York St John University London Campus, Canary Wharf — at the heart of the UK's FinTech corridor.

The Decade That AI Rewrote the Rules of Technology

How Generative AI Is Reshaping Every Corner of the IT Industry — and How York St John University- London Is Preparing the Graduates Who Will Lead That Change

By Nalinda Somasiri-Associate Professor in Generative AI and Machine Learning

Associate Dean at York St John University- London

The last decade belonged to the cloud. The next decade belongs to intelligence. As artificial intelligence transitions from a specialised research discipline into the central nervous system of global technology infrastructure, the IT industry faces its most consequential transformation since the internet itself. We are not witnessing incremental change — we are living through a structural reset of how organisations build, deploy, and think about technology.

The global generative AI market, valued at just over USD 40 billion in 2023, is projected to exceed USD 1.3 trillion by 2032. Enterprise spending on AI infrastructure — compute, data platforms, model integration — is outpacing traditional IT investment in every major economy. And unlike previous technology waves that disrupted specific sectors, this one is cutting across all of them simultaneously: healthcare, finance, logistics, education, defence, and public administration.

Leading information technology institutions across the world are making futuristic investments to build the AI and computing resource base the next decade demands. Although the leading universities in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia take prime place in global rankings, institutions embedded in the heart of global financial and technology districts are playing an increasingly decisive role — among them, York St John University's London Campus, situated near Canary Wharf at the centre of the UK's thriving FinTech and technology corridor.

AUTOMATION GROWS UP: FROM TASKS TO THINKING

For years, automation meant rule-based systems doing repetitive work — invoice processing, data entry, basic customer queries. Generative AI has fundamentally changed that equation. Today's systems do not merely execute predefined instructions; they reason, generate, adapt, and learn from context. This shift from task automation to cognitive automation is perhaps the defining feature of the current decade.

Knowledge workers are already experiencing this firsthand. Legal teams use large language models to draft contracts and analyse case precedent. Software engineers rely on AI coding assistants that can write, review, and refactor entire codebases. Medical professionals use multimodal AI to interpret imaging data alongside patient histories. In each case, AI is not replacing human judgement — it is amplifying it, compressing the time between insight and action.

> ***"GenAI is reshaping every industry. We want our graduates to be the people leading that transformation, not just responding to it. Our strength is that we are deeply applied — we design programmes around real employer needs, live tools, and authentic assessments, so students are not just learning theory — they are building professional capability from day one."***
>
> — Dr Nalinda Somasiri, Associate Dean & Associate Professor in Generative AI, York St John London

The World Economic Forum estimates that AI will displace 85 million jobs globally by 2025 while creating 97 million new ones. The net figure sounds reassuring. The transition does not feel that way for those caught in between. The IT industry has a responsibility — and an opportunity — to lead on reskilling. Organisations and universities that treat AI adoption as a workforce strategy, not merely a technology strategy, will emerge stronger.

COMPUTING WITH PURPOSE: YORK ST JOHN LONDON AT THE HEART OF CHANGE

At the heart of Canary Wharf — one of the world's most dynamic technology and finance districts — York St John University's Computer Science and Data Science Department is building something that London's technology sector genuinely needs: graduates who are technically capable, ethically aware, and professionally ready, drawn from the full breadth of the communities the capital serves.

The department's academic team brings a rare combination of international experience, research depth, and industry-facing curriculum design. Four academics who help shape its identity bring decades of combined expertise across AI research, data science, wireless communications, software engineering, cloud computing, and cybersecurity. What unites them is a shared belief that the best technical education is built around real problems, real tools, and real professional communities.

CYBERSECURITY IN THE AGE OF INTELLIGENT THREATS

If AI is making organisations smarter, it is making adversaries smarter too. The cybersecurity landscape of the next decade is defined by a fundamental paradox: the same capabilities that power enterprise productivity are powering a new generation of attacks. Generative AI enables threat actors to craft hyper-personalised phishing campaigns at scale, generate convincing deepfake content for social engineering, and accelerate the discovery of software vulnerabilities.

AI-driven security operations centres are now capable of correlating billions of signals in real time, identifying anomalous behaviour that would be invisible to human analysts working traditional timelines. Predictive threat modelling, automated incident response, and continuous identity verification are shifting security from a reactive discipline to a proactive one.

> ***"Canary Wharf is not just a postcode — it is a community of FinTech companies, global banks, and technology consultancies that our students can access from day one. We invest in giving students access to the tools professionals actually use — cloud platforms, cybersecurity labs, embedded systems. Students who pursue MBCS membership or work towards cloud and cybersecurity certifications alongside their degree leave with something that signals not just competence, but professional commitment."***
>
> — Dr Soonleh Ling, Senior Lecturer & Director of Cloud Computing and Cybersecurity, York St John London

The department's forthcoming MSc Applied AI and Cybersecurity programme is designed precisely for this intersection — preparing professionals who understand both the offensive potential and the defensive application of AI at enterprise scale.

DATA AS THE NEW INFRASTRUCTURE

Every AI system, from a simple recommendation engine to a frontier language model, runs on data. The quality, accessibility, and governance of that data determines the quality of everything built on top of it. In the AI IT decade, data infrastructure is as strategically important as physical infrastructure was to the industrial age.

Organisations are rapidly moving beyond the data lake paradigm toward data mesh and data fabric architectures — decentralised, domain-driven approaches that allow large enterprises to manage data at scale without the bottlenecks that plagued earlier centralised models. Real-time data pipelines, vector databases for AI retrieval, and synthetic data generation for training are becoming standard components of the modern technology stack.

> ***"Data science is only as good as the questions it asks. If the people designing those questions all come from the same background, you get blind spots — in your data, your models, and your outcomes. Inclusion is not an add-on. It is part of how we teach, support, and design the student experience from day one."***
>
> — Swathi Ganesan, Deputy Associate Dean & Programme Director, MSc Data Science, York St John London

> ***"Technical confidence, absolutely — skills in Python, machine learning tools like TensorFlow and Scikit-learn, big data engineering, cloud platforms, and statistical analysis. But the growth I find most rewarding is when students develop professional confidence: learning to frame a problem, communicate their findings to a non-technical audience, and collaborate across teams."***
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> — Sangita Pokhrel, Lecturer & Research Group Lead, Paragon Research and Innovation Group, York St John London

GOVERNANCE, REGULATION, AND THE ETHICS IMPERATIVE

Technology rarely waits for regulation to catch up with it. AI is no exception. But the governance gap is now so large — and the potential consequences of misuse so significant — that regulatory frameworks are accelerating faster than at any previous point in the technology industry's history.

The European Union's AI Act, which entered force in 2024, represents the world's first comprehensive legislative framework for artificial intelligence. It classifies AI applications by risk, imposes strict requirements on high-risk systems, and carries substantial penalties for non-compliance. Other jurisdictions — including the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and several Southeast Asian nations — are following with their own frameworks.

For technology leaders, this environment is not a constraint to be managed — it is a design requirement to be embraced. AI systems that are explainable, auditable, and free from discriminatory bias are not just ethically preferable; they are becoming legally required and commercially expected. Organisations and institutions that build responsible AI practices into their development and teaching lifecycle now will find compliance far less disruptive than those who retrofit governance after the fact.

DISRUPTION AS THE NEW NORMAL

Every industry is being rewritten. In software development, AI coding tools are compressing development cycles by 30 to 50 per cent in some organisations. In healthcare, AI diagnostics

are achieving accuracy levels that match or exceed specialist physicians in specific domains. In financial services, AI is transforming fraud detection, credit underwriting, trading algorithms, and customer engagement simultaneously. In education — a sector historically resistant to change — generative AI is forcing a fundamental rethinking of assessment, pedagogy, and professional qualification.

York St John London's response to this disruption is deliberate. Two new postgraduate programmes are currently in development: the MSc Applied AI and Cybersecurity, and the MSc AI and Digital Business Transformation. Both are designed to sit at the intersection of technical depth and strategic application — preparing graduates not just to work with AI, but to lead its deployment in enterprise and public-sector environments. The existing MSc Computer Science and Data Science with Professional Experience programme places students with vetted employers for six to twelve months, closing the gap between qualification and career in a way that traditional academic programmes rarely achieve.

> ***"We are building for the next decade of the digital economy. Our programmes are aligned with BCS professional standards, supporting graduate pathways to Chartered IT Professional (CITP) and Incorporated Engineer (IEng) status. Industry partnerships are built into the curriculum architecture — not bolted on as an afterthought."***
>
> — Dr Nalinda Somasiri, Associate Dean & Associate Professor in Generative AI, York St John London

THE DECADE AHEAD

The AI IT decade is not a single moment of transformation. It is a sustained, compounding shift that will accelerate as models become more capable, compute becomes more accessible, and integration with physical systems — through robotics, autonomous vehicles, and the industrial internet of things — deepens.

What is certain is that standing still is not an option. Organisations that treat AI as a future consideration are already behind those that have made it a present priority. Governments that fail to invest in AI infrastructure and talent will find their economies structurally disadvantaged. Professionals who do not engage with AI tools and concepts will find their careers increasingly constrained.

But within this urgency, there is genuine optimism. Generative AI, applied thoughtfully, offers the most powerful set of tools humanity has yet developed for addressing complex problems — in medicine, in climate, in education, in scientific discovery. Institutions like York St John London — building applied, inclusive, professionally anchored programmes in the heart of one of the world's great technology cities — are among those who will determine whether that potential is realised broadly or narrowly.

The world needs IT experts who can solve hard problems, work with people from different backgrounds, and keep learning throughout their careers. The AI IT decade will be defined not only by the technology that is built, but by the people who are equipped to build it — and to use it wisely.

"The question is not whether AI will transform technology. It already has. The question is whether we will shape that transformation — or simply be shaped by it."

Nalinda Somasiri is Associate Dean and Associate Professor in Generative AI and Machine Learning at York St John University's London Campus. He writes on the intersection of artificial intelligence, technology strategy, and society.

Swathi Ganesan, Deputy Associate Dean & Programme Director, MSc Data Science, York St John London

Sangita Pokhrel FHEA, Lecturer, Module Director, and Research Group Lead — Paragon Research and Innovation Group, London

Dr Soonleh Ling, Senior Lecturer & Director of Cloud Computing and Cybersecurity, York St John London