



The Future of Adult and Lifelong Learning in the Age of AI

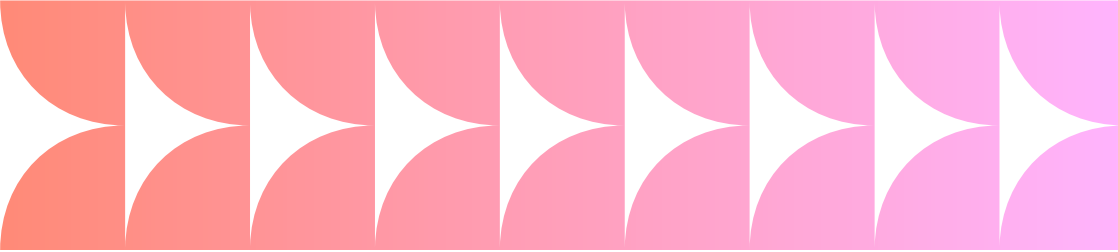
23 September 2025



Infosys

In association with:





Welcome...

... and thank you for joining us for the Future of Adult and Lifelong Learning in the Age of AI conference, part of MK Tech Week 2025.

This event brings together educators, policymakers and technologists to explore how Artificial Intelligence (AI) – particularly generative AI can be used to enhance educational opportunities, experiences and outcomes for adults, and also address skills shortages in key areas.

Since the launch of ChatGPT back at the end of 2022 AI has been making headlines with claims that it will radically change the whole of society. In recognition of this, in Autumn 2023 the UK Government held an '[AI Safety Summit](#)' at Bletchley Park, a venue considered by some as the birthplace of computing. Building on this in 2024 Milton Keynes City Council ran an [MK AI Festival](#) and this year the festival has evolved into the [MK Tech Week](#), which we are proud to support.

Since 1969 The [Open University](#) has changed millions of lives by using the latest tech innovations to deliver adult and lifelong learning to all who wish to realise their ambitions and fulfil their potential.

This event is sponsored by [Infosys](#), a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting.



Agenda

09:00 – 09:30

Arrival, registration and coffee

Welcome and introduction

09:30 – 10:15

Prof. Ian Pickup, Emily Darlington MP, Prof. Mark Brandon, Prof. John Domingue and Esther Spring

10:15 – 11:00

An Unschooled's Guide to Learning, Working and Innovating Playfully with AI.

Jocelyn Burnham

11:00 – 11:45

Responsible AI in practice. Challenges and Opportunities for HE

Prof. Miriam Fernandez

11:45 – 12:30

Machine Design: A New Creative Literacy

Marco Antonio Alfaro Ruz

12:30 – 14:00	Networking lunch and exhibition
14:00 – 14:10	Afternoon introduction Esther Spring
14:10 – 14:40	Panel: The Skills Required to Survive or Thrive in the Age of AI David Hayes, Sophie Lloyd and Peter Gill
14:40 – 15:40	AI, Skills and Jobs: Ethics and Opportunities – interactive session Navin Patel
15:40 – 16:40	The Human Way of Data – Reimagining the Student Experience with AI: Practical Use Cases Across the Journey and Boosting the Talent Acquisition Efficiency Julián Ricoy, Alejandra Gómez Chacón, Begoña Nuñez-Herran and Shubham Joshi
16:40 – 16:50	Closing remarks Prof. John Domingue & Esther Spring
16:50 – 17:30	Reception and networking



Your hosts



Professor John Domingue is Professor of Computer Science at the Knowledge Media Institute (KMi). The Open University's technology research and innovation centre. He is also the President of STI International, an organisation specialising in AI and semantics and responsible for the European Semantic Web Conference (ESWC) series.

Serving as KMi Director from 2015 to 2022, Prof. Domingue has contributed 250 refereed articles in fields such as semantics, AI, the web, distributed ledgers, and eLearning.

Since 2023 he has been at the forefront of examining the impact of generative AI on higher education including a UKRI funded project (SAGE-RAI) with the Open Data Institute.



Esther Spring is the skills and training lead for AI and Digital Capabilities at The Open University. She has extensive experience implementing digital transformation and innovation projects, focusing on a human-centred approach to supporting and developing staff capabilities and confidence, to harness new technology and sustainable ways of working within the broadcast and higher education sectors.

At The Open University projects Esther's include the adoption of delivering learning via the VLE, creating OpenLearn and FutureLearn, and working with academic teams to help develop their online learning content. She has written a number of courses for OpenLearn on supporting hybrid working, digital transformation, and understanding sustainability.

Your hosts



Professor Ian Pickup is Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Students) at The Open University. Ian is a passionate advocate for the role that universities play in society; originally a 'first generation' student, he understands the transformative potential of higher education across the life journeys of all learners.

Ian gained a BA (with QTS) from the University of Warwick and holds a PhD in Education from the University of Roehampton. He is a National Teaching Fellow, a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and Professor of the Student Experience in Higher Education.



Professor Mark Brandon is Interim Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) at The Open University, with responsibility for leading strategic initiatives such as the OU's REF submissions, its approach to knowledge exchange, and its entrepreneurial expansion activities.

A polar oceanographer, Mark joined the OU as an environmental science lecturer in 2000 after completing his PhD at Cambridge and working in the British Antarctic Survey. He was promoted to Professor in 2017, awarded an MBE for services to polar science in 2021, and won the prestigious Polar Medal in 2024. Mark has also advised the BBC on major series such as *Frozen Planet* and *Blue Planet II*, and served as a Special Advisor to Parliament's Environmental Audit Committee.

Mark's commitment to education stems from his upbringing in East London, and he remains passionate about the OU's mission to widen access to learning.

Speakers and panellists



Emily Darlington is the Labour MP for Milton Keynes Central. She is Chair of the Backbench Committee for the Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government and a member of the Science, Innovation and Technology Select Committee. She was previously the Deputy Leader of Milton Keynes City Council.

Prior to her elected roles, she worked with an international development charity in Kenya, held senior roles in the university sector, public service innovation organisations and unions, and served as Special Advisor to the Department of Trade & Industry, and Special Advisor to the Chancellor of the Exchequer at HM Treasury.



Jocelyn Burnham (www.aiforculture.com) is a leading independent AI Communicator, workshop leader, and speaker, specialising in AI innovation in the creative and cultural sectors through creativity and playfulness.

She has been commissioned by organisations including Arts Council England, Tate, The Church of England, Historic Royal Palaces, Art Fund, Shakespeare's Globe, RADA, Kew and Bloomberg Philanthropies to produce bespoke AI workshops and resources.



Professor Miriam Fernandez is a Professor of Responsible Artificial Intelligence at The Open University's, Knowledge Media Institute (KMi). Her research agenda revolves around advancing responsible AI, ensuring that technological innovation aligns with ethical principles and societal values. Her pioneering work spans diverse domains, from algorithmic transparency and fairness to the societal implications of AI deployment.

By integrating cutting-edge AI techniques with a human-centred approach, she fosters solutions that prioritise social responsibility, transparency, and inclusivity. She has contributed to more than 100 scientific articles in some of the best conferences and journals in her field, and having won over £2.5M worth of external grants to support her research.



Marco Antonio Alfaro Ruz is an architect and urban designer with a Master's degree in Urban Design from The Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL), specialising in the development of design methodologies that integrate AI, parametric tools, and principles of biomimicry. He has participated in international competitions and contributed to architectural and urban projects of various scales, from conceptual design to executive stages.

He is currently leading research at Studio Tim Fu, investigating advanced applications of AI in architecture and urbanism, and exploring new pathways for innovation in the built environment.



Navin Patel Ph.D., is an Associate Vice President at Infosys. He leads the AI Academy within the global Education, Training & Assessment (ETA) group, shaping learning pathways that keep more than 320,000 colleagues – and many clients – future – ready in an age of rapid technological change. With 28 years in the IT-services industry (21 of them at Infosys). Navin’s journey has spanned hands-on software development and architecture, global delivery management, and heading pre-sales for Healthcare, Insurance and Life Sciences before pivoting to talent enablement.



Julian Ricoy Hervada is a project director and business analyst with a background in technology consulting, digital transformation, process improvement, and business development. With a career spanning both the UK and Spain, he has led and contributed to multiple education-focused initiatives, delivering value to institutions and students through human-centred innovation.

His academic and professional journey reflects a deep commitment to continuous learning and the practical application of emerging technologies. Passionate about the intersection of innovation and education, Julian brings a people-first approach to the use of AI in educational contexts, supporting meaningful and sustainable transformation within learning environments.



David Hayes is Chief Data Officer at The Open University. A highly experienced senior leader and coach with a passion for helping people to help themselves and for using data to unlock the art of the possible.

A background in finance and accounting across Water, Telecoms and Banking led him into the world of data and technology, initially supporting and then taking lead roles in major change programmes before becoming the first CDO and leading the creation of the first real data functions at Santander UK.



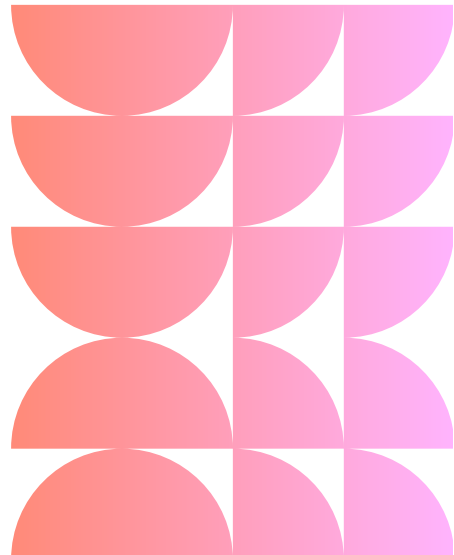
Sophie Lloyd heads up Economic Development (Invest MK) for Milton Keynes City Council and key areas of corporate policy, including regional working (Central Area Growth Board, Fast Growth Cities network, Oxford-Cambridge arc), and Infrastructure investment planning.



Peter Gill has over 35 years' experience in the IT industry, ranging from service delivery to leading sales and bid teams. Peter heads Infosys' UK public sector business and brings a wealth of experience of working with public sector organisations helping them to transform how they deliver services to the public.

Peter has a long-term interest in working with people to help them develop reusable skills and be ready for the changing workplace, and helped to deliver Infosys' social value commitment in the UK. He has also worked with local councils to implement learning platforms to shape future skills within the community, including AI skills.

Peter has been a school governor with a special interest in the use of ICT in education, its practical use in the classroom, and how AI will influence future learning. Peter has been involved in helping young people into work by supporting them to construct and refine their CVs and provide interview preparation and practice.



Exhibitors

This event features exhibitors from:



About how The Open University works with employers

The Open University (OU) is uniquely placed within the UK skills landscape, providing educational opportunities across all four nations and internationally.

We work with more than 2,700 organisations to provide undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, apprenticeships, short courses and free learning through our OpenLearn platform.

The majority of our students are already in work, due to the OU's flexible, tutor-supported online learning model. Our open access policy means that prior qualifications are not needed for most courses. We also widen access to education through our various scholarships for underrepresented groups, and support diverse entrepreneurs through our Open Business Creators programme.

Furthermore, almost 39,000 of our 200,000 students declare a disability, and 28% of OU UK undergraduates live in the 25% most deprived areas of the country. With regards to quality, The OU is 1 of only 34 universities to achieve overall Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework 2023. The OU Business School is proud to be part of an elite group of just 1% of business schools worldwide that are triple-accredited.

Our teaching is underpinned by quality research and the OU is in the top third of UK universities for research excellence, with 82% of our research assessed as world-leading in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021 (based on REF Times Higher Education Power Rankings).

If you would like to discuss how the OU could help to address your skills challenges, please get in touch.

Email: business@open.ac.uk

Web: business.open.ac.uk



The Future of Adult and Lifelong Learning in the Age of AI Conference 2025 is a collaboration between The Open University, Infosys and Milton Keynes City Council as part of MK Tech Week.

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