

# HARNESSING TECHNOLOGY

STRATEGIC THEME FOUR  
**Master technology and data**

Sam discussed leveraging standardised bank data for analytics at our flagship event, Analytics Live.  
**Sam Bonser ACA**  
Product Manager, Circit

Sarah spoke about the future of AI in analytics at our flagship event, Analytics Live.  
**Dr Sarah Schlobohm ACA**  
Head of Artificial Intelligence, The Citation Group



Read more at: [icaew.com/technology](https://icaew.com/technology)



**STRATEGIC THEME FOUR**  
**Master technology and data**

With technological change set to define the future of work, we continue to equip our members to harness the current and upcoming opportunities. In 2023, we ramped up our work on AI, and further embedded digital knowledge and skills into our member offerings.

**LEADING ON AI**

In June, we submitted a [response](#) to the UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology's consultation, AI regulation: a pro-innovation approach. Our response highlighted the role that ICAEW members can play in helping shape AI risk management and delivering AI assurance services. It also raised the lack of focus on ethics and called for greater regulatory clarity for businesses.

Recognising the significant impact of AI creating seismic change, we published a [generative AI guide](#), examining the technology's role in accounting. This has been extremely well-received by members and organisations, including IFAC and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO).

We held a multi-disciplinary [roundtable](#) to discuss the professionalisation of AI assurance, including lack of regulation and standards and skills shortages. Representatives attended from the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, the Information Commissioner's Office, the British Computer Society, PwC, Mindbridge and Simmons & Simmons.

**MASTERING MID-TIER TECHNOLOGY**

To help update our understanding of the technology and software landscape in which mid-tier firms are operating, between February and April we conducted [research](#), with support from market research firm, Savanta, and sponsored by Confirmation.

The objectives were to understand where members see their practice on the digital journey, the different technology solutions currently in use and the level of integration between different applications. We also examined any concerns or challenges around the use of technology, now and in the future.

The research approach included telephone and online surveys with senior decision-makers across a mix of practice sizes in the UK.

Key findings included an overall sense of optimism and positive attitude towards new technology. Key drivers for technology adoption were staff retention and wellbeing, and barriers were levels of effort and capability required.

We also held quarterly forums to engage mid-tier practice tech leads and discuss challenges and opportunities with peers and SMEs. September's session explored AI and was attended by the FRC.

**ICAEW ANNUAL CONFERENCE: TECHNOLOGY**

Our first Annual Conference since the pandemic took place in November.

Tickets sold out several weeks in advance, with more than 300 delegates joining from across the world.

The event featured 20 sessions led by industry experts and 25 sponsorship partners, who came together to explore the future of technology in accounting.



John was instrumental in creating our AI strategy.  
**John Pearce**  
Director, Digital and Publishing, ICAEW



Daniel is Vice-Chair of our Tech Board and chairs our Digital & AI accounting insight group.  
**Daniel Clark FCA**  
Trainer and Writer, Digital Skills for Professionals Ltd



Shikha helped to promote our mid-tier tech forums to our stakeholders.  
**Shikha Shah**  
Senior Marketing Executive, Commercial, ICAEW



Highlights included a keynote speech by Nir Evron, Senior AI Speech, Language and Search Lead at Microsoft, on whether ChatGPT is coming for our jobs; BBC technology editor Zoe Kleinman, discussed how technological trends are changing the face of business; and Alchemy HR founder Lola Abitogun, explained how to get workforces on board with new software.

**ICAEW ANALYTICS LIVE**

In June, our Data Analytics Community hosted its first in-person event, Analytics Live, focused on the theme of data-driven decision-making.

More than 150 delegates attended, and featured speakers from the Open Data Institute, Engine B and Grant Thornton, together with consultancies, software companies and academia, who shared insights and best practices.

Delegate feedback was overwhelmingly positive, leading to plans for a follow-up conference in 2024.

**OTHER HIGHLIGHTS**

Our **Data Analytics Community** saw 38% growth in 2023, finishing the year with more than 34,500 members.

In 2023, we had 306 enrolments of our **Data Analytics Certificate**, and began a review of the programme to ensure it remains relevant and as attractive and accessible as possible.

Our **Finance in a Digital World** programme, developed in partnership with Deloitte, is also being reviewed and updated. The programme equips members with insights on how digital transformation has impacted - and continues to impact - finance.

With financial models becoming the most important decision-making tools in finance, in October we launched an **Advanced Financial Modeler Accreditation**, in partnership with the Financial Modeling Institute (FMI). This self-directed e-learning certification includes a range of resources and tutorials on how to create effective, transparent and well-structured financial models.

To mark the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cyber Security Awareness month, we launched a **hub** containing articles, guides, webinars and podcasts.

We delivered a digital skills workshop for almost 200 small and mid-size practices, helping firms develop understanding of what digital upskilling means, which skills their firms need and practical ideas of how to fill those gaps.

ICAEW Hong Kong expanded its **Critical Skills** series to encompass workshops on both soft skills and Excel proficiency. The sessions were conducted by David Benhaim, an ICAEW member and Microsoft MVP, who trained participants in intermediate and advanced Excel techniques. The series was promoted to members in Australasia, Greater China, South East Asia and the Middle East, and received more than 1,200 registrations.



Bani manages our Excel and Data Analytics communities and helps deliver content on these subjects and wider tech.  
**Bani Lamba ACA**  
Data Analytics and Tech Manager, ICAEW

David is an ICAEW representative for Cambodia and regular Excel Community contributor.  
**David Benaim FCA**  
Founder & consultant at Xlconsulting, Cambodia

Andrew is Chair of our Excel Community.  
**Andrew Paw**  
Associate Director, Protiviti

Duncan is a member of the ICAEW Hong Kong Committee.  
**Duncan Fitzgerald FCA**  
Financial Services Risk and Crypto Leader, PwC Hong Kong