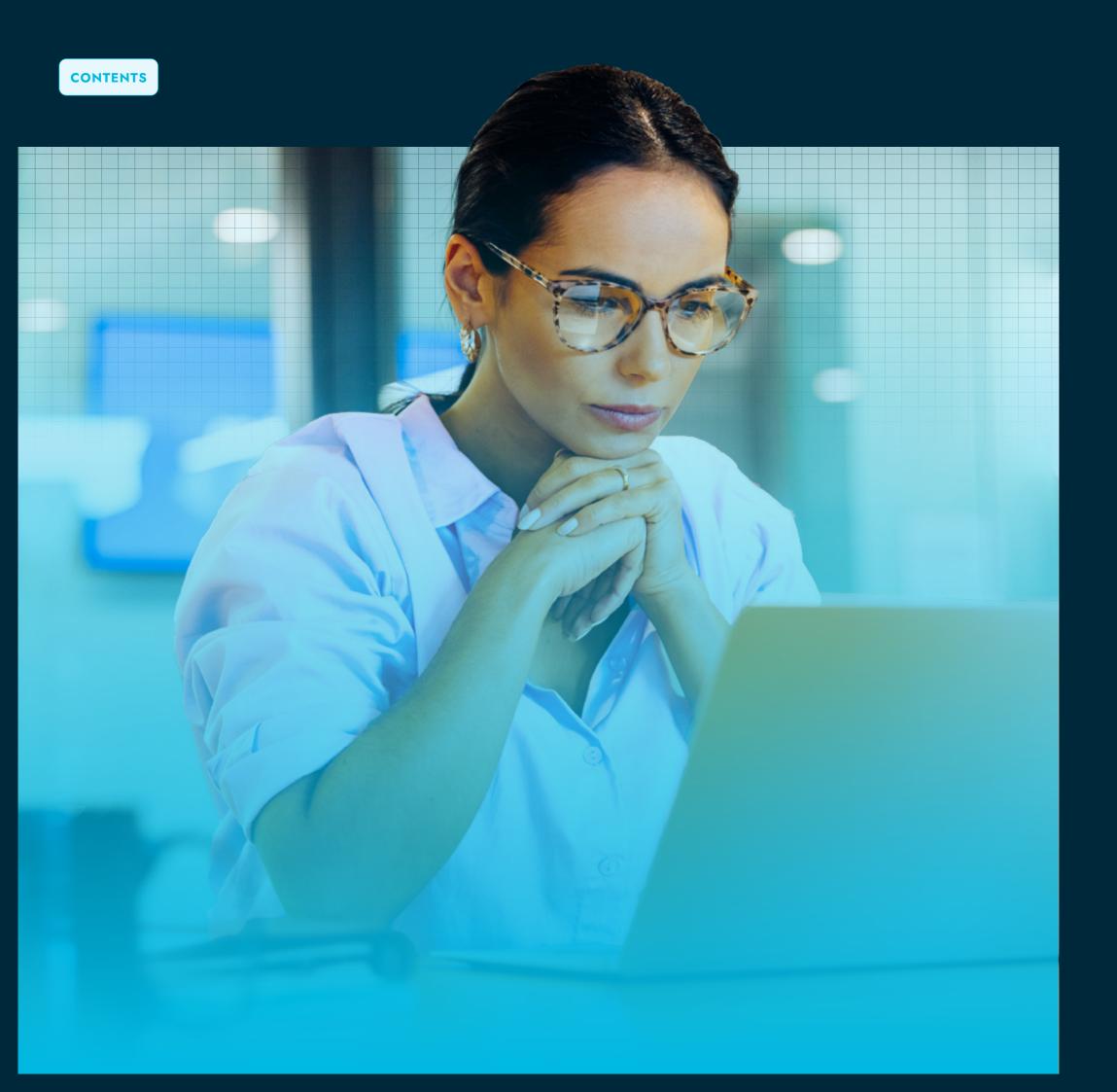
# A.I. FOR THE F.D.

The finance person's sensible guide to artificial intelligence





# Contents.

1 Introduction

2 Chapter 1

6 Chapter 2

13 Chapter 3

Chapter 4

22 Chapter 5

28 Chapter 6

34 Chapter 7

39 Afterword

**42** Glossary

44 Interviewees

# Introduction.

# How are you feeling about the whole AI thing?

It's probably entered your life in some way – but if you're still harbouring some anxiety about it, that's understandable.

There's an endless, exhausting discussion raging about what artificial intelligence means for the economy, the environment and humanity itself.



Should you believe the tech founder who warned that AI would mean unemployment of up to 20%?<sup>1</sup>

The Silicon Valley start-up whose declared ambition is to automate all human work?<sup>2</sup> (Whatever gifts the AI innovators have been blessed with, humility isn't always one of them.)

Or should you be reassured by the top business school that's pointed to the millions of jobs AI could *create* – and the boost it can give to human productivity?<sup>3</sup>

While these debates go on, you have a job to do, here and now, in finance. And all this talk of a workplace transformed by AI can seem like science fiction if you're still keying numbers into spreadsheets or if your organisation hasn't yet abolished paper invoices.

# That's where this guide comes in.

In *AI* for the *FD*, we've sought to tune out the noise, the hype and the controversy. Wherever this technology is heading, nobody's going to uninvent it. So we've focused on what it can really do for you, right now, and what actionable steps you can take to get up to speed.

We've interviewed a host of very clever, tech-savvy people – and you'll be pleased to learn that none of them is suggesting AI should replace you. The age of the robot FD is not yet upon us.

In fact, when we asked how finance professionals should start adopting AI, we kept getting the same response: Begin with the mundane work. The process-driven, repetitive tasks that suck up your time. If AI can help with that, you'll be able to spend that time on the areas where your human wisdom is most valuable.

If you use it well, Al could free you to focus on the things people do best. Welcome to the FD's sensible guide to artificial intelligence.

# **GET MORE**

Ready for more tips on harnessing artificial intelligence in your finance team? Help yourself to all our AI resources.

iplicit.com

<sup>1</sup> cnbctv18.com/education/ai-impact-on-white-collar-jobs-unemployment-layoffs-19633785.htm

<sup>2</sup> https://techcrunch.com/2025/04/19/famed-ai-researcher-launches-controversial-startup-to-replace-all-human-workers-everywhere/

<sup>3</sup> https://mitsloan.mit.edu/press/new-mit-sloan-research-suggests-ai-more-likely-to-complement-not-replace-human-workers

# CHAPTER ONE.



# Al novice to Al guru:

# Where are you on the learning curve?

## **Definitions #1**

Artificial intelligence: The ability of machines to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. Examples include understanding speech, recognising patterns, solving problems, learning from experience and making decisions. Al systems are designed to adapt and improve based on the data they process.

## What you'll learn:

- What research reveals about FDs' attitudes to Al
- The gulf between the AI enthusiasts and everybody else
- Why your people are probably using AI already
- What's your AI IQ? Take our quiz to find out

# What we know.

93%

Of FDs say AI will be a core skill for finance professionals in five years. Yet **38%** are hesitant or cautious about adopting it

If you're less than super-confident in your AI skills, you're not alone.

It might seem everyone else has immersed themselves in artificial intelligence with the unshakeable bravado of a teenager on their Xbox. But research suggests the picture is more mixed.

We asked 250 finance decision makers in medium-sized organisations about the extent of their Al adoption.

While 83% had fully or partly adopted at least some AI technology, 38% described themselves as hesitant or cautious about adopting it. Only 53% had a formal policy or framework for the safe use of AI, while 58% were concerned about the security and compliance risks of adopting AI without clear governance.

And while 93% believed AI would become a core skill for finance professionals within five years, people were concerned about what it could mean for jobs. Half (51%) saw it as a threat to entry-level finance jobs, while 52% said it could become a threat to senior roles — including their own.

#### **GET THE DETAIL**

Want to know where your fellow FDs are with AI – and what time savings they're seeing? Grab the full findings of iplicit's research at iplicit.com

iplicit.com

There's a group of people that loves this technology...But then you see the opposite.

Becky Glover, FD

# 'There's a hunger — but a lack of understanding'

Our research points to a gulf between the people who are racing ahead with AI and those who've barely begun.

"My impression is there's a group of people that love this technology, who are passionate about it and love playing around with it," says Becky Glover, a former FD of the Year winner at the Accounting Excellence Awards.

"But then you see the opposite – the people who are very cautious, who are not sure if it's a fad that will come and go. And those people are often not doing much to up skill themselves or their teams."

There's a similar gulf in the accounting profession.

Alastair Barlow, a former PwC accountant and business founder whose latest venture is the software business Numbrs, says: "I hang out with a group of early adopters in accounting, who tend to enjoy a challenge and like trying new technologies and sharing their experience. In that sample, 75% were using Al daily as of early 2025, with pretty much 100% using it at least weekly.

"In that bubble, it would be easy to get the impression that everybody in the world is using some form of AI every day. But among the 42,000 accounting firms in the UK, there will be a large proportion who don't even use cloud technology for all their clients, so it's unlikely they'll have huge knowledge and experience of AI."



People are split between those who declare AI is a waste of time and those who find it transformational.

# Daniel Lawrence, Bots For That

Daniel Lawrence, CEO of the accountancy automation business Bots For That, says: "We do our own State of Accounting Automation survey, which finds a massive hunger for it but also a lack of understanding.

"When people try it, we find they're split between those who declare it's rubbish and a waste of time and those who find it transformational. The people who really succeed with it are those who are attracted by a vision of what it could do, who accept it doesn't quite deliver that vision but recognise that it maybe gets you a step closer — so they persevere."

It might be tempting to leave this whole subject to the smart people who built your finance system. If AI has the potential to save you a lot of labour, won't those features be added to your core accounting software soon enough?

The risk of taking that approach is that without some knowledge, you'll struggle to evaluate your own vendor's offer and whether any Al features are all that they're claimed to be.

"There's real value in learning about what AI can deliver," says Paul Sparkes, iplicit's Chief Product Officer.

"I would encourage people to take a similar approach to the one iplicit took when it ran an AI Curious project to get staff experimenting with AI and sharing their knowledge. The technology moves quickly, so I'd be cautious about pinning your colours to a particular mast just yet."

# 'Nobody has it fully figured out'

Ali Kokaz, Head of Data and Al at the leading growth equity firm One Peak, is a daily user of Al.

"Across the board, everyone is saying 'We need to look at AI to make us more efficient'. But it's moving so quickly that no one knows exactly where they are on this journey," he says.

"I think the only commonalities are that everyone sees Al's transformative potential, wants to use it and feels it is moving too rapidly for them to keep up. Yet no one knows where they really are on the journey. Nobody has this fully figured out."

Wherever you are on the AI curve — personally or as an organisation — there's an important reality to bear in mind. You'll almost certainly have people on your team who are learning and experimenting. After all, ChatGPT brought this technology to the consumer in 2022, before most businesses had adopted it.

"You need to be cognisant of the fact that even if you're not aware of your team using AI, they probably are," says Olivia McMillan, Chief Operating Officer at iplicit.

"People are adopting these tools naturally, so it's important that you're supporting them and welcoming that, rather than stifling them. Getting some golden rules in place is important."

If you've barely dipped a toe in Lake AI, you might be wondering what you can actually do with it.

In the next chapter, we'll look at some real-world examples.

Even if you're not aware of your team using AI, they probably are.

Olivia McMillan, iplicit



# **HOW'S YOUR AI IQ?**

### Find out where you are on the adoption curve

Pencils out — it's quiz time. As we set out to get better at AI, let's see where you're starting from. You'll be marking your own answers — and unlike finance, it's not pass/fail.

Instructions: For each statement below, rate how much you agree on a scale of 1-5:

1 = Strongly disagree | 2 = Somewhat disagree | 3 = Neutral/unsure

| 4 = Somewhat agree | 5 = Strongly agree

1.	I've got	a pretty good	sense of	what Al	can (and	can't)	do for	finance	team

- 1 2 3 Score:
- 2. My organisation is already using AI tools in some way, beyond basic automations that are built into our software.
- (1) (2) (3) (4) (5) Score: /5
- 3. I can picture a few ways AI could make planning, reporting or decision making easier.
- 1 2 3 4 5 Score: /3
- 4. I have an idea of the risks or downsides that might come with making more use of AI in finance.
- 1 2 3 4 5 Score: /5
- 5. I'd feel confident in my ability to weigh up an AI tool to judge whether it's worth the investment.
- 1 2 3 4 5 Score: /5
- 6. My team has the appetite and mindset to give AI a try.
- 1 2 3 4 Score: /5
- 7. I've encouraged conversations or small experiments with AI in the team.
  - 1 2 3 4 Score: /5
- 8. If we decided to run a small AI trial, I'd be up for leading it.
  - 1 2 3 4 5 Score: /5

# Where are you on the curve?

#### 8-16 points

Al sceptic. You're cautious about Al and not sure if it's being over hyped. Nothing wrong with that – but a little more knowledge could shift your view.

#### 17-24 points

Al beginner. You're curious and starting to explore. This is the ideal point to build momentum with a bit of learning and some low-risk experiments.

#### **25-32** points

Al adopter. You're past the dabbling stage. You've tried things, seen the value and you're in a strong position to benefit.

#### **33-40** points

Al expert. You're well ahead of the curve, exploring advanced possibilities and shaping how others see Al in finance.

# Improve your score

However you scored, don't get put off by the idea that other people are way ahead of you and it's too late to catch up.

This field is changing all the time. Nobody knows it all — and a relatively small, regular investment of time in learning and experimenting is going to compound rapidly.

# CHAPTER TWO.

# A day in Al.

# **Definitions #2**

Large language model (LLM): A type of AI that's been trained to understand and generate human language. It analyses vast amounts of text to learn patterns. It responds to your commands (or "prompts") by continually predicting what comes next in a sequence. This enables it to answer questions, draft text, summarise information and have conversations. The best-known LLMs include ChatGPT, Claude and Google's Gemini.

## What you'll learn:

- The "problem-first approach" to adopting AI
- What AI can do for you 11 real-world examples from finance professionals

#### **BEFORE WE PROCEED - A WARNING**

Several examples here involve putting potentially sensitive data into AI tools that you don't control. You should anonymise that data if you can't guarantee it will be kept private. Bear in mind GDPR and your responsibilities to your employer and customers.

If in doubt, consult with whoever's in charge of information security and data protection in your organisation. There's more on this in Chapter Six, which is all about AI risks.

# The problem-first approach.

Sometimes, you could do with hearing a bit less about how AI will change the world and a bit more about exactly what you're supposed to do with it.

How, specifically, can it help a stressed-out finance team that's up against the familiar pressures of too much work and not enough time?

Alastair Barlow, founder of Numbrs, has seen a lot of progress on that front since ChatGPT, the first widely-adopted conversational AI, arrived in November 2022.

"People have got over the novelty of using it to write LinkedIn posts and emails," he says. "That may still be its most common use but an increasing number of people are analysing high volumes of data or getting help with complex technical accounting queries."

Start by figuring out the things that you want to fix in your role or in your business. I'd take that one thing and try and find the AI answer for it."

# Becky Glover, FD

However, "What can AI do for me?" Might be the wrong question to start with.

"People sometimes get stuck because they look at the solution before the problem," says FD Becky Glover.

"I'd suggest starting by figuring out the things that you want to fix in your role or in your business. Maybe it's the likelihood of fraud that keeps you up at night, for example — in which case, I'd take that one thing and try and find the AI answer for it."

Ali Kokaz, Head of Data and Al at One Peak, takes a similar approach. "In our organisation, we don't say 'I wonder what we could apply Al to'. We ask: 'What's the business problem? How do we get rid of that business problem or inefficiency? And does Al allow us to do that?' Sometimes the answer is no, but increasingly it's yes."

Olivia McMillan, who led 50 staff in an initiative called AI Curious as COO of iplicit, suggests a way to start. "I'd say challenge your team to think about highly repetitive tasks which often utilise data in one way or another and which feel administrative," she says.

"Think about the core of your role and the results you need to deliver. Which repetitive but essential tasks could AI take on to help you get there more efficiently?"

Indi Tatla, former CEO of Bankable and co-host of the podcast Digi-Tools in Accrual World, advises: "Think about areas where you've done the original thinking and you want the task done quicker the next time.

"For example, I already know what my work flow should be for anyone who gets in touch with me. Their messages will go into one of a handful of boxes and the top-priority ones will get a sincere response from me and a commitment. So the key is to create the original logic for sorting the messages and let the AI take it from there, rather than let it run wild."

Alastair Barlow adds: "If you can accelerate a lot of processes, you can release time for what's most valuable. So for every problem you have, I think the first question should be 'Can AI help me accelerate this somehow?"

#### **TOP TIP**

-W

What repetitive but essential tasks do you have to do every day? Think about using AI for that.

# A day in the Al life.

It's 9am on a working day. The Al-confident FD sits at their desk, looking at their computer, where their internet browser is displaying the chat window of an Al tool such as ChatGPT, Copilot or Claude. Now what?

We asked a host of tech-savvy finance professionals for concrete examples of how FDs can employ AI in their everyday work.

Does anybody's working day look exactly like the one below? Absolutely not – but all these things can be done with the tools available right now.

# 9am: Preparing for meetings

You scan your calendar for any appointments, trying to recall what they're about and what prep you need to do.

Becky Glover has Microsoft's AI tool Copilot integrated with her other Microsoft programs so it can act like a personal assistant briefing her on the day. "You can type into Copilot: 'Prepare me for my next meeting' and it'll come up with all the relevant emails and information you might need," she says.

# 9.30am: Minuting your meeting

After your first meeting, there's barely time to reflect on how it went – and what you've committed yourself to – before the next thing demands your attention.

But Copilot and other AI applications can help with the loose ends. "Rather than have someone sitting there typing up action notes, the AI can record the meeting and produce minutes and action points that you can just review and ping around to the people who attended," says Becky.



# 10.00am: Data entry

You'll be spending a chunk of time in spreadsheets today – but not all the data you need is sitting in Excel ready for you.

"Data entry into Excel might be the most boring part of your job," says Jake Moore, an AI enthusiast and Global Cybersecurity Advisor at ESET.

"But if you've got the data in another format, you can simply take a photo of it, put that photo into an AI tool, ask the AI to put it into a CSV file, then drop that into Excel. As long as you're careful to exclude personal information and just give the AI tool numbers in rows, it's a brilliant time-saver."

# 10.15am: Setting up spreadsheets

Some people love creating Excel spreadsheets and working out the necessary formulas. For everyone else, it's worth consulting AI.

"If you've got any issues with Excel data, you can talk to ChatGPT or another AI tool and tell it the problem," says Jake Moore.

"You can give it some dummy data to play with or just speak to the Al as you would to an Excel genius and it will most likely come back with the formula you're after."

Alastair Barlow adds: "You can also use it to riff off ideas. For example, you might say 'I've got this complex spreadsheet. How do I apply this function to this data?' Or 'How do I filter this?' Your imagination is the only limit."

8

# 10.30am: Finding patterns and comparing datasets

When there's data to be analysed, you don't necessarily need to do all that poring over spreadsheets yourself. You can get a lot of insights by uploading the figures to AI — carefully anonymised, if you're venturing outside your own locked-down ecosystem.

"If you have a large volume of data, AI is a powerful tool for identifying patterns, trends and anomalies," says Alastair Barlow.

Rob Steele, CFO at iplicit, adds: "Al can analyse large sets of data in a way that would be practically impossible for a human.

"For example, I've looked at the usage statistics showing how customers are using our software, anonymising it before putting anything into ChatGPT. All then enables me to see what features customers are using, how many invoices they're scanning and so on, alongside what they're paying, and I can see whether they're getting full value for money. Those insights are useful to a business in all sorts of ways."

That ability to sift large amounts of data can also be a short cut to finding discrepancies, says Becky Glover. "If I have a lot of data and need to know where the differences are, I'll drop the two datasets into ChatGPT — anonymised, so it looks like lists of numbers — and it will find those differences," she says. "Then I can use my human expertise to take further action."

# 12.00pm: Forecasting and setting KPIs

Maybe this working day involves viewing the bigger financial picture, looking to future quarters or years.

Al forecasting is still experimental and not a replacement for proper financial modelling. But it is worth looking into the assistance it can give you.

Becky Glover says: "I've used Copilot, which is attached to my Excel, to do a little bit of forecasting work. I don't think it's quite there yet as a forecasting tool, and ChatGPT is a little better, but it's good at looking at how we're doing on our KPIs."

Al can also suggest methods for forecasting and even offer some KPIs you might want to use. "I recently wanted to review my forecasting to see if there were better or faster ways of doing it," says Becky.

"I told ChatGPT I wanted to create a forecast for an insurance broking and underwriting business, I wanted it to give me KPIs that we should use and I said it should all be doable in Excel. Within five minutes, it gave me a forecast that I could pull into Excel and it suggested those KPIs. It knew that insurance businesses deal in gross written premiums (GWP) rather than revenue and it based its KPIs on that.

"Fortunately, my own current forecasting was pretty similar to what it suggested, but it was useful to compare the two."



# 2.00pm: Preparing board reports

I save around 90 minutes each month on board reporting by using AI to write the commentary.

# Rob Steele, iplicit

There's a board meeting coming up — and the time-consuming process of writing the necessary report might not be your idea of fun.

You'll want the text to reflect your own insights and knowledge. But you might be able to use some AI help.

"I save around 90 minutes each month on board reporting by using AI to write the commentary," says iplicit's Rob Steele.

"I've created a standard prompt with the key paragraphs I want to cover and the AI then fills in the data points and adjusts the tone depending on whether the results are positive or negative. This means I can produce high quality commentary quickly and if the numbers change or the message needs to be reframed, it's as simple as adapting the prompt.

"Al allows me to generate clear, adaptable commentary quickly and adjust it as the numbers change."

Becky Glover does things the other way round: a first draft of her own creation followed by an Al-assisted polish.

"I have a very busy brain and there's a lot going on at any one point, so sometimes I'll be writing a report while there are other things on my mind. An FD needs to be able to write quite long reports for the board that make sense, because quite serious decisions are going to be based around it," she says.

"So I usually write the report in draft and put it into ChatGPT, anonymising everything. When it outputs its version, I'll often think: Oh yes, that's what I meant. That sounds brilliant."

# 3.00pm: Illustrating those reports

However insightful your board report is, people will want pictures. Al can be invaluable in creating graphics to bring the data alive.

Becky Glover uses AI features in the graphic design platform Canva, rather than Microsoft's PowerPoint, for board packs and presentations.

"When you're in charge of finance, you talk to non-finance people quite a lot. You have to get information across to someone who only looks at finance once a quarter and has no training in it, so I'm always looking at how to show things graphically," she says.

"If you want to show that your revenue is 80% of where you want it to be, you can tell Canva's Al tool 'I want a circle showing 80% complete'.

"ChatGPT and Canva can talk to each other, so you could also tell ChatGPT to produce that chart and it'll get Canva to do it.

"Alternatively, you could give ChatGPT a brief like: 'I need to show the board that we're only at 80% of expected revenue. What's the best way to do that?' And it'll come back with different graphics for you to choose from. Similarly, if I'm working with our HR manager on examining the gender pay gap, we could produce a graphic with little male and female figures shaded in to show how we're doing.

"You can create something that looks amazing and the program is really quick and intuitive."



# 3.30pm: Checking for fraud and errors

While you've been spending your day looking at all this big-picture stuff, there will have been a lot of transactional work going on in your organisation. All can help review all that for error and fraud, highlighting anything that needs a closer look.

Al can take a data source and identify outliers. It'll be able to identify fraud patterns or something out of the ordinary.

# Alastair Barlow, Numbrs

"We're used to auditors reviewing things like what debts you've written off or how you've handled deferred revenue. They'll run their certain prescribed checks," says iplicit's Rob Steele.

"You could potentially use AI to run those same checks. When used within your own secure environment, it could check company names against verified addresses, phone numbers and bank details, for example, to make sure there's no fraud going on."

Alastair Barlow adds: "Al can take a data source and identify outliers. It'll be able to identify fraud patterns or something that looks out of the ordinary."

As we'll explore in Chapter Six, AI can enable new kinds of fraud. One use of its image generation abilities is to create simulated photos of receipts that never existed – yet AI can also help detect those fakes.

Becky Glover says: "Many organisations use OCR (optical character recognition) technology to allow people to submit photographs of receipts with their expense claims. It's possible to generate fake photos of receipts through AI, but AI can also examine those receipts to tell whether they're real."



The day has been too busy for you to read and make sense of lengthy, jargon-filled documents. But what day isn't?

Al can help review and digest that material. "You might be presented with a 60-page document that you need to understand but you can't necessarily get a lawyer to explain everything," says Rob Steele.

"Al is good at picking out some of the key things in those documents and summarising them. It can identify which areas I should drill down into, which areas are potentially risky or need highlighting. There might only be three or four points in a lengthy document that you really need to read and understand."

Jake Moore of ESET does something similar with those screeds of terms and conditions that you're supposed to click "I agree" to.

He says: "I can put those T&Cs into a PDF and ask: 'Referring to this document only, what should I be aware of and what has changed recently? Is there anything I should be thinking about before I go forward?'"





# 5.00pm: Credit control

Before you pack up for the evening, you might wonder how the cash flow's going. Do any debtors need chasing? Would a cash flow forecast be helpful? This is not the kind of analysis you could traditionally squeeze in at the end of a packed day — but AI can accelerate the process.

Paul Sparkes, Chief Product Officer at iplicit, says: "You can take an aged debtors report out of any system, put it into your AI model of choice and say 'Show me the outliers' — as long as you've made sure that data is not going to find its way into the outside world.

"You can go further by exporting the list of aged debtors, along with the invoices, and saying 'Calculate my average debtor days and show any invoices that are at least 10% outside of my normal number of debtor days'. You could do all that in a spreadsheet — but not in 30 seconds, as you could with AI.

"It still needs checking but all you have to do is look at the invoice and establish that it really is that number of days overdue and needs action."

# Where to start

Adopting just one or two of the suggestions above could save you hours. But if you're early in your Al journey, you might be asking: "OK, but how do I get it to do any of that?"

The answer to that one is about prompting. That's a skill that has inspired many a LinkedIn hustle or shouty YouTube advert — but let's take a sensible look.

#### **LEARN MORE**

Get all our AI resources at iplicit.com

LEARN MORE



# CHAPTER THREE.



# Your prompt attention: How to talk to your Al companion.

### **Definitions #3**

Prompt: The message or question you type or speak into an Al tool to tell it what you want it to do — e.g. "Write a summary of this article", "Suggest 3 good Italian restaurants near Birmingham New Street", "Tell me a joke about fixed asset depreciation".

## What you'll learn:

- Why prompting isn't the secret wisdom that some people would have you believe
- How to start like you're Googling and then add context, persona and format
- Some ways to avoid those AI hallucinations
- How to iterate and improve

# It's no secret.

Your first experience with AI might have gone something like this: You asked ChatGPT to do something. The result was disappointing. And that was that for a while.

A good prompt is clear, specific and gives the AI enough context to understand exactly what you want.

### **ChatGPT**

You'll have heard people say that using AI successfully is all about prompting — and some people do their best to make that skill sound mysterious and impressive. Once you start researching the subject, you may well be assailed by noisy YouTube ads and uber-confident social media hustlers, all offering to share the AI prompts that will change your life.

But getting better at prompting isn't about uncovering a secret that only those wise people have unlocked. It just involves taking on board a few tips and then experimenting for yourself.

ChatGPT itself says this: "A good prompt is clear, specific and gives the AI enough context to understand exactly what you want."

Once you've launched the home page of ChatGPT, Copilot, Claude or another AI tool and been confronted by a chat window with a flashing cursor, let's examine what you might do next.





#### **TOP TIP**

A tip before we start: If you're a better talker than a writer, no problem. Try pressing that microphone icon and speaking, in natural language, to your Al tool. You can always ask it to turn your ramblings into a draft prompt that you can review before it takes further action.

# **Starting out:**

# Think of it like Google

At its heart, prompting isn't so different from using Google or another search engine — except that being specific with your queries really helps.

"I would say start by thinking of it as a Google search," says FD Becky Glover.

"If you just type the word 'forecasting' into a Google search, it's going to come up with weather forecasts and answers to 'What is forecasting?' Before it gets anywhere near budget forecasting, because your query was too broad.

"It's similar with an AI tool like ChatGPT or Copilot. To get the best answer, you have to be really specific about what you want.

"The other difference is that with AI, you can have a bit more of a backand-forth conversation with it. You can say 'I like this, I don't like that, try again', whereas with a Google search you'd have to change your search terms and start again."

# Add some context

Here's where prompting starts to look very different from Googling. You can add more information that the AI should take into account when answering.

These models were mainly trained on public information and a lot of information about you and your situation is private.

# Jack Rhodes, iplicit

Jack Rhodes, who has played a key role in iplicit's AI experimentation as Revenue Operations Lead, says: "One of the best ways I've heard it described is in the phrase 'Context is king'.

"Context is the factor that really helps AI give you the output you want.

"Context could mean more information about a task, about your business, about your situation, the challenges you're facing or what you want the output to look like.

"Al can't read your mind and it can't know information that it wasn't trained on. Bear in mind that these models were mainly trained on public information and a lot of information about you and your situation is private, so you have to give it some of that information to get the output you want."

Becky Glover gives an example: "You might say this to the AI: 'I'm currently writing a report for my board. I'm the finance director. Our industry is insurance. The board members don't often see finance so I want something I can present to them that's as clear as possible, preferably a diagram with a dashboard-type theme.'

"Once you really start to paint a picture like that with the prompt, you'll get something back that's more specific to your requirements."

# Give it a persona

Here's another dimension to the issue of context: You can give AI a role to play.

"ChatGPT and all the other AI models do well if they not only understand the context of a situation but also what perspective they should take on that situation," says Jack Rhodes.

"Giving the AI a lens through which to view the situation helps it work out exactly how it should respond.

"You could tell the AI 'You're a CFO' or 'You're an FD' before sharing your task. Those roles will help the model look at the situation from that perspective, improving the output."

Alastair Barlow, founder of Numbrs, adds: "You could say: 'You're a top personal tax expert at PwC and I want to evaluate the best way to extract remuneration from this company'. Then you go on to suggest the format."

# Give it a format

Think about the form you'd like the Al's response to take. Are you expecting three paragraphs of guidance? A comprehensive report? A diagram?

Alastair Barlow says: "You could say: 'I want you to present this in a table'. Or 'I want you to draft a memo'. You can also give it an example of how the output should look."

If you're unsure of the best format, you could try asking the AI to suggest some options before it carries out the task.



# Let it say 'I don't know'

One way to avoid hallucinations is to say: 'Only use the facts I've given you'

# Alastair Barlow, Numbrs

You'll know a bit about hallucinations – those surprising AI responses where any resemblance to real life is purely coincidental.

Those hallucinations are, at least partly, a result of Al's eagerness to please.

"These models are designed to give you an answer. Being eager to please is baked in at a very low level," says Jack Rhodes.

"But you can get the AI to override that base instruction to be nice. You can give it permission to challenge you and to be direct — and you can give it permission to say it doesn't know enough to respond. Giving it that 'out' helps because otherwise that's where hallucinations and bias can happen, just because it's going into all kinds of depths to figure out an answer to your problem."

You can guide the AI to be cautious, to say "I don't know", challenge your assumptions and ask follow-up questions. Not all AI tools will reliably follow these instructions but many advanced models will.

You can also reduce the risk of hallucinations by constraining Al's sources. Alastair Barlow says: "One way to avoid hallucinations is to say: 'Only use the facts I've given you. Don't use any information outside this background'."



# Break down the task

The more complex the task, the bigger the potential time savings from AI. But that complexity can make prompting more daunting.

"When you're dealing with a complex problem, it's worth breaking it down into steps," says Jack Rhodes.

"You can tell the AI you have this overall challenge and that you'd like it to tackle it bit by bit. You can then give it the steps to work through and tell it to report back after each step, so you can review its progress before giving it permission to move onto the next one.

"A sequence of smaller tasks is easier to solve than one big, complicated problem."

# Refine your prompts

If your prompts don't get the results you want, it's tempting to abandon your conversation with AI and just do the task yourself. But you'll learn a lot more by tweaking the prompt and seeing how that changes the results.

"My own journey really has just been trial and error. In fact, that's pretty much the only approach I've used," says iplicit's CFO, Rob Steele.

"I use natural language, either by typing or talking into the AI tool, and nine times out of 10 it does a great job. If it hasn't got the right idea, I tell it the output's not quite right, and I'll tell it to add this or change that — and that usually works."

Becky Glover agrees. "If the result isn't quite what you want, that's completely normal," she says.

"You then just have to say 'This is what I like and this is what I don't like. Please try again'. The more you play around with it, the better you'll get, because you'll learn how it wants the information."

# **Create a library**

As you refine those prompts, it's helpful to be a bit scientific about the whole process. Keeping a log of the prompts you tried and the responses you got will assist your learning. You'll also avoid having to search through past AI chats to find out what worked last time. A simple Word document or Excel spreadsheet will do the job.

"It's definitely helpful to have a prompt library," says Jack Rhodes.

"Record the prompt, what you were using it for, an example of the output — and that will help you iterate as you go."

# Ask AI to help

Not sure where to begin with your prompt? Are you hitting a brick wall? You could ask AI to get the process started.

"If you're not sure what the AI needs from you, tell it to ask you questions," says Jack Rhodes.

"Say: 'What would you need to know to be able to do this better?' You could tell it to ask you five questions that will help it complete its task."

# It's not a mystery

As we've seen, good prompting is not a superpower handed down through tech gurus and influencers. It's something anyone can accomplish — and a little practice and self-education every day will compound over time.

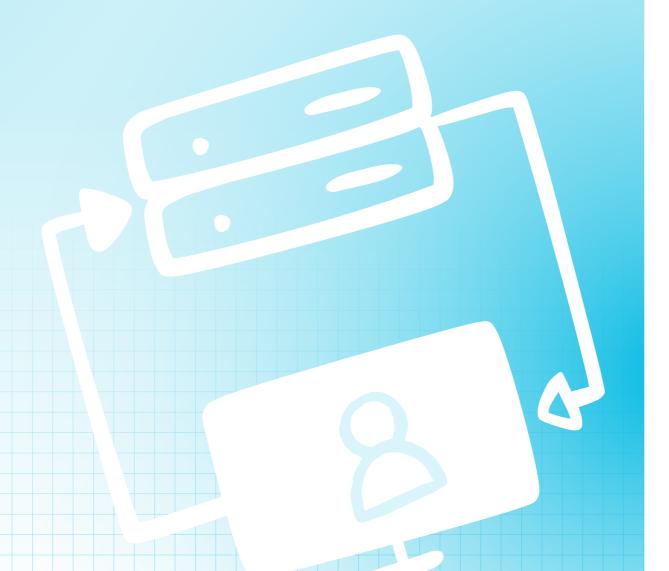
There's much more to say about how to learn and experiment with artificial intelligence. But first we'll consider a form of it that's more complex and potentially much more powerful. It's time to enter the world of agentic AI.

### **SHORT VERSION**

Get a handy cheat sheet for improving your prompting – along with a bumper pack of other AI resources – at iplicit.com

iplicit.com

# CHAPTER FOUR



# Meet my agent: Your introduction to agentic Al.

# **Definitions #4**

Agentic AI: Systems that can make decisions and take actions on their own to achieve goals. Agentic AI can set objectives, plan steps to reach them and act independently, often adapting as it learns.

# What you'll learn:

- How AI can take actions on your behalf
- How new tools can work proactively without prompting
- How agents can specialise in areas of your business
- Why you should 'beware the blur' between automation and real agentic Al

# Your electronic assistant.

We've seen how conventional AI acts like a highly conscientious, eagerto-please researcher — fetching information, drafting reports, even giving you an argument if you ask it to.

But some highly clever people used the arrival of ChatGPT in 2022 as the signal to develop something even more powerful.

By combining the power of large language models with other tools, they sought to create electronic assistants capable of doing multiple things in different systems. The idea was that these new platforms wouldn't only write a suggested itinerary for your trip to Corfu. They'd book you into a hotel you'd be sure to like, arrange the flights and transfers and report back to you once everything was arranged.

Welcome to the slightly science fictiony world of agentic AI.

# 'We've reached a pivotal point'

An Al agent, then, is a tool that can go away and take action to achieve a goal that you've set.

Olivia McMillan, Chief Operating Officer at iplicit, says: "I think we've recently reached a pivotal point with agentic AI.

"Al is no longer there just to make us more effective by being our copilot; we can actually duplicate parts of ourselves to be 10 times more effective.



# Olivia McMillan, iplicit

"ChatGPT launched its agent mode recently in the UK and within half an hour, one of our team members had it preparing a supermarket order for him."

But how might that kind of tool work for your finance team?

Imagine asking the AI to forecast your organisation's cash flow for the next three months, using your last 12 months of data for reference.

The agent could then carry out all the necessary tasks — both in your finance system and outside it — and deliver a report to your inbox. It could also set an alert to go off in case the available cash dips below a responsible threshold.

On top of this, AI agents integrated with finance systems can aid audit and compliance by running checks on transactions and flagging potential irregularities. They can do scenario planning by simulating a range of reactions to external events. Outside the finance system, they could prompt you to renegotiate contracts as renewal dates loom, based on market prices and your usage patterns.

Podcaster and CEO Indi Tatla says: "I know of people who've configured agents, trained on some base level data, that can highlight discrepancies in reconciliations and accruals and perform very specific tasks as an extension of your team.

"You will need to weigh that up against the kind of AI technology that vendors are increasingly building into their own software — but either method could automate some of the work that you might have needed an extra person to do. Which one is better remains to be seen."

# When Al mimics a human

On the second Monday of every month, it will know it has to do a particular series of tasks. You won't need to schedule it or interact with it.

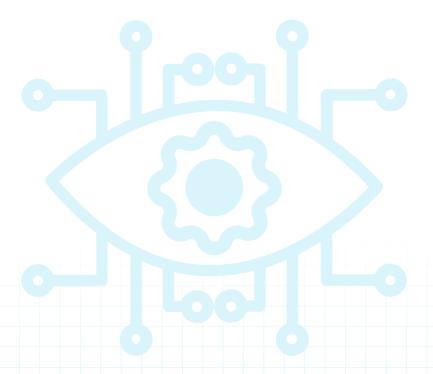
# Daniel Lawrence, Bots For That

Daniel Lawrence specialises in this field as CEO of Bots For That, which created the accounting AI agent Houbeanie.

He says agentic AI should be able to do a lot more than ChatGPT's agentic mode.

"An AI agent isn't a chat window. It's a proactive and pre-emptive automation tool that has been trained on how you and your firm work," he says.

"In accountancy, it will know the sequence of events, the accounting timetable, it'll know your clients and the format, style and tone of your communication.





"On the second Monday of every month, it will know it has to do a particular series of tasks and it will proactively start doing those things. You won't need to schedule it or interact with it before it does that.

"Not only that, but it will be able to take multiple actions for you. So if you say, 'What's the balance on my tax account?', It will go off and find that information at HMRC but also take pre-emptive actions. For example, it might tell you the tax return is due on Monday and give you the link to make the payment now and avoid penalties."

His company's product for accountants in practice is an example of agentic AI in action. It has "Good morning" and "Good evening" routines, which involve the agent telling the user what automations have been run, what transactions need human review, what important emails need looking at and some potential responses to those emails.

"It saves all the going back and forward, logging in and out of different systems and fetching data," he says.

More powerfully still, an AI agent could be dedicated to a specialist field such as fees and pricing. It could review data about a client's activity and compare it with publicly available information about pricing in that sector and region. It could then see which clients' prices might need reviewing, draft a pricing proposal and suggest an email inviting the client for a review.

# Beware the blur

Most examples of people using 'agentic' AI in accounting and finance aren't really agentic. We need to beware of the blur.

# Paul Sparkes, iplicit

Paul Sparkes, Chief Product Officer at iplicit, believes the term "agentic AI" is often used loosely to describe things that are built into some core systems.

"People often think about AI agents helping with month-end automation. But when we created iplicit, we always had automation in the architecture," he says.

"Most of the examples I've seen of people using 'agentic' to describe things in accounting and finance aren't really agentic. They're automations, following a set of rules — and we've been doing that for five years," he says.

"I might want the system to go through my accruals, based on a set of rules I define, and automatically reverse them. That's a way to save huge amounts of time and people will call that agentic but it's not. It's an automation. Each has its place but we need to beware of the blur."

It wouldn't be the first time that people have applied a fashionable label to a feature to make it sound more ground-breaking than it is. Despite that, Paul foresees big advances in agentic AI, with agents increasingly integrating with finance software and other core systems.



"Microsoft has an AI agent called the Analyst, which can analyse different data sources. That could be integrated to look at your finance system data as well as the Excel spreadsheets you feed it," he says. "But you'll need the right security and controls, so users can only see what they're allowed to see — otherwise you could have users seeing all kinds of salary information, for example."

Some of this kind of functionality lies in the future — but not very far in the future. Agentic AI is likely to be something you'll benefit from trying out soon.

Which brings us onto the subject of learning and experimenting freely but safely.

#### **WANT MORE?**

Help yourself to our AI resources at iplicit.com

iplicit.com

# CHAPTER FIVE



# Fun with Al: How to learn and experiment safely.

## **Definitions #5**

Machine learning: A way for computers to learn from data so they can make decisions or predictions without being explicitly told what to do. An example could be forecasting cash flow based on past performance, customer behaviour and market trends — or flagging unusual transactions that could indicate fraud.

## What you'll learn:

$\bigcirc$	What to do if your organisation's resistant to Al
$\bigcirc$	How to learn through play
$\bigcirc$	How AI can teach you about AI
$\bigcirc$	The importance of finding peers
$\bigcirc$	How to encourage Al learning in your workplace
$\bigcirc$	A new way to spend Friday afternoons
$\bigcirc$	The importance of staying curious

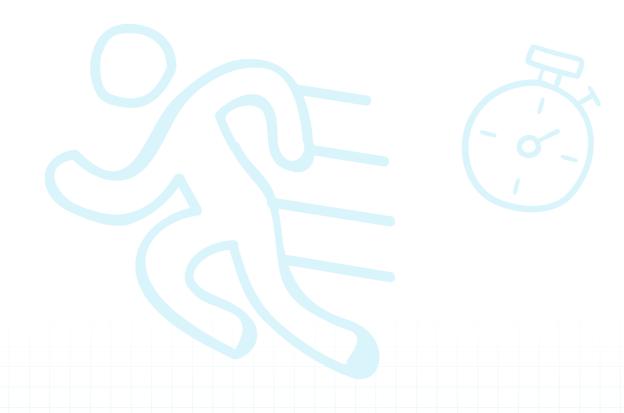
# Getting up to speed.

The world of AI moves so fast that learning enough about it — and then keeping your knowledge up to date — might look impossible.

After all, even the experts who live and breathe this stuff don't know everything. And these are people who don't have to concern themselves with doing the bank reconciliation.

The challenge of getting up to speed might look even more daunting if you're part of an organisation that's doing little or nothing to encourage AI use. So how do you learn, experiment and keep improving? And how do you encourage wider AI experimentation among your colleagues?

Our interviewees suggested some approaches.



If your organisation isn't ready, you should be doing things on a personal level outside work.

Becky Glover, FD

# Try this at home

If your workplace is unenthusiastic about AI or just too darned busy for you to devote any time to it, you may have to do your initial learning at home.

"If your organisation isn't ready for the tech, then I would say you should be doing things on a personal level outside work — even if it's just reading articles and watching YouTube videos to start with," says FD Becky Glover.

"You can use it in your personal life too. You might start by saying to an AI tool 'I've got to pack five lunch boxes this week. Give me some ideas for what the kids can eat'."

Jake Moore, Global Cybersecurity Advisor at ESET, advises: "Just go all in. Go and use it for everything.

"I speak to parents who don't understand their children's homework — well, that's what ChatGPT is there for. It can be your assistant when you are helping your child. Don't give the child access to ChatGPT but that's a really creative way of learning together."

# Learn through play

"The best way to start is just to be curious," says Becky Glover.

"When children are little, at nursery or early school, they're always taught through play. I always wonder: When did that stop?

"I just love to play with this stuff. A lot of this tech is really hard to break, so as long as you understand enough to be careful with confidential data, you can just learn through playing with ChatGPT."

# Ask Al

Al can help you learn a lot of things - including how to use Al.

"There's a mass of information out there and so much noise, so honestly I would ask AI," says podcaster and CEO Indi Tatla.

"Al is a really good resource for this. You can just tell it to teach you how to do something. I've learned to prompt it to teach me about a particular subject."

That doesn't only have to be about asking AI ad hoc questions. You could tell AI about your role, your job responsibilities and your current level of AI knowledge, then ask it to generate a 90-day learning plan tailored to the number of hours you can allocate each week.

# Try different tools and models

The main AI platforms – ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude and so on – each have their strengths.

It can be confusing for a user because a platform like ChatGPT may offer several models at once. Until recently, there was ChatGPT 4.0, O1 Pro, O3 Pro, and a number of other different models all available and all optimised to do different things. Claude and Gemini also have multiple models that are active or tailored to different tasks.

Whilst the vendors have started to simplify things, as in ChatGPT 5.0, it's worth experimenting to see which model suits your needs best – whether your focus is on creativity, speed, accuracy or technical depth.

"Each model is built differently, trained differently on different data for different purposes and will give you different answers to the same question," says Daniel Lawrence, CEO of Bots For That. "There's no one model that's best at everything."





# Read, watch and listen

In case you hadn't noticed, an awful lot is written and said about AI. Exploring the subject online through articles, videos and podcasts can lead you to the people whose expertise will help you.

"There are some great YouTube videos, LinkedIn articles and Substack articles that tell you, step by step, how to do things," says Becky Glover.

"If you're not comfortable with just having a play with the technology, and perhaps you need to go back a step, I would definitely recommend seeing how other people do things and copy what's relevant to you."

Olivia McMillan, Chief Operating Officer of iplicit, adds: "There is a podcast which I really like called The *AI Daily Brief*, formerly *The AI Breakdown*. It's a very good podcast with a great presenter who covers everything in around half an hour each day.

"There are also your standard tech magazines and websites which are constantly covering AI. I have a feed coming into my email to give me updates.

"I think the key is when you see something cool, you should share it with your team. Nobody knows exactly where the great ideas will come from."

# Find your peers

Finding the right community, where people are honest and willing to be open about what works and what doesn't, is incredibly valuable.

# Ali Kokaz, One Peak

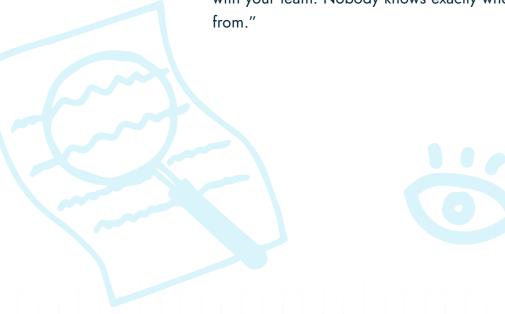
If you're scratching your head as you try to figure this stuff out, remember that a large part of the working world is in the same boat. It's worth connecting with some of those people, either through LinkedIn or old-fashioned personal introductions. Ideally, look for people who are a step or two ahead of you.

"When you look online, it can seem everyone is using AI and everyone is overhyping it a bit, claiming to have replaced half their workforce with AI. Finding the right community, where people are honest and willing to be open about what works and what doesn't, is incredibly valuable," says Ali Kokaz, Head of Data and AI at One Peak.

"It's a good idea to speak to other companies that are slightly further ahead on that journey. That, along with reading reports on what other people are tackling with AI, can really get your imagination rolling."

Indi Tatla adds: "If you can just connect with like-minded people, get involved in that community and ask the questions there, you'll find people share really good nuggets of information. That helps a lot because then all the information comes pre-qualified in some way."

Becky Glover says: "Finding your peer group, your safe space, where everyone's having the same issues and has the same questions, is really valuable. When you're in that room brainstorming and throwing ideas around, you'll feel supported."



# Start a working group

Try and encourage 5-10 other people to work with you so you can all develop best practices and review what works.

# Jack Rhodes, iplicit

As your personal knowledge of AI grows, you'll be able to make a stronger case for exploring its potential at work.

"If you're in management, you can lead a steering group," says Jack Rhodes, iplicit's Revenue Operations Lead.

"You can take a few examples of the productivity gains you've achieved personally – perhaps a task that used to take 20 hours and now takes five minutes – and if you can prove that case to a steering group, you'll really start to get some momentum behind it.

"Try and encourage five to 10 other people to work with you so you can all develop best practices and review what works and what doesn't."

Ali Kokaz adds: "There will be people that are better at this than others. Get those people working together and sharing ideas. Make them Al champions in the business so they can go around and talk to other people.

"People will soon see it as a career opportunity – what if I became the AI expert in my department?

"If you allow everyone to use AI, at least now and then, you can see what solutions or uses they come up with and you can have 'show and tell' sessions to share those findings and inspire people.



# Olivia McMillan, iplicit

# Go wide

The alternative to a small steering group — or maybe the next step — is to get buy-in for a company-wide project.

iplicit's Olivia McMillan called for volunteers from across the business to take part in its Al Curious initiative.

"We had 50 AI enthusiasts from all parts of the company take part in this month-long challenge. There were clinics and experiments and we paid for trials of premium tools so people could simply explore," she says.

"We encouraged learning and sharing. Over the course of that month, Al awareness shot up."

At the start of the initiative, 22% of the participants were using Al daily, with 26% using it weekly and 39% categorising themselves as "occasional experimenters". By the end, 69% were using Al daily and 31% weekly.

"The reason for opening it up so broadly was that we could get a wide variety of lenses from across the business. You never know where innovation is going to come from," says Olivia. "I knew from the 'hack days' I'd run in other tech companies that great ideas come from unlikely places."

Many of the group worked on proofs of concept for applying AI in their jobs. "It was important to share those proofs of concept across the group — because while the person who came up with that proof of concept sees one application of it, other people will build upon it," says Olivia.



# Make time for experiments

Some of the best products we've had came from people saying 'I wonder if this would work' and being given time for a 'side of the desk' project.

# Ali Kokaz, One Peak

Experimenting with AI is all too likely to end up on that list of Things We'd All Do If We Weren't So Busy All The Time.

Ali Kokaz of One Peak applied an idea from pre-Al days to his approach. "Something I've been doing in my teams for about 10 years is to assign half a Friday — every week or every other week — for people to work on whatever they want," he says.

"It shouldn't be directly related to their day-to-day job. It should be time assigned to experimenting. Some of the best products we've had are the ones that came from people saying 'I wonder if this would work' and being given some time to spend on it as a 'side of the desk' project.

"Normally on a Friday afternoon, people might just be keen to finish the week as soon as possible — but we found when people were working on things they wanted to do, they actually worked later."

Maybe your organisation can't countenance half a Friday away from the regular tasks. If that's the case, start by considering what small amount of time you could set aside each week. It's likely to pay off.

# **Stay curious**

When it comes to AI, there's no complete body of knowledge that you can assimilate to become an expert. Since you can't know everything about a subject that changes every day, you have to stay curious.

"It comes down to people's attitudes – being willing to improve and change your ways of working and adapt to technology," says Ali Kokaz.

Daniel Lawrence of Bots For That adds: "A week is a long time in the Al world. It's a nascent technology, not mature, and no two models are the same.

"We need to keep trying things and testing things, keep experimenting but do so consciously and have a simple playbook for how we're going to use AI."

So experiment away. But there are a few risks you need to know about.

#### **KEEP LEARNING**

Check out all our AI resources at iplicit.com

iplicit.com

# CHAPTER SIX.

# Al-wary: The three big risks you need to know about.

# **Definitions #6**

Hallucination: An AI response that sounds plausible but is wrong or fabricated. Hallucinations often contain specific figures, dates or citations to sources that don't exist. They occur because AI systems work by predicting what comes next, based on patterns in their training data, rather than checking facts in a database.

## What you'll learn:

How not to expose your own data – or your customers'
 Why AI makes things up and how to tell when it does
 Some favourite AI-enabled scams
 How to devise an AI policy without going to extremes

# Avoiding two extremes.



You have to very quickly develop golden rules that people can cling to as they experiment.

# Olivia McMillan, iplicit

You're happily feeding sensitive financial information into a new and imperfect technology that learns by sucking up all the data it can find. What could possibly go wrong?

While AI can massively improve your productivity, using it comes with some risks. What's more, the technology has opened up new exciting new areas for fraud.

It's not surprising that many organisations' early reaction was to ban their staff from using AI at all – but that approach won't hold. You'd be missing out on substantial productivity gains and may find yourself putting off customers, prospective investors and potential staff.

iplicit's COO, Olivia McMillan, says: "The question of governance around AI is challenging. Where do you start? It's OK at the very start of your AI journey to have your people experiment with very light oversight — but then you have to very quickly develop golden rules, the basic principles that people can cling to as they're experimenting with AI."

Daniel Lawrence, CEO of the accounting tech business Bots For That, says: "At the moment, I see a lot of people going to one of two extremes. Either they lock their systems down so tightly that people can't move or there's no locking down whatsoever and it's all too loose."

You'll need to find a position in between those extremes. So let's look at the three big areas of AI risk.

# **Risk 1: Data security**

What data are you putting into AI and can you be sure it won't end up in the public domain? And what might your staff be putting into AI, either on the organisation's devices or their own?

"I'd advise people to choose their AI tool with some thought about its privacy policy," says Jake Moore, Global Cybersecurity Advisor at ESET.

"If you're using a free version of ChatGPT in particular, you need to remember that its business model is to learn as much as it can and add more data to its algorithm, which is the nuts and bolts of AI.

"If you want to be as safe as possible, you have to assume that in a worst-case scenario, any data you upload to the internet could one day be compromised."

OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT, says it doesn't train its models on data from its paid plans (called Team, Enterprise and API). These plans also offer enhanced security protections, including encryption and compliance with standards such as SOC 2 Type 2 certification. Free users may have their inputs and outputs used in training though unless they opt out.

Ask yourself: Is this information you would share to a stranger in the pub? If it's not, you probably shouldn't be giving it to an AI model without some safeguards in place.

Jack Rhodes, iplicit





"ChatGPT is potentially not as secure as Copilot, so you have to be really careful with what you put into it," says Becky Glover. "You should avoid individuals' names, phone numbers, addresses, dates of birth — any private information like that.

iplicit's Chief Product Officer, Paul Sparkes, says: "Beware of the free models, albeit they're great and appealing. I'd keep that for your holiday planning."

Many organisations work in Microsoft's ecosystem and use its Copilot AI tool, which keeps your data private. Copilot can also integrate powerfully with your other Microsoft applications to help you with emails, calendars, presentations and more. But many people will prefer to continue using other tools.

Apart from risking your own data, you need to bear in mind that you've probably given undertakings about what you do with customer information. "If customer data is held within a company or its service, there's an assumption that it won't be shared with any third party — and those AI tools are third parties," says Jake Moore of ESET. "So there has to be something about AI written into contracts."

CEO and podcaster Indi Tatla gives says: "If everyone in your organisation is using ChatGPT and you want to encourage it, make sure they're using company accounts and make sure you know what you're paying for. Don't scrimp on it — pay for the level that acknowledges this is your data and it needs protecting."

Jack Rhodes, Revenue Operations Manager at iplicit, suggests: "Ask yourself the question: Is this information you would share to a stranger in the pub? If it's not, you probably shouldn't be giving it to an AI model without some safeguards in place."

You only get one chance to lose a customer and that will happen as soon as you deliver the wrong results or breach security or privacy.

Daniel Lawrence, Bots For That

The risks to customer data multiply as more employees get access to that data and use AI in their work. And while there hasn't yet been a big GDPR case involving data uploaded to an AI tool, that could happen.

The Information Commissioner's Office advises organisations to apply GDPR principles thoroughly when using AI — and suggests Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs) are an ideal way to demonstrate compliance. The Financial Conduct Authority also has guidance on the subject, stressing the need for processing of personal data to be fair and transparent.

"Many employees have access to huge amounts of data compared with 20 years ago," says Indi.

"When I joined the world of work, there was no way I could see all aspects of a customer database, for example, but now many people can. When you start introducing AI into the team, it's very difficult to track what's going on.

"What's more, if someone is using their own personal GPT for work, using it for both personal and work tasks, then if they leave, that knowledge has left your ecosystem and has gone. Having guardrails will protect against that but will also ensure the team benefits from the knowledge generated within these systems."

Daniel Lawrence of Bots For That says: "It's important to understand the different AI models, the subscription level you're on and what protection comes with it. You're potentially using a lot of private data but if you only use AI for generic things, like 'Give me a response to this email', you're missing the opportunity to get the most out of it.

"You only get one chance to lose a customer and that will happen as soon as you deliver the wrong results or do something that breaches security or privacy."

## **TOP TIP**

Check what the owner of the AI tool can do with your data by default. Opt out of any uses that you're unhappy with — and if in doubt, use a paid plan.



# **Risk 2: Hallucinations**

Time and efficiency are valuable to finance teams but trust is doubly important.

Ali Kokaz, One Peak

You'll have read about some of Al's greatest howlers. Once in a while, artificial intelligence will confidently assert something that's 100% wrong.

For example, there are not three Rs in the word "blueberry", as ChatGPT-5 told some users in August 2025. *Saving Private Ryan* did not win the Best Picture Oscar for 1998, as ChatGPT and other LLMs said. And glue is not a good way to stick cheese to your pizza, despite Google's AI Overview feature suggesting it in May 2024.

That could be embarrassing if you're hosting pizza night or taking part in a pub quiz (the answer you're looking for is *Shakespeare In Love*). But more concerning in the professional world are the cases of AI getting maths wrong, citing sources that don't exist or making omissions and fabrications when condensing documents.

"Al can get the most simple things wrong yet often does the most complex things really well. You always have to check its homework," says iplicit's Rob Steele.

Ali Kokaz, One Peak's Head of Data and AI, says: "This is an issue for everyone but particularly for finance teams. Time and efficiency are valuable to finance teams but trust is doubly important. They don't want to save time if they can't sign off the numbers and put their names to them."

Al doesn't go to jail – you do.

Rob Steele, iplicit

Most hallucinations happen because large language models work by predicting the next word, based on the text they've ingested. Sometimes, things go seriously off track. When it comes to numbers, Al can apply the wrong formulas, misunderstand numbers or spot patterns that aren't meaningful.

Back in our chapter on prompting, we looked at some ways to reduce the risk of hallucinations. You can give context about what the numbers mean. You could ask for step-by-step calculations so errors in reasoning are easy to spot. You could even ask the AI to run the numbers using Python or another language.

When the responses come back, you will have to sense-check them, perhaps comparing them against trusted sources. And beware spurious precision — a figure worked out to many decimal places might be just plain wrong.

"It's your responsibility to check whether what's come out of Al's black box is actually correct," says Alastair Barlow. "It's your liability, your insurance and your reputation that's on the hook — for now."

Paul Sparkes, iplicit's Chief Product Officer, says: "Al is like having an apprentice. It is a very capable apprentice but needs guidance. In two years' time, that apprentice will be amazing and will bring a lot of value. But you wouldn't set your apprentice off to build a report pack without you checking it and being confident it's right."

iplicit's Rob Steele adds: "I certainly wouldn't have AI signing off your tax returns or VAT return, or anything like that, without some human intervention.

"In the end, AI doesn't go to jail – you do. Ultimately, you have to be responsible for these things."

## **TOP TIP**

Beware of surprising precision in Al answers. It could be a sign of hallucination.

# Risk 3: Scams and fraud

There are tools out there being used at scale to offer malware as a service, enabled by AI.

# Jake Moore, ESET

Among the many people who've improved their productivity thanks to AI are criminals. Their profit margins seem to have enjoyed a healthy boost too.

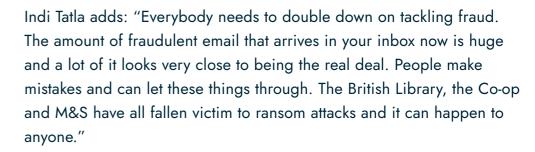
"There are hundreds of ways criminals can use AI creatively," says Jake Moore of ESET.

"Many people are used to the traditional scam emails that purport to come from your boss or your bank manager and a lot of people will spot those. But AI can now create more targeted scams with a much better hit rate."

A handy resource for the AI-literate scammer is GhostGPT, a large language model without ethical constraints. It will answer requests that other LLMs won't, such as instructions to create ransomware, write phishing emails and other scams.

Jake adds: "There are even more dodgy creations that allow people to upload a virus and say 'Create a version of this that's brand new and won't be seen by traditional antivirus software'.

"There are tools out there being used at scale to offer malware as a service, enabled by AI."



Al's ability to generate images, video and text has created rich new areas of opportunity for scammers. These are the "deepfake" creations which can fool even a cautious user. It's easy to be fooled by an Algenerated picture of a non-existent receipt or invoice — and fraud can get more sophisticated than that.

As long ago as 2019 – before the world had heard of ChatGPT – *The Wall Street Journal* reported that a convincing Al voice had been used to call the CEO of a UK energy firm and scam the business out of 220,000 euros<sup>1</sup>.

That was thought to be the first case of its kind. But in 2023, ESET's Jake Moore staged a startling real-world demonstration of how easy a scam involving an AI voice generator had become.

"I cloned the voice of a CEO and then, with his permission, I spoofed his phone number," he says."

"I then sent a voice note via WhatsApp to his financial director. I knew he was at a particular restaurant, so the AI voice said he was at the restaurant and they'd forgotten to pay someone so the FD should transfer the money straight away.

"It made sense, it was believable, and 14 minutes later she transferred £250 to my personal bank account."

More recently, Jake created a LinkedIn post in the name of a locally-known company boss, announcing that he was planning to take part in a charity bike ride. Hundreds of people liked the post and many looked for a non-existent JustGiving page. The tool this time? A convincing Algenerated video.

The prospect of fake versions of you — or your chief executive — joining your Zoom or Teams calls is not very far away.

In this world of Al-assisted fraud, human vigilance will be even more important, as will protection such as multi-factor authentication.

"Verification is key – but seeing and hearing isn't believing any more," says Jake.

"A lot of small companies are using code words now. They use particular words when financial information is being shared that are only ever spoken within the team, never shared online or by text.

"Companies need to really pay for good security software as well — a multi-layered security platform, with multiple tools from different companies, making sure that information is secure all the way from backup to your spam filter."



#### **TOP TIP**

Cyber security is becoming more important by the day. Invest in the right products and in human vigilance.

# Policies and golden rules

Having weighed up all the risks and how to mitigate them, you'll need to set down your position in a policy at some point. That sounds intimidating — but common sense and an FD's customary caution will take you a long way.

FD Becky Glover says: "Finance is a confidential function anyway. We are always thinking 'Can I talk to this person about that?' I think we always have that in the back of our mind — it's about balancing risk and reward."

# You really want to be careful not to stifle innovation.

# Olivia McMillan, iplicit

Your Al policy needs to be realistic, so that people aren't tempted to circumvent it, and it needs to be widely communicated and adhered to.

For iplicit's Olivia McMillan, the balancing act is between caution and innovation. "When you're developing governance for AI, you really want to be careful not to stifle innovation," she says.

"You need your governance framework, you need to think about ethical use of AI, you need to think about GDPR and all those other important things. But you can't stifle innovation — and that's the balance you have to find.

"Even if you're not encouraging your people to forge ahead with AI as we are, they're probably using it. It's probably bled through from their personal lives, where they're using it to shop or check contracts or create their home renovation plans.

"People are adopting these tools naturally and you as an organisation need to support them and welcome that — and having some golden rules in place helps everybody."



#### **TOP TIP**

Develop robust but practical golden rules — and make sure everyone knows about them.

# CHAPTER SEVEN.



# Bots can't lead: The things humans still do best.

# **Definitions #7**

Cognitive augmentation: The use of technology to enhance human thinking, rather than replace it. While AI excels at processing vast amounts of data, humans add contextual understanding, ethical reasoning and strategic insight. AI does the heavy statistical lifting and you act on the results.

# What you'll learn:

$\overline{\mathbf{y}}$	What kinds of skills AI can't automate
$\overline{\bigcirc}$	What's most valuable about human workers
<u>\( \)</u>	Why humans should still bring insights and creativity to the data
<u>&gt;</u>	How accountability still rests with people
$\overline{\bigcirc}$	Why AI shouldn't be handling "soft" skills
<u>&gt;</u>	Why you should keep doing what you're great at

# How not to lose your job.

It's about giving people back more time so they can add real value with their expertise, knowledge and vision.

# Paul Sparkes, iplicit

You've spent years acquiring the knowledge, experience and qualifications that make a good FD. Is all that going to be shoved aside because technology promises to be faster and cheaper?

We shouldn't pretend the world of work will be unaffected by AI. The technology is already having an impact, particularly on entry-level jobs. Dario Amodei, CEO of Anthropic, the owner of the AI platform Claude, warned in summer 2025 that half of all entry-level jobs could disappear within five years, pushing US unemployment to 10-20%.

That's potentially a big challenge for society — but workers made of flesh, blood and brains will still be needed for the foreseeable future.

"I think, sadly, AI tends to affect the entry-level jobs more than the senior roles," says iplicit's CFO, Rob Steele.

"If something is fairly straightforward and repetitive, that's something you can usually automate — but it's harder to train an AI as a highly skilled worker or a strategic leader."

A report called *How Not To Lose Your Job to AI*, from the nonprofit 80,000 Hours, found some reasons to be optimistic. It said that "while AI drives down the value of skills it can do, it drives up the value of skills it can't".

The authors identified four types of skills that won't be easy for AI to replace:

- → Hard for AI messy, long-horizon tasks with poor data, where a
  person is wanted.
- Needed for deploying AI the skills of organising and auditing AI, or work in related industries such as data centres.
- Used to make things the world needs more of skills involved in healthcare, housing, luxury goods etc.
- Hard for others to learn rare expertise that matches your unique strengths.

"Al is a logical extension of what we've been saying for a long time about other kinds of automation," says Paul Sparkes, iplicit's Chief Product Officer.

"It's about giving people back more time so they can add real value with their expertise, knowledge and vision. It's a tool, not the answer in itself, but enormously powerful."

So what is the uniquely human, high-value work that will occupy your hours when your robot companion is doing more of the boring stuff? Let's look at some of the things AI can't — or shouldn't — do.



# Adding real value

The goal is delivering value... We do that by strategic thinking.

# Alastair Barlow, Numbrs

The idea that technology will free people up to do higher-value work has been around as long as computers. But that issue has become even more pertinent now that AI can handle a vast amount of transactional and data-driven work.

The challenge is particularly acute in the world of accountancy in practice, where clients who use AI will know what labour-saving tech is available to their accountants. But it also affects finance teams, whose "clients" are the other parts of the organisation.

Alastair Barlow of Numbrs says: "What we do as accountants or finance teams is not about processing things quicker. That's not the goal. The goal is delivering value — and we often deliver value by understanding what the client or the business values and what they need. We do that by strategic thinking.

"We have to think: what can we do that makes a difference, that shows value, on top of providing a set of accounts? That's where the opportunity lies."

Daniel Lawrence, CEO of Bots For That, gives examples from the world of accountancy in practice. "If people are going to attach less value to the compliance element of the job, because technology makes the cost of that almost zero, you have to ask where we present value on top of that. It could be one-to-one meetings, quarterly business reviews. What do we do that's over and above producing management accounts? That's where the opportunity is."

CEO and podcaster Indi Tatla adds: "What you really bring to your role is expertise and knowledge. That's what's valuable about working with you. There's something precious about that and we shouldn't be gungho about trying to replace it with AI."

# **Human judgement**

All can digest a lot of data and flag up trends and outliers — but it's up to the humans to apply real judgement.

iplicit CFO Rob Steele cites the example of a software company using AI to review large amounts of data about how customers are using its product.

"The insights from that are not just about pricing," he says.

"You could examine whether customers need more training in an area of the software they're not using so much. Should the customer success team give them a call and show them they're not getting the full benefit of features they're paying for? Only humans can make that kind of judgement.

"Al can only provide a commentary on the facts in front of it — so if it identifies areas where sales are underperforming, for example, it won't know if there are good reasons for that, or if activity is ramping up for the next quarter. Al can only use the data it's been fed or trained on."

All might identify areas that will repay close attention from a human, he says. "It enables you to highlight problem areas much quicker and then spend your time focusing on that area in a lot more detail," he adds.

Ali Kokaz, Head of Data and Al at One Peak, says: "Our objectives in using Al are not about saving the team the maximum amount of time. That's a by-product. For us, it's about enabling the team to make the best, most informed decisions — and if they happen to do it quicker, that's great."

It's about enabling the team to make the best, most informed decisions — and if they happen to do it quicker, that's great.

Ali Kokaz, One Peak

# **Accountability**

The reason you have your job title is that you're able to sign on the dotted line. We trust in that.

# Indi Tatla, CEO and podcaster

As discussed in our chapter on risks, it's human beings who face the consequences if there's a serious error or omission in the accounts.

"Al is a great assistant but it should never fully replace humans," says Rob Steele.

One Peak's Ali Kokaz adds: "As investors, we'd be worried if we heard the finance department of a company say 'We've completely automated all our reporting and we don't look at the numbers'. You can automate quarterly reports but when those reports are finalised and reviewed, it's you that needs to review them and write some commentary to send to your shareholders."

That accountability comes with having "director" in your title, of course. "If you're a finance or legal person, the reason you have that job is that you're able to sign on the dotted line," says Indi Tatla.

"We trust in that. There's a level of deference that comes with that role.

"I suspect that will remain the case because a machine won't be able to take responsibility for that for a very long time and someone has to be held accountable."

# **Creativity**

People may be wary of using the word "creative" anywhere near the word "accounting" – but human creativity is part of the job. Problem solving, interpreting and communicating are all creative – and in those areas, Al can be an aid but not a replacement for human skills.

"In the world of software engineering, which is my domain, you spend your day doing three main things," says Ali Kokaz of One Peak.

"Firstly, there's identifying the problem. Secondly, there's identifying what the solution should look like. And then there's the third bit, which is writing the code. What AI does is make the third piece — building the solution — much quicker.

"The same principle applies to other areas of work too. The human creativity involved in identifying the problems and inefficiencies and what the solution should look like, that's still very much required. Al can't do it for you."

The human creativity in identifying problems and inefficiencies and what the solution should look like, that's still very much required.

Ali Kokaz, One Peak



# 'Soft' skills

With AI helping our efficiency, we'll have more time to connect with people.

# Indi Tatla, CEO and podcaster

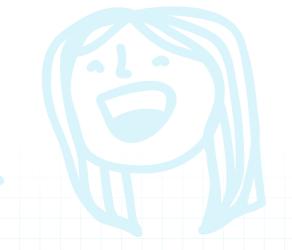
Management guru Tom Peters has said repeatedly that the term "soft skills" is a misnomer. "Soft" things like dealing with people, relationships and culture are hard — because they're hugely important but difficult.

Soft skills, then, are the last thing you'd want to delegate to Al.

"With AI helping our efficiency, we'll all have more time to connect with other people," says Indi Tatla. "I hope we'll see that positive side from it."

Olivia McMillan, COO at iplicit, says: "If managers are able to free themselves from a lot of repetitive, administrative actions, they can spend more time on people development, on learning about their customers and spending time with them.

"All those are intangible but really high-value activities that tend to get deprioritised because everybody has so many administrative things to do."



# Whatever you're great at

There are probably parts of your job that you're particularly great at. Parts that almost don't feel like work, that other people find hard, and where your insight is more valuable than any Al output. Maybe that's something you should keep doing.

"Some people really enjoy delving into data and I'm not sure we should be saying they're not allowed to do that anymore," says FD Becky Glover.

"I think we should say 'What are you really good at? You focus on that'. If that's delving into data and understanding it, fine, and if you're not good at writing emails or prepping for meetings or doing your action points, then get tech to do that for you.

"If tech allows us to focus on what we love doing, then it gives people a bit more purpose in their role. It's here to help us, not to take anything away from us. It might just help you focus in on what you're best at."

I think we should say: 'What are you really good at?' You focus on that'.

Becky Glover, FD

#### **BONUS CONTENT**

Get access to all our AI resources at iplicit.com

iplicit.com

# ROUNDING UP.

# Afterword: It'll make you look fantastic.

#### What's left:

- Final thoughts
- Your Al glossary
- About iplicit
- Our interviewees

# Al will do the heavy lifting.



Your job is to add the meaning, the context and the value.

# Daniel Lawrence, Bots For That

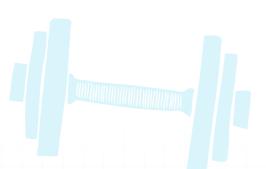
However AI develops – and whether or not it lives up to the expectations of its biggest cheerleaders – it's highly likely to change your job.

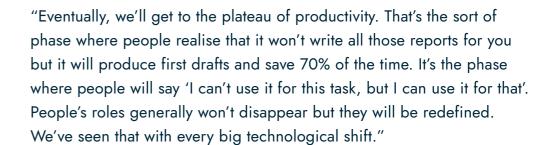
Ali Kokaz, Head of Data and Al at One Peak, thinks we're in for some more upheaval before things settle down a bit.

"We're going through a bit of a hype cycle. At the moment, it seems everyone is talking about how it could change the world and thinking Planet Earth as we know it won't exist in 20 years," he says.

"Later, we'll get the trough of disillusionment, where people realise they still need to do some things the old way – they'll have to review Al's results and actually read some of those articles it's summarised.

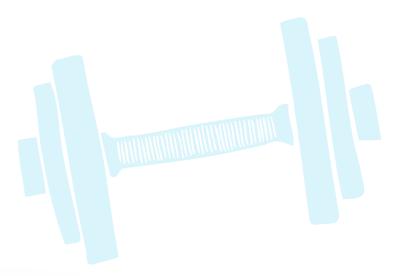






Daniel Lawrence, CEO of the accountancy automation business Bots For That, says: "The technology will keep evolving faster than any of us can fully keep up with. There will always be risks, new models, new terms and new hype cycles. But beneath all that, one truth remains constant: clients don't just want compliance. They want clarity, confidence and human judgment they can trust.

"Al will take care of the heavy lifting. Your job is to add the meaning, the context and the value. That's where your expertise, your creativity and your relationships come in and that's something no machine should replace."



# 'It's not cheating'

You should be open about the fact that you've used these tools.

# Paul Sparkes, iplicit

Paul Sparkes, iplicit's Chief Product Officer, says AI is a seismic shift, affecting knowledge work the way machinery affected factory production lines. Getting better at understanding and using it can only be good for your career. "It's going to make you look fantastic," he says

"I was chatting with somebody the other day who said that when they first discovered AI, they felt a little bit embarrassed. They felt as though they were cheating. But I believe passionately that you should be open about the fact that you've used these tools.

"If you were in a factory and you found a machine that would improve productivity by 50%, why would you be embarrassed to share that with your colleagues? For some reason, it feels like it's some sort of black magic, but it's not. It just needs good governance and management and some key rules that you follow."

# 'Just try one thing'

As this guide has sought to show, it's definitely not too late to improve your AI skills, even if you haven't learned much about it so far.

"I'd say don't despair," says Jack Rhodes, iplicit's Revenue Operations Lead.

"It's a rapidly evolving technology. Conversational AI is barely three years old. People often feel like they're falling behind or that the technology is moving so fast they won't keep up. But it's as though we're in the 1990s and the internet's just happened.

# It's as though we're in the 1990s and the internet's just happened.

# Jack Rhodes, iplicit

"We don't really know yet how deeply AI will embed in our day-to-day but just dipping your toe in, starting to interact and converse with it, is a really good place to start. Just keep it simple."

Business leaders shouldn't be afraid to ask basic questions on the subject, says Olivia McMillan, iplicit's Chief Operating Officer.

"It's moving so rapidly that if you don't know something, the chances are there will be other people around the table who also don't know. So you need to be vulnerable in that way," she says.

Indi Tatla, podcaster and CEO, believes the technology will be a game changer for businesses, although some industries will "really suffer" from the upheaval.

"The pace of change in the past two years alone has been incredible and in another two years it will have moved on very quickly," she says.

"So you need to get involved and dip your toe in. Just try it one thing, one pain point, and see how you get on.

"Just as they used to say 'There's an app for that', there will definitely be an AI for that."

Happy experimenting.

# ---

### **TOP TIP**

Think of one pain point in your everyday work. Then devote some time to investigating how AI could help. It could be the start of a productive AI journey.

# Glossary.

Agentic AI: Systems that can make decisions and take actions on their own to achieve the goals they've been set. Your AI agent might monitor cash flow, automatically transfer funds between accounts when necessary or negotiate terms with suppliers.

Algorithm: The detailed instructions that tell AI how to solve a problem or make a decision, specifying the inputs and steps it needs to produce a result.

Artificial intelligence: The ability of machines to perform tasks that typically require human intelligence, adapting and improving as they process more data.

Bias: Systematic errors in the outputs of AI, owing to skewed training data or flawed assumptions in the model's design. For example, an AI system trained to flag unusual expenses might miss irregularities in certain categories if those weren't well-represented in its training data.

Chatbot: An Al-powered tool that simulates conversation. The windows you type into when you use ChatGPT, Copilot, Gemini etc are examples of a chatbot interface. They're commonly used in customer service, support and productivity tools.

Cognitive augmentation: The use of technology to enhance human thinking, rather than replace it. For example, Al might spot unusual patterns in financial statements while the FD makes a judgement about what's going on.

Deep learning: A sophisticated form of machine learning. It uses layers of artificial "neurons" to process complex data in a way that mimics the workings of the human brain, building up its understanding as it goes.

Explainable AI (XAI): AI systems designed to provide clear reasoning for their decisions. An AI system might flag up a budget variance and spell out to you why it's something to be concerned about.

GPT: Stands for Generative Pre-trained Transformer, the most common type of large language model. It generates human-like text by predicting what word or phrase should come next. It's called "pre-trained" because it learned from massive amounts of text before being fine-tuned for specific tasks. GPTs like GPT-5 are the power behind tools like ChatGPT and Copilot.

Hallucination: An AI response that sounds plausible but is wrong or fabricated. For example, an AI might confidently state revenue figures that are just plain wrong.

Large language model (LLM): A type of AI that's been trained to understand and generate human language by continually predicting what comes next in a sequence. Examples include ChatGPT, Claude and Gemini.

Machine learning: A way for computers to learn from data so they can make decisions or predictions without being explicitly told what to do. For example, software could study thousands of past transactions and then sort new receipts into the right budget categories.

Model: A mathematical and statistical engine that powers AI – for example, GPT-5 is a large language model trained to understand and generate human-like text, powering the tool ChatGPT

Natural Language Processing (NLP): Al's ability to understand and generate human language. It handles the complexities that make human communication tricky for computers — e.g. context, sarcasm and double meanings.

**Neural network:** A model inspired by the human brain, used in deep learning to recognise patterns and relationships in data. This might enable AI to read written invoices and extract key information like amounts, dates and vendor names.

Overfitting: When an AI model works well on training data but poorly on new data – for example, a fraud detection system that does the job with last year's transactions but fails to catch new types of fraud.

Prompt: The message or question you type or speak into an AI tool to tell it what you want it to do – e.g. "Summarise this quarterly report for the board meeting" or "Calculate the ROI on our new software investment".

Synthetic Data: Artificially generated data that mimics the real thing, without containing personal or sensitive information. An Al model can use a real dataset to create a larger pool of synthetic data for training another model.

Training data: The historical information that teaches AI to make predictions and decisions. It might include many thousands of correctly processed invoices and receipts, for example.

# **About iplicit**

iplicit makes powerful cloud accounting software designed for organisations that have outgrown entry-level online products or need to move on from on-premises systems.

Launched in January 2019, it now has more than 43,000 daily users in 103 countries. The software integrates with other cloud applications and provides users with real-time reporting capabilities, automated data migration, paid implementation and a public API to break down data silos.

iplicit has been rated 18th among UK businesses on the FT1000 list of Europe's fastest-growing companies and achieved 40th place in the Deloitte UK Technology Fast 50. iplicit has been named AccountingWEB's Best Enterprise Accounting/ERP and Accounting Excellence Mid-Market & Enterprise Accounting Software of the Year.

You can find us at iplicit.com





# Our Interviewees.



#### **Alastair Barlow**

is a former PwC My Financepartner leader who went on to found the outsourced finance function business flinder, which was acquired in 2024 by <u>Ascendant</u>. He consults for Ascendant and is CEO & cofounder of the Al-first accounting technology business <u>Numbrs</u>.



#### **Becky Glover**

is a multi-award-winning strategic business leader and director of finance and technology, with a proven track record of driving growth and innovation in dynamic environments. Her experience spans diverse industries, from listed organisations to start-ups to established organisations. She is co-founder of the Connexion Career Collective, a community to mentor and inspire future growth leaders in tech.



#### Ali Kokaz

is the Head of Data and AI at <u>One Peak</u>, a leading growth equity firm backing software scale-ups. He has previously worked in senior AI and data science roles at Founders Factory, Credit Suisse and Kubrick Group, as well as founding the Investment newsletter Buzzing Stocks.



### **Daniel Lawrence**

is CEO and Founder of <u>Bots For That</u>, a UK-based automation and Al company transforming the accounting industry. With a background in accounting and a passion for innovation, Daniel leads the development of intelligent automation tools and Al agents that help firms save time, improve accuracy and focus on higher-value work. He's become a recognised voice on the future of accounting, automation and the role of humans in an Al-driven world.



## Olivia McMillan

has a 20-year track record in leading SaaS (software as a service) businesses. She oversaw customer operations at Houseful, the tech and data company behind Zoopla, and before that worked for the San Francisco-based customer service platform Zendesk, optimising operations for organisations in the Asia-Pacific region. She became iplicit's Chief Operating Officer in 2025.



#### Jake Moore

was a cybersecurity advisor and computer forensics expert with Dorset Police before joining the leading European cybersecurity firm <u>ESET</u>, where he is Global Cybersecurity Advisor. He speaks on the subject to print media and broadcasters including Good Morning Britain, BBC Breakfast and Rip-Off Britain.



#### **Jack Rhodes**

specialises in revenue operations, helping early-stage businesses streamline processes and drive growth. With over a decade of experience in operations management, he's delivered operational excellence at companies including AirRated, Metrikus, and Deazy. Jack has saved thousands of hours through AI solutions and optimised core business processes across marketing, sales, finance, and delivery. He's currently Revenue Operations Lead at iplicit.



**Paul Sparkes** 

played a pivotal role in the growth of Exchequer software in the early 2000s, before taking on senior positions at IRIS and One Advanced. From the launch of <u>iplicit</u> in 2019, he served as Commercial Director, leading the charge to liberate finance teams from legacy and entry-level systems. More recently, as Chief Product Officer, Paul has been applying his 30+ years of experience in the accounting and ERP space to lead the team shaping iplicit's product strategy.



**Rob Steele** 

was co-founder of the successful accounting software business Exchequer in 1990 and stayed with the business until 2007 after it had been acquired by Iris Software. He returned to the industry in 2018 to help launch <u>iplicit</u> into the market and serves as its CFO.



**Indi Tatla** 

has specialised in finding the right mix of people and tech in a succession of businesses including Capium, AREX Markets and as Co-CEO of Bankable. She is co-host of the successful accountancy and business podcast <u>Digi-Tools in Accrual World</u>.



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