



Softcat

# SOFTCAT BUSINESS TECH PRIORITIES REPORT 2023

An annual snapshot of the IT landscape in the UK and Ireland, provided by Softcat.

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# INTRODUCTION

The modern business era demands that organisations are agile, innovative and resilient. Investing in the right IT technologies and services can make the difference between surviving and thriving in a rapidly changing environment.

In this report, you'll get a clear picture of the current trends within the IT business landscape, the solutions and services organisations are prioritising, and the biggest challenges they face, which technology is helping them to overcome.

Based on the views of more than 4,000 respondents from 2,900 organisations in the UK and Ireland, this report represents the views from over 27 industries and sectors (both public and private).

**4,000**  
Respondents

**2,900**  
Organisations

**27**  
Industries and Sectors

# A FOREWORD BY RICHARD WYN GRIFFITH



Chief Commercial Officer at Softcat

//

**As we continue to navigate the ever-changing landscape of technology, it is essential that we remain vigilant and adaptable.**

The past year has seen global unrest, but it has also presented us with countless technological opportunities for growth and innovation. By taking a measured and strategic approach, we can effectively manage the risks associated with emerging technology, while also seizing the opportunities that it presents. It is critical that we remain proactive in our efforts to safeguard against cyber threats, integrate AI into our operations, and build digital resilience.

Only by embracing change and remaining steadfast in our commitment to progress can we hope to thrive in this new age of digital transformation. I look forward to continuing to work with our customers towards a brighter future!

//



# KEY FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

## BUSINESS CHALLENGES

70%

The majority of respondents (70%) said their organisations are prioritising 'People and Culture' as their main environmental, social and governance (ESG) focus this year, closely followed by Sustainability (68%) and Diversity and Inclusion (55%).

48%

48% of respondents are facing people-related challenges, with stiff competition for the best tech talent in the hiring market and challenges with retaining that talent.

40%

Commercial Risk, defined as market uncertainties and obstacles that might lead to losses, is also a concern for 40% of respondents. Macro trends in economics, demographics and geopolitics – plus the rapid pace of technological change – are testing organisations' agility and adaptability.



## TECHNOLOGY PRIORITIES

56%

Cyber Security is the top technology focus in 2023, with 56% of respondents ranking this priority in their top three.

39%

Following that, over a third (39%) cited Devices and End User Computing as one of their top three priorities over the next 12 months.

28%

Lastly, harnessing data (including strategy, governance, platforms and analytics) is the third most highly ranked tech priority, with 28% of respondents ranking it in their top three.

# OUR EXPERT ANALYSIS OF TECHNOLOGY TRENDS

In this section, Softcat's OCTO (Office of the Chief Technology Officer) experts dive deeper into the report's key findings to further explore the trends, opportunities and challenges they're seeing across each technology area.





# OPTIMISING THE DIGITAL WORKSPACE

## ENHANCING PRODUCTIVITY, SECURITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY

**JACK LEWIS**

Chief Technologist for Digital Workspace at Softcat



# 39%

**39% of respondents** said Devices and End User Computing is one of their top tech priorities over the next 12 months.

“

**This year, organisations have recognised the need to provide better digital workspaces to their end users.**

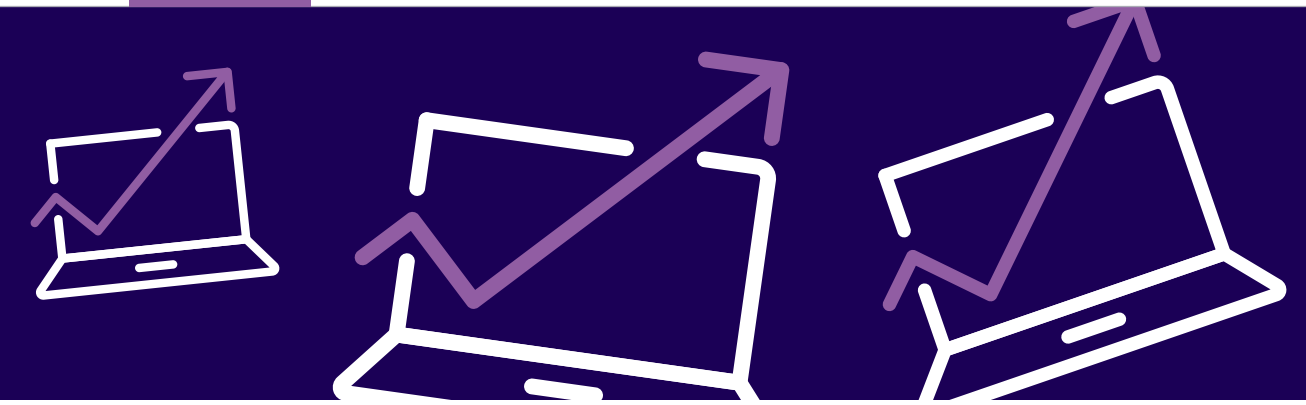
Providing the workforce with secure devices and appropriate technologies not only boosts productivity by mitigating the risks from cyber attacks, it also improves the employee experience by increasing job satisfaction, subsequently helping to attract and retain talent.

Meanwhile, upgrading collaboration and communication technologies allows for effective internal and external interactions regardless of location.

And finally, by providing end users with the best operational support services, they can continue to benefit from technology investments.”

# OPTIMISING THE DIGITAL WORKSPACE

## ENHANCING PRODUCTIVITY, SECURITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY



“Focusing on these four key themes, ensuring a structured approach to user enablement and following adoption change management best-practices will better support and accelerate your organisation’s objectives to achieve more.

mitigation with security controls that don’t hinder end-user productivity, raising resilience is key for maximum impact, enabling businesses to stay ahead of the competition.

Additionally, it would be careless not to recognise the importance of

**It’s also important to note how recent changes and risks in other key technology areas impact the digital workspace.**

For example, cyber security and digital workspace go hand in hand. As our customers strive to balance risk

AI - especially with the new wave of generative AI becoming increasingly integrated into productivity apps and

operating systems. With its potential to change how we work and interact with technology; this is a major area of growth and one that organisations should focus their efforts on. Getting themselves into an ‘AI and Co-Pilot’ ready state will ensure they’re able to take advantage of these technologies as soon as possible. Without essential preparation now, businesses risk falling behind their competitors, which could be costly.

Reassuringly, we’re seeing an increased number of customers who want to ensure their digital workspace is sourced and operated as sustainably as possible. Sustainability is about

being as responsible and efficient as possible, with the latter closely linked to productivity. The gains customers want to make in this area go hand in hand with providing employees with the best digital workspace experience.”

**JACK LEWIS**

Chief Technologist for Digital Workspace at Softcat



# CYBER RESILIENCE

## SUSTAINING A SAFE SPACE AMID TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS

**KIERON NEWSHAM**  
Chief Technologist for  
Cyber Security at Softcat



# 56%

56% of respondents said cyber security is one of their top tech priorities over the next 12 months.

“

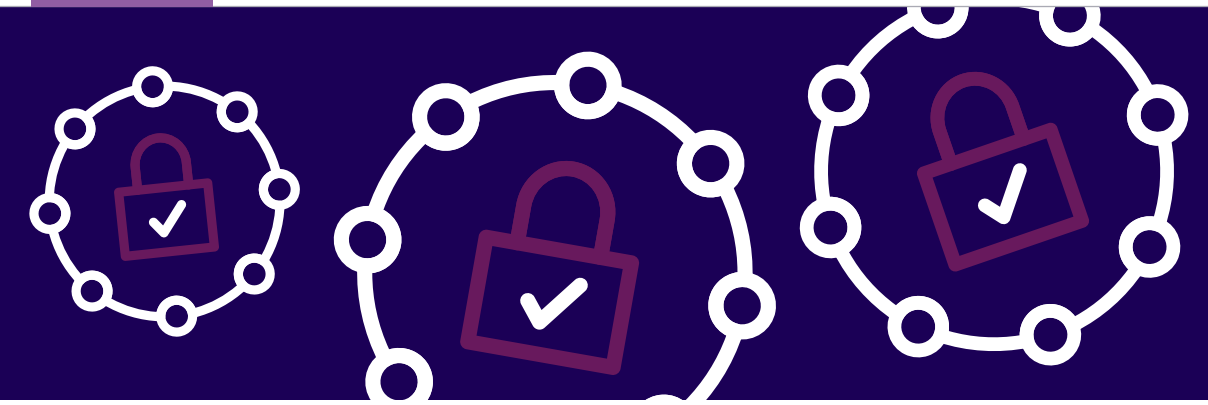
Cyber security continues to accelerate at an immense pace, driven not only by technology advancements in other areas of IT, but also by the incessant nature of threat actors and our ability as defenders to out-manoeuvre them.

As such, this year's focus is 'resilience'. The capacity to continuously ensure we're able to recover and normalise operations after a cyber incident is more important than ever.

Threat data paints a familiar picture of initial access, with exploit (33%) and phishing (23%) making up over half of all initial access vectors<sup>1</sup>. For impactful change, organisations should focus on assets, credentials and vulnerabilities. Underlying security operations, broad organisational awareness and training programmes also remain key to alleviating risk and managing it effectively.”

# CYBER RESILIENCE

## SUSTAINING A SAFE SPACE AMID TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS



“Advancements in technology coupled with high-quality service, have taken organisations to new heights within operations. Managed Detection Response (MDR), Managed Extended Detection Response (MXDR), and cloud-based Security Information Event Management (SIEM) are providing private sector and public sector organisations of all sizes fantastic detection and response capabilities.

Data remains the target resource, with 40% of all threat-actor objectives aiming to obtain data as the valued commodity.

## As a currency, data is so flexible in its use case that it’s almost becoming the de-facto standard for why organisations are breached.

Packs of Personal Identifiable Information (PII) can go from anywhere between £400 to over £1,700 on criminal forums and are being used to extort ransom payments and to support military intelligence gathering, disinformation and morale-impacting campaigns - as we’ve seen in Ukraine.

With data security in the spotlight for most organisations, it’s perhaps ironic that the

largest development over the last year exists due to our need as human beings to consume more of it than ever.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) poses both solutions and problems for the cyber security community. We can use AI developments to enhance intensive human processes like Threat Hunting, but we must also be aware of an increase in threat-actor behaviour as a by-product

of them optimising their own processes; from using AI for activities like advanced social engineering (deepfakes) and automated reconnaissance.”

**KIERON NEWSHAM**  
Chief Technologist for  
Cyber Security at Softcat

*“Cyber security should be everyone’s top priority in today’s world with all the cloud apps and services available.”*

Hughes Network Systems Ltd

*“Cyber security for us and many other organisations is one of the biggest challenges with the biggest risks. Being a small-to-medium sized business means we don’t necessarily have all the high-end protection etc. And security has to fit within our budget constraints.”*

Opro International Ltd

*“Just look at what is out there and what has been happening in the past couple of years. Cyber security is paramount.”*

Southern Housing

*“Cyber security is always number one, as it always needs to be monitored and improved”*

Lymington Precision Engineers



# INTEGRATED HYBRID AND MULTI-CLOUD STRATEGIES

## FOR EFFICIENCY, INVESTMENT DIVERSITY AND DIGITAL ACCELERATION

### GARY HAWKINS

Chief Technologist for Data, Platforms and Cloud at Softcat



# 18%

**18% of respondents** said Datacentre and Private Cloud is one of their top tech priorities over the next 12 months.

“

Organisations are increasingly adopting hybrid and multi-cloud strategies to improve efficiency, further diversify IT investments, continually improve digital resilience, and ultimately strive to accelerate digital outcomes.

Understandably, organisations are demanding more insights, reliability, and agility from their technology investments. However, they often need to manage

complex and diverse technologies and partner ecosystems, migrate from legacy to modern infrastructure and contend with increasingly critical talent shortages. This can make achieving their desired business outcomes difficult and make these goals seem out of reach.”

# INTEGRATED HYBRID AND MULTI-CLOUD STRATEGIES

## FOR EFFICIENCY, INVESTMENT DIVERSITY AND DIGITAL ACCELERATION



“At the heart of this transformation are the many applications and data silos that need to be integrated to deliver tangible business outcomes. A detailed application and data maturity assessment is vital to ensure continuous improvement, to maximise business value, and to improve the experience for both employees and customers.

Security, IT, and DevSecOps approaches are often less effective in today’s ever-changing on-premise and hybrid cloud environments. Businesses tend to focus on the IT strategy and technology transformation at the expense of business outcomes.

To address this challenge, many organisations are implementing a data backbone strategy to provide visibility and insights into all their

operations. This data backbone can help teams identify and mitigate risks, troubleshoot problems more quickly and make better decisions about deploying and managing their workloads.

**C-suite business leaders and IT must continue to work closely together with visionary leadership that delivers a well-executed strategy.”**

**GARY HAWKINS**

Chief Technologist for Data, Platforms and Cloud at Softcat



# HARNESSING DATA

## ESTABLISHING A STRONG GOVERNANCE STRATEGY IN A NEW DIGITAL AGE

**GARY HAWKINS**  
Chief Technologist for Data,  
Platforms and Cloud at Softcat



# 28%

**28% of respondents** said Data - including strategy, governance, platforms and analytics - is one of their top tech priorities over the next 12 months.

“

**Data is a strategic asset that businesses of all sizes need to harness to drive innovation and measurable success. However, many businesses struggle to get the most out of their data due to challenges such as a lack of analytical and classification processes, resources, and expertise.**

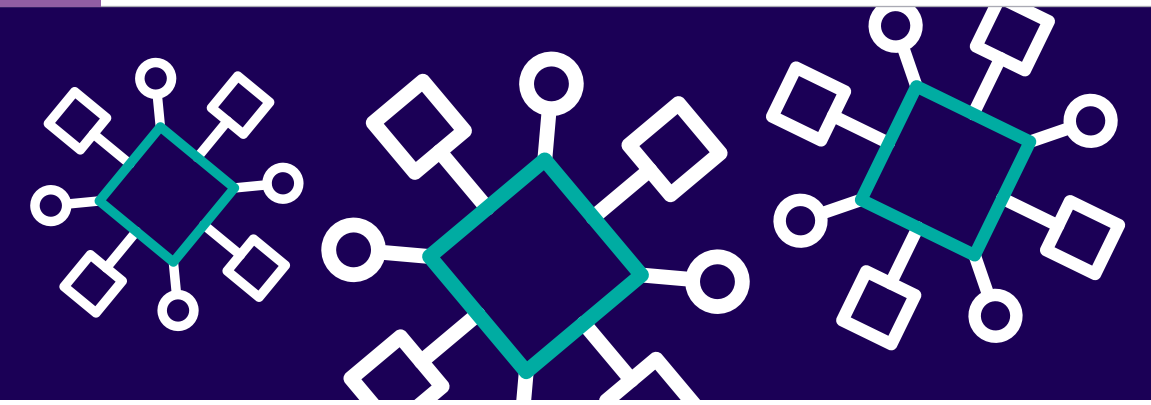
A measurable data governance strategy will help businesses overcome these challenges. Using clean and contextual data to identify trends, automate tasks, reduce costs, and develop new business models will, in parallel, deliver accurate, timely, reliable and secure accessibility.

But generative AI integration won't generate accurate insights without a well-defined data governance strategy. Better governance, better results, better data!

The trends are converging to create a new digital landscape that's more complex at first glance, but will ultimately be more dynamic, pervasive, and intelligent than ever before.”

# HARNESSING DATA

## ESTABLISHING A STRONG GOVERNANCE STRATEGY IN A NEW DIGITAL AGE



*“Data is a priority for us. The clean up, tagging and retention requirements around data will help with compliance and regulatory requirements. It will also help to cut down and dispose of unnecessary data, leading to a cleaner view of what we have and improving our sources of information we use.*

*This will lead on to being able to make better and more informed choices and higher quality data-driven decisions.”*

Brainkind

*“We need more accurate, timely data analytics and reporting to improve our decision making”*

Angus Soft Fruits

*“[We] need to get the organisation ready to utilise AI and that relies on good quality data across the organisation.”*

Takepayments

*“It is an area that is getting a lot of discussion within the company in terms of trying to move more into insights driving business decisions. A key part of this is understanding the data we have and what the value is in that data. Then to understand how we can unlock the value of the data, either using MI/BI or AI.”*

NG Bailey Group



# THE EVOLUTION OF NETWORK ARCHITECTURE

## FROM SD-WAN TO PRIVATE WAN AND 5G EXPANSION

**THOMAS ROWLEY**  
Chief Technologist  
for Networking and  
Connectivity at Softcat



# 25%

25% of respondents said Networking and Connectivity is one of their top tech priorities over the next 12 months.

“

Networking and Connectivity have undergone large changes in requirements over the past five years, primarily driven by the adoption of SaaS (Software as a Service), cloud and Hybrid Working.

As a result, our applications and services, and users and devices, are distributed in various locations, creating a myriad of ways these two worlds connect.

Consequently, this has changed what we need to observe and monitor, and we're now seeing observability technology flooding the market.

Changes in requirements have impacted the technologies we use in networking and how we architect them together to form a reliable and performant technology ecosystem that provides a good user experience.”

# THE EVOLUTION OF NETWORK ARCHITECTURE

## FROM SD-WAN TO PRIVATE WAN AND 5G EXPANSION



“For example, as organisations find more traffic bound to the internet, driven by SaaS and Cloud adoption, IT teams are rapidly adopting SD-WAN solutions to maintain visibility and control of traffic while optimising connectivity to services and applications. Due to the enormous reliance on the internet for organisations to operate, it also enables organisations to take a risk averse approach to internet connectivity by taking multiple connections (including 5G) in an active-active manner with traffic routed over the most suitable link defined by software. As a result, we predict that SD-WAN will become a commoditised technology. It’s forecast that 5,000 of the largest global

enterprises (by revenue) will have SD-WAN installed at 61% of global WAN sites by the end of 2023, growing to 81% by 2026.<sup>2</sup>

Organisations’ WAN environments should continue to evolve past SD-WAN and into Private WAN solutions where the private layer 2 WAN becomes the new ‘Hub’ and the ‘Spokes’ become anything hanging off it, including centralised multi-cloud connectivity, IoT devices, offices and tightly integrated central security controls.

Meanwhile, adoption of IoT is forecast to almost double from 15.1 billion in 2020 to more than 29 billion IoT devices in 2030<sup>3</sup>, with an infinite

amount of use cases in both enterprise and industrial sectors. While use cases are wide ranging, one common requirement that enables IoT adoption is network connectivity. Enterprise

of large-scale digital transformation and investigating how private 5G can play a part in this journey of reliably connecting thousands of devices at ultra-low latency in a secure manner.

### Cellular networking will continue to grow as public 5G roll out continues, achieving faster speeds and enabling both remote and mobile connectivity.

organisations are exploring how they can connect third party IoT devices to wireless networks and leverage native capabilities in wireless deployments like location services. On the other hand, industrial organisations are at the start

And it’s not due to slow down anytime soon. According to an ITU forecast, global mobile data traffic is estimated to grow at an annual rate of 55% between 2020 and 2030<sup>4</sup>.”

**THOMAS ROWLEY**

Chief Technologist for Networking and Connectivity at Softcat



# AI REVOLUTION

## NAVIGATING OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

**ANDREW HERMSEN**

Chief Strategist of AI  
and Cloud at Softcat



# 300K

Imagine the neural networks that underpin AI systems growing to an astonishing **300,000 times their current size** by 2030.

“

**Simultaneously brimming with potential and fraught with complexities, AI stands out in today’s business and technology landscape. Let’s peer into the not-so-distant future and assess the potential of AI to reshape business and technology.**

Imagine the neural networks that underpin AI systems growing to an astonishing 300,000 times their current size by 2030. It will herald unprecedented intelligence, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. But this promise is not without its pitfalls. Ensuring data quality, security, and governance will no longer be optional; they will be imperative to harnessing this newfound intelligence responsibly.”

# THE AI REVOLUTION

## NAVIGATING OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS



“Personal AI assistants will become your new best friends—or at least your main point of contact with businesses. These assistants won’t just serve as a novel interface; they’ll necessitate a radical shift in organisational thinking. The focus will have to pivot towards a balanced approach that merges human-centric design with an AI-centric strategy, creating an ecosystem where convenience, personalisation, and trust coexist seamlessly.

**Meanwhile, AI capability is getting built into existing platforms and services, enhancing functionality and performance, with this infusion raising its own set of challenges.**

Questions about transparency, accountability, and fairness are already at the forefront. The draft EU AI Act<sup>5</sup> marks a pivotal move towards harmonised governance but remains a work in progress.

On the operational front, high-performance computing resources are just the tip of the iceberg.

Storage and networking capacities will have to scale dramatically, necessitating

effective financial management. Subsequently, FinOps will serve as a guiding discipline that helps organisations align cloud spending with business objectives.

Thinking about the people who will steer these AI initiatives, there’s an impending skills gap looming over the horizon. Organisations cannot just rely on homegrown talent; they’ll need to forge external partnerships and collaborations. Moreover, they’ll be required to invest in building internal competencies in areas like AI prompting and setting up an AI Centre of Excellence.

So, as we navigate the evolving AI landscape, balancing the scales of opportunity and challenge will become an objective and imperative for forward-thinking organisations.

Our customers can expect AI-focused workshops and webinars alongside expert consultancy on AI strategy and best practices. Support in data management, cloud migration, security, compliance and governance are key for successful implementation of AI-based projects.”

**ANDREW HERMSEN**

Chief Strategist of AI and Cloud at Softcat



# A SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FROM OUR EXPERTS



## DIGITAL WORKSPACE

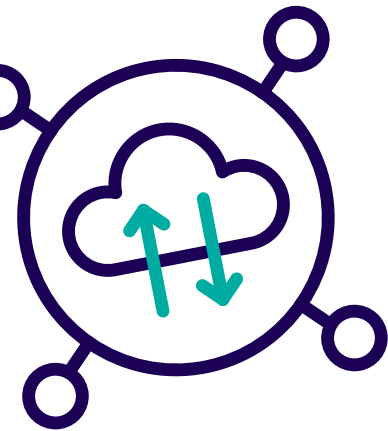
- High performing, secure technologies and devices mitigate cyber security risks, boost productivity and improve employee satisfaction and retention.
- Optimised operational support services enhance end-user experience and validate technological investment.
- Cyber security and digital workspaces work hand in hand, but new developments in one should not hinder the other.
- Generative AI could change how employees work and interact with digital workspaces, but businesses need to prepare so they don't get left behind.
- Sustainability is becoming increasingly important to digital workspace management within organisations.

## CYBER SECURITY

- Technological advancements, the high value of data, and the persistent threat of bad actors have accelerated cyber security development.
- Over half of initial access is gained through exploit and phishing activity, highlighting the need for advanced technologies like MDR, MXDR and SIEM.
- Data is the major target, whilst AI exists as a double-edged sword presenting both solutions and problems for cyber security.
- Every business needs resilience - the ability to continuously identify and recover from threats.



## DATA AND HYBRID MULTI-CLOUD



- Organisations are increasingly adopting hybrid and multi-cloud strategies to enhance efficiency, diversify IT investments and boost digital resilience.
- Businesses should be cautious of focusing too heavily on diversified IT strategy and technology transformation at the expense of their business outcomes.
- A data backbone is crucial for all businesses to gain accurate insights, foster quick issue resolution and manage workload.
- Data is a valuable asset driving innovation and measuring success, but many businesses fail to leverage it due to a lack of processes, expertise and resources.
- Generative AI integration isn't a silver bullet. A comprehensive data governance strategy will be needed to mitigate challenges whilst driving innovation and measurable insights.

## NETWORKING AND CONNECTIVITY

- An increase in SaaS, cloud and hybrid working adoption has propelled multi-location distribution, altering the way we connect and what and how we need to observe and monitor.
- Increased reliance on internet-bound traffic means IT teams are swiftly embracing SD-WAN solutions to optimise connectivity with forecasted widespread adoption of SD-WAN.
- IoT adoption growth is furthering the need for better network connectivity within enterprise organisations, while industrial organisations investigate the role of private 5G amid digital transformation.
- A risk-averse approach to connectivity is needed, dynamically routing traffic over the most suitable links.



## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

- By 2030, AI will offer unprecedented intelligence. However, there are complex challenges to ensure data quality, security and governance.
- Personal AI assistants are poised to become primary interfaces between users and businesses, necessitating a shift in organisational thinking to balance human-centric design with an AI-centric strategy.
- Storage and networking capabilities must be scaled whilst tackling the impending skills gap, with external partnerships and enhanced internal competencies essential.





# A SUMMARY //

## BY DEAN GARDNER



Technology Director at Softcat

The IT landscape is evolving at a tremendous pace for us, our customers and vendor communities. Technology is seen as a panacea but more than ever before investments and usage of technologies need careful consideration. This is to ensure value is being realised and the usage models provide tangible business outcomes with little to no risk.

We believe there is a need to focus on the end user experience to drive innovation and improvements, but to also ensure data and security responsibilities are understood. Simplifying the operational complexities across hybrid and multi-cloud architectures to support the apps and data proliferation are now a priority to truly tackle. There is a requirement to move at a rapid rate towards innovative connected architectures to ensure users, apps and data are seamlessly intertwined to deliver a seamless experience. Whilst every organisation needs to have an adaptable security and governance model to ensure risk and resiliency are top of the priority list. With the world accelerating towards generative AI, every consideration will need to be factored into measuring the impact of this potentially revolutionary and risky technology.

The now and the future are here and that makes for an exciting prospect to deliver solutions that bring technology to life for our customers. We believe we are in a fantastic position to support our customers across this ever-increasing complex landscape. //

# THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES FACING ORGANISATIONS TODAY

As part of this year's survey, organisations were asked what they expect to be their biggest challenges they are facing over the next 12 months.





## THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES

# PEOPLE

# 48%

**Nearly half of respondents (48%)** said they're facing people-related challenges like recruitment and retention within their organisation.

As the pandemic brought years of disrupted working and newfound time for people to re-evaluate their jobs, goals and personal priorities, the world witnessed employees leaving their jobs en masse in the 'Great Resignation'.

Today, with wages failing to keep pace with inflation<sup>6</sup>, the cost-of-living increases and opportunities everywhere for talented employees, there is little sign of this trend slowing down anytime soon.

The result? A widening skills gap in both public and private sectors, and the creation of an employee job market where employers face stiff hiring competition for the best talent.

In this climate, focusing on the workforce is a top priority for every organisation looking to close the gap.

Instilling a culture of continuous learning, with a focus on reskilling and upskilling, will be key to future resilience and slowing the rate of movement within the jobs market.

In a world where job satisfaction is transparent, and the likes of Glassdoor are only a click away, offering job flexibility, providing authentic leadership, and driving diversity forward will go a long way in attracting and retaining staff as more people seek greater fulfilment in the workplace. Pay is important, but money isn't enough by itself.

In a broader sense, the right technology also affects how employees feel. Workers satisfied with workplace applications are 1.6 times more likely to want to stay, grow and perform in their current organisation<sup>7</sup>.





## THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES

# COMMERCIAL RISK

# 40%

**40% of respondents** said 'Commercial Risk' was a key challenge, defined as any market uncertainties and obstacles that might lead to losses. This can include macroeconomic risks like rising inflation, geopolitical tensions and the economic downturn.

The risks confronting businesses remain high in 2023 and beyond.

The impact on growth will be felt over the coming year, with credit conditions and budgets tightening rapidly. A period of stagflation, characterised by sluggish growth and high inflation, is expected to be long. Some industries also continue to face supply chain interruptions, while others face the consequences of unease within the financial sector and the drop in investor confidence.

Technology risk can also affect an organisation financially. Any IT failure, caused by data security incidents, cyber-attacks, legacy IT or service outages, has the potential to cause disruption and reputational damage.

Identifying technology risks, promoting best practice and future-proofing hardware and software should be an ongoing effort and an integral part of risk management strategies for all industries.





## THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES

# PROCESSES

# 31%

'Processes' was selected as an expected top challenge for **31% of organisations** over the next 12 months. And within hybrid workplaces, finding, fixing and automating broken processes has become a necessity for many.

Process management relates to a wide range of business objectives, including how organisations streamline workflows, boost productivity, reduce compliance risks, enrich the customer experience, and increase agility and scalability. But with so much choice and competing priorities, knowing which tool is the right one for the job can be challenging.

Most process management strategies, along with the implementation of changes, involve the IT team, as technology underpins so many tasks, roles and systems within the modern organisation.

A thorough testing process is key to delivering successful change. Lack of performance testing can lead to process breakdowns, unforeseen errors, operational disruptions and new security risks.





## THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES

# TECHNOLOGY EXPERIENCE AND PROCUREMENT

# 30%

**30% of respondents** ranked 'Technology Experience' as a challenge over the next 12 months, closely followed by IT procurement (26%). This includes the tech necessities that all employees rely on, as well as job function-specific tools used by individuals or departments.

Today, every worker's experience in their role is impacted by the technology they use (or don't). So, investing time and money in providing the best digital experience is vital, including procuring the right software, hardware and services to bring it to life.

Digital experience matters to the workforce and the customers they serve. And it starts with knowing how to support what each is trying to achieve in the first place, rather than simply investing in shiny, new technology without purpose.

Technology now governs every aspect of an employee's journey, from the moment they apply for a job to the moment they exit, and every experience in between. Getting it right can unlock huge gains in productivity and morale. Getting it wrong, however, can have the reverse effect and ultimately impact the bottom line.

The rise in IT procurement as a service is helping to resolve some of these challenges, saving organisations money and time. Businesses alleviate the pressure of selecting, buying, delivering, repairing and replacing equipment throughout the product lifecycle by partnering with IT procurement and purchasing professionals. Using this model, IT spend is optimised and the digital experience remains first class.





# THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES IN SUMMARY

An organisation that embraces technological and cultural change will be well-positioned to anticipate and tackle challenges head-on when they come their way.

Specifically, investing in a first-class employee experience can help minimise or overcome many of the challenges discussed in this section - from attracting and retaining diverse talent, reducing commercial risk, improving processes, and optimising IT spend.

Equipping individuals and teams with the digital tools they need to do their jobs well is paramount. It will optimise performance, boost morale, unlock growth and increase resilience across the board and for years to come.





# A SPOTLIGHT ON SUSTAINABILITY

With the climate crisis worsening and public attitudes changing, sustainability has become an issue business leaders can't ignore.



*As we move forward with hardware solutions we become (rightly) more interested in the circular economy and the carbon footprint of where product comes from and how we dispose of assets at the end of their useful life.*

University of Glasgow





## A SPOTLIGHT ON

# SUSTAINABILITY

The results from this year's survey bear this out as **68% of organisations** ranked sustainability as a top ESG focus for the year ahead. The sectors most likely to rank sustainability as their priority ESG focus include Higher Education (96%), Agriculture (85%) and Real Estate (81%).

*“With the ever-growing importance of environmental sustainability to our customers, Softcat continues to develop our sustainability solutions, ensuring we offer a selection that can assist organisations wherever they are on their digital net-zero journeys. Our approach is to deliver tailored solutions that are sustainable by design, delivered efficiently, and recycled responsibly to support our customers in their commitment to a sustainable future.”*

**JOHN GLADSTONE** Sustainability Lead at Softcat



”

*We as a business are working to become net zero by 2045. We are big on sustainability and will be looking to reflect that in orders and equipment.*

**Bloom Procurement Services**

”

It's clear that sustainability is being placed at the heart of every organisation, with businesses more committed than ever to meeting sustainability goals and science-backed climate targets that positively impact the planet.

At Softcat, we're committed to helping customers understand the environmental impact of their digital strategies and transition to a more sustainable model. Our goal is to achieve a net-zero supply chain by 2040, and we are proud to be one of the first companies globally to have both near and long-term science-based targets approved.

Starting and progressing along a sustainability journey can feel like a challenge too great for some businesses. The reality is that making changes to minimise your organisation's negative impact on the environment doesn't mean cutting back or losing money.

We've proven this is a false mentality. As part of our journey to operate at carbon net-zero by 2040, our carbon emissions have already dropped 37% since 2016. During this time, our recruitment and revenue have soared.

Change on this scale doesn't come from the boardroom alone. All employees must understand their role in helping their organisation meet its sustainability targets. And gains can be made in every area of a business, from energy consumption and supply chain management to the technology they use.



# GOODBYE... FOR NOW

We hope you have enjoyed reading the 2023 Softcat Business Tech Priorities Report as much as we did writing it. Thank you to all our customers for taking the time to share their valuable feedback.

At Softcat, your priorities are our priorities, and we're committed to helping every customer tackle the shortfalls in their IT environment to reduce costs and risks.





# ABOUT SOFTCAT

**Put simply, we help organisations find the right IT infrastructure for their needs, procure it and implement it for them, as well as deliver a range of ongoing support and managed services. These include software licensing, workplace technology, networking, security, cloud, and datacentre.**

**Softcat is an FTSE 250 listed IT infrastructure solutions provider, with people and passion at the heart of its success.**

Softcat partners with hundreds of different software and hardware vendors to bring the latest and broadest range of technology to our customers, as well as numerous specialist service providers to augment the capabilities of its growing in-house teams. Softcat has ten offices and operates in six markets, including the UK and Ireland.

We offer you a single point of purchase for bespoke, innovative IT solutions. This is delivered through a combination of our broad portfolio of IT services and solutions, a deep technical knowledge, and strong partnerships with leading vendors.

Softcat combines Digital Workspace, Cyber Security, Networking and Connectivity, Hybrid Platforms and Data, AI and Automation to deliver the technology, services and world class engagement required for customers to succeed in the hybrid world.

**Whether it's a piece of software, expert advice or full infrastructure transformation, our teams are ready to deliver.**







# PRESS AND MEDIA CONTACT

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