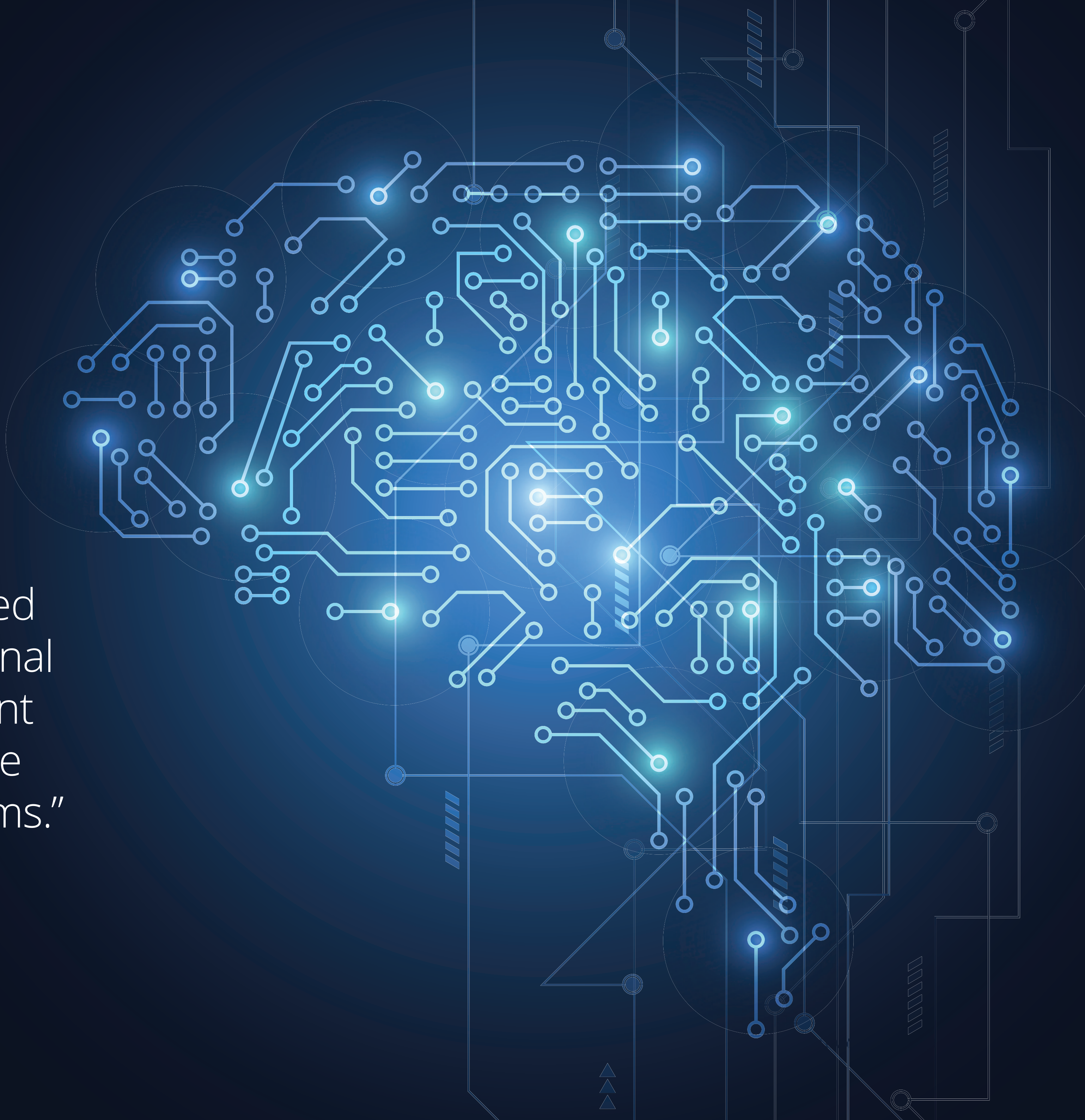
ITAM FORUM

AI and ITAM

“AI needs to be treated as a tool in your arsenal and not a replacement of the people who are running your programs.”

Anne Watson
ITAM Solutions Architect
SHI



Introduction

In today's ever-evolving technology landscape, the role of IT Asset Managers has become increasingly complex. The task of efficiently managing and optimising a company's IT assets is no small feat, with sprawling infrastructures, diverse device types, and constantly changing IT and software environments. And, this won't slow down. It will increase.

So, what is AI's role in all of this? How can AI help ITAM? What role will it play?

This eBook explores the benefits and opportunities that AI brings to ITAM alongside expert insight from leaders within the global ITAM community.

And, we'd like to give special thanks to Rich Gibbons from the ITAM Review who's knowledge on this subject formed the basis of this eBook.

- **Will AI increase efficiencies, simplify asset tracking, and streamline processes?**

- **Will it do a lot of the 'leg work' so ITAM teams can focus on more strategic activities that bring greater business value?**

- **How can you ensure your organisation is safely leveraging AI (and what does that mean)?**

Findings from the [Snow Software 2024 IT Priorities report]

This report surveyed 800 IT leaders across the globe. AI topped the agenda for IT leaders.

Integrating AI is the number one issue IT leaders dealt with during 2023, and 82% say they are prepared to leverage generative AI technologies. 72% believe their organisation will be using more AI (including generative AI) within the next two-to-three years.

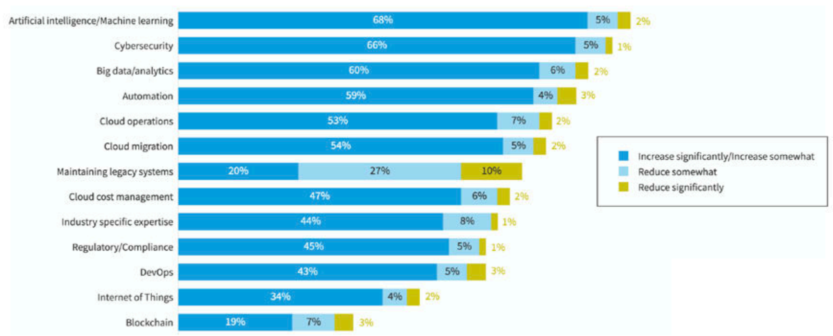
The top three priorities for 2024:

“Managing AI” sits in 4th place at 23%.

Findings from Flexera’s [2023 Tech Spend Pulse report]

506 technical professionals and executive leaders worldwide participated in this survey during the summer of 2023. 68% of respondents expect an increase in the use of external supplied Artificial Intelligence/Machine learning resources. 77% of European respondents expect to see an increase in AI/Machine learning (including generative AI) investment within the next 12 months.

Planned changes to use of external IT resources



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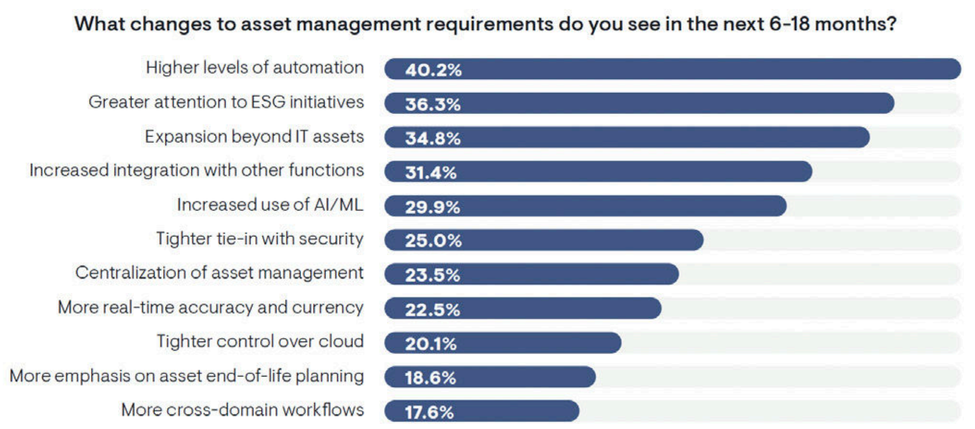
Source: Flexera 2023 Tech Spend Pulse (Figure 27)
flexera

Findings from ServiceNow’s ‘[A business view of IT asset management: Current state and near-term outlook’ report]

This report surveyed 450 global leaders in 2023. 30% expect an increased use of AI/ML within the next 6-18 months.



The Challenges of Traditional ITAM

Traditional ITAM tasks and responsibilities can be cumbersome and error-prone when done manually and compounded when you consider these four points below. And, moving to SaaS and cloud resources makes these more likely to happen and harder to manage.

AI presents a transformative solution to these challenges by automating and optimising various ITAM processes. This can lead to increased efficiency, reduced costs, and enhanced compliance…
if done right.

Complex environments
that use a mix of on-premises and cloud-based solutions, making it challenging to keep track of assets across various platforms.

Rapid changes
thanks to software updates, hardware replacements, and changing user needs that creates a constant state of flux.

Compliance risks,
due to the improper management of licenses, that can lead to costly legal and financial consequences.

Cost Overruns
on licenses and underutilised hardware created by a lack of insight into the asset estate and usage.

The Potential Benefits of AI in ITAM

01

Enhanced Asset Discovery and Inventory Management

AI-powered tools can scan an entire network and identify devices and software, even those that may have been overlooked or forgotten. This comprehensive asset discovery ensures that no critical asset goes unaccounted for. And, AI can categorise assets, providing granular information about their specifications and configurations. This newfound visibility into the IT landscape allows for better decision-making and resource allocation.

02

Real-time Monitoring and Predictive Analytics

AI can monitor asset performance and usage in real-time, flagging any anomalies or issues as they occur. This proactive approach allows IT Asset Managers to address problems swiftly, reducing downtime and improving overall system reliability.

Furthermore, AI-driven predictive analytics can forecast future asset needs based on historical data. This will help teams to proactively plan for upgrades or replacements, minimizing disruptions and ensuring the efficient allocation of resources.

03

License Optimisation and Compliance

AI can track software usage patterns and recommend optimisations, preventing over-licensing and minimising costs. Additionally, it can monitor (in real-time) license compliance, alerting IT teams to any potential violations, reducing risks.

04

Cost Reduction and Resource Allocation

AI-driven ITAM can identify under-utilised assets, allowing organisations to redistribute or retire them. Additionally, AI can provide insights into the total cost of ownership (TCO) of each asset (maintenance, energy consumption, license costs, etc.).

Armed with this information, IT Asset Managers can make informed decisions about which assets to keep, upgrade, or phase out.

05

Security and Risk Mitigation

AI can help identify vulnerabilities in IT assets and infrastructure, flagging potential risks and recommending security patches or updates.

Will AI be a game changer for ITAM?

Steve Tait
CTO, Snow Software

"It's going to be a game changer for ITAM and for everybody. We're using computers and systems to interrogate data to find out answers to questions. What we're going to move to with Generative AI plugged into these systems is the ability to pose questions in natural language and receive a natural language response. This is completely game changing for data-heavy applications such as ITAM."

Rohit Lobo
Product Management, ServiceNow

"The scope of ITAM has been broadening. The volume of assets and data ITAM manages is huge and increases every day. So, this is how tools like machine learning and AI can really help."

Christopher Brune
Executive Research & Innovation Manager, USU

"ITAM has a large amount of very valuable data, and this is recognised by other departments. With the help of AI, especially Generative AI, ITAM will get recommendations and advice before asking for it, before it even knows to ask for it. This will be the real game changer."

Anne Watson
ITAM Solutions Architect, SHI International Corp.

"Not only is it going to give you those definite answers, but it's going to reduce the amount of time it takes to collect and identify all data sources, normalise the data, and process it. That's a huge game changer."

The Road Ahead

As AI starts to help reshape ITAM, there are several opportunities and challenges that ITAM professionals should be aware of.

Opportunities

01

Customised Solutions:

AI can be tailored to meet the specific needs of an organisation, ensuring ITAM strategies align with business objectives.

02

Integration:

AI-powered ITAM solutions can seamlessly integrate with existing systems, reducing disruption during implementation.

03

Scalability:

AI can handle large-scale operations, making it suitable for organisations of all sizes.

04

Data-Driven Decision-Making:

AI provides valuable insights, empowering IT Asset Managers to make informed decisions and optimise IT resources effectively.

05

More time:

AI can free up you and your team to focus on the aspects of work uniquely suited to humans – including building relationships and stakeholder engagement across the business.

Challenges

01

Data Privacy:

The use of AI in ITAM requires handling large amounts of sensitive data and ensuring data privacy and compliance with regulations like GDPR is a crucial challenge. What data do you have? Where is it from? To whom does it refer? These, and more, are key questions.

02

Skill Gap:

Implementing AI in ITAM may require specialised skills and training for staff – be prepared for the time and budget this will need.

03

Initial Investment:

While AI can lead to significant cost savings in the long run, the initial investment in AI-powered ITAM solutions can be substantial – particularly including onboarding and training. Make sure the business case takes this into account.

What will be the biggest use of AI in the real world in 12 months' time?

Steve Tait
CTO, Snow Software

"It's going to be in these core areas – how do I look at data, summarize it, process it quicker and ingest more data into the system. Those for me are the big things."

Rohit Lobo
Product Management, ServiceNow

"For me, I think we might see more of an assist type model with AI, where it assists ITAM practitioners to get answers and be more effective and productive in their roles."

Steven McQuade
Senior Product Manager for Asset Lifecycle Management, Iron Mountain

"AI will help with sustainability and e-waste. The combination of AI, Machine Learning and Robotics will together help to strip down, process and harvest IT components that can go back into the supply chain."

Christopher Brune
Executive Research & Innovation Manager, USU

But… "AI will have to have some governance. The more important AI becomes, the more attention it will get so organisations will need to define the conditions and criteria for when AI can be used."

Are you ready for AI?

According to Jonas Jasinskas from SoftwareOne, ITAM professionals should keep the following 10 points top of mind when it comes to integrating AI with ITAM. Learn more by reading this informative article by Jonas: AI is coming to the world of ITAM – are you ready?

01

Assess current ITAM processes:

What are the strengths, weaknesses and pain points? This will help to identify where AI can help.

02

Data readiness:

Data quality is paramount otherwise AI will not be able to deliver helpful insights and predictions.

03

Data security and privacy:

You must implement measures to protect sensitive data.

04

Integration with existing systems:

Aim for a seamless integration with your existing ITAM tool as this will help with adoption and transition.

05

Skill and Knowledge development:

Upskill your ITAM and IT teams. The effective use of AI requires specialised skills.

06

Change management:

Communicating with affected teams is crucial to making AI implementation a success.

07

Define KPIs:

Measure and report the success of your AI-driven ITAM activities. Tie this back to your objectives.

08

Define your objectives:

What do you want AI to help achieve? This will guide all that you did with AI.

09

Compliance and ethics:

Data privacy, data ethics and regulatory compliance. It's of paramount importance to keep these top of mind.

10

Monitoring and governance:

Like with everything else in ITAM, you need to maintain transparency and accountability to drive success.

Final thoughts

"Don't be afraid. Be aware, and improve your skills. People and processes will remain."

Christopher Brune
Executive Research & Innovation Manager, USU

Steve Tait
CTO, Snow Software

"Get excited about the domain and the possibilities but don't panic about trying to answer all of the questions about possible future use cases. Focus on what you can do now. Invest the time to write an acceptable use case policy for Generative AI. People require skills to use it. Get your vendor contracts in place and ask vendors about their AI strategy. How are they taking your data? What are they using it against? How is that data being processed?"

"I hope AI doesn't go the way cloud did. We saw so many companies rushing to the cloud without a plan or a strategy, and now, they're trying to reel that back and put FinOps in and try to figure out how to do it smartly. If companies aren't being proactive and are not making plans and strategies, they're going to find themselves in a world of hurt."

Anne Watson
ITAM Solutions Architect, SHI International Corp.

Rohit Lobo
Product Management, ServiceNow

"AI has the power to be transformative for ITAM, but it also comes with its challenges. From an organisation's perspective, I think it would be good to think about what your strategy is, what the biggest impact areas are, and approach it from that aspect. How does it add transformative business value to your organisation?"

ITAM FORUM

About the ITAM Forum

The ITAM Forum is a global trade body for the advancement of the IT Asset Management industry. We are a not-for-profit membership organisation, led by ITAM professionals for ITAM professionals. Our members are passionate about IT Asset Management and the business value it brings to companies regardless of size and industry.

The ITAM Forum has two primary objectives:

1. To elevate the position of ITAM by sharing knowledge and best practices that focus on business value and aid to grow the profession.

2. To create – and be a caretaker of – the new ISO 19770 standard certification program so organisations can demonstrate the quality of their ITAM practices.

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