



BCS IT LEADERS FORUM (ITLF): Summary Report - IT Leaders Forum Annual Conference and Symposium v3.0

- **References:** Online Chat Log, Flipcharts, Round Table Notes & Handwritten Notes
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Overall Summary

- The Conference and Symposium fostered wide debate, with over a hundred people having registered for the event. Recurring themes were:
 - Technology is changing faster than professional institutions are adapting
 - This in turn is creating challenges around leadership, skills, governance, resilience, AI adoption, and engagement with younger professionals

1. Themed Summaries:

The BCS IT Leaders Forum focused on how the IT profession and BCS must adapt to rapid technological change, particularly in AI, resilience, quantum computing, autonomous systems and future leadership skills.

The strongest message was that **leadership, governance, resilience and adaptability are becoming more important than technical expertise alone**. Participants repeatedly stressed that technology is advancing faster than professional institutions are adapting.

Key Themes

- **AI Governance:** The priority is not AI technology itself but accountability, governance, professional standards and clear ownership of AI outcomes; in addition, understanding AI limitations including hallucinations and fabricated outputs need to be factored into governance practices.
- **Digital Resilience:** Resilience and service availability are now board-level concerns, with increasing regulatory attention and a focus on business and

societal impact. Discussion also extended to AI resilience and the consequences of AI failure affecting business services, finance and critical infrastructure.

- **Supply Chain Risk:** IT leaders need a much deeper understanding of cloud, open-source and third-party dependencies.
- **Autonomous Systems:** Autonomous vehicles generated both optimism and scepticism, particularly regarding safety, evidence, regulation and workforce displacement.
- **Quantum Computing:** While quantum technology remains surrounded by hype, organisations should begin preparing for post-quantum cryptography and future security challenges.
- **Future Leadership Skills:** Successful IT leaders will require vision, communication, influence, cross-disciplinary thinking, entrepreneurial mindsets, lifelong adaptation and continuous learning and comfort with uncertainty. Reskilling, vocational and experiential learning, mentoring and learning-by-doing were identified as strategic priorities. In addition, the significance of tried and tested skills frameworks such as the Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) are essential for skills benchmarking.

2. Strategic Concern for BCS

While there was strong recognition of the longstanding contribution to the profession that the BCS has made, some participants felt that there may be opportunities to further evolve its approach with regards to member engagement, innovation and professional leadership in order to meet the expectations of a rapidly changing technology sector.

Recommendations

For BCS

- Strengthen engagement with universities and students.
- Improve pathways for early-career professionals.
- Increase visibility of thought leaders and member communities.
- Provide more practical guidance on AI governance, skills and emerging technologies.
- Support mentoring opportunities.

For IT Leaders

- Focus on outcomes rather than technology for its own sake.
- Develop expertise in AI governance and accountability.
- Understand the limitations of technology, especially in the context of AI.
- Prepare for post-quantum security challenges.
- Improve digital resilience and supply-chain awareness.
- Invest in communication and interdisciplinary leadership skills.

3. Overall Conclusion

The event's central question was not about any single technology, but rather:

“How must BCS and IT leaders evolve to remain relevant and effective in an AI-driven era?”

The consensus was that the future of the profession will be defined by the following main points rather than by technical capability alone:

- Governance
- Adaptive leadership
- Resilience
- Skills frameworks (e.g., SFIA)
- Accepting and preparing for continuous adaptation
- The need to support lifelong learning
- Awareness and management of the limitations within AI (e.g., perceiving contextual misunderstandings and/or hallucinations)

Annex A: Specific Round Table and Panel Contributions

Source: Gill Ringland: Recommended ITLF actions: AI, resilience and public sector focus; outreach to young people; and collaboration with SFIA on skills.

Source: Paul Reason: Highlighted AI governance, business-model readiness, training requirements, student engagement, AI standards, showcase events and positioning BCS as a trusted source of IT guidance.

Source: Rony Zaman: Added insights on AI disruption, healthcare use cases, AI agents, future skills, ethics, resilience, international governance and lobbying opportunities.

Source: Dr. Mercedes Arguello Casteleiro: Provided examples of student and graduate outreach through SGAI seminars, AI for Health, and industry-academic engagement to foster wider outreach:

- [BCS SGAI Virtual Seminar Series 2024](#): (presentations from computer science undergraduate students)
- [Democratising Science with AI September 2024](#) (including feedback from a CTO and Senior Research Manager)
- [AI for Health 2025 organised by BCS SGAI](#) (presentations from medical university undergraduates)

Source: Professor Ed Steinmueller and Sue Milton: Emphasise AI resilience as a distinct strategic consideration. Highlight risks from AI hallucinations, fabricated outputs and over-reliance on automation. Strengthen mentoring, career pathways, skills mapping and lifelong learning. Support vocational and experiential learning alongside formal qualifications. Encourage learning-by-doing and innovation within governance guardrails.