybrid system.

The all-new Kicks, now in its second generation, evolves further as a compact SUV suited for both everyday driving and leisure activities. It features a bold and dynamic exterior design, a high-quality interior and is now being offered with the third-generation e-POWER system, which significantly improves fuel efficiency. In addition, the model introduces Nissan's e-4ORCE electric all-wheel control technology for the first time in the Kicks lineup.

"Kicks is a core model for Nissan, and it plays an important role in delivering the value of electrification technologies to more customers; by introducing the third-generation e-POWER for the first time in the Japanese market," said Akira Sugimoto, corporate executive responsible for Japan Marketing & Sales.

The all-new Kicks features a completely updated powertrain, adopting a newly developed 5-in-1 e-POWER electric powertrain unit for the first time in the Japanese market. This unit modularises five core components – motor, generator, inverter, reducer and increaser – delivering improved compactness, reduced weight and increased rigidity. Combined with a 1.4-litre dedicated power-generation engine (HR14DDe), the entire powertrain achieves enhanced fuel efficiency and quietness.

The model is also equipped with Nissan's e-4ORCE electric-drive all-wheel control technology. By integrating high-torque motor output with brake control, the system delivers responsive cornering performance and a smooth, comfortable ride.

In addition, a high-rigidity body and newly designed suspension contribute to stable handling during cornering and reduced vibration over road surface abnormalities, ensuring a comfortable ride. A 'Snow Mode' (available on e-4ORCE models) is also newly introduced, enabling confident driving across various conditions, including snowy roads.

Latest developments from the French industry

FRANCE

FRANCE ADVANCES AI FUTURE

A year ago, at NVIDIA GTC Paris at VivaTech, France laid out plans to advance local AI – from new AI factories and national compute capacity to open frontier models and industrial platforms.

Now, that AI infrastructure is coming online. AI agents are running in production, startups are deploying applications and the French AI ecosystem is developing models, datasets and platforms designed around local languages, cultural context and European requirements.

France's AI ambitions are gaining momentum. Billions in investment commitments through France 2030, the 2025 AI Action Summit and this year's Choose France Summit are reinforcing the country's position as one of Europe's leading destinations for AI infrastructure.

As part of these efforts, Mistral is building a new 44-megawatt data centre in Bruyères-le-Châtel, a commune in northern France. Announced at GTC Paris last year, Mistral's first deployment is already operational with 18,000 NVIDIA GB200 systems – laying the foundation for the company's roadmap of 200 megawatts of compute capacity across Europe by 2027.

The NVIDIA Blackwell platform is designed to help AI factories maximise throughput within fixed power budgets, combining higher performance per watt silicon with software features that boost data centre throughput in power constrained environments.

Mistral is also working with French public investment bank Bpifrance, AI and advanced tech investment company MGX and NVIDIA to expand Campus AI, a network of AI factories anchored by a planned 1.4-gigawatt facility, making it one of Europe's largest AI campuses.

This momentum reflects a broader wave of AI infrastructure investment in France.

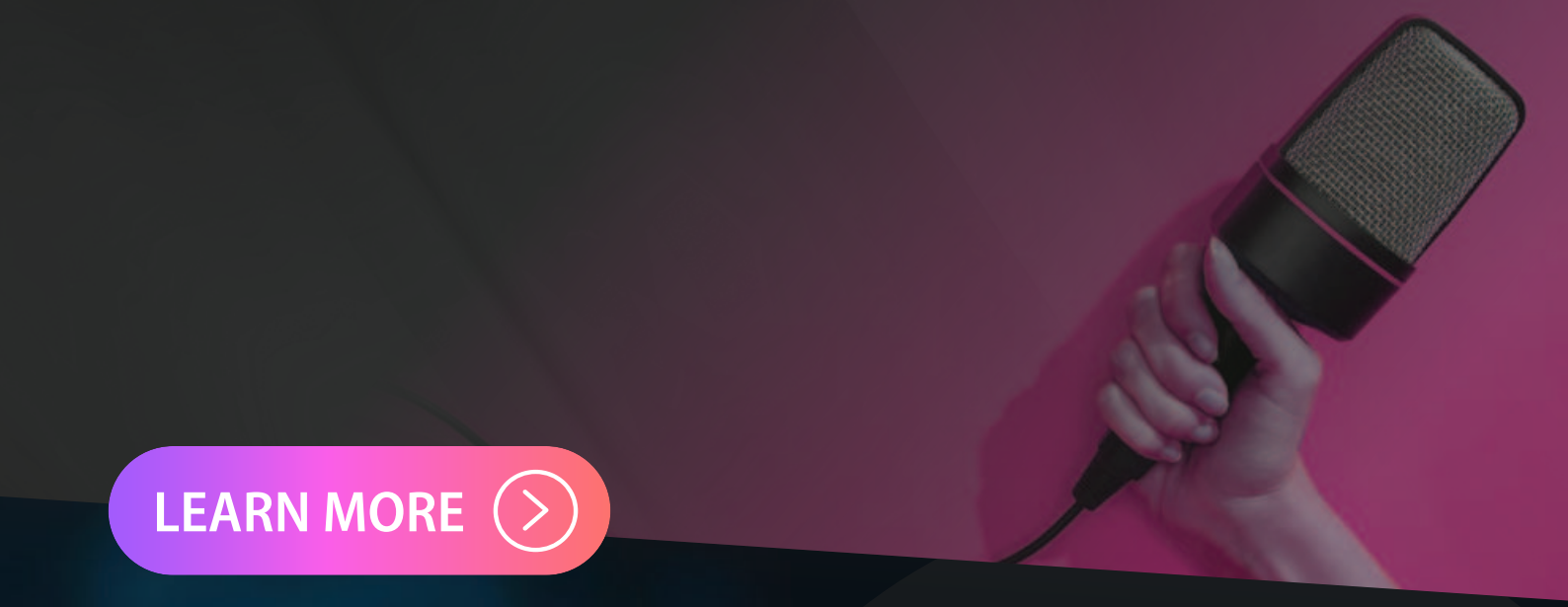
France's trajectory has moved from announcing its AI ambitions to deploying the infrastructure, models and applications needed to realise them. As new AI factories come online and adoption accelerates across industries, the country is emerging as one of Europe's most active environments for AI development.

EXPERT OPINION

Daniel Usifoh of Axiom Sustainability Software addresses supply chain challenges



The hidden climate challenge *and how to fix it*



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The sustainability industry is being driven by several key factors: incoming legislation (CBAM, UK SRS, and CSRD), the race to net zero and greater educational awareness of how important sustainability can be to a business and its bottom line. Daniel Usifoh, MSc, MCIPS, Co-Founder of Axiom Sustainability Software outlines a package of solutions.

When it comes to meeting net zero requirements (and staying ahead of incoming mandates), there is one statistic that truly stands out: for the vast majority of businesses across virtually every sector, 80% or more of their total carbon footprint originates within their supply chain.

If we are to make genuine, measurable progress toward global net zero targets, then we must confront this fact head-on. Managing supply chain sustainability is a business, environmental and operational challenge that needs to be tackled.

The Scope 3 paradox

To understand why the supply chain is such a monumental hurdle, we must look closely at Scope 3 emissions. While Scope 1 covers direct emissions from owned sources and Scope 2 covers purchased energy, Scope 3 represents all indirect emissions that occur in a company's value chain. This spans a wide range of activities, including the extraction of raw materials, global transportation and logistics, employee commuting, business travel, and even the end-of-life disposal of products by consumers.

EXPERT OPINION

Daniel Usifoh of Axiom Sustainability Software addresses supply chain challenges



For many organisations, Scope 3 represents a frustrating paradox. It is the area where a business has the most significant environmental impact, yet it is also the area where it has the least direct control.

Modern supply chains are inherently fragmented. A single product – whether it is a specialised chemical formulation, a piece of heavy machinery or a consumer item – may contain hundreds of inputs sourced from a global web of tier-one, tier-two and tier-three suppliers.

Tracking the environmental cost of these requires navigating a landscape dominated by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), many of which lack the internal resources, expertise or capital to accurately measure their own carbon output.

The data dilemma

One of the biggest obstacles companies face in addressing this 80% emissions gap is the sheer complexity of data collection. Traditionally, businesses have relied on 'spend-based' modelling to calculate Scope 3 emissions, using financial purchasing data and multiplying it by generalised industry emissions factors to estimate a carbon footprint.



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While spend-based calculations are a useful starting point, they are a blunt instrument. If you help a supplier transition their factory to 100% renewable energy, then a spend-based model will not reflect a carbon reduction unless you also spend less money with them. To drive true sustainability, organisations must transition to activity-based data: real, primary numbers pulled directly from the factories, transport routes and operations of their supply chain partners.

Historically, gathering this data has been an administrative nightmare. If a procurement team emails 500 different suppliers asking for their carbon footprints, then they will inevitably receive 500 different answers in 500 different formats. And, of course, many of those responses will simply be 'We don't know.' Attempting to manage this volume of fragmented data via manual spreadsheets is unsustainable and highly prone to human error.

Navigating this landscape

Attempting to manage this volume of fragmented data via manual spreadsheets is not just challenging, as new laws come into effect, it is becoming a massive compliance risk.

Across the UK and Europe, a raft of new regulations is fundamentally rewriting the rules of corporate disclosure. The EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)

About the author



Daniel Usifoh, MSc, MCIPS, is an experienced professional in sustainable procurement and technology, dedicated to helping organisations achieve their sustainability objectives. As the Co-Founder of Axiom Sustainability Software, Daniel's mission is to help businesses and their supply chains become more sustainable.

and the UK's evolving Climate-related Financial Disclosures are pushing businesses away from voluntary green claims and toward mandatory, audit-ready data. Under CSRD, large enterprises must now report on their 'double materiality' – detailing how climate change impacts their financial bottom line and how their operations and supply chains impact the planet.

Crucially, this includes the mandatory reporting of Scope 3 emissions. If your business operates within these jurisdictions, or if you are a supplier to a company that does, then you are in this requirement.

However, the pressure is not just coming from regulators; it is coming from the market itself. Major OEMs and enterprise buyers are actively auditing their supply chains, placing a premium on vendors who can provide transparent ESG data. Companies that fail to provide this transparency risk losing out on crucial contracts.

From guesswork to action

This is where digital innovation and sustainability technologies become indispensable. Addressing the supply chain emissions challenge requires moving beyond manual guesswork and embracing centralised, automated software solutions.

Advanced ESG reporting platforms, powered by AI and machine learning, are bridging the gap between enterprise ambition and supplier capability. By utilising dedicated sustainability software, companies can automate data collection. Centralised supplier portals enable vendors to submit their data directly to a unified hub. The software then applies standardised emission factors, eliminating the need for relentless email chasing and manual data entry.

Cloud-based platforms achieve real-time visibility by providing live dashboards of a company's carbon performance, helping procurement and sustainability teams instantly identify high-impact carbon hotspots. The best platforms also support SME suppliers by including built-in carbon calculators that help smaller suppliers measure their own footprints. By implementing these tools, enterprises can turn a daunting data request into a collaborative, value-added partnership.

Finally, technologies such as Digital Product Passports enable tracking a component's journey from origin to the final product, ensuring that sustainability claims are backed by a provable digital trail.

AI and machine learning further accelerate this broader process by identifying hidden emission patterns in massive datasets, forecasting the environmental impact of proposed procurement changes and intelligently suggesting low-carbon alternatives to current materials.



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All-in-one reporting

UK-based team

Expert guidance



The power of collaboration

While technology is the enabler, the true driver of sustainable supply chain management is human collaboration. No company can achieve net zero in isolation.

Effective sustainability hinges on aligning all involved parties – from raw material extractors and logistics providers to the end consumer – with a unified environmental strategy. Engaging with suppliers to set mutual targets, providing decarbonisation guidance and sharing the technological tools needed for accurate reporting builds a resilient, future-proof supply chain.

Addressing the 80% of emissions hiding within the supply chain is undoubtedly the most complex sustainability challenge modern businesses face. Yet, it is also the most significant opportunity. By combining collaborative partnerships with powerful digital ESG platforms, companies can transform Scope 3 from a regulatory burden into operational efficiency, market leadership and a genuinely sustainable future.

Axiom Sustainability Software

Axiom sustainability reporting software is designed to help organisations reduce their carbon emissions, achieve net zero quickly and accelerate their sustainability performance.

Axiom is a powerful, cloud-based sustainability and environmental accounting platform that helps businesses monitor, analyse and improve sustainability performance. It provides a comprehensive suite of tools to help organisations across a wide range of industries gain complete visibility and control over their sustainability performance.

The importance of a supportive network

inside TECHNOLOG

QUESTION: How would you describe the importance of collaboration with **supplie**

"Our collaborative supplier framework is essential to meeting both our goals and those of our clients. Our role is to solve client problems, but we cannot do that without our partners and suppliers. It is our relationships with them that allow us to provide these comprehensive capabilities.

With our structured engagement model, we ensure that we can work as effectively with niche specialists as we do with global multinational companies. This agility empowers our clients with the latest technical knowledge, ensuring that every service delivered is optimised for speed, security and real-world impact."

Kat Hopkins, SVP HR, Atos

"We are grateful for the partnerships it has built with the likes of the Sustainable Healthcare Coalition, The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry and the Association of British HealthTech Industries. These organisations have been fundamental to our journey."

Andy Clarke, Head of Sustainability & Public Affairs UK & Ireland, Bayer

"We really value when our partners invest their time into understanding the higher education sector. This allows for a constructive dialogue where concepts can be tested and refined. Within the university environment, we must weigh our decisions against institutional values, purpose and user experience. Having these collaborative relationships with our partners enables us to make these choices for the good of the entire university.

Our focus is on guaranteeing that every pound spent delivers a clear return, enriching the lives of our students and wider community."

Pauline Howie, Director of IT Service Delivery, Newcastle University

"Our partnerships are not transactional; they are transformational. I view a partnership as long-term. It needs to be sustainable, and I surround myself only with partners who will take my clients higher. This is the philosophy I bring to every engagement through JP Global Consulting."

Joanna Pamphilis, Founder & CEO, JP Global Consulting



Y MINDS

rs and **partners**?

"These relationships are very important to us. Our technology partners' expertise in software development allows us to manage full-scale business transformation, program organisation, systems integration and end-user adoption. For prospective clients, we also host joint innovation centres with our partners to showcase real-world successes, demonstrating the potential of our services combined with their modern software."

Johan Smits, Partner,
KPMG

"There are a lot of cybersecurity initiatives coming down the line, and we are partnering with specific cyber companies to ensure all our data is protected. We dedicate a significant amount of time to deciphering what companies are best for our needs, partnering with only the best service providers that will keep our students' data safe."

Carl Fong,
Chief Technology & Information Security Officer,
Orange County Department of Education

"We established clear win-win partnerships, sharing UX feedback and roadmap ideas while gaining increased transparency on roadmap priorities and access to their strongest resources. This collaboration even extended to our IT hub in Bangalore, where teams worked together to build internal technical expertise."

Fiona Paddon, Head of Digital & Commercial Enablement, Shell

"We prioritise partners aligned with ESG principles, strengthening supply-chain resilience and sustainability. Supplier quality, technological capability and delivery reliability directly impact product performance and certification, making them critical to our success."

Charalampos Karakidis, International Sales Director, Olympia Electronics

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EVENTS PARTNERSHIPS

A selection of future events, previews for GITEX AI Everything Abu Dhabi and GITEX Global, then reviews of DTX Manchester, Money20/20 Europe and Smart Manufacturing Week.

Upcoming EVENTS

AIMCS EXPO

22-23 September 2026

The 4th Middle East Asset Integrity Management Conference & Showcase (AIMCS EXPO 2026), co-located with the Upstream Digital Transformation & Smart Operations Conference & Exhibition (UDT 2026), will take place at Rixos Marina, Abu Dhabi. The event brings together leading experts and decision-makers in asset integrity, pipeline integrity and well integrity.

For more info click here

Smart Retail Tech Expo

11-12 November 2026

Smart Retail Tech Expo is the leading event for retail innovation in the UK. From the latest advancements in AI, automation, retail infrastructure solutions to omnichannel retail technologies, CRM and unified commerce services, Smart Retail Tech Expo is aimed at creating seamless and scalable omnichannel experiences.

For more info click here

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GITEX AI Everything
5 – 7 October – Abu Dhabi

GITEX GLOBAL
7 – 11 December – UAE

09-12 November 2026

Web Summit Lisbon

Web Summit Lisbon 2026 will unite over 71,000 attendees, including 1,857 investors and 2,725 startups, alongside 900+ speakers. The four-day event features high-profile keynotes, panel sessions, masterclasses from brands like Meta and Huawei, and the famed Pitch competition.

For more info click here

BEYOND

23-25 November 2026

Held in MediaCity in Manchester, the BEYOND Festival and Conference is a multi-day programme designed to spark ideas and turn them into action. Visitors will hear from leading voices working at the edge of culture, research and emerging technology.

For more info click here

07-08 December 2026

GIANT Health

The GIANT (Global Innovation and New Technology) Health Event is the UK's foremost NHS innovation festival, featuring 6+ distinct shows. Visitors will network, engage with 100s of world-class speakers, experience immersive presentations, witness leading health-tech start-ups pitch to investors, and much more.

For more info click here

An overview of GITEX AI Everything Abu Dhabi

GITEX AI EVERYTHING ABU DHABI

Known as the place where the world convenes in new intelligence, GITEX AI Everything Abu Dhabi runs from 5th to 7th October at the ADNEC Centre and is expected to be one of the largest applied AI gatherings in the Middle East.

AS the world's leading AI show and AI event, GITEX AI Everything Abu Dhabi delivers the largest global showcase of AI solutions ready to transform every industry. Uniting enterprise tech leaders, startups, policymakers, investors and visionaries, the event brings together the forces shaping the future of artificial intelligence at scale.

This is where applied AI innovation is revealed, debated and deployed – through breakthrough technologies, high-impact discussions and bold ideas defining the next generation of intelligent societies. As the definitive global meeting point for the AI ecosystem, AI Everything Abu Dhabi connects technology, investments, policy and ambition to turn intelligence into real-world impact.



Bringing together governments, technology companies, startups, investors and enterprise leaders, GITEX AI Everything Abu Dhabi is grounded in research, outcomes and real-world deployments, helping advance the global transition toward AI-native nations, with live use-cases spanning government, health-care, energy, mobility, finance and security.

Abu Dhabi acts as the perfect backdrop for this exciting event, as a city that is known for being the power centre shaping the world's AI-native future. A reputation that is expected to soar thanks to the ongoing plans to invest AED 13 billion into making Abu Dhabi home to the world's first fully AI-native government by 2027.

A busy schedule

The programme opens with a high-level leadership AI Summit on 5th October, followed by two dynamic days on 6th to 7th October featuring an AI exhibition, conferences,



hands-on workshops, investor-startup match-making and high-value networking. Across a vibrant expo floor, attendees will experience first-of-their-kind AI breakthroughs designed to accelerate innovation, improve efficiency, reduce costs and transform industries.

AI Everything Abu Dhabi features a powerful ecosystem of co-located verticals including AI Government Everything, Data Centre Intelligence Infrastructure, AI Semicon Everything, AI Quantum Everything, Physical AI Everything, AI Cyber Valley Everything, and AI StartX. Together, these platforms drive collaboration, practical adoption and measurable impact – enabling global participants to explore AI solutions that unlock productivity, fuel growth and deliver long-term competitive advantage.

For example, attendees can look forward to learning more about the ways in which AI is supporting government initiatives in the AI Government Everything arena. Labelled as the place where public sector transformation meets frontier intelligence, policymakers, tech leaders and civic innovators are expected to convene in this area to highlight the AI most likely to elevate governance, optimise services and enhance national resilience.

For those looking to explore the latest innovations, AI StartX is the number one AI startup programme.

The newest addition

AI Everything Abu Dhabi is also expected to ramp up the region's shift into the age of physical AI through the addition of Physical AI Everything, a new dedicated arena designed to be the epicentre for AI-powered robotics and intelligent systems that move, sense and interact with the environment.

These are just a few of the exciting programmes planned, and with networking and commercial engagement central to the event, AI Everything Abu Dhabi is the place to go if you are looking to build relationships, evaluate vendors or explore new opportunities across the world of AI.

To find out more **click here**

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VP Ayman Hassan discusses GITEX GLOBAL

GITEX GLOBAL

Running from 7th to 11th December, GITEX GLOBAL is the platform where next-generation technologies converge to inspire, connect and accelerate the future. Reimagined into a frontier platform that accelerates the pace of global tech growth and the rising ambitions of AI economies worldwide, GITEX GLOBAL will bring together leading experts from across the entire technology sector. Ayman Hassan, Vice President – Commercial, provides an insight into GITEX GLOBAL 2026.



AYMAN HASSAN, VICE PRESIDENT

What makes this year's GITEX GLOBAL the boldest reinvention of the world's largest tech and startup show?

GITEX GLOBAL 2026 represents a breakthrough in how global innovation ecosystems converge, evolve and expand – propelling the world's largest tech and AI show into a new dimension of scale, ambition, impact and immersive experiences.

We are moving to a landmark new home at Expo City Dubai – Dubai Exhibition Centre, shifting to December dates and reimagining the format. The programme will open with a high-level summit on 7th December, followed by an industry deep-dive expo and conference from 8th to 11th December. The ambition is to architect an event that does not just reflect the AI economy but actively accelerates it. The shift to December is a strategic repositioning that places GITEX at the heart of Dubai's vibrant tourism season; offering the international tech executives and investors in

7th – 11th *December*

THE WORLD'S LARGEST TECH & AI ECOSYSTEM NETWORK

attendance a chance to explore the city's distinctive lifestyle and cultural calendar, providing the perfect backdrop for more immersive and longer stays.

GITEX GLOBAL will open with GITEX Scale Summit. What can attendees expect from this conference?

The Scale Summit will be a fully-dedicated day of outcomes-focused leadership dialogues between key stakeholders of the global AI and tech economy. The agenda is built around the decisive questions shaping AI economies right now: governance, data sovereignty and data centre project investments, alongside global AI use-cases across critical sectors covering healthcare, finance, education, cybersecurity and the funding strategies fuelling the next wave of global tech startups.

The idea was to designate a full day of high-level conversations, strategic alignment and policy deep dives, before the show transitions into the business, commercialisation and application themes of AI, quantum and emerging tech across the expo from 8th to 11th December.

What new features and elements are being introduced at this year's GITEX GLOBAL, and how do these additions reflect the evolving needs of the technology industry?

The 2026 edition goes significantly deeper into the structural imperatives of the AI economy. We are expanding the show's scope to address the technologies driving the intelligence economy and the critical infrastructure and resources that underpin them – sectors like data, mobility, physical AI and new energy, which have moved from supporting roles to centre stage in today's macroeconomic context.

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GITEX GLOBAL

There are several exciting new programmes in development, and we will share more details as we get closer to December.

What are the key highlights of the event that attendees should not miss?

From 8th to 11th December, the show floor at Expo City Dubai will showcase the most frontier-pushing innovations in AI, quantum technologies, biosciences and longevity tech, physical AI (robotics), and much more. Reuniting GITEX GLOBAL and Expand North Star in one integrated location creates one unparalleled platform with tech giants, governments, startups, investors and founders.

For those attending from international markets, the December



experience transforms the trip into something far more valuable than an event visit. Dubai in December is a destination in itself.

What market trends is this year's event expected to focus on?

The central narrative of 2026 is the acceleration of the global AI economy, moving from proof of concept to real-world industrial deployment at scale. That means the conversations will go beyond AI models and algorithms, into the infrastructure required to sustain them: compute, data architecture, clean energy and smart mobility. Supply chain reconfiguration and geopolitical pressures are reshaping how technology infrastructure is being planned and financed globally. GITEX GLOBAL 2026 is oriented precisely around these ongoing realities.

We are also looking closely at new advancements in quantum, biotech and the intersection of AI across industries through our co-located shows: GITEX Cyber Valley (cybersecurity), GITEX Quantum Expo (GQX), Physical AI (Robotics Park), Expand North Star (startups) and more upcoming verticals to be announced later.

What part of GITEX GLOBAL are you personally looking forward to the most?

The move to Expo City Dubai is definitely one of the most anticipated moments, not just for us but also for the global tech community. Placing the world's largest tech and AI event inside a venue undergoing a US$2.7 billion expansion, adjacent to the world's biggest airport development project, tells the world exactly where this show is headed. Beyond being a venue, Dubai Exhibition Centre is the centrepiece of a rising mega city hub and integrated in Dubai's 2040 Urban Master Plan.

Is there anything not covered by the above questions that you would like to share with our readers? ↘

To find out more **click here**

VP Ayman Hassan discusses GITEX GLOBAL

I want the readers of Inside Technology to explore the scale and depth of what GITEX represents. In 2025, GITEX GLOBAL convened tech and AI communities from over 180 countries, alongside 6,800 enterprises and startups and 400+ government entities; placing GITEX as a unifying platform with seismic impact by the merit of the stakeholders it converges across sectors and continents. The business outcomes finalised, the investments committed and the policy frameworks that are shaped drive positive momentum for industries across emerging and advanced digital economies.

At its core, our mission is to evolve GITEX into a trusted catalyst of empowerment, competitiveness, and prosperity in the digital age, equipping governments and companies with the ability to internalise innovation, scale across borders and sharpen their digital capacity for what comes next.

Quote

Placing the **world's largest tech and AI event** inside a venue undergoing a,

US$2.7 BILLION EXPANSION

adjacent to the **world's biggest airport development project**, tells the world exactly where this show is headed

AYMAN HASSAN, VICE PRESIDENT



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Our experiences of DTX Manchester

INSIDE TECHNOLOGY AT DTX MANCH

The 2026 edition of DTX Manchester was held from 29th to 30th of April 2026 at Manchester Central. Jennifer Davies from Inside Technology attended the North's biggest digital and IT event.

AS an event, DTX is for the people making real change happen – choosing the right tech, rolling it out and getting results. This is the event for the people shaping the transformation journey in business. Transformation in this context means more than just technology, it is about skills, culture, accessibility, ethics and sustainability: the foundations of long-term business success.

"DTX Manchester set the stage for highlighting the innovation happening in the North, and the buzz around this was palpable," Jennifer explained. "The regional focus is important and reminds us all to explore innovation hubs beyond the typical places we tend to focus on, such as London, Silicon Valley, etc."

Networking opportunities

Run as part of Manchester Tech Week, DTX Manchester brought together the tech community to swap insights and explore the latest solutions. The overall goal is to help visitors feel more confident about what comes next. The value of personal interactions at the show was clear to Jennifer.

"I had the pleasure of interviewing nine individuals on-site this year," she said. "The networking experience was excellent. The organisers did a superb job of creating opportunities to connect between attendees, speakers and exhibitors."





IESTER



The busy exhibition floor featuring Platinum Sponsor, ManageEngine

DTX is for the people **making real change happen** – choosing the right tech, rolling it out and getting results

Jennifer Davies, Inside Technology

View of a packed audience from the Main Stage of DTX Manchester



Like many events, DTX Manchester offered an app to help attendees manage networking opportunities. The Reg.buzz event app from LiveBuzz offered a frictionless user experience for DTX Manchester, helping exhibitors and visitors make the most of their time at the show.

"The DTX event app was released earlier than most, giving me ample time to organise my schedule for Manchester," continued Jennifer. "It was easy to send a message through the app and set up a time to meet on-site."

With such a broad range of companies and technologies in attendance, it was difficult for Jennifer to pick out a standout experience. Unsurprisingly, given the event's



Jennifer Davies with Pete Hannah, VP of Sales Western Europe at Object First

focus on networking, it was one of the meetings arranged via the Reg.buzz app that stood out for Jennifer.

"If I had to pick just one highlight, it would be my conversation with Object First," she said, "Specifically, the anecdote about meeting a prospective customer at last years' DTX Manchester (Mersey Rail), then subsequently signing a deal with that customer.

"When Object First met the customer again at DTX Manchester 2026, the Mersey Rail team shared their experience of the contract, delivering an excellent on-site testimonial. This really sums up what DTX Manchester is all about: the opportunities on offer and what can happen when the right audience is connected with the right ideas."

LEARN MORE

Event summary

Just as it was a challenge to pick a single highlight, so too did Jennifer struggle to summarise her DTX Manchester experience. Given the high profile of AI in the current media ecosystem, it was no surprise that this topic was a significant takeaway.

"The industry is moving beyond the initial hype of AI – AI for everything," she explained. "We're now in a space where the conversation is geared towards questions exploring why and where do we need AI, what do we want it to do, what will be the benefit, and how do we make it successful at scale."

Consideration of success at scale leans into another of Jennifer's insights from DTX Manchester: that people, culture and leadership are still right at the centre of successful digital programmes.

"Also, IT leaders are faced with the incredible challenge of navigating a flooded SaaS







Panel discussion on 'The new border reality; confronting geopolitics, data sovereignty, and supply chain risk

landscape, then identifying the right solution at the right time," Jennifer continued. "This is where attending events like DTX can be immensely helpful.

"Finally, cyber resilience is at the heart of this rapidly evolving tech landscape. To quote from a conversation I had on the day: a cyber strategy must incorporate both resilience and remediation; not only how to protect yourself, but how to recover afterwards."

Looking ahead to 2027, Jennifer shared her advice to anyone planning to attend the next event: "DTX Manchester is a hub for information and ideas that extends beyond the normal innovation hot spots in the UK – go for fresh ideas and introductions into new and exciting vendors, as well as some very well thought out panel discussions.

"It seems obvious, but it's so valuable to spend a good amount of time beforehand exploring the considerable exhibitor list and speaking agenda to direct your focus when you arrive. However, also make room for serendipity: leave yourself time to explore the event floor in case something new crops up that you haven't seen before."

It seems obvious, but it's so valuable to spend a good amount of time beforehand **exploring the considerable exhibitor list and speaking agenda** to direct your focus when you arrive and getting results

Jennifer Davies, Inside Technology

Jennifer with the team from Just After Midnight



EVENT REVIEW

A summary of Money20/20 Europe

MONEY20/20 EUROP

Money20/20 Europe ran from 2nd to 4th June. This was where the entire money ecosystem – banks, payments, tech, startups, retail, policy, crypto, cybersecurity and beyond – united to make history. Held in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, bold ideas were born and powerful partnerships were sealed.

Money20/20 has wrapped its Europe show in Amsterdam after three jam-packed days of the boldest conversations and biggest shifts in the European financial landscape. With thousands of attendees from over 2,200 companies and nearly 100 countries, Money20/20 Europe has proved one thing: Europe is not playing catch-up – it is shaping what is next.

The event stages showcased a lineup of 450 industry-leading speakers from 40 countries, with women representing 45% of all speakers. Compelling keynotes from financial powerhouses included Steven van Rijswijk, CEO at ING; Evelien Witlox, Director of Digital Euro at ECB; and TS Anil, CEO at Monzo, to name a few.

Financial regulators gathered at the exclusive inaugural Money20/20 Policy Exchange for closed-door discussions aimed at accelerating innovation across three critical sectors: cryptocurrency regulation, Open Finance data access frameworks, and cross-border policy developed in partnership with the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

Event highlights

Several major announcements were launched live – including from Revolut, Klarna & Visa, Mastercard & Deutsche Bank, Enfuce & Shuttle, Kraken & Ivy, LSEG, NYSE, and NomuPay. Money20/20 (in partnership with FXC Intelligence) also launched the report 'How Will Europe's Money Move in the Future? 2025's View of 2035.' A forward-looking, data-driven analysis of how Europe's cross-border payments ecosystem is set to transform over the next decade.

The show also unveiled eight startups set to disrupt the industry, with Sinpex taking home the award for Money20/20's Startup Pitch competition. The startups taking the briefing stage also included: Oscilar, Abbey-Cross, Indicio, Carbon Equity, Esca, Nekod and ChainComply.

Key themes from the show included the accelerating momentum behind stablecoins and digital currencies; AI's fast-moving impact on fraud, identity and personalised finance; and open banking's evolution into an open data economy. Industry leaders debated Europe's role in global fintech

To find out more click here

competitiveness, while regulation and sovereignty emerged as defining forces shaping the region's financial future.

Show feedback

"This year's show was alive with optimism and intent to create the future of finance," said Suzy Pallett, Executive Vice President of Money20/20 Europe. "We saw regulators, banks, startups and tech giants taking decisive action and making bold moves that will transform tomorrow's financial landscape. The energy was electric, and the connections made here will shape what comes next as we collectively create the future of Europe's financial ecosystem."

"Money20/20 continues to be a key milestone for us each year, making it the perfect stage to announce our new partnership with Deutsche Bank," said Greg Ulrich, Chief AI Officer at Mastercard. "This will bring open banking-powered account-to-account payments to merchants across Europe."

Money20/20, Fintech.TV, Cheddar, and NYSE launched 'Taking Stock' a game-changing new fintech show set to launch in mid-August, broadcasting live from the NYSE trading floor on 11 Wall Street and from major fintech events worldwide.

"The NYSE has long been a platform for partnership, where innovation begins and transformation takes shape," said Joe Benarroch, Head of Content, Media Partnerships & Distribution, NYSE Group. "The launch of 'Taking Stock', in collaboration with Money20/20, Fintech.TV and Cheddar, is a testament to our commitment to bringing fresh perspectives to the market conversation. Together, we're opening new doors for storytelling and insight at the intersection of business, culture, technology and finance."



EVENT REVIEW

A quick summary of Smart Manufacturing Week 2026

SMART MANUFACTURING WEEK

London Tech Week is one of Europe's largest and most influential technology festivals, bringing together global leaders in innovation, investment, enterprise technology and public policy. Taking place each year in the capital, it serves as a focal point for the UK's technology ecosystem, as well as a meeting ground for founders, investors, corporates and policymakers from around the world.

Across the main two days, Smart Manufacturing Week welcomed over 13,500 manufacturing and engineering professionals, along with more than 450 solution providers. This created an unrivalled platform for ideas, technology and collaboration.

Curated by The Manufacturer and built on deep, data-led industry insight, Smart Manufacturing Week 2026 directly addressed the realities facing manufacturers today. Against a backdrop of ongoing economic volatility, rising energy and input costs, geopolitical disruption, skills shortages, and accelerating digital and sustainability pressures, the event provided a vital forum for practical solutions, honest debate and real-world progress.

Alongside returning favourites such as the two-day Manufacturing Digitalisation Summit, Best of British Showcase, STEM Programme, Visitor Trails, Innovation Alley and more, 2026 introduced a powerful line-up of new features designed to bring innovation to life on the show floor.

Event highlights

The Factory of the Future presented a compelling vision of next-generation production in action, featuring an immersive VR-enabled factory built from individual, modular components. Developed in partnership with AMIC, the Advanced Manufacturing Innovation Centre, Factory of the Future brought together digital manufacturing, automation, AI, digital twins, cybersecurity, sustainability and connected supply chains into one integrated manufacturing story.

This year, visitors were able to experience the concept created in partnership with AMIC in a virtual way. On the busy show floor, the AMIC team showcased how modern manufacturing systems can respond, adapt and optimise in real time.

2026 also saw an expansion of the Ambassador Programmes, bringing even more respected voices into the heart of the event. These ambassadors contributed insight, hosted discussions, championing innovation and connection through dedicated



networking moments. These programmes helped to inspire both current leaders and the next generation of manufacturing talent.

Another highlight was the FightFest presented by Accu. This high-energy, live robotics battle tournament saw engineering teams go head-to-head in front of the crowd. This event was fast-paced, competitive and great fun for spectators.

A networking festival

Attracting an audience of over 13,500 manufacturing and engineering professionals, Smart Manufacturing Week is the UK's leading event to connect with peers from across the full industrial landscape. Attendees had backgrounds from design and engineering through to smart production and maintenance.

Thus, visitors experienced high-energy networking, including a vibrant drinks reception with live music. Throughout the event, the atmosphere blended business with a festival feel, creating the perfect environment to build relationships, expand networks and engage with the industry over three packed days.

Indeed, the whole event featured a vibrant festival atmosphere, blending cutting edge technology with live demos, music, street food and informal networking. Visitors could move between buzzing stages, interactive zones and relaxed lounges, meeting innovators, sharing ideas and discovering new solutions in an energetic, collaborative environment that truly felt like a celebration.

With Smart Manufacturing Week finished for 2026, it is time to mark your calendar for the return of the event on 09th to 10th June 2027. Once again, this show will bring together the people, technologies and ideas shaping the future of UK manufacturing and engineering. Designed to support organisations at every stage of their smart manufacturing journey, Smart Manufacturing Week 2027 will connect strategy, innovation and practical implementation. ■

To find out more **click here**

Feature Focus
CYBERSECURITY

This edition of Inside Technology includes an introduction to cybersecurity, with an expert opinion examining how security counters hybrid threats and a special report reviewing cybersecurity in the UK and EU, along with a selection of news stories.

EXPERT OPINION

Richard Hilson examines how security counters hybrid threats

Critical infrastructur in the age of hybrid t

The UK's Critical National Infrastructure (CNI) is entering a converged threat era – one where cyber, physical and aerial risks are overlapping attack surfaces targeting the same high-value assets. Furthermore, data centres have been formally designated as CNI, elevating both their strategic importance and their exposure to attack. Richard Hilson of PFL Access Management examines how CNI security has evolved, now there is a pressing need to protect distributed, often unmanned, systems across land, air and digital layers.

Historically, organisations responsible for critical assets have approached security in distinct domains or silos. Cybersecurity teams protect networks and data, physical security teams manage access control and perimeter protection, while airspace, in most cases, has remained largely ungoverned – until the past decade or so.

But the structure, and manner of threats, has evolved somewhat. According to the UK's National Cyber Security Centre, (NCSC) the country is now facing around four nationally-significant cyber incidents per week, many linked to hostile state activity. At the same time, geopolitical tensions are increasingly playing out through infrastructure disruption, both physical and digital.

We are living in the converged threat era, and attackers are not constrained by organisational silos any longer. Rather they are actively exploiting the gaps between these silos, and hybrid threats (whether state-backed, or criminal) are combining multiple factors to achieve their objectives.



To find out more click here

e security hreats

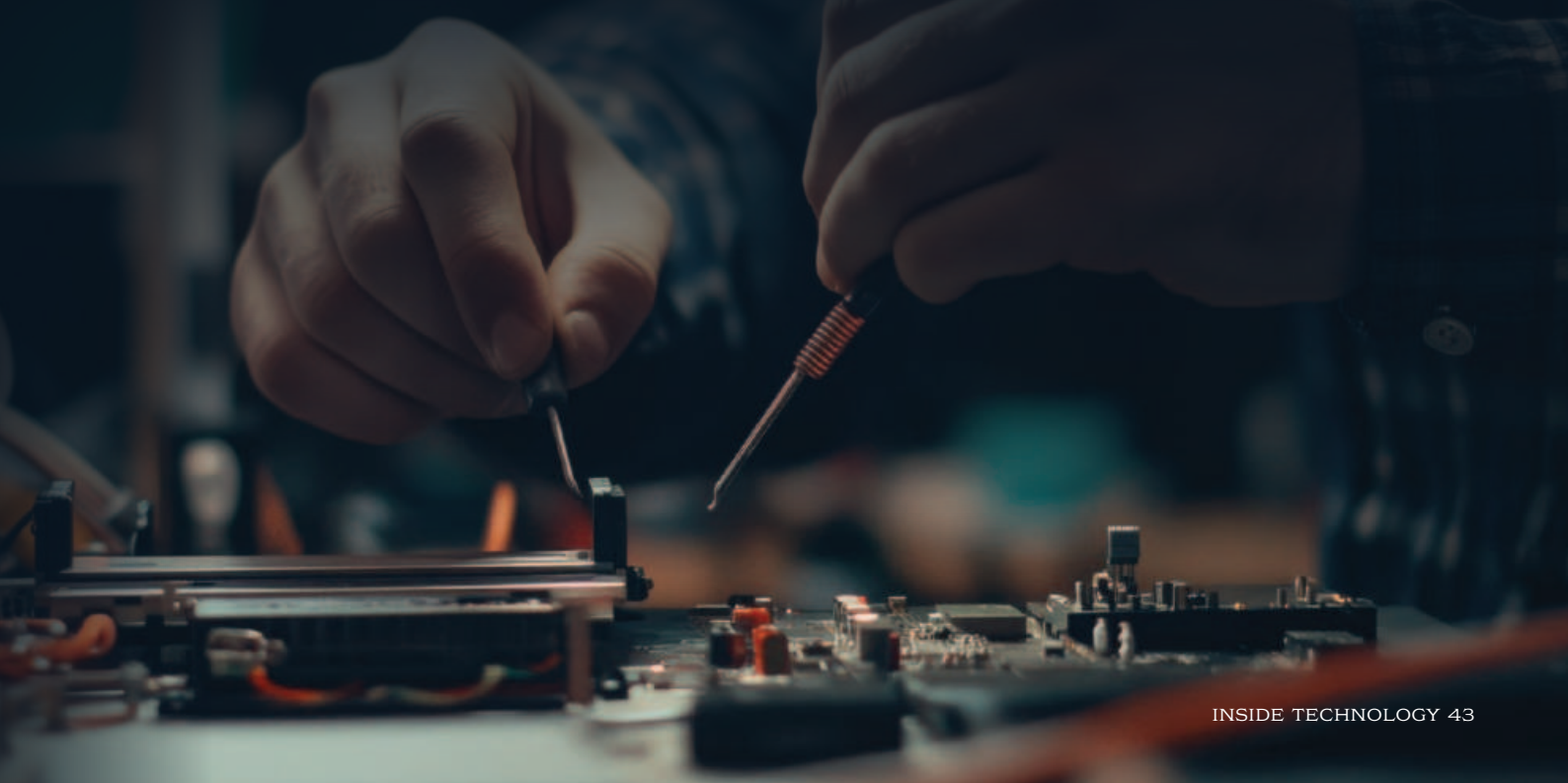
Drone incidents near sensitive UK sites have more than doubled year-on-year, demonstrating how low-cost, accessible technology can now bypass traditional perimeter controls entirely. The physical infrastructure underpinning the digital economy remains exposed – with 95% of global data traffic dependent on subsea cables vulnerable to disruption.

Hybrid threats in practice

A typical campaign might begin with cyber reconnaissance, identifying vulnerabilities in IT or operational technology (OT) environments. This may be followed by physical surveillance, potentially conducted via drones, to map access points, movement patterns or security weaknesses.

Securing high-value infrastructure

For CNI environments, which are often lightly staffed and in remote or hard to reach locations, the security challenges have escalated. Data centres are a prime example. While they underpin the digital economy, many operate with minimal on-site personnel, relying on remote management and automation.



EXPERT OPINION

Richard Hilson examines how security counters hybrid threats

There are now between 11,000 and 12,000 data centres globally, supporting everything from financial services and cloud computing to AI workloads and critical government systems. In the UK alone, the sector generates around £4.7 billion in annual gross value added and supports more than 43,000 jobs, with projections suggesting it could unlock a further £44 billion in economic impact by 2035. However, this has also made them increasingly attractive targets.

Recent incidents highlight this growing risk. In 2024 and 2025, several high-profile cyberattacks targeted data centre operators and cloud providers, disrupting services and exposing vulnerabilities in interconnected systems.

Many modern facilities are designed to run on remote monitoring, automation and centralised control systems. While this delivers efficiency, it also creates conditions where threats can go undetected for longer periods. This is the same with other areas of CNI, including energy infrastructure, transport networks and logistics hubs with remote assets and reduced human presence all contributing to expanding risk.

State-backed groups increasingly operate through intermediaries, such as criminal networks, to allow them to obscure their involvement while still achieving their objectives. Likewise, those with a purely criminal intent are adopting techniques traditionally associated with nation states, further blurring the lines.

To combat this, we are now seeing how organisations approach potential threats that are coordinated, adaptive and designed to exploit both technical vulnerabilities and organisational blind spots.

Despite this shift, many security strategies are fragmented, and physical security systems often operate independently of cybersecurity platforms. Access control data is not always integrated with wider threat intelligence, and airspace monitoring, where it exists, is rarely connected to ground-based systems outside governmental and military circles.

In converged threat environments, this becomes a liability, because an isolated




Richard Hilson of PFL Access Management

access control system may detect unauthorised entry, but without integration into broader monitoring frameworks, it cannot provide context. Furthermore, a cybersecurity platform may identify unusual network activity, but without visibility of physical access points, it may miss a critical link in the chain.

The same applies to drone activity; detection alone is insufficient if it is not connected to incident response protocols or wider security systems.

A multi-layered model

Security is evolving into a multi-layered, intelligence-led model, reflecting the reality of hybrid threats and converged risk. At ground level, this now looks like robust perimeter protection and intelligent access control. Modern systems go beyond basic entry management, incorporating real-time data, identifying verification and integrating with wider security platforms. The goal is a 360-degree view of control access, where we have a full understanding of it, who is on site, why they are there and whether that activity aligns with anticipated patterns.

The CNI community and security suppliers are also on the front foot in addressing the growing airspace gap. Counter-unmanned aerial system capabilities, including drone detection and mitigation, are becoming essential to CNI security.

Equally important is the digital layer, with continuous monitoring of IT and OT environments providing visibility into network activity, system performance and potential compromise. In sectors such as energy, transport and data centres, where operational systems are increasingly connected, this visibility is essential to maintaining both security and resilience.

This enables organisations to achieve real-time situational awareness, where data from multiple sources is collected and analysed to provide a comprehensive view of risk. An access control event can be linked to network activity, and drone detection can trigger automated responses across physical and digital systems – and ultimately, patterns can be identified.

This approach is increasingly aligned with the direction of policy and regulation across governments and international bodies. This includes NATO and the EU, which are placing greater emphasis on the protection of CNI, given the economic and political importance of such assets.

Perimeter defence alone is no longer sufficient, nor is a purely cyber-focused strategy. Instead, organisations will continue to adopt a layered approach that recognises the interconnected nature of modern, hybrid threats and infrastructure.

The end of strategy-led cybersecurity policy

Cybersecurity is no longer simply IT issue. In the UK, it has become part of economic policy, regulations and board-level decision-making. At the same time, the risk environment is moving quickly. AI is now baked into the problem, making attacks faster, cheaper and harder to spot. Inside Technology examined how the UK government is responding.

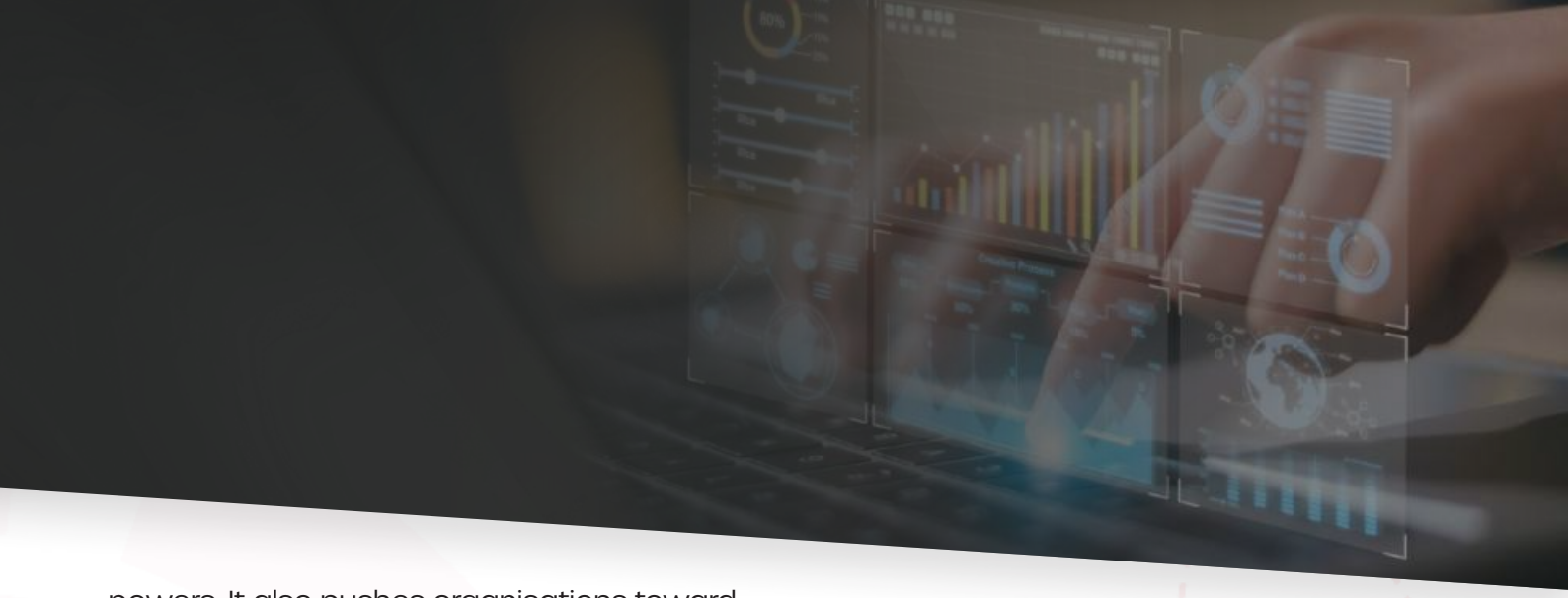
The UK's approach to cybersecurity is shifting into an enforcement-led phase. The National Cyber Security Strategy 2022 remains the core strategic framework, setting the government's long-term direction toward 2030. What is changing is how that strategy is being delivered in practice, through regulation, enforcement and updated expectations for organisations.

A changing picture

The biggest signal of that shift is the Cyber Security and Resilience Bill, currently passing through Parliament. This bill updates and expands on the old Network and Information Systems Regulations from 2018, which aimed to address threats posed to network and information systems, and therefore improve the functioning of the digital economy.

The key change now is how cyber risk is being understood. Rather than focusing on the internal mechanisms of a single organisation, the framework covers everything connected to a business: suppliers, Managed Service Providers, data centres and the wider digital supply chain.

That broader scope comes with tougher incident reporting rules and stronger enforcement



powers. It also pushes organisations toward continuous compliance, meaning high level cybersecurity security must be always upheld.

A big reason for all this is how quickly the threat landscape has changed. AI has lowered the barrier to entry for cyberattacks. Phishing emails are more convincing, reconnaissance is automated and deepfakes can now be used to impersonate executives or influence decisions. What used to take considerable time and skill can now be done with minimal effort, and often at a serious scale.

This is where the UK shift toward resilience comes in. The idea is simple: breaches will happen, so the priority must be in limiting damage and recovering quickly. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), which sits within GCHQ, is central to this policy. It provides guidance, threat intelligence and practical support during incidents. The NCSC has been consistent in its view that disruption is now unavoidable for critical services.

The irony is that while AI helps attackers, it also strengthens defenders, so AI is also accelerating developments on the cyber-security side. Policy is now being shaped around that balance. The NCSC and wider industry are increasingly using machine learning programs for detecting unusual behaviour, spotting anomalies and speeding up incident response.

The Cyber Security and Resilience Bill embeds flexibility, so rules can be updated more quickly through secondary legislation. This is particularly significant given that the ever-evolving threat landscape does not move on parliamentary timescales.

EU policy

For businesses operating across the EU, the contrast with the UK is becoming clearer. The EU's NIS2 Directive takes a more structured, prescriptive approach, expanding coverage across sectors and tightening rules around governance, reporting and supply chain risk. The EU Cyber Resilience Act goes further, pushing security into the design stage of products and software.

Both regions are moving in the same direction, though. The focus is on greater accountability, more supply chain scrutiny, faster reporting and more responsibility sitting with senior leadership. The difference is mostly in style: the EU prefers detailed rules, while the UK leans more on flexibility and regulator guidance.

What is clear across both systems, and much of the world, is that cybersecurity is no longer something that sits in the back-ground. It is a vital part of how successful organisations are run day to day. With AI adding more speed and unpredictability into the mix, that shift is not looking likely to slow down anytime soon.

BRINGING AI TO CYBER DEFENCE

IBM has announced it has joined the OpenAI Daybreak Cyber Partner Programme, bringing advanced frontier AI capabilities into security operations to help enterprises counter machine-speed threats. Building on the recently announced Project Lightwell, as part of this effort IBM has launched a new application security service that uses the cyber capabilities of OpenAI's models to help organisations identify and validate software vulnerabilities with greater speed and precision.

Through this programme, IBM is working with OpenAI to apply advanced AI capabilities to be deployed defensively inside enterprise workflows in order to help organisations understand and reduce their exposure.

The new application security service can go beyond traditional code scanning to identify and validate vulnerabilities using OpenAI cyber capabilities. AI-driven analysis assesses application code and prioritises areas with highest potential to contain flaws and exploitable paths. The security harness, powered by IBM Consulting Advantage – IBM's AI platform for delivering consulting services to clients – connects client application environments to advanced AI in a controlled, secured and governed way.

Delivered as a managed, enterprise-ready service, clients can begin with focused evaluations of key applications and expand to continuous monitoring to reassess risk over time as code changes and new threats emerge.

Participation in the OpenAI Daybreak Cyber Partner Programme reflects IBM's ongoing role in shaping how frontier AI is deployed across enterprise workflows. Together with OpenAI and other partners, IBM is helping define standards for safeguards including for controlled analysis to help enterprises strengthen resilience.

Project Lightwell combines an enterprise security clearinghouse with a global force of engineers to patch, validate and manage open-source code across the software supply chain. Supported by a $5 billion commitment from IBM and Red Hat, the initiative will use OpenAI's cyber capabilities alongside other frontier AI models to help with code review and remediation.





Click here for the latest news

ADVANCING UAE CYBER RESILIENCE

The UAE Cyber Security Council (CSC) and Commvault have announced the launch of a dedicated Innovation Center of Excellence in Abu Dhabi, underscoring the continued collaboration between the two organisations and marking an important step in advancing resilient operations across the UAE.

The Innovation Center of Excellence (CoE) was unveiled during Commvault's SHIFT Dubai roadshow, held at the Museum of the Future. The CoE will serve as a regional hub for cyber resilience research and innovation, plus digital infrastructure protection. It will also provide a central venue for executive, customer and partner engagements, as well as dedicated workstations and demonstration areas showcasing Commvault`s cyber resiliency capabilities in real-life scenarios. These simulated production environments provide hands-on practice responding to AI attacks and recovering complex applications, including entire cloud workloads and identity systems like Active Directory.

This collaboration supports the UAE's national vision for secure digital transformation by bringing together government entities, critical infrastructure operators, universities, startups and global technology partners within a single collaborative ecosystem.

A key component of the initiative is the planned establishment of a regional Commvault Readiverse environment that includes our flagship simulations, Minutes to Meltdown and Minutes to Recovery, enabling government agencies and enterprises to experience live cyberattacks and recovery scenarios to strengthen preparedness against evolving threats. Unlike traditional approaches focused on detection and containment, this platform enables users in the region to experience compromised backups, execute recovery plans and ultimately rebuild environments under realistic threat conditions, strengthening their resilience against modern AI-driven cyber-attacks.

In addition, Commvault and the UAE CSC will support the development of the next generation of cyber resilience professionals through a self-paced e-learning program. In doing so, it will support the UAE's national cybersecurity priorities by helping build a skilled pipeline of cyber resilience professionals and increasing exposure to enterprise-grade data protection and cloud technologies.

FEATURE COMPANIES

A selection of company profiles from across the technology sector.

Greenify

the pharmaceutical & agritech indu



Photo Credits: **Bayer AG**

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As a global enterprise specialising in health care and agriculture, Bayer has achieved a great deal during its 162 years of operations, the most recent of which is a quickly developing sustainability strategy in the UK led by Andy Clarke, Head of Sustainability & Public Affairs UK & Ireland. Andy explained how he was utilising experience gained across his lengthy career, to enhance Bayer's green agenda. Report by Imogen Ward.

AS a global leader in pharmaceutical, biotechnology and agriculture, Bayer has remained on the leading edge of innovation and development for decades. Now, with the support of Andy Clarke, the company is entering a new transitional period.

Through his own expertise within the world of sustainability, and his prior experience in sales, Andy is using his unique perspective and skills to ensure Bayer's sustainability goals are a success.

"The real starting point of my career in sustainability occurred ten years ago, when I was listening to a talk at a conference that really homed in on asking 'what brings you to work?', 'what motivates you?' and 'what makes you enjoy your job every day?'," explained Andy. "This really got me thinking, and I came up with my three values: the simplicity of messages and communication; the ability to get into detail; and working in a place where people come first. These values have guided me ever since.

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"At the time, I was working in Bayer UK's sales department, and although the job achieved each of my values, I wasn't necessarily living and breathing them. This realisation gave me the courage to move into a different part of the company, and, having already identified that sustainability was up-and-coming, but wasn't being addressed in the UK organisation, I went on a mission to expand this area and deliver against the needs of our customers and policy requirements."

An eye for sustainability

Andy is naturally inquisitive and enjoys learning new things. This characteristic made him the perfect fit for establishing Bayer's new sustainability programme and helping it grow.

Determined to make this new programme a success, Andy relied on discovery, persistence and influence, to build up Bayer's sustainability agenda from scratch.

"Whenever I start a new project, I am able to wipe the slate clean and really build my knowledge and understanding from the ground up," shared Andy. "This is exactly what I did within sustainability, utilising my prior experience to help create solid foundations for the road ahead.

"This took far less time than I was expecting, and we began delivering



Photo Credits: **Bayer AG**



some fantastic results from the off (an achievement that gave us the room to grow and really transitioned Bayer from a new player in the space to a leader in the field of sustainability)."

According to Andy, he has always been fascinated with the area of personality profiling and influencing. In his role within sustainability, Andy got to flex his skills, adapting his ideas to meet the preferences and personalities of each audience he was addressing. This really helped spread the key sustainability messages and advance its progress.

One of the reasons that Bayer was able to deliver results so swiftly was thanks to Andy's strategy of beginning with the simplest improvements: "I was able to identify low-hanging fruit and that really got us going. By picking the easiest objectives first, and communicating those early wins, we were able to build momentum and accelerate our influence over the wider organisation."

The company spent significant time reviewing and reducing its facilities in the UK and Ireland. Unnecessary office space was downsized, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning underwent upgrades to ensure a more efficient and less-carbon intensive workspace.

Bayer's Goals

Bayer UK and Ireland's target is to be carbon neutral by 2030 & net zero by 2050

Andy Clarke

Bio

ANDY CLARKE

ANDY CLARKE is an experienced commercial leader in the FMCG, Healthcare and Skincare industry. He has held senior level roles within sales and sustainability, including his current position as Head of Sustainability & Public Affairs UK & Ireland.

Andy also chairs a circular economy forum to support the healthcare industry bring one voice together for the sector. This forum aims to address key challenges and opportunities and work with government to ensure adoption of policy in the future.

Another important development saw Bayer make considerable reductions to its paper trail.

"We do a lot of work with the NHS, whose orders have historically been processed via fax," explained Andy. "Because of this our paper use was incredibly high. Of course, we cannot change how our customers operate, but we encouraged more digital options for them, which led to a paper reduction of near 96 per cent."

Green growth

As a result of its efforts, Bayer has successfully reduced its overall Scope 1, 2 & 3 emissions by 67%, in comparison to its 2019 baseline.

"My strategy is to not just look at the big-ticket items but also cover the little changes too," said Andy. "We are working hard to build a culture of sustainability, and the smaller actions really helps advance that goal as these are the elements that most of the workforce can get involved in and become inspired by."

One of the first things Bayer did to enhance its sustainability culture was create an engagement and education workshop to involve its colleagues and give them a greater understanding of the company's sustainability goals and strategies.

"We have had a hugely positive response from our people," shared Andy. "At first, they were curious, but that quickly progressed to a desire to get involved.

"We didn't even really have to preach about it, as all our employees were already onboard with becoming greener and supporting a healthier planet. They've ⇲





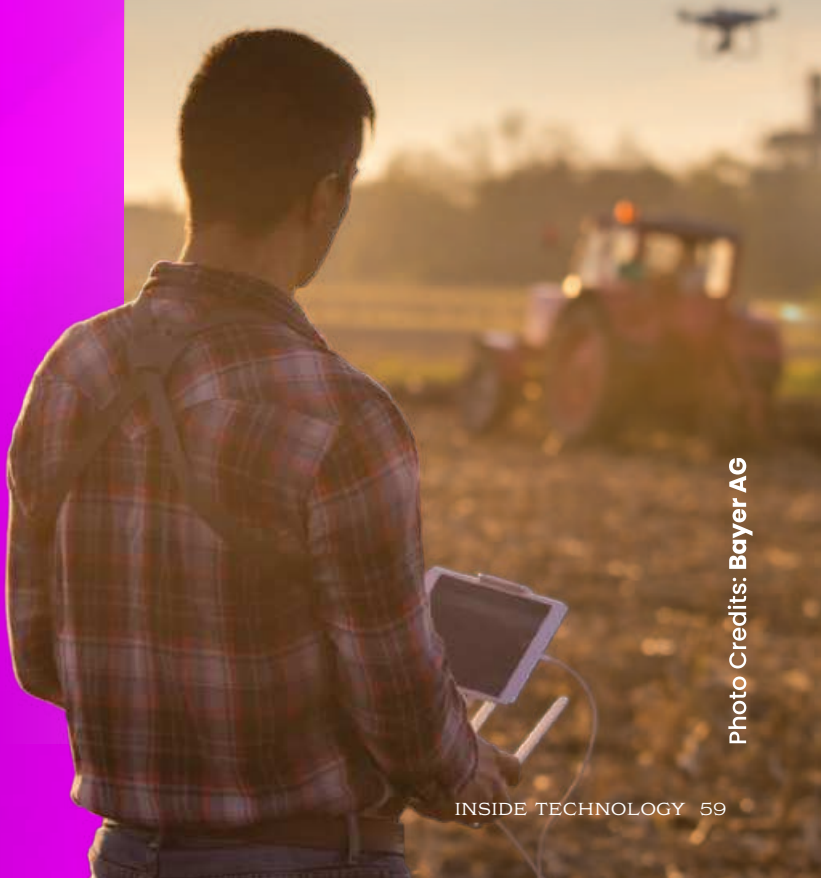


Photo Credits: **Bayer AG**





THANK YOU!

BAYER is also grateful for the partnerships it has built with the likes of the Sustainable Healthcare Coalition, The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry and the Association of British HealthTech Industries. These organisations have been fundamental to the company's journey, providing key learning opportunities and introducing Bayer to other partners for collaboration.

now even started competing against one another to get the best results, and it's become a really fun thing to partake in at the office."

A collaborative effort

Understanding that Bayer could make a greater impact with the support of others, Andy took the time to re-release the supplier code of conduct. Included in this is a list of rules of engagement that Bayer and its partners adhere to as an agreement.

"We used this opportunity to showcase our ambition for sustainability, what our targets were and what kind of commitments we expected from our suppliers," said Andy. "In doing so, we opened the conversation and encouraged more opportunities for collaboration with our suppliers."

With Andy's help, Bayer UK has made some amazing progress with its partners, including Alloga.

"Alloga is our third-party logistics and transport provider, and we worked in collaboration with the company to find greener solutions for our logistics," explained Andy. "As a result of that brainstorming, we managed to support



Photo Credits: **Bayer AG**

the company's transition to HVO biofuel. This amazing change saved us around 83 per cent of our transport- and logistics-related carbon emissions, which equates to more than 450 tonnes of emissions reductions annually."

In addition to this exciting development, Alloga is also providing Bayer with the primary data for all its deliveries. With Bayer completing more than 50,000 deliveries in a year, this is a huge data set.

"The information that Alloga provides has been really helpful to us, it has enabled us to monitor, measure and calculate our emissions at a granular level," continued Andy. "We then pass the insights discovered to the wider group to give the organisation an idea of the impact of our downstream emissions. This is especially useful as the group only measure upstream emissions."

> **Andy Clarke**

Advancing with technology

To further enhance Bayer's green impact, Andy is now looking into AI to support collation and estimation of this data.

"A lot of what we do is based on intuition," explained Andy. "And as humans, we can only predict so much. AI is a great tool, ↘

because it can collate vast amounts of data in seconds, but it can also fill in the gaps, then predict and accelerate our understanding of efficiency and what areas we need to target next."

By using AI, Bayer will be in a better position to focus on larger hurdles like circular economy. As one of the biggest challenges currently faced by the industry, being able to tackle this challenge head on with the support of AI is going to make a huge difference.

Bayer's Growth

As a result of its efforts, Bayer has successfully reduced its overall Scope 1,2 & 3 emissions by 67%



Photo Credits: **Bayer AG**



"The healthcare system especially, is designed to support human health, not prioritise recycling and circularity," explained Andy. "For this reason, much of the equipment used in the system, such as needles and PPE, is single use that goes into incineration or landfill. Being able to adjust that system to be more circular will be a major challenge that is going to require industry leads, medical professionals, associations and government officials to work in tandem. It is not something that can be changed overnight."

As Andy continues to enhance Bayer's sustainability journey, he is determined to utilise the progression to inspire and support the rest of the industry.

"The good thing about this space is that it is never done," said Andy, in conclusion. "There is always plenty to get stuck into and to improve. Our focus moving forward will remain on the circular economy and searching for new ways to support the wider industry's dedication to becoming greener." ■

Powering Progress

Shell is a global integrated energy company. While the brand is widely recognised for its retail fuel stations, Shell has been acknowledged as the world's leading lubricants supplier for 19 consecutive years (accredited Kline & Company 2025, 23rd Edition Global Lubricants). The company's lubricants business is a critical division serving both consumer and industrial markets. Head of Digital & Commercial Enablement Fiona Paddon discussed the company's focus on customer trust and service delivery.

AS a company, Shell is committed to driving innovation, Head of Digital & Commercial Enablement Fiona Paddon said: "My journey with Shell began 17 years ago and it has been amazing to grow and evolve alongside the company. Having studied Mechanical Engineering and, as a Formula One fan, Shell's longstanding association with the sport really drew me to the company.

"After gaining experience in sales and marketing roles, I now play a key part in modernising my division and use digitalisation to streamline operations. Our main objective is to ensure that the company's value proposition, in terms of both products and services, is delivered to customers with global consistency."

Shell's lubricant portfolio includes well-known brands such as Shell Helix for passenger





vehicles and Shell Rimula for heavy-duty trucking. Additionally, the company offers a wide range of industrial lubricants for sectors such as construction, steel, mining and power generation. As technology has advanced and the world has transitioned to prioritise sustainability, Shell has also expanded its offering to include specialised fluids for electric vehicles and data centres.

"Currently, I manage a suite of digital tools, including CRM systems and marketing automation platforms," added Mrs Paddon. "Using this technology, we are building more flexible and maintainable solutions. We want to make data-driven decision making more accessible, ensuring technology acts as an enabler for staff. This allows us to create better customer experiences and drive business growth."

Meeting expectations

Over the years, client expectations in the B2B sector have shifted significantly. With clients now demanding the responsiveness and transparency of consumer markets, Shell has had to move from traditional sales models to a more integrated and open approach. Additionally, sales now often involve large buyer groups, which makes decision-making more complex.



"There is a clear trend towards digital self-service," explained Mrs Paddon. "We see significant potential for AI to further personalise our B2B experience."

Shell is committed to delivering effective digital transformation strategies. To achieve this, the company analyses specific business problems and gathers feedback from industry stakeholders and staff to create specialised solutions. One area the Digital & Commercial Enablement division is currently focused on is CRM transformation. This includes enhancing communication between different business functions to encourage collaboration.

"By streamlining processes and improving data quality, we are aiming to develop a more flexible and insight-driven organisation," continued Mrs Paddon. "This foundational work ensures that as technologies like AI are introduced, they provide meaningful value rather than unnecessary complications. I've seen several waves of digital transformation, so I know effective transformation only comes when you have a genuine understanding of the problem you are trying to solve."

"By streamlining processes and improving data quality, we are aiming to develop a more flexible and insight-driven organisation.

QUOTE FROM **FIONA PADDON**





Integrating AI

With AI driving digital transformation across the world, it is becoming a core component of Shell's operational strategy. Originally, the company introduced AI through the pilot of Microsoft Copilot. A focus group of leaders was used to test features such as meeting summarisation and administrative task automation, evaluating their effectiveness. Now, Shell is implementing more specialised generative AI solutions. This includes translating technical data sheets into multiple languages and scanning for online information to enhance lead generation data.

"There is a lot more to come in terms of AI in CRM systems, particularly in surfacing real-time insights during account planning, opportunity qualification or even at the point of customer engagement," commented Mrs Paddon. "Having those insights at the fingertips of the people that need them is going to be really important in improving our effectiveness and efficiency as an organisation."

Navigating complex global regulations has made introducing AI at Shell a challenging process. Every use case of AI undergoes thorough formal review by ethics and compliance teams to ensure safety for the company and staff. This guarantees that new technologies and systems are properly applied, establishing clear boundaries and limiting risk.

"While on one hand, we are still working to build trust in AI with some of our key stakeholders, on the other hand, we are having to invest in AI to meet the growing demand for it," added Mrs Paddon. "Keeping up with the pace of demand is definitely a challenge, but we are collaborating across the company and delivering training opportunities to successfully integrate AI into operations."

People-focused solutions

While AI is a powerful tool, its true value lies in how it enhances people's lives, Mrs Paddon said: "Rather than leaving digital tools to those who already have the

Fiona Paddon

Bio

FIONA PADDON

Head of Digital & Commercial Enablement



Fiona Paddon is a results-driven leader who is currently Head of Digital & Commercial Enablement within Shell Lubricants' marketing organisation. With 17 years of experience driving commercial growth and digital innovation, she oversees the business' global CRM and marketing technology strategy.

With a Master's in Mechanical and Automotive Engineering from Newcastle University, she has progressed from technical advisory and global account management to leading major digital transformations. She is able to maximise ecosystem value and enhance ROI through advanced analytics, successfully delivering complex projects that optimise operations. Fiona Paddon is UK-based and has held global leadership roles, including a stint living and working in Malaysia, blending technical expertise with commercial strategy to deliver innovative solutions.



specialised skills to utilise them, our focus is on widespread accessibility and hands-on experimentation. Through this, teams can personally witness the benefits of AI while simultaneously identifying its limitations. This builds the confidence and technical literacy necessary to ensure technology remains a supportive asset, rather than a constraint."

Within these digital changes, Shell continues to prioritise people. All technological initiatives are focused on improving systems for staff and customers, making their daily tasks easier. The company recognises that it is its employees and partners that drive impactful results, rather than new technologies. Maintaining this human impact at the centre of the company's strategy ensures that growth is both technically and practically effective.

Going forward, Shell will be managing several high-profile initiatives. This includes the SAP S/4HANA upgrade and advancements in contract and product lifecycle management. By integrating these projects, the company hopes to create a seamless experience for both front-line staff and customers.

"We are also looking to move towards a more predictive model in terms of customer experience," continued Mrs Paddon. "Our goal is to understand customer needs before they are even articulated. Using AI-driven insights, we will be able to recommend the most effective campaigns, products and solutions. Empowering teams with actionable data, we will be able to strengthen the specialised service that Shell provides."

For the user

Long-term collaboration with external partners and suppliers has played a key part in Shell's digital evolution. For example, the company collaborated with Oliver Wyman for its ↘

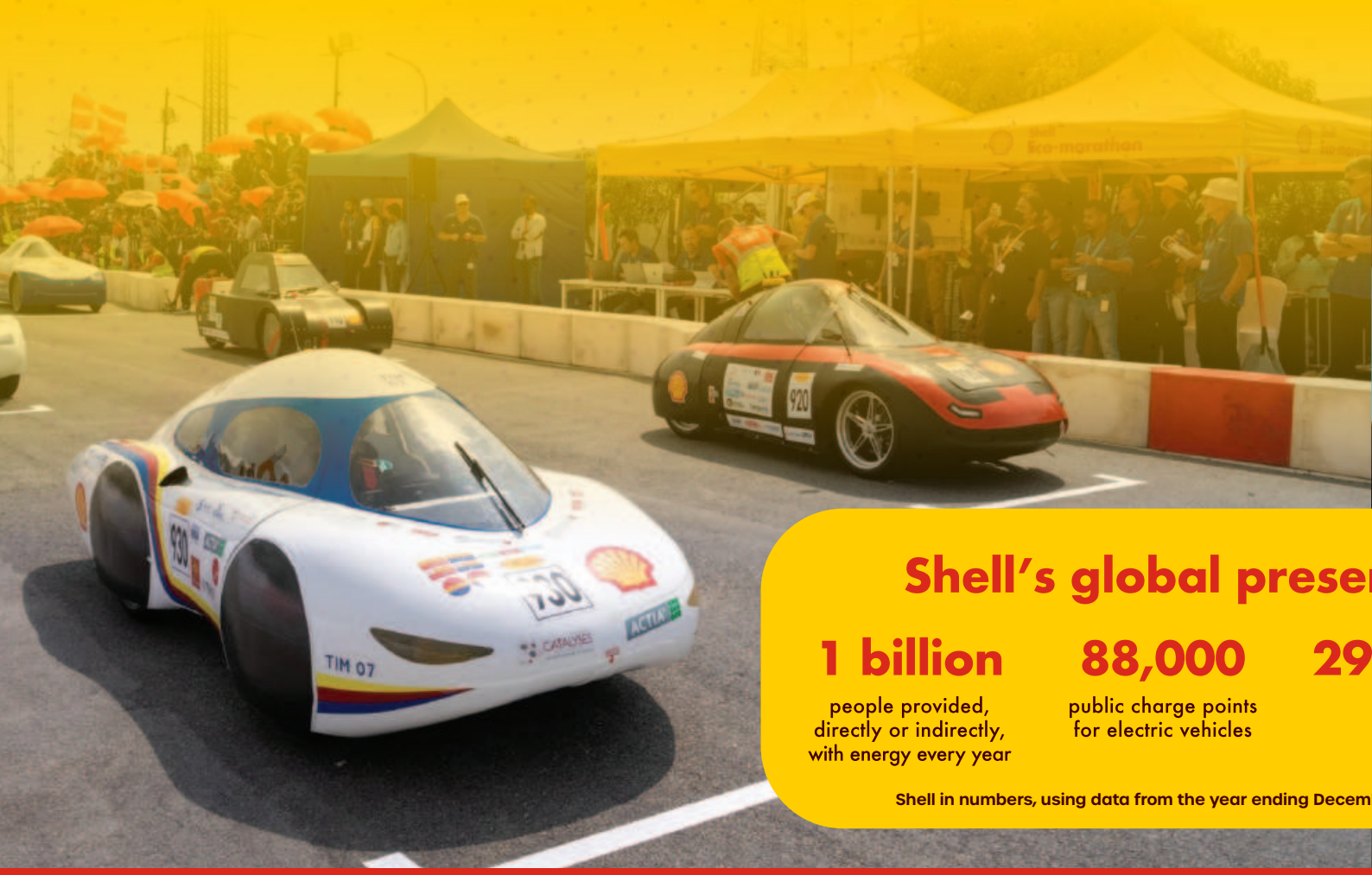


Integrated Deal Making project, shaping the strategy to transition from manual processes to a digitised ecosystem. This focused on pricing segmentation and change management, with Oliver Wyman helping Shell deliver these capabilities internally.

"A major part of this ecosystem was the integration of a CPQ tool from PriceFx," explained Mrs Paddon. "We established clear win-win partnerships, sharing UX feedback and roadmap ideas while gaining increased transparency on roadmap priorities and access to their strongest resources. This collaboration even extended to our IT hub in Bangalore, where teams worked together to build internal technical expertise."

More recently, the company launched its CRM of the Future programme to re-imagine how teams connect, collaborate and grow – simplifying fragmented ways of working and enabling more joined-up, insight-led engagement across Shell's global lubricants business.

The Salocin Group helped to assess some of the technical integration challenges of large-scale migration and Forrester advised on industry best practices to ensure the project's success. Through its relationship with Docusign, Shell is also prioritising improvements in the E2E Contract Lifecycle Management process. This includes review of classical stages but also harnessing AI



Shell's global prese

1 billion
people provided, directly or indirectly, with energy every year

88,000
public charge points for electric vehicles

29

Shell in numbers, using data from the year ending Decem





nce

million

ber 31,

capabilities in obligation management areas to help the business.

"Throughout all of these initiatives, we have been guided by the principle: designed by the user, for the user," added Mrs Paddon, in conclusion. "True transformation requires aligning strong data foundations and streamlined processes with the people they impact. Additionally, by treating suppliers as strategic partners rather than just vendors, we ensure our digital tools are both resilient and high performing.

"I enjoy both creative problem-solving and technical analysis in my role. However, the greatest reward is delivering digital tools that genuinely simplify the lives of my colleagues and create lasting value for the future." ■

Accelerating intellige

Offering leading systems integration and service management, Atos UK & I provides AI-powered digital transformation across the UK and Ireland. The company uses its engineering experience and technical expertise to effectively manage proprietary systems and third-party software. COO Sue de Wit, SVP Critical National Infrastructure Graham Scanlon and SVP HR Kat Hopkins discussed evolving technologies and responsible business. Report by Antonia Cole.



Atos is committed to ensuring its clients maintain operational stability as technology evolves, COO Sue de Wit said: "From the hardware and software at individual workstations to the high-capacity mainframes that power large-scale financial and industrial processes, our service portfolio spans the entire digital infrastructure. A key part of this support is our strong cybersecurity framework that is designed to protect client data against increasingly complex global threats."

Atos' data scientists and engineers monitor emerging innovations to ensure clients can implement the latest technologies and gain a competitive advantage. Additionally, the company works with clients to develop tailored technology solutions while using ↘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AI
Message Prompt

Special DIAMOND supporter of ATOS

POWER OF THREE

Unlock Mainframe Data. Accelerate AI. Strengthen Cyber Resilience.

Mainframes process up to 75% of the world's transactions and remain the trusted system of record for the world's largest enterprises. The challenge isn't whether the data has value.

The challenge is putting that value to work.

As organisations race to deploy AI, strengthen cyber resilience and deliver real-time business insight, one question continues to surface:

How do you unlock the power of mainframe data without disrupting the systems that run your business?

The answer is the Power of Three.

By combining the strengths of Atos, BMC and Dell Technologies, organizations can unlock trusted mainframe data, make it available to modern platforms and accelerate innovation without rewriting applications, increasing operational risk or compromising governance.

THE POWER OF THREE

BMC Unlocks the Data
Securely connects, protects and synchronises mainframe data, creating accessible copies in open formats while production systems continue operating unchanged.

Dell Technologies Powers the Platform
Provides enterprise-grade infrastructure for high-performance storage, cyber recovery, analytics and AI workloads at scale.

Atos Delivers the Outcome
Provides architecture, implementation, governance and managed services, ensuring measurable business outcomes from day one.

One Partnership. One Outcome.
Faster access to business-critical data. Better cyber resilience. Accelerated AI adoption. Reduced operational risk.

BMC	Dell Technologies	Atos
Moves your mainframe data to modern storage without disruption.	AI-optimized infrastructure that processes your data at scale, under your governance.	Managed Service from end to end, aligned to the agreed outcome.

YOUR MOST VALUABLE AI ASSET ALREADY EXISTS

Many organisations believe AI requires entirely new data strategies.
In reality, some of the highest-value data in the enterprise already exists inside core business systems.

The objective is not to move the business away from the mainframe.
The objective is to unlock the value of the data residing within it.

"AI is only as powerful as the data behind it. For many enterprises, their richest source of trusted information is already running on the mainframe."

FOUR HIGH-IMPACT USE CASES

1. AI-Ready Enterprise Data
BMC moves it. Dell powers it. Atos governs it.

2. Cyber Recovery for the Enterprise Era
Dell vaults it. BMC protects it. Atos recovers it.

3. Real-Time Compliance and Reporting
Trusted data. Faster decisions.

4. Modern Application Enablement
Atos modernises it. Dell hosts it.
You keep the logic.

OUTCOMES THAT MATTER

- Faster cyber recovery
- Better fraud detection & operational insight
- AI-ready enterprise data
- Reduced compliance effort
- Improved governance
- Faster access to critical information
- Stronger resilience
- No application rewrite required

Where This Approach Can Help

The value of this approach will vary by organization, but the underlying use cases are often similar. Some teams are looking to improve cyber recovery. Others want more timely access to operational data for reporting or analytics. Some are exploring whether existing mainframe data can support AI or machine learning use cases, provided the right governance is in place.

Improving Cyber Recovery Readiness. A cyber recovery use case is often the easiest place to begin because the objective is clear: create a more resilient, better tested recovery environment for critical data. In regulated sectors in particular, the ability to maintain protected copies of data and rehearse recovery procedures in advance can make a material difference to incident response planning.

Streamlining Compliance and Reporting. Another common use case is data access for reporting and analytics. Many organizations still rely on delayed or heavily transformed data pipelines when moving information out of mainframe environments. That may be acceptable for some reporting workflows, but it becomes less useful when teams need closer-to-real-time insight into transactions, trends or anomalies. In those cases, reducing latency and preserving data integrity can be more important than redesigning the application estate.

AI Readiness: A third area of interest is AI readiness. This is where expectations need to stay grounded. Mainframe data does not automatically become AI-ready simply because it is available on another platform. The organization still needs good governance, clear permissions, strong data quality and a sensible use case. But where those conditions are in place, better access to operational data can support experimentation and future deployment.



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Atos

The mainframe and existing applications remain in place. What changes is the organization's ability to use the data they generate through a more controlled and modern data-access layer.

20–40%

improvement in fraud detection when live mainframe data feeds AI models in near real time.
Source: BMC internal benchmarking, 2024

Up to 70%

reduction in the financial impact of ransomware - with recovery in hours, not weeks.
Source: Atos Cyber Recovery client engagements, 2023–2024

40%

less manual effort in compliance reporting through automated, immutable audit pipelines.
Source: Atos client data

A Structured Starting Point

The most useful way to assess this kind of approach is through a small, defined starting point rather than a broad transformation program. A focused assessment should identify the priority data sets, the target use case, the governance requirements and the dependencies across infrastructure, security and operations. It should also be clear where the approach fits and where it does not.

In practical terms, that makes this more of an enablement model than a replacement strategy. The mainframe remains in place. Existing applications are not rewritten. The aim is to create a more controlled route for using enterprise data in ways that support resilience, insight and future growth.

For organizations that are under pressure to improve access to critical data without increasing operational risk, that is a proposition worth evaluating. The most credible next step is a short technical discovery discussion that tests fit, scope and feasibility against a real use case.



SCAN FOR MORE INFO

DELL Technologies

bmc

1 Mainframe Data — Cloud Access

BMC moves it. Dell stores and processes it. Atos manages it.

Your VSAM, Db2, IMS, and Adabas data moves to Dell PowerScale or ObjectScale via encrypted S3 object storage. No application changes. No mainframe MIPS consumed. Data that has been locked away for years becomes available to your AI, analytics, and BI tools — without your mainframe knowing anything changed.

Best for: Financial services, public sector, telco — any team whose mainframe data should be working harder than it is.

2 Cyber Recovery as a Service for Mainframe

Dell vaults it. BMC secures it. Atos recovers it.

An automated, air-gapped vault with immutable copies of your most critical data. Continuous threat monitoring. Recovery runbooks built and tested before you ever need them. When an attack happens — and statistically, it will — you're executing a rehearsed plan, not an improvised one.

Best for: Any regulated enterprise that can't afford weeks of downtime or data loss after a cyber*attack*.

3 Enterprise AI Platform on Mainframe Data

Dell computes it. BMC feeds it. Atos governs it.

Private, on-premises AI models trained on your mainframe data, processed by the Dell AI Data Platform and running on the Dell AI Factory. Your data stays where you say it stays. Your models run where you say they run. Sovereign AI isn't a marketing phrase here — it means you have contractual and architectural control over every part of the stack.

Best for: Enterprises with strict data residency requirements who want the benefits of generative AI without handing their data to a public cloud.



What the Next 90 Days Look Like

START SMALL. DELIVER FAST.

Days 1–2: Demonstration of capabilities and solution walkthroughs.
Days 3–30: Joint discovery and solution design.
Days 31–60: Secure deployment, data integration and cyber recovery enablement.
Days 61–90: First business outcome delivered and measured.

THE FUTURE DOESN'T REQUIRE REPLACING THE CORE

With ATOS, BMC and Dell Technologies, organizations can safely extend the value of trusted mainframe data into modern platforms, accelerate innovation and strengthen cyber resilience without disrupting the systems that keep business moving.

POWER OF THREE

BMC unlocks the data • Dell powers the platform • Atos delivers the outcome.

One partnership. One strategy. Maximum value from your most critical data.

real-time dashboards to make effective data-driven decisions. With this, Atos helps clients become future-ready.

In addition to implementing new technologies, the company is also focused on workforce development. Atos prioritises continuous skills training, providing employees with opportunities to grow and advance their careers in the age of AI. These investments in people then drive the company's own success, allowing it to navigate the changing technological landscape.

"Through our apprenticeship programme in Birmingham, we are establishing clear career pathways for the next generation of technical

Through our apprenticeship we are establishing clear ca generation of technical talen

SVP HR Kat Hopkins

talent," added SVP HR Kat Hopkins. "We have partnered with Solihull College to provide over 25 apprentices with the first step in their AI-proofed careers. With many entry-level roles disappearing due to automation, we are creating positions that focus on structured training and give people the opportunity to enter almost any area of the industry. By investing in people through initiatives like this, we are also investing in our future."



programme in Birmingham, reer pathways for the next nt

The digital future

Atos is aiming to be the most responsible business in the technology sector. This commitment is being driven by its leadership team that includes Kat Hopkins, who brings over 25 years of expertise in large-scale transformation, Graham Scanlon, who joined Atos as a graduate but is now SVP for Critical National Infrastructure, and Sue de Wit, whose career has spanned both service delivery and operations. All these leaders chose to stay due to the company's dynamic environment and role in supporting the UK's national infrastructure.

"I have transitioned through various roles and functions within the company over the years, learning new skills at each stage," explained Mr Scanlon. "My journey really highlights the potential for personal growth within Atos, which we are now bringing to the next generation."

Atos delivered £4 million in community impact in 2025 alone. For example, the company donated over 500 laptops to communities in need and reached almost 6,000 young people through STEM engagement initiatives. These were specifically aimed at underrepresented groups to provide work experience and an entry to technology career paths. This year, the company is planning to expand upon these programmes and deliver more social initiatives throughout the UK.









COO Sue de Wit



SVP Critical National Infrastructure Graham Scanlon



SVP HR Kat Hopkins



"Our work is about more than technology," continued Ms de Wit. "We improve business processes that provide essential services to citizens, ensuring the digital future remains fair, inclusive and sustainable for everyone. We have a substantial footprint across the UK, and we are choosing to invest, and be a real force for good, in these different regions. By prioritising regional development alongside our own business commitments, we ensure that the real benefits of digital innovation reach every community we serve."

Integrating new technology

In terms of technical development, Atos is accelerating the integration of AI from experimental stages to real-world applications through the launch of its Atos Sovereign Agentic Studios (ASAS). ASAS is designed



while maintaining safety and reliability. The company is specifically focused on mission-critical, complex and highly-regulated industries, which face more barriers to effective AI integration.

"Based in our Birmingham facility, ASAS provides a sovereign by design framework," explained Mr Scanlon. "This ensures that clients in critical national infrastructure, defence and central government retain control over their data, models and compliance. The ASAS model moves beyond simple proofs of concept to create workflows designed for immediate operational use."

The ASAS programme is supported by a network of leading AI partners, enabling Atos to utilise high-capability platforms. By integrating advanced cybersecurity products such as MXDR and SIVO, the company ↘





combines digital sovereignty and AI safety. This means clients will remain protected despite current global challenges.

"Our commitment to mission-critical innovation has resulted in us forming our Centre of Excellence for Critical National Infrastructure (CNI), which partners closely with organisations to identify and address operational and environmental challenges, while also collaborating across industry, regulators and sector bodies to tackle systemic issues that affect society," added Mr Scanlon. "We have recently been recognised by two Utility Week awards for our Project Triton and our Wastewater Intelligent Network.

"Project Triton utilises a digital twin of the electricity grid to accelerate infrastructure upgrades towards the country's net-zero targets, while our partnership with Scottish Water focuses on advanced wastewater monitoring supporting active preservation of water supplies. These projects demonstrate our ability to deliver technology solutions in complex environments and improve the sustainability of the UK and Ireland, and its long-term environmental agenda."

Supporting major events

Atos has differentiated itself in the technology market through its dedicated business unit specialising in major events. This division manages the people, processes and intellectual property required to deliver large-scale competitions, including the Olympic and Paralympic Games from 1992 to the Paris 2024 Olympic Games. The company's system integration expertise was essential to the event's security. Atos' infrastructure



Click to find out more about

MXDR **SIVO**

successfully defended against approximately 55 billion cyber events with zero impact.

"We provide a wide range of critical IT services, from timing and scoring to secure broadcasts for other major events," said Mr Scanlon. "We have a long-term partnership with UEFA through to 2030, which includes the UEFA Euro 2028 games in the UK. As well as this, we have supported events like the 2025 Invictus Games and the Special Olympics World Winter Games. These events require highly-complex systems integration, so we choose to work with a diverse range of partners to deliver the best results."

To ensure the success of these events and all client operations, Atos utilises an expert supplier network. The company prioritises long-term strategic partnerships with key industry players to solve complex client problems. Collaborating with companies such as Dell, as well as SMEs and startups, Atos has immediate access to innovation, specialist training and emerging technologies. With this, the company is able to offer industry-leading solutions like ASAS.

"This collaborative framework is essential to meeting both our goals and those of our clients," continued Ms Hopkins. "Our role is to solve client problems, but we cannot do that without our partners and suppliers. It is our relationships with them that allow us to provide these comprehensive capabilities.

"With our structured engagement model, we ensure that we can work as effectively with niche specialists as we do with global multinational companies. This agility empowers our clients with the latest technical knowledge, ensuring that every service delivered is optimised for speed, security and real-world impact."

Ensuring technical security

As Atos continues to implement new technical innovations, CSR will remain a key part of its identity. The company established its ESG framework over a decade ago, positioning itself as an industry leader in decarbonisation and ethical governance. Having recently achieved its goal of reducing absolute greenhouse gas emissions by 50% across Scopes 1, 2 and 3, Atos has now submitted new ambitious targets for validation. The company is aiming for a 36% reduction by 2035 and to reach Net Zero by 2050.

"As technology evolves, our focus has shifted towards mitigating the heavy energy consumption associated with AI and ensuring that ethical standards are embedded in every digital solution," explained Ms de Wit. "We also empower our clients to meet their own sustainability goals. For example, our service-based emissions solution enables clients to accurately track and report Scope 3 emissions.

"As technology evolves, our focus has shifted towards mitigating the heavy energy consumption associated with AI and ensuring that ethical standards are embedded in every digital solution"

COO Sue de Wit



"Another key initiative is our sustainable workplace service, where we provide high-quality, remanufactured devices. This is just one of the ways we promote the circular economy to our clients, maximising the lifespan of IT assets without compromising on security or performance."

Going forward, Atos will focus on its Services as Software model. This includes using AI agents to manage repeatable, data-intensive tasks on a large scale, allowing the workforce to focus on more complex projects. In this way, the company will be able to help clients improve the efficiency of their operations while keeping their data secure.

"The industry is always changing and evolving, which is a real source of motivation for us," added Ms Hopkins, in conclusion. "Working within such a dedicated team as we collaborate to solve complex, real-world problems is very rewarding. At Atos, we aren't just driving technical innovation, we are working towards a more efficient and safer society. Our goal is to become the responsible business in our sector within the UK." ■





Elevat
execu

Operating at the intersection of technology and finance, Joanna Pamphilis has over 25 years of global leadership experience. Her new venture, JP Global Consulting, where she serves as Founder and CEO, offers tailored, performance-driven transformations for companies and executives. She discussed the benefits of the business model with Hannah Barnett.

ring FinTech tives *with Vision*

Thanks to a winning combination of FinTech thought-leadership and decades of experience executing strategic transformations on an international stage, JP Global Consulting was designed to succeed. From the start, the company was focused on creating value with a human-centric approach.

"My mantra is to pay it forward," said Joanna Pamphilis, Founder and CEO. "Elevating C-level executives with vision is what drives me. There is value to having an independent executive C-level advisor. There's no ulterior motive. I'm not selling a pyramid scheme. I don't have any KPIs or billable hours to worry about. My first focus is the client and their success."

JP Global Consulting was launched in February 2026, and within the first months, had secured several clients. By April, due to extensive demand, it was also offering a private coaching service, including younger and mid-level talents. The company was formed as a response to the acceleration of technology in the FinTech sector. "I couldn't sit on the sidelines in this disruptive moment any longer," said Ms Pamphilis.

Setting up to succeed

The first foundational area of JP Global Consulting is described by Ms Pamphilis as 'deep historical context.' This includes her multidisciplinary international experience, having held high-level roles in a range of finance sectors, making her particularly skilful at quickly assessing complex situations.

"The second foundational area, that I believe to be my competitive advantage, is what I call 'clarity of judgment,'" Ms Pamphilis explained. "Upfront I can apply an unbiased view. I know exactly where to go, what doesn't seem right and where problems will surface. In a world where the acceleration of AI will place even more emphasis on human judgment, there is ↘

FINASTRA

MODERN PAYMENTS WITH PEACE OF MIND



Trusted by over 300 financial institutions worldwide, Global PAYplus modernizes payments, streamlines compliance, and reduces operational cost and risk. Powered by secure, AI-enabled workflows, and an ISO 20022-native platform, Global PAYplus processes $7 trillion in transactions every day. Built on a scalable, resilient, microservices architecture, Global PAYplus delivers unmatched efficiency and reliability for the future of payments.

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From FinTech and digitalisation to AI and DevOps, Inside Technology delivers in-depth company profiles. Supported by the latest innovations and trending topics, we present the information to operate in an ever-changing world.

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a value to this efficiency for C-level executives – they don't have any time to lose."

The third foundational area is giving prominence to the trusted relationships that extend over 25 years. "These don't come from attending a network event each year," said Ms Pamphilis. "It's from the times that we've worked together side-by-side to deliver strategy."

JP Global Consulting evaluates each business transformation, alongside the client, through three lenses. The first is strategic, aligning initiatives with long-term objectives. The second is operational, embedding adaptability into the operating model. "Organisations that survive and thrive make adaptability a competitive advantage," as Ms Pamphilis put it.

The third lens is cultural. "Transformation fails without the people doing the work," Ms Pamphilis explained. "We need to involve employees early, communicate in a transparent way, address the change fatigue and develop an accountability model that includes leadership. It's about having the buy-in of the people. No transformation is successful without this. Full stop."

While CIO at UniCredit, Ms Pamphilis applied these lenses to achieve a large-scale business transformation that required re-engineering business processes for a wealth management company. This complete technological and architectural transformation, from the database to the operating system, was not without its challenges.

"Organisations that survive and thrive make adaptability a competitive advantage"

Joanna Pamphilis








Girl

"Being able to use these three lenses was very useful, especially when initiatives like this come under stress," Ms Pamphilis explained. "Over a period of time, it's not uncommon for the strategic initiative to be in place but the long-term objective to change, so it's extremely important to go back to the foundation, or things become operationally wobbly."

Fractional CIO

Ms Pamphilis also offers her services as a Fractional CIO – an experienced technology executive that serves a company on a part-time or interim basis. A Fractional CIO provides senior high-level IT leadership, allowing organisations to access external C-suite expertise without the cost of a full-time permanent executive.

"In one case, a group-level CIO is set to retire by the end of the year, and there was a long transition period," said Ms Pamphilis. "Working with me as a Fractional CIO, we assessed the landscape and the internal team. This helped the company set the groundwork and inform the board how to move forward, including assessing whether there was someone internally who could step up."

Sometimes a Fractional CIO is required more urgently. For example, at a leading financial services provider in Africa where the group-level CIO left suddenly. The board knew it could take up to a year to find the right replacement. "Bringing me in, to take a current view of the existing landscape is very helpful," Ms Pamphilis said. "I'm not interested in taking on the role of that CIO, but the company has, for a period of time, access to this expertise while identifying a permanent, replacement CIO."

The business model of JP Global Consulting has always been powered by strong business relationships and Ms Pamphilis







enjoys connections stretching back several decades. Most are built on trust, transparency and shared values.

"Our partnerships are not transactional; they are transformational," said Ms Pamphilis. "I view a partnership as long-term. It needs to be sustainable, and I surround myself only with partners who will take my clients higher. This is the philosophy I bring to every engagement through JP Global Consulting."

This ethos informed Ms Pamphilis' previous role at UniCredit, where significant partners like financial software company Finastra ↘

ANNA
Pamphilis

JOANNA PAMPHILIS has held executive and board-level positions at some of the world's leading financial institutions. Her roles have included Managing Director and CIO at UniCredit, Managing Director and COO Technology EMEA at State Street, and COO of Global Equities Trading at KCG Holdings. She holds an MBA in Management Information Systems from Loyola University Chicago and completed UniCredit's ESG Programme for Executives in 2023.

"Bringing me in, to take a current view of the existing landscape is very helpful"

Joanna Pamphilis

provided invaluable support. "The Executive Vice President responsible for our account was very fair," Ms Pamphilis said. "Finastra understood our business and our pain points and did what it could to support us. Finastra is a product-focused company, and UniCredit was one of its largest clients at the time that I was there."



Change management

Much of Ms Pamphilis' present-day accomplishments can be traced back to previous achievements. Ten years ago, she also oversaw another successful, but highly demanding, business transformation – that resulted in what was Wall Street's largest ever M&A transaction at that time, valued at $1.4 billion. The two companies involved were complementary, with some overlap, but the project required redefining the business entirely.

"I was reporting to the CEO, working closely with him and the C-level team, to clearly articulate our goals to the rest of the staff, which wasn't easy," recalled Ms Pamphilis. "It was important to align strategic initiatives with long-term objectives; essentially the blueprint for bringing the two companies together.

"This merger was not friendly at all. The company did not want to be acquired, yet it had to be because of serious financial issues, so there was a lot of negativity. We ended up hiring an outside firm for change management services – meaning we had a team structure, both internal and external, to create, manage and support this change."

The formal change management process also ensured employees were involved in creating the new business, down to the design of new headquarters and even selecting the canteen menu. "We gave people responsibility and stretch roles, to make them part of what we were doing," said Ms Pamphilis. "Early on in the M&A, it



wasn't clear if we would be successful. In the end, hiring this change management organisation was key."

The future of FinTech

Going forward, Ms Pamphilis' vision is to create a world where AI seamlessly enables financial complexity, giving people more control and confidence over their financial future. The removal of traditional barriers controlled by institutions could give equal access to banking, investing and wealth building; key in the democratisation of the sector. Within this process, JP Global Consulting is perfectly positioned.

"There's no other global consultancy with the ambition to elevate C-level executives with vision," said Ms Pamphilis. "I am required to be a trusted advisor to the C suite, connected to the professional network I have built for more than 25 years. I'm not PwC or Deloitte, with thousands of consultants requiring to be billed to a client, so that individual, personal trust is a differentiator.

"I also have an indisputable track record of successfully executing transformations and delivering concrete business value. Many studies quote that 80 per cent of transformations fail. I'm in the elite class of the 20 per cent of C-level leaders who have succeeded."



Ms Pamphilis recently spoke on these topics, and more, at the Banking Transformation Summit in London. As she explained, it is a privilege to be able to use her multinational experience to address an audience in a way that gives both inspiration and practical takeaways.

"I have great pleasure in being able to speak about topics near and dear to my experience," Ms Pamphilis said, in conclusion. "All of this comes back to paying it forward, because this is my mantra. Whether this means mentoring young talent, or now with JP Global Consulting taking my expertise to elevate CIOs with vision." ■

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INNOVATE FINANCE TOGETHER

Finastra partners with customers to deliver reliable secure and trusted mission-critical financial services software driven by innovation. Sylvie Boucheron-Saunier, CRO, Payments, answered questions for Inside Technology.

Finastra provides financial institutions with the tools needed to shape what's next. How have you accomplished this?

We see a shift in mindset within institutions. Payments transformation is no longer about delivering a single programme and moving on – it is about building the ability to evolve continuously.

Every institution starts from a different place. Some are looking to simplify and bring their payments activity onto a more unified foundation, creating consistency and resilience across operations. Others are far more targeted, focusing on specific areas such as clearing, liquidity or routing, where they can unlock immediate value without taking on unnecessary disruption.

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Finastra's

Sylvie Boucheron-Saunier

Our role is to support both of those journeys, without forcing a single path. We give clients the flexibility to move forward in a way that fits their strategy.

A big part is removing friction from change itself. Whether it is expanding into new markets, connecting to new schemes, or adapting to regulatory shifts, the expectation now is speed – not multi-year reinvention. Our standardised approach makes a real difference, allowing institutions to move step-by-step rather than through large, high-risk programmes.

Meanwhile, the nature of transformation is changing. What used to be seen as complex and resource-intensive – particularly the move away from legacy environments – is becoming more manageable. With intelligent

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tooling and more automated operations, institutions can reduce risk while improving day-to-day efficiency.

Underneath all of this is a simple idea: banks can change without destabilising the core of their business. They should modernise in a way that keeps them operationally strong while still moving forward.

What core elements make Finastra stand out from the competition?

We stand out by uniting capabilities that are often treated separately.

Today, many institutions try to simplify highly fragmented payments environments while keeping up with constant change. The tension between stability and adaptability is where many approaches fall short.

We focus on helping banks resolve that tension. The process starts with creating more consistency across payments, giving institutions a more unified operation.

80% of the world's top 50 banks put their trust in our secure and reliable solutions.

> "INSTEAD OF LARGE, DISRUPTIVE UPGRADES, CHANGE HAPPENS INCREMENTALLY.
>
> quote from **Sylvie Boucheron-Saunier**

Just as importantly, this is about how that environment evolves over time. Instead of large, disruptive upgrades, change happens incrementally. Institutions can respond to new regulations, market demands or growth opportunities step-by-step, without constantly reworking their core.

Operationally, payments are shifting away from reactive, after-the-fact processing toward a more real-time, controlled way of operating, where decision-making happens as events unfold.

Also, clients increasingly value the combination of depth and breadth. We bring deep expertise in payments, then apply it across a very broad spectrum of institutions (from the largest global banks to mid-tier players) with consistent, enterprise-grade capabilities. That

blend of technical understanding, delivery maturity and market insight allows us to work as a long-term partner in transformation.

In that context, the real differentiator is simple: the ability to adapt without adding complexity. Institutions that can do that consistently are the ones that pull ahead.

How has your own experience shaped Finastra?

One of the biggest lessons I've learned is that strategy only matters if it translates into real-world impact. In payments especially, there is often a gap between vision and execution – and closing that gap has been a consistent focus for me.

A big part of that is alignment. In complex transformations, value is not created within silos. It comes from product, sales, and delivery operating as a single system, with a shared understanding of what success looks like for the client. When that alignment is in place, execution becomes faster, more consistent, and ultimately more meaningful.

At the same time, I've seen how important it is to stay close to the market. Payments is evolving too quickly to rely on static strategies. A more data-driven, feedback-led approach allows us to continuously refine how we position, deliver, and scale our solutions based on what clients actually need.

Another shift has been toward repeatability. Large transformations are no longer one-off efforts; they need to be scalable. The ability to apply proven models across institutions – while still adapting to their individual context – is what turns success into sustained growth.

98%+ speed to pay rates

Ultimately, it comes down to outcomes. Whether it is simplifying operations, accelerating growth, or enabling new business models, what matters is the tangible impact delivered to clients. That focus is what continues to shape how we evolve as an organization.

What technological advancements help enhance Finastra's offering?

The most important shift we are seeing is that technology is no longer being introduced in layers – it is converging to fundamentally change how payments platforms operate and evolve. There is a move towards modern, cloud-native foundations that allow institutions to operate with greater consistency and long-term readiness, particularly as regulatory frameworks like ISO 20022 continue to reshape the industry. What matters is the ability to work with cleaner, more consistent data and build on it over time.

Equally important is the flexibility of these environments. Instead of being tightly coupled and difficult to change, platforms

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$7TN We help move $7 trillion in transactions every single day.

are now designed so that new capabilities – whether new payment types, services or market requirements – can be introduced without disruption. That dramatically reduces the risk traditionally associated with change.

Operations are rapidly evolving. With more real-time visibility and embedded intelligence, institutions are shifting towards a more controlled, 'manage-by-exception' model. AI is key, improving how exceptions are handled, how decisions are made and how efficiently teams operate.

Another major shift is openness. Payments is increasingly embedded into broader ecosystems that connect banks, corporates and fintech partners. This integration allows payments to become part of end-to-end client journeys.

What unites these is resilience. With the ability to scale services independently, deploy changes without downtime and maintain consistently high availability, institutions can modernise without disrupting core operations.

Taken together, these advancements enable institutions to evolve continuously, with confidence and control.

What excites you most about your job?

What makes this role so compelling is the combination of pace, scale and impact.

Payments is one area where you can see the effect of change almost immediately. Small improvements in speed, efficiency, or client experience can translate into meaningful outcomes: higher volumes, faster cash flow, stronger retention. That tangible connection between execution and impact is incredibly motivating.

There is also a strong element of transformation at scale. Closing strategic partnerships that fundamentally reshape how institutions operate is about helping clients modernise, grow and compete differently in their markets. When those partnerships translate into real business change, then the work becomes truly rewarding.

The industry is evolving at a remarkable pace. From AI and real-time payments to embedded finance and cross-border innovation, payments sits at the centre of multiple shifts happening at once. Being close to that change, and working with clients to navigate it, keeps the role constantly engaging.

FINASTRA

JOANNA IS ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE PROFESSIONALS I HAVE MET.

quote from **Sylvie Boucheron-Saunier**



Ultimately, it comes back to people and partnerships. Building high-performing, multi-cultural teams, staying close to the field and working with clients from all around the world as long-term partners is what drives sustained success. In a relationship-driven industry like payments, you do not just win business once, you earn the right to keep it by delivering value consistently over time.

How did you meet Joanna Pamphilis?

I met Joanna when she was CIO at Unicredit, where she was my customer. From the outset, we built a strong working relationship, and it was immediately clear that we would develop a long-lasting partnership.

Joanna is one of the most remarkable professionals I have met. She combines calmness with firmness and brings an honest, balanced perspective. Her ability to focus on the bigger picture significantly strengthened our partnership and made our collaboration especially valuable.

She is also a highly respected CIO, as reflected in the many industry awards she has received. Also, she is a strong advocate for women and an excellent mentor to younger generations.

For more information visit
www.finastra.com

New energy so



As one of the UK's largest energy network and infrastructure operators, E.ON has been accelerating the clean energy transition for over 25 years. The company's aim is to build a modern and decentralised energy network. Director of Global Partnerships & International Key Accounts Simon Duncan discussed balancing customer needs with environmental responsibility, in conversation with Antonia Cole.

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With its focus on people and sustainability, E.ON has left a lasting impact on the UK's energy industry, Director of Global Partnerships & International Key Accounts Simon Duncan said: "E.ON has a strong customer-centric purpose, which involves creating affordable and sustainable energy for everyone. This really makes me feel like I'm making a difference when I come to work every day and is a big reason why E.ON has been voted one of the top 10 places to work in the Sunday Times list.

"The company has also won awards for diversity and inclusion, social value initiatives and has an excellent Trustpilot score."

Globally, E.ON employs 80,000 people across 14 countries and serves over 50 million customers. The company manages grid networks, city infrastructure and retail energy supply. Additionally, E.ON operates over 6,000 industrial energy assets, supporting major manufacturing sectors including data centres, steel, chemical and food production, as well as high-profile ↘



80,00
employee

partners such as BMW, Bosch, Audi, Radisson Blu and Diageo.

"I've spent half my life at E.ON," added Mr Duncan. "I met my wife and friends here, so it feels like a second home. Some of my favourite projects are the ones with the most human impact. I'm incredibly proud of the work our Green Funding Solutions team is delivering to create affordable warmth in social houses or how our B2B Solutions team is educating children on clean energy and conservation at Edinburgh Zoo with their new solar meadow. These projects really warm my heart."



Continuous progress

As a company, E.ON is committed to the internal development of its employees. This has been demonstrated through Mr Duncan's 22-year career at the company, starting as a call centre advisor in Bolton and advancing into executive leadership roles.

"I've been blessed to work within such a supportive company, where I've been able to grow into Director and CCO roles," explained Mr Duncan. "From earning my stripes with the fantastic teams in the call centres, back offices and field sites across

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es

across
14
countries

and over
50 million
customers served



the UK to leading the transformation of our smart metering rollout, there have been many experiences that have shaped my career. I have also learnt a lot about growing profitable businesses through trusted customer relationships and partnerships by leading our industrial and city-scale solutions businesses.

"What has helped me the most, however, is working for great leaders. I've been fortunate to have some exceptional mentors who have allowed me to learn from their experiences."

Throughout Mr Duncan's career, the energy market has undergone significant changes. The industry has faced geopolitical shifts, rising consumer costs and a growing demand for electricity and heating. The sector has also begun prioritising the balance between sustainability, affordability and grid reliability, which has been accelerated by worldwide technological advancements.

"Today, the grid faces new demands from electric vehicles, heat electrification and data centres," continued Mr Duncan. "At E.ON, we feel a heavy responsibility to make a difference. I'm optimistic that there's a clean and affordable energy future for all of us.

"At E.ON, we feel a heavy responsibility to ***make a difference***"

▲ Director of Global Partnerships & International Key Accounts ***Simon Duncan***



E.ON's 25-year agreement with Peel Ports Group involves installing up to

48,000
solar panels

at the Port of Liverpool. Becoming the UK's largest roof-mounted solar array, it will generate ***25MW*** of renewable electricity.



Key infrastructure

Currently, E.ON is delivering three major green infrastructure projects across the UK. In South Wales, the company has partnered with Quinbrook Infrastructure Partners at the former Uskmouth coal power station to introduce a 230MWh battery storage facility. This project will help stabilise the grid by balancing supply and demand, as well as creating 130 local jobs and increasing regional biodiversity by 18%.

"We have also launched a 15-year partnership with the Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham to cut carbon emissions by 43 per cent," commented Mr Duncan. "With support from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme and the Carbon and Energy Fund, we have replaced thousands of square metres of windows with energy-efficient double glazing. We are also introducing a geothermal heating and cooling system that recycles waste heat, saving 10,000 tonnes of carbon annually."

Another significant project is E.ON's 25-year agreement with Peel Ports Group to establish the UK's largest roof-mounted solar array at the Port of Liverpool. This includes installing up to 48,000 solar panels across 26 buildings, which will be capable of generating 25MW of renewable electricity. The array will supply a quarter of the port's annual power needs and reduce emissions by over 4,700 tonnes each year.

Positive impact

In order to accelerate the clean development of the energy sector, E.ON is prioritising the fundamentals before adopting advanced technologies. For homeowners, this means implementing efficiency tools such as smart meters, time-of-use tariffs and high-quality insulation. Once these measures have been successfully implemented, homeowners can then integrate solar panels, battery storage, heat pumps and electric vehicle chargers with flexible grid products like E.ON Next Optimise.



"A business looking to enhance its energy systems needs someone who has the credibility and reputation to build something that lasts," said Mr Duncan. "In most cases, we'll start with an installation of digital energy visualisation tools, like our Optimum platform. This taps into the user's BEMS system and optimises it for efficiency. Then, customers can evaluate the energy technology they want to install and we deliver the solution."

On a larger scale, city-wide innovation utilises digital twins to identify how to effectively rebuild infrastructure. For example, E.ON is working in long-term partnership with Coventry City Council to transform the city's energy infrastructure. This includes planning for new renewables, waste heat recovery and electric charging infrastructure for residents and businesses.

"While driving the green energy transition is very rewarding, our social impact ↘

Bio

SIMON DUNCAN

Simon Duncan

Director of Global Partnerships & International Key Accounts



SIMON DUNCAN is an energy executive dedicated to advancing global sustainability and achieving net zero goals. Over his 22-year career with E.ON, he has progressed through the company from frontline customer operations to senior international leadership.

Mr Duncan is now Director of Global Partnerships & International Key Accounts at E.ON Energy Infrastructure Solutions, focusing on decarbonising industries, building energy resilience and alleviating fuel poverty. Mr Duncan is an experienced leader of people and projects.

In his previous role as Chief Commercial Officer for E.ON UK, he managed over 1,000 people and led major commercial initiatives exceeding £1 billion in value. Today, Mr Duncan is recognised for transforming underperforming business units into profitable operations driven by clean energy innovation.



is a big part of our culture and identity," added Mr Duncan. "We're heavily focused on customer affordability, with initiatives like energy debt relief supporting those who need it most.

"We also fund community food gardens, wildlife trusts and tree planting across the UK, as well as partnering with Kidney Care UK. Internally, we are supporting hundreds of apprenticeships and delivering early careers advice for school leavers. Additionally, we have our Greener Game initiative in partnership with the FA, bringing sport and health to young people, and our long-standing charity partnership with Mind, which focuses on mental health."

Evolving markets

To deliver its specialised expertise and high-quality customer experiences, E.ON relies on its diverse network of suppliers and partners across Europe. Significant partnerships include the company's 15-year relationship with Coventry City Council aimed at transforming local energy infrastructure.

"One recent partnership that we are continuing to build on is with ABB, which has strong expertise in assessing and optimising fleets of electric motor-driven systems," said Mr Duncan. "This is complemented by our edge in both financing and operating complex energy systems, delivering a unique offering for customers.

"Our clients are also significant partners for us. With Holcim, we have been collaborating



on a large-scale waste heat recovery project in Germany. This extracts approximately 10 megawatts of thermal power from rotary kiln exhaust gases using an innovative heat exchanger to decarbonise cement production. Using Orcan Energy's ORC technology, recovered heat is then converted into electricity to create a more circular system."

Looking forward, E.ON's key focus will be on helping customers navigate the energy market while ensuring access to affordable, predictable and dependable clean power. To achieve this, the company will continue to take advantage of planned grid upgrades, expanded renewable capacity and advanced digital tools.

"With three daughters, I look forward to a world where energy is affordable and comes from clean and resilient sources," added Mr Duncan, in conclusion. "Our purpose is to make energy work for our customers and I am optimistic about the stabilisation of the energy system. I love being in this environment, where people are passionate about making a difference. I genuinely look forward to each day at E.ON, no matter what new idea or challenge we are facing." ■

"...I look forward to a world where energy is affordable and comes from ***clean and resilient sources"***

▲ Director of Global Partnerships & International Key Accounts ***Simon Duncan***



For what COM

With its mission to empower the UK for future economic and societal developments, techUK plays a key role in the strategic integration of technology into the national market. Deputy CEO Antony Walker discussed techUK's aim to ensure that the UK remains a competitive global hub for technological innovation. Report by Antonia Cole.



AS an organisation, techUK is committed to delivering sustainable benefits to individuals, society, the economy and the environment, Deputy CEO Antony Walker said: "We work closely with our members to create an optimal business environment for technology companies to establish themselves, grow and operate in the UK. With our team of experts, we actively engage in major policy discussions to address some of the industry's most complex challenges."

From artificial intelligence regulation and online safety to competitive frameworks, techUK is helping technology companies navigate industry transitions. By facilitating collaboration between businesses and ↘

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WE BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN TECHNOLOGY PROVIDERS AND COMMERCIAL STAKEHOLDERS

Deputy CEO Antony Walker

regulators, the organisation is aiming to create clear market conditions that allow the sector to grow and develop.

By focusing on key markets for technology deployment, such as the public sector, healthcare, financial services and defence, techUK can analyse emerging technological trends and identify future opportunities. The organisation assesses innovations in areas including robotics, quantum computing and cloud infrastructure to help the UK stay at the forefront of technological development.

"We bridge the gap between technology providers and commercial stakeholders," added Mr Walker. "This ensures that sectors can successfully absorb current innovations to improve productivity and overcome operational challenges. With our dual focus on





optimising opportunities while addressing the societal and economic risks of new tech, we ensure that the UK technology ecosystems grow in a balanced and impactful way."

Expanding reach

After completing a master's degree in European Studies, Mr Walker began his career in Brussels in the early 1990s. He joined the American Chamber of Commerce where his early professional experiences coincided with the wider introduction of the commercial internet. Mr Walker worked on foundational European technology policies such as early telecommunications liberalisations, the initial e-commerce directive and the first data protection frameworks.

"Working between both policymakers and impacted corporations in this role established my long-term career trajectory, which has been centred on technology policy," explained Mr Walker. "What originally attracted me to the technology sector was its rapid pace, as well as its potential for economic and societal impact. The industry's constant evolution requires an open-minded approach to change, so I have found the environment suits me really well.

"Professionally, I am continuously driven by the intellectual challenges that accompany rapid innovation. This involves balancing the clear benefits of technological and economic growth with the wider social implications and regulatory hurdles it creates."

Eventually in 2013, Mr Walker's interest in the technology industry led him to techUK.



The previous organisation was called Intellect, but in partnership with CEO Julian David, Mr Walker transformed the organisation into techUK. After recognising a market need for a comprehensive, broad-based technology trade association, both Mr Walker and Mr David created techUK to represent the entire UK technology ecosystem.

"Today, techUK has more than doubled in size since its inception," continued Mr Walker. "We successfully serve a diverse membership that spans major global corporations, established mid-sized enterprises and fast-growing startups. By continuously expanding our reach and influence, we are ensuring that the UK will lead global technological innovation and policy development."

Accelerating innovation

A key focus for techUK is scale-up companies, which are a major part of the UK technology sector and a significant driver of national economic growth. Out of the organisation's 1,100 member companies, approximately 10% have been identified as fast scaling. While scale-ups only make up approximately 1% of all UK SMEs, they contribute over half of the total SME economic output. This is the equivalent of approximately £1.5 trillion in Gross Value Added.

"These scale-ups have the potential to grow very quickly and deliver real economic value to the UK," commented Mr Walker. "They have a unique to opportunity keep the nation globally competitive in terms of emerging technologies. While the UK is exceptionally skilled at seeding startups, securing the environment for these companies to successfully transition into the high-growth phase remains our critical focus."

To ensure that businesses remain and succeed within the UK, techUK works with scale-ups across a diverse range of sectors. Member companies include technology innovators such as Wayve and Oxa, which both develop autonomous vehicle software, as well as Axiologic and Intelligent Lilli. The company also works with an AI proposal platform called AutoGenAI and a leading decision intelligence provider called Quantexa. Through techUK's support, these companies are growing faster and bringing the benefits of their innovations to more people and businesses across the UK.

"We provide the strategic resources to help scale-ups navigate the challenges of rapid expansion," added Mr Walker. "Our support is

ANTONY WALKER, *Deputy CEO*

With over 20 years of experience leading technology sector membership organisations across London and Brussels, Antony Walker has established himself as a public affairs and policy professional. Prior to his professional career, Mr Walker received an MA in European Studies from KU Leuven and a MA in History from the University of Aberdeen.

Currently, he is Deputy CEO of techUK where he played a major role in the organisation's rebrand in 2013, from Intellect to techUK. Previously, Mr Walker spent over a decade as Chief Executive of the Broadband Stakeholder Group, which is the UK government's leading broadband advisory body. Here, he facilitated essential cross-industry discussions around the open internet.

Additionally, as a University of Cambridge Policy Fellow since 2014, Mr Walker is heavily involved in conversations on both new academic research and practical public policy.





SECURING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT IS ESSENTIAL TO ACCELERATE INNOVATION IN THE UK

Deputy CEO Antony Walker

focused across five key pillars: procurement, finance, skills, regulation and trade support. By optimising these framework conditions, we ensure that high-growth companies can seamlessly absorb innovation, access vital capital, recruit necessary talent and expand their operations into international markets."

Shaping policy

Another key factor in determining how UK scale-ups can develop is the national policy landscape. While financing options and accessibility are still major challenges, techUK has made significant progress by directly engaging with the Treasury and the British Business Bank. However, the UK's funding environment is still not as competitive as countries such as the US. Scale-ups in the UK also have limited access to global talent due to tools like the scale-up visa not being widely used, which can prevent them from securing large public sector procurement contracts.

"These are areas where we are making great improvements and we have had amazing support from our partners so far," said Mr Walker. "Although, a key issue we are noticing is the regional differences between scale-ups throughout the UK. Scale-ups outside of London and the Southeast take longer to mature. This slower growth timeline can disqualify them from crucial funding



mechanisms like the Enterprise Investment Scheme, so we are working to address this issue.

"Additionally, the growing interest in deep tech has presented some unique hurdles. These companies have different capital requirements, so we are really exploring how to create the right environment for them."

Despite these challenges, techUK strongly supports the government's industrial strategy. This is especially true regarding its focus on eight key growth sectors, including technologies, life sciences, defence, financial services, creative industries, advanced manufacturing, clean energy and professional services. Going forward, the organisation is actively developing policy proposals for the upcoming budget to address core issues on capital, talent, regulation and procurement.

"Securing the right environment is essential to accelerate innovation in the UK," added Mr Walker. "The greatest opportunity for transformation lies in artificial intelligence. As a society, we are only in the early stages of the AI revolution. We believe that the impact of AI will surpass previous shifts such as cloud computing or the mobile internet. In addition to AI, we are very interested in deep tech. Through our work, we hope to make these advancements possible."

Developing markets

The future of the technology sector is being shaped by shifting global dynamics. As the government increasingly recognises the value of domestic technology companies, UK scale-ups are becoming a core part of policy decisions. Going forward, techUK is working to create the optimal environment for technology companies to grow and develop within the UK.

"To maximise the potential of the UK technology sector, we have to maintain a highly-attractive innovation ecosystem," said Mr Walker. "The UK must continuously refine its financing landscape and successfully attract global investment and executive talent. Additionally, as the UK is a relatively small market, securing ongoing access to international markets and creating global partnerships are also policy priorities."

To achieve this, techUK facilitates relationships between private sector enterprises, government bodies and key stakeholders. The organisation promotes regular engagement, inviting approximately 25,000 visitors to its offices every year. Through regular conversations, techUK identifies shared ambitions and challenges between members, which it uses to drive economic growth.

"Navigating this fast-moving landscape offers a unique perspective on societal transformation," explained Mr Walker, in conclusion. "Working in the technology sector feels like having a front-row seat on history, observing global innovations develop in real time. By addressing critical questions surrounding advanced technologies, we ensure that the industry mitigates risks while taking full advantage of new opportunities." ■

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Providing high-quality audit and advisory services, KPMG develops digital solutions for the modern and intelligent economy. The company is committed to driving progress that benefits both people and the environment. Partner Johan Smits discussed how KPMG is combining its service expertise with technology, in conversation with Antonia Cole.

AS a company, KPMG is focused on accelerating growth and creating long-term capability roadmaps, Partner Johan Smits said: "One of our strategic objectives is to become the leading supply chain and procurement consultancy in the Netherlands. To achieve this, our supply chain strategy team assists clients in cost performance and analytics, operating model change, technology enabled transformation, and also securing their long-term operating licenses by designing optimised, efficient and zero carbon – sustainable – supply chain networks."

KPMG uses trusted operating models tailored to specific sectors, such as retail, pharmaceuticals and industrial manufacturing. The company then enhances these processes with major software platforms, including SAP, Microsoft, OMP, SLIM4, AIMMS, AERA and Blue Yonder, to guide companies through their digital upgrades. KPMG also helps clients improve transport networks, switching to electric vehicle fleets

and designing return systems that meet European recycling regulations.

Through its partnership with AIMMS, a software provider that has direct plug-ins into SAP, KPMG delivers AI-driven supply chain network plans. Recently, the company has been prioritising the integration of AI. This involves using its Velocity framework to automate repetitive tasks with AI agents, enabling real-time decision-making. This technology is now being implemented across cross-functional business integration, data systems integration and end-user adoption management.

"In my role, I build executive relationships to understand client needs before proposing solutions," added Mr Smits. "This is vital in the consumer retail sector, which is very fast paced and often serves as a testing ground for technological advancements. Retail demands rapid adaptation, so the agile practices developed there are highly refined. Once the technology is trusted, we can then apply it to more complex sectors like defence and pharmaceuticals to improve resilience."

Developing expertise

At KPMG, Mr Smits' role involves leading procurement and supply chain practice in the Netherlands, as well as coordinating EMEA supply chain initiatives for major accounts. After graduating with a degree in business engineering, Mr Smits gained early exposure to marketing, sales, logistics, finance, supply chain and procurement through his consulting career. Then, he





“IN MY ROLE, I BUILD EXECUTIVE RELATIONSHIPS TO UNDERSTAND CLIENT NEEDS BEFORE PROPOSING SOLUTIONS”

went on to manage complex and strategic programme portfolios and global change initiatives at Heineken.

“I was looking for some hands-on operational experience, so I also moved into daily operations execution roles at Heineken,” explained Mr Smits. “I oversaw planning and end-to-end logistics, customer service and export shipping. In this role, I focused heavily on improving lean processing and optimising operations.

“Eventually, I returned to global supply chain roles, designing the Change programme for global business service frameworks for centralised procurement and becoming the head of the global supply chain Integrated Business Planning Department. I led the global transformation to full-scale IBP, enabled by ⇲



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Bio

JOHAN SMITS

JOHAN SMITS



JOHAN SMITS is a Partner within KPMG's Supply Chain Advisory group, specialising in consumer, retail and industrial manufacturing supply chains. Mr Smits leads large-scale, AI-driven digital transformations focused on creating customer centric and end-to-end supply chain strategies, making an impact through strong operational experience.

Before joining KPMG, he spent over five years as the Global Supply Chain Director for the Heineken Company. Here, he led a multi-million-euro digital integrated business planning transformation across 85 countries and won the prestigious Supply Chain Chairman's Award in 2018, in the USA.

Mr Smits now contributes his expertise globally through advisory roles. He is a member of the European Supply Chain Forum and has previously held advisory board positions for both supply chain software leader Blue Yonder and the TIAS School for Business and Society.



advanced technologies. My experience here led me to return to consulting, where I could apply my knowledge across multiple organisations and widen this to other sectors and supply chains."

Mr Smits' interest in technology originated from his engineering background, having seen the sector transition from isolated point solutions to integrated platforms. While major enterprise resource planning (ERP) providers handle administrative and transactional processes, specialised point solutions are still essential for advanced planning and decision intelligence. Mr Smits is now using his expertise to support clients in integrating data-driven planning into their new operating capabilities.



"Currently, many companies are migrating legacy ERP structures to the cloud, without adapting their business models. However, once successful, this is creating a demand for targeted differentiating applications and new models," continued Mr Smits. "These specific applications sit on top of core systems to manage tasks like warehouse optimisation, network design and decision-intelligence.

"I joined KPMG to help drive this change. Now, we are using our strong relationships with chief financial officers and supply chain leaders to shift the focus from managing operational volume to driving real value through technology."

Exploring technologies

With its structured transformation networks, KPMG assists clients in navigating the acceleration of sector digitalisation. The company's powered supply chain initiative guides clients through cloud migration, while its Velocity system transforms business functions using AI. For example, AI ↘

agents can automate repetitive tasks like processing new supplier data into ERP systems.

"A key focus area for us is the mid-market segment, which includes fast-growing companies with revenues between €500 million and €3 billion," commented Mr Smits. "These companies often require agile set ups, which is why we deliver strong ERP systems combined with specialised point solutions. With the help of our partners, we implement tailored applications on top of core ERP networks.

"For example, we integrate Slimstock's Slim4 software for advanced planning, S&OP and inventory reduction, as well as AIMMS for network design and simulation."

"INTERNALLY, WE ARE ALSO USING SECURE AI AND THE LATEST AI TOOLS TO ACCELERATE OUR ADVISORY RESEARCH"





In advanced end-to-end logistics, KPMG partners with companies such as Aera to implement decision intelligence. Using connected data platforms and algorithms, these systems predict how events and supply chain disruptions will impact downstream operations. This allows for automated adjustments instead of having to make manual changes.

"Internally, we are also using secure AI and the latest AI tools to accelerate our advisory research," continued Mr Smits. "However, protecting client data will always remain our top priority, so human expertise is still a central part of this process. While AI can quickly analyse financial metrics and identify strategic priorities, we know that the real value comes from our consultants' expertise. They can synthesise insights, manage stakeholder alignment and design execution plans, amongst various stake-holders within our clients' organisations. The AI agent cannot do that today or tomorrow!"

Promoting sustainability

Supporting clients in navigating ESG compliance and risk management is another major part of KPMG's operation. As well as focusing on regulatory compliance, reporting and scoping emissions, the company delivers long-term sustainable business solutions. This includes restructuring operating models to prioritise limiting environmental impact, managing Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive requirements and integrating social responsibility into corporate risk analysis.

"We design sustainable supply chains that promote the circular economy and ↘



meet the customer demand for environmentally-friendly products and services," said Mr Smits. "Global warming remains a significant threat around the world. Therefore, companies have to re-evaluate their product portfolios and profitability to ensure long-term sustainability."

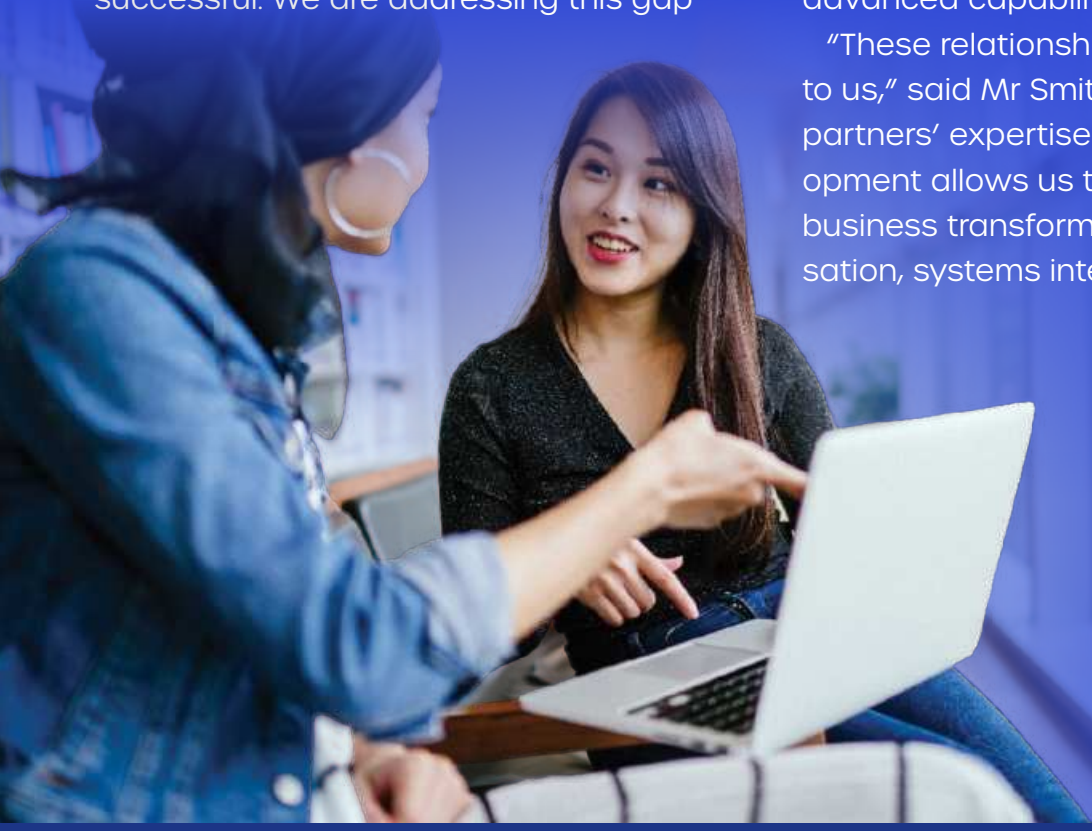
At the same time, global supply chains are facing many disruptions due to conflicts and transit blockages. Consequently, global networks are now prioritising local sourcing, manufacturing and distribution. This regional strategy aims to minimise risk and enhance supply chain reliability, enabling clients to stay resilient.

"Many of our clients are undergoing major supply chain transformations," added Mr Smits. "However, our statistics show that only 14 per cent of top performers consider their technology implementations successful. We are addressing this gap by delivering comprehensive user solutions. As a company, we understand that supply chains are sensitive to poor data, misaligned KPIs and fractured workflows. Using innovative technology, we ensure alignment throughout the supply chain with our end-to-end solutions."

Driving collaboration

To deliver these comprehensive supply chain services, KPMG has established long-term relationships with a selection of leading technology providers. In addition to maintaining partnerships with major companies such as SAP, Microsoft and ServiceNow, KPMG also focuses on specialised partnerships with Aera, Slimstock and AIMMS. This provides the capacity and flexibility needed to quickly deliver technological innovations and advanced capabilities.

"These relationships are very important to us," said Mr Smits. "Our technology partners' expertise in software development allows us to manage full-scale business transformation, program organisation, systems integration and end-user





“OUR ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO BUILD SUPPLY CHAINS WHERE THE MAJORITY OF STANDARD TRANSACTIONS RUN AUTOMATICALLY”

adoption. For prospective clients, we also host joint innovation centres with our partners to showcase real-world successes, demonstrating the potential of our services combined with their modern software. We move beyond the ‘Jump-start AI discovery’ into Enterprise AI business usage.”

Going forward, KPMG is aiming to enhance its complete supply chain solutions. The company is committed to helping clients build teams knowledgeable about data management, establish clear business rules and create strong technology structures. By focusing on long-term strategy and operational excellence, KPMG will deliver modern capabilities that support digital growth and prepare clients for future industry developments.

“Our ultimate goal is to build supply chains where the majority of standard transactions run automatically,” explained Mr Smits, in conclusion. “Whether it is product onboarding, automated forecasting or supply planning, we are using technology to make repetitive tasks more efficient. This will enable our clients to focus their efforts on more high-value tasks, driving business growth and sustainable development. With these automated foundations, clients can remain resilient and highly competitive, despite challenges in the global market.” ■

BAK redefined



ERY

Headquartered in Indianapolis, US, CraftMark Bakery is a specialised manufacturer of frozen bakery products. This includes ready-to-bake cookie dough, flatbreads, muffins and ready-to-eat cookies. Director of IT Joe Willis discussed how the company is using technology to optimise and future-proof operations. Report by Antonia Cole.

Founded in 2013, CraftMark serves a diverse client base, Director of IT Joe Willis said: "Our focus on high-volume automation and stable quality control has been integrated into the company since it was established. This has enabled us to work with many different businesses, from global quick service chains and restaurants to large-scale supermarkets."



With its investments into automation, CraftMark is able to balance significant production volumes, often exceeding 15,000 cases a week, while maintaining market agility. This gives the company the time and flexibility to assist clients through the entire product lifecycle, researching,

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Digital transformation has always been a key part of CraftMark's development. In such a high-volume industry, using technology to stay agile helps the company remain resilient to market challenges. CraftMark treats this modernisation as an ongoing project, continuously investing in new and updated systems to enhance operations. Currently, the company is upgrading its Warehouse Management Systems (WMS), Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems. These investments ensure that CraftMark's technology can continue to support future business growth.

"Our aim is to be a valued partner to our customers and everyone that interacts with our products," added Mr Willis. "Working with my team of like-minded and motivated individuals, I am passionate about making that mission come to life through the integration of effective technology systems."

Professional progress

Although Mr Willis began his career with a degree in computer graphics, his professional focus changed early on. While working for a small sheet metal fabrication company, he transitioned into IT to address the company's growing technical needs. This enabled him to build a foundation





in network administration and server management. Over the next decade, Mr Willis continued to specialise in helping companies modernise outdated systems and eventually moved into senior IT leadership roles within the manufacturing sector.

"One of the key milestones of my career was managing the IT infrastructure for an automotive exhaust manufacturer during their rapid global expansion," explained Mr Willis. "I led the implementation of ERP systems in Europe and managed the integration of several domestic acquisitions. Delivering projects like these has given me practical experience in scaling operations and navigating the challenges of high-growth environments, which continues to guide me today."

Mr Willis was originally drawn to his role at CraftMark as it required a broad range of technical and leadership skills, including his specific expertise in ERP and EDI systems. Additionally, the scale of the operation and the company's commitment to technical investment made joining CraftMark an exciting opportunity for him. Now, Mr Willis is focused on growing a department that ↘







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"Throughout my career, I have seen how significantly technology has evolved," continued Mr Willis. "Now, technology is no longer an afterthought, it is driving the development and growth of companies all over the world. Modern manufacturers are now required to prioritise cybersecurity and technical compliance to meet the standards of their customers. This makes my job truly rewarding, as I know I'm making a real difference to CraftMark's future."

Advanced automation

CraftMark operates with innovative technology. The company's facility features several production lines that are almost entirely automated, utilising digital dosing systems for bulk ingredients such as flour, sugar and liquid eggs. Controlled by precise scales and automated valves, this system dispenses recipes through a network of pipes across the site. This high level of automation ensures consistency across CraftMark's significant production volumes, including a monthly consumption of nine million pounds of flour.

"To maintain these high standards, we use sophisticated quality control sensors," commented Mr Willis. "Automated optical scanners verify the physical dimensions and internal consistency of dough products, while others monitor baked items to ensure they meet visual specifications, such as chocolate chip distribution. We





also have automated sensors to track temperature and moisture content across ovens and freezers to ensure food safety. My team and I manage the essential backend architecture that keeps these manufacturing systems synchronised.

"Working at an industrial bakery also has challenges outside of IT. The high volume of airborne flour means that we must take special care of our operational hardware, as flour can build up on intake fans and heat sinks, leading to shortened equipment life and other complications. I have Coeliac Disease, which brings its own personal complexities to working at an industrial bakery. I must rely on my team to ensure equipment is maintained."

To support these physical operations, the company utilises advanced ERP and EDI systems. CraftMark has used a highly-customised version of NetSuite since 2014, which automates everything from warehouse logistics for forklift operators to comprehensive batch tracking. This allows the company to trace any product from the point of sale back to the specific raw ingredient used.

"Currently, we are working to modernise these systems and the company's EDI infrastructure," added Mr Willis. "These upgrades will be vital as we navigate increasingly complex food safety regulations and quality expectations. By upgrading our digital tools, we can become more efficient in how we use our systems. Overall, we want our technology to grow with us as we continue to support our clients."

Enhancing efficiency

In recent years, the technology industry has shifted towards the integration of AI. At CraftMark however, the highly-regulated nature of food manufacturing means the addition of new technologies requires careful implementation. As safety and accuracy are key priorities, the company believes that human oversight is still essential.

"Despite this, AI has the potential to really benefit us in terms of data analytics and business intelligence," said Mr Willis. "Given the high level of automation at the bakery, we generate a significant amount of data in our operations. AI can be a powerful tool in processing this information, helping us ↘



Bio

JOE WILLIS

Joe Willis

Joe Willis is the Director of IT at CraftMark Bakery. Here, he is focused on aligning technology systems with practical business goals. After receiving his bachelor's degree in computer graphics and computer technology from Purdue University, Mr Willis went on to develop a balanced background in both technical design and high-level department leadership.

Over the years, he has gained extensive experience managing IT systems through major acquisitions and global expansions. This includes leading ERP and EDI strategy across various international plants. Mr Willis continues to specialise in building scalable infrastructure and reliable data systems that support long-term manufacturing value and operational success.



understand how specific environmental variables can impact the final quality of a product."

By using AI to analyse these patterns, CraftMark will be able to manage conditions to ensure the highest possible consistency and efficiency. Additionally, the company has been using AI to improve personal productivity. This includes completing tasks such as troubleshooting EDI data and streamlining project management.

"Going forward, we are focused on several major digital initiatives beyond AI," continued Mr Willis. "We are currently onboarding a new WMS to improve inventory tracking and ensure raw ingredients are stored in optimal conditions. Additionally, I am leading a complete transformation of our EDI infrastructure and the modernisation of our ERP system. Supported by our expert

partners, we hope to replace our legacy hardware and software to guarantee our digital foundation remains secure and scalable."

Specialised support

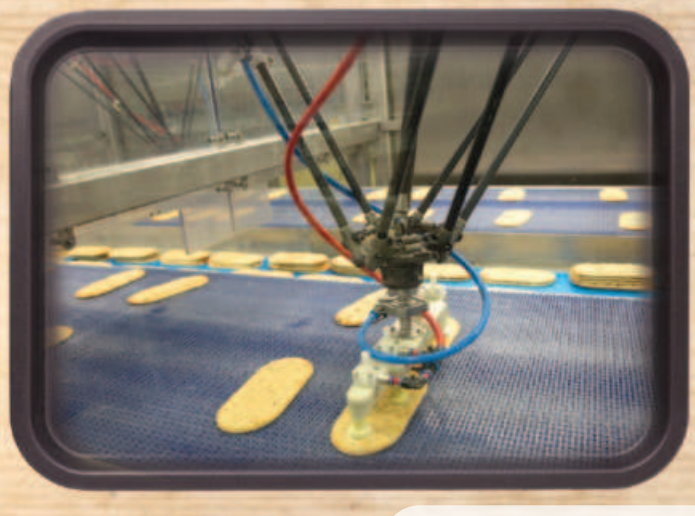
As the industry continues to evolve and more competitors prioritise modernisation, it is essential that CraftMark invests in innovation to remain ahead of the market. The company is looking to move from just collecting data to actively utilising it to better understand specific operational outcomes. By analysing data to identify the causes of line failures or quality variances, CraftMark can further reduce waste and maximise production efficiency.

"The food manufacturing sector will continue to pivot towards the high-volume automation in which we are already successful," explained Mr Willis. "While many of our competitors still rely on manual processes, our purpose-built facility allows us to maintain a significant edge in resource efficiency. Having this head-start means that we can keep upgrading and improving our digital infrastructure ahead of the industry standard."

To make these technical investments successful, CraftMark relies on its relationships with partners and suppliers. With a trusted network of consultants and service providers, the company has been able to constantly develop its technology and products.

"As well as building external relationships, we also recognise the importance of building a positive work culture within the company," added Mr Willis. "We make sure to identify and empower individuals in the company who have specific expertise, enabling us to create an environment where technical and operational teams support one another. By maintaining these reliable connections, we have the specialised support necessary to execute complex digital transformations and remain a leader in a competitive manufacturing landscape." ■





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In an era where cybercrime is at an all-time high, and organisations increasingly rely on automation to improve efficiency, advanced technology has never been more critical. The Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) understands this well, relying on the technical know-how of Chief Technology & Information Security Officer Carl Fong and his team of experts to keep student records safe and enhance the education of pupils county-wide. Carl highlighted his relationship with technology over the years and how this has helped enhance his current role, in a report by Imogen Ward.

Carl Fong lives and breathes tech. Ever since he played his first video game, the self-proclaimed 'computer nerd' was hooked.

"I was (and still am) a huge fan of Marvel and the original Star Trek," explained Carl. "I was inspired by the 'out of this world' technology that was injected into these fictional universes."

This same passion has helped drive Carl along every step of his career journey; alongside the lessons he learned from his own parents.

Inspiring beginnings

Growing up as the oldest of six children, Carl held a level of responsibility for his parents, knowing that (in line with the traditions of ↘

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his Asian heritage) he would be the one to provide for them when they retired. Understanding what this would mean, Carl was determined to make his career trajectory a success.

"I grew up inspired by the hard worth ethic of my parents, who owned their own grocery store," explained Carl. "I learned valuable lessons from them when I began to help at 13, doing everything from sweeping floors to all aspects of a grocery store. My parents taught me that success comes from hard work, and by the time college came around, I was awarded grants and studied data processing at California Polytechnic State University, Pomona."

After graduating from California Polytechnic State University, Pomona in 1984 with a degree in data processing, He joined OCDE in 1985 as a developer. Just two years later, he was promoted to Operations Manager. In 2002, he stepped into his current leadership role, where he has served for more than two decades.

Having been in the department for more than 40 years, Carl has shaped OCDE's technological infrastructure into a resilient and forward-thinking system capable of meeting the evolving demands of modern education and cybersecurity.

"Tech is my passion," continued Carl. "But it changes so rapidly. One of the reasons I have been able to stay in my role for so long, is the ability to be like water – I go with the flow. If there is new technology entering the market that can help OCDE enhance the wellbeing and education of our students, then I want to integrate it. So many people ↘



are too afraid to adapt to new technologies, but I know that it's a simple case of evolve or be left behind."

An evolving landscape

One technology that is currently taking the world by storm is Artificial Intelligence (AI). Although machine learning-based software has existed for a long time, the field has advanced at a significantly faster pace in recent years.

Every sector and industry has felt the shift, and education is no different. AI is being implemented more and more to support the schooling of students with learning difficulties and improve workplace efficiencies when it comes to record keeping.

"AI is also a great option for the business side of education because it can collate data and calculate budgets at an impressive speed," shared Carl. "This spares up a significant amount of time that can be reinjected into enhancing the educational experience of the children."

While AI has been around for decades, recent advances have created new opportunities in education. Carl sees strong potential for AI to handle routine administrative tasks – such as data analysis, budget calculations, and summarizing lengthy proposal documents – freeing up staff time for teaching and student support.

There is so much potential in AI. However, implementing it at OCDE will take time. Carl is cautious about implementation: "Before introducing any major new technology, I need to understand the strategic direction of every department. This takes time, collaboration, and careful planning to ensure AI truly serves our students and staff."



Building brighter futures

On the education side, OCDE is doing everything possible to enhance the experience of school children up and down the county. With funding often limited, many schools cannot afford to upgrade the technology they already have or invest in new advancements. To overcome the issue of budgets, OCDE is supporting the Innovation Funding Initiative that was founded by the current Orange County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Stefan Bean.

"The Innovation Funding Initiative was launched by Dr. Stefan Bean as part of his 5-3-1 Strategic Plan, which acts as an educational roadmap to enhance and better serve the County's school districts," explained Carl.

The initiative was inspired by an ongoing effort to invest in bold, creative and student- centred educational activities, and required school districts to apply if they felt they utilised an innovative strategy that was unique to their district.

The chosen applications were awarded up to $525,000 to enhance the strategy and share it with other Orange County school districts.

"Whether it be a new technology or an innovative way of teaching, we wanted to see something exciting and impactful," Carl continued. "The applications were judged by a committee, and six districts were selected out of 29, with the funding split evenly between each winning entry."

One of the winning districts developed a personalised college and career road map that links classroom learning to future pathways. Other winning applications included collaborative math 'learning labs' for ↘

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Bio

CARL FONG

teachers and students learning to design code-compliant tiny homes to support families experiencing homelessness.

A secure system

Alongside its dedication to enhancing the education of its students, OCDE is doing everything possible to ensure that these children have access to safe and secure learning. With cybersecurity threats at an all-time high, this is not as easy as it might seem.

As Chief Technology & Information Security Officer, Carl understands just how large a threat cyber risk can be and has worked hard to keep up the organisation's security from the inside out.

Within the department's security process, Carl and his team run random audits to ensure the IT department is following the correct frameworks and guidelines. The team also carries out risk assessments for Orange County school districts to assist them in their security posture. These tests, which are unique to Orange County, have been an effective solution for protecting information.

"I have been fortunate enough to build an IT division with a cybersecurity focus within the organisation, with people dedicated to certain roles," continued Carl. "The IT division has seven departments dedicated to carry out Dr. Bean's 5-3-1 Strategic Plan that has 5 key initiatives, 3 objectives that support the local districts and one bold goal."

The IT division is also being supported by strong partnerships that have really helped enhance OCDE's security.

"There are a lot of cybersecurity initiatives coming down the line, and we are partnering with specific cyber companies to ensure all our data is protected," explained Carl. "We dedicate a significant amount of time



Carl Fong

Chief Technology & Information Security Officer

Inspired by all things tech, Carl Fong gained his degree in data processing at California Polytechnic State University Pomona. After graduating he joined OCDE, where he has remained for more than 40 years, building a stellar career and improving the system to the benefit of almost half a million students.

Other achievements include becoming a president of CEPTA, Hall of Fame for CITE, being named the T.E.N. Information Security Executive of the Year in the nonprofit Sector and gaining his doctorate at the turn of the century to honour his late father.

to deciphering what companies are best for our needs, partnering with only the best service providers that will keep our students' data safe."

Other steps taken by the division, include creating highly secure virtual desktops that allow employees to work from home without being at risk of security breaches. These are just some of the implementations that have helped motivate Carl over the last 40 years and continue to inspire him today.

"Not only do I love the people here, but I love the technology too," said Carl. "I love being able to get my hands on new tech and make it work for us. "Our students are the next generation of leaders. My role is to make sure the technology they use supports – rather than limits – their potential.

"So, I make it my mission everyday to ensure that we continue to adapt and move with the technology in a way that benefits the organisation and, most importantly, the children.

"True commitment to that goal means constantly striving to improve. That is why I aim to push technology and staff to the boundaries of innovation. Together, I hope we can continue strengthening Orange County's education system and ensure our children have futures as bright as their potential." ■

EMPOWERING EDUCA

Newcastle University is a leading institution of higher learning, educating students from over 130 countries across three capuses in Newcastle, Singapore and Malasia. As a founding member of the Russell Group of research- intensive universities, the institution is committed to driving innovation and global progress. Director of IT Service Delivery Pauline Howie discussed the university's investments into technology to meet the diverse needs of its user base. Report by Antonia Cole



AT Newcastle University, IT service delivery is a key part of the institution's daily operations, Director of IT Service Delivery Pauline Howie said: "Our technology supports a significant community, including over 6,000 staff members and 27,000 students. Managing a user base of this scale requires a carefully structured and user centric approach. We have to ensure that we remain considerate of the diverse and often complex needs that are present in a research intensive academic environment."

As Director of IT Service Delivery, Ms Howie uses technology to ensure the university remains functional while ↘

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ROC TECHNOLOGIES

Digital foundations for the moments that matter

Universities are dynamic, evolving environments, focused on advancing research and knowledge whilst creating high-quality experiences for their students. Increasingly, their ability to deliver against those ambitions depends on the digital foundations beneath them: reliable access, secure connectivity and infrastructure that can support the pace and complexity of university life.

In this context, network transformation is not simply an infrastructure upgrade. It is about creating a foundation that allows the university to keep learning, research and services moving, while enabling a better experience for its community.

Roc works in partnership with universities like Newcastle to assess how technology supports the rhythm of campus life, where pressure points are emerging, and where targeted change can unlock greater value. In practice, the strongest digital estates are those designed not only for day-to-day operation, but for the moments when the university needs them most.

editorial mention



Roc

Is your IT ready for the moments that matter?

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promoting innovation. A key focus is research computing, which includes high-performance computing and specialised technology for data-heavy research projects. Additionally, Ms Howie focuses on digital adoption and literacy. This means ensuring that the university community can fully utilise the capabilities of standard tools like Windows 11, Microsoft Teams and SharePoint to improve efficiency. AI is of course becoming a topic of interest and excitement across the sector, with Newcastle University looking to leverage what it can offer us across our environment.

To achieve these goals, the IT department includes a business partnering unit. This team helps navigate the specific challenges of the academic setting by connecting central IT with the wider university. In this way, both students and staff can benefit from consistent and supportive technical systems, supporting the university to meet our strategic aims.

"To maintain operational integrity, we use Information Technology Infrastructure Library processes," added Ms Howie. "These frameworks ensure that our services are robust, efficient and reliable, which minimises the risk of failure at critical moments. Ultimately, my role requires a constant balance between managing daily operations and supporting an innovation stream that is driven by the university's research and teaching needs.

"By focusing on the purpose and impact of technology solutions, we ensure that digital investments support both user experience and the university's strategic goals."

Meeting needs

Managing IT service delivery in a large academic environment has a unique set of challenges. With such a diverse user base, specific requirements vary greatly across students and staff. Successful delivery requires the IT department to fully consider the different levels of digital literacy, and the specific personal challenges users may face within the university. This ensures that technology acts as an enabler rather than a barrier.

"A hurdle specific to the university sector is the management of legacy technology," explained Ms Howie. "High-value equipment, which is often funded through specific research grants, must be maintained for many years. Our role is to ensure these systems remain effective and secure against evolving cyber threats without disrupting critical research.

"Balancing these operational constraints with the demand for modern, high-speed data solutions means we must set realistic expectations for what we can achieve. While commercial enterprises may have larger budgets to solve these issues, we have to rely on our team's ability to be inventive and adapt to changing circumstances."

Newcastle University launched the Service First initiative to tackle systemic issues in IT support, against a backdrop of escalating complaints and a backlog of over 3,000 service tickets. A project team was created, then through root cause analysis, team and ↘



analyst performance improvements, an extensive suite of operational reporting, and increased stakeholder engagement, defects were reduced by 98% within 12 months.

Alongside transforming IT service delivery and restoring stakeholder confidence, the Service First programme was recognised as the winner in the Excellence in Project Delivery in Service category as part of the prestigious British Quality Foundation (BQF) 2025 Excellence Awards.

Another challenge is meeting the current user expectations of speed and safety. By ensuring that digital services remain intuitive and that security is managed transparently, Newcastle University can meet the demands of its user base. This allows the university to focus on its education and research targets.

"I joined Newcastle University because I was inspired by its purpose-based leadership," continued Ms Howie. "Discovering the world of educational technology and the impact of university research has provided a new level of professional fulfilment for me. Enabling the development of



people and projects at the university really drives me to ensure our technical systems run smoothly."

Advancing technology

While technical expertise is essential for IT stability, technology must remain focused on the user, Ms Howie commented: "My previous experience at BT showed me that the customer is always the primary focus. Every IT process, whether incorporating a new demand or managing service costs, is designed to ensure the user feels supported, informed and empowered. We are transitioning from the traditional model, where technology had to be adapted to, into one where technology serves specific human and organisational needs."

In line with this, Newcastle University has launched the Platform for the Future initiative to embed comprehensive business systems and transform the institution's technology, strengthening the university as a whole. With this, the university is transitioning to using technology to facilitate flexible, self-paced and remote learning that better suits students' needs.



"Our new network designed and implemented by Roc Technologies provides a highly secure, resilient foundation for our Platform of the Future strategy," added Ms Howie. "The solution based upon world-leading technology from Fortinet and HPE Juniper uses AI to deliver improved student experience, enhanced research capacity and advanced teaching and learning capabilities.

"I am heavily involved in advancing research computing. For example, at Newcastle University we built a specialised function to support researchers with high-power computing and secure data storage. As Deputy Chair of the UCISA digital research community, I am passionate about delivering projects like this."

The university is also carefully integrating artificial intelligence into its operations. Although AI has the potential to accelerate service delivery and enhance education, Newcastle University is committed to ensuring it is used responsibly. This means balancing innovation with human oversight and prioritising accountability.

Utilising innovation

Newcastle University is currently using AI to enhance student experience and optimise operations. Within the IT department, the team is looking to use AI for predictive



Executive profile

Pauline Howie

Specialising in large-scale operational transformation and service excellence, Pauline Howie has spent much of her career managing complex technology simultaneously while supporting diverse business needs. She has a Master of Arts in History from the University of Dundee and a PG Dip in Information Technology from Abertay University, giving her a unique industry outlook.

With a background in large-scale project management and a long-standing employment at BT Group, she is currently the Director of IT Service Delivery at Newcastle University. Pauline Howie brings a people-first perspective to the digital landscape. Rather than just focusing on technical solutions, she ensures that customer and employee engagement drive every digital initiative.

analytics. By using autonomous algorithms, the team can predict system failures and automate repairs to keep technology running smoothly for users. Additionally, AI-driven tools like chatbots or intelligent navigation systems are being explored to help students and applicants access university information.

"AI could also be very transformative for the data-intensive research we do at the university," said Ms Howie. "It can interpret and draw conclusions from large datasets, allowing researchers to focus their expertise on testing and validation. However, this must be done deliberately and thoughtfully, with human oversight remaining essential. This ensures that AI is used as a purposeful tool, rather than a distraction from our core mission of critical thought."

As the university integrates AI into operations, it is focused on maintaining security and sustainability. The institution utilises clear guidelines to prevent the misuse of AI and protect data integrity.

"While automation and AI can handle basic tasks, the human element remains irreplaceable for complex problem-solving," continued Ms Howie. "Our main goal at the university is to ensure graduates are ready for an AI-driven future. This means we must upskill both staff and students, as well as collaborate with external partners to gain an understanding of where industries are headed.



Bio

PAULINE HOWIE

Pauline Howie with Andy

"We hope to balance technological innovation with responsibility, ensuring the human brain remains at the centre of the educational journey."

Lasting transformation

IT service delivery is made possible at Newcastle University through its long-term partnerships. The institution builds valuable relationships with partners and suppliers that focus on developing expertise and shared values. Through partnerships with organisations such as Microsoft and Crimson, the university has been able to gain access to specialised knowledge and enhance its digital capabilities.

"We really value when our partners invest their time into understanding the higher education sector," commented Ms Howie. "This allows for a constructive dialogue where concepts can be tested and refined. Within the university environment, we must weigh our decisions against institutional values, purpose and user experience. Having these collaborative relationships with our partners enables us to make these choices for the good of the entire university.

"Our focus is on guaranteeing that every pound spent delivers a clear return, enriching the lives of our students and wider community."

As IT continues to evolve, Newcastle University is investing in innovation to both enhance its own processes and deliver the research that will benefit society. The university plans to use technology to create a transformative experience for students and leave a positive impact on the world. ■

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