

FEBRUARY 2025

inside zhΞro



A Whole New World

Easy AI Transformation

Open Inclusive Ethical

AI Action Summit 2025

Transforming Cybersecurity with AI

Cyber Insights from Wesley

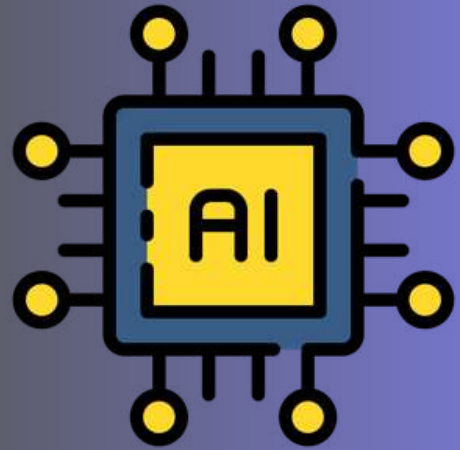


Message from Izak

Greetings everybody and welcome to our hot off-the-press edition of Inside Zhero.

This month we are focusing on the transformative power of AI and how it opens up a whole new world for business operations. Our Head of Development, Wesley, also tells us how AI is transforming cybersecurity.

IZAK OOSTHUIZEN
Chief Executive Officer,
Bestselling Author



In this issue

Our feature Our feature “A Whole New World” details how AI transformation technologies can impact every aspect of your business .

UK business leaders plan to spend 5% of revenue on AI initiatives in 2025.

"AI transformation can elevate your business performance across the board. By adopting AI, you will be able to streamline administrative tasks, enhance customer experiences with hyper-personalisation, and modernise IT processes. This means driving efficiency and innovation at every level."

Izak Oosthuizen

Zhero Founder and CEO,
Bestselling Author



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A WHOLE NEW WORLD

AI transformation is when a business brings artificial intelligence into its operations, products, and services to boost innovation, efficiency, and growth. It's about using AI tools to make things run more smoothly, helping companies stay flexible and keep up with change. Think of it as upgrading from a paper map to a GPS - sure, you could still get where you're going the old way, but why make it harder than it needs to be? With AI advancing so quickly, businesses that embrace it are more likely to stay ahead of the competition. IBM points out that companies integrating AI into their transformation tend to outperform others. But AI transformation isn't just about replacing old processes with fancy new tech - it's a bigger shift that can completely change how a business operates. A well-planned AI strategy can introduce brand-new ways of working, improve productivity, and help businesses grow sustainably. Making AI work isn't just about plugging in some software and calling it a day. Businesses often need to rethink their whole approach, including their strategy and company culture. AI is here to help us work smarter, not harder.

AI transformation



AI transformation is all about using smart tech to make businesses more efficient, innovative, and future-ready. There's no one-size-fits-all approach and different companies use different AI tools depending on their goals. Here are some of the key players in the AI game:

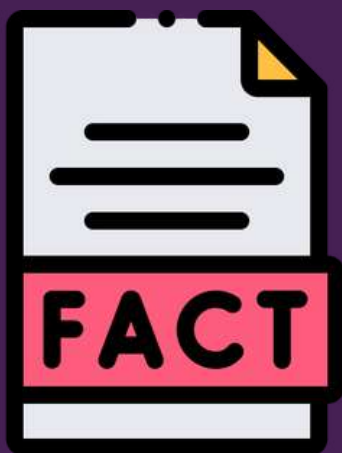
- **Natural Language Processing (NLP)** is what makes computers understand human language, whether it's text or speech. It powers things like smart searches, customer sentiment analysis, automatic translation, and even content summarisation.
- **IoT Integrations** connect everyday devices to the internet, making them smarter. One big use case is geolocation, which helps businesses with location-based pricing, targeted ads, and even optimizing delivery routes. It's how your food delivery app magically knows where you are and gets your order to you - hopefully still hot.
- **Automation** is about getting machines to do the boring, repetitive stuff so humans don't have to. AI-powered automation helps with IT operations (AIOps), business workflows, and other tasks that would otherwise eat up a lot of time - think of it as an ultra-efficient assistant that never gets tired.
- **Generative AI** is the creative one in the bunch - it can generate text, images, videos, music, and even code based on a simple prompt. It's already behind AI-generated art, chatbots, and tools that help developers write software. It's like having a brainstorming buddy who never runs out of ideas.
- **Big Data Analytics** is the backbone of AI. AI needs tons of data to learn and improve, and big data analytics helps make sense of all that information. It uses machine learning and data mining to uncover insights, so businesses can make smarter, data-driven decisions instead of just going with gut feelings.

Planning AI transformation



Organisations that adopt an AI-first mindset rather than simply digitising their business processes can secure a significant competitive advantage in today's fast-changing business landscape. While there isn't a one-size-fits-all blueprint for an AI journey, some common considerations during the early planning stages of an AI transformation include:

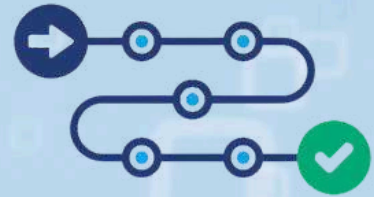
- **Strategy and Value** - What are the use cases and objectives behind the AI transformation? Which workflows will be enhanced, and what internal metrics will determine success?
- **Technology and Data**- Which models, datasets, and deployment strategies best align with the organisation's overall strategy?
- **Experience Design** - How will both internal and external users interact with AI?
- **Operating Models** - How can the organisation scale new technologies across its various operations?
- **Talent and Culture** - How will the organisation foster a culture of AI through training, upskilling, and recruitment?



Into the future

- By 2030, AI could contribute up to \$15.7 trillion to the global economy
- AI will impact 300 million jobs globally
- 63% of organizations planning to adopt AI within the next 3 years
- 77% of devices currently in use are reported to have some form of AI integrated within them

Stages of AI transformation



AI transformation is a dynamic process, and every company's AI use cases and implementations are a bit different. Before an organisation trains and deploys AI, it usually follows a few key planning steps to ensure the strategy works effectively:

- **Information Gathering:** At this stage, the organisation does its homework—researching tools like generative AI, machine learning, computer vision, and other tech. Stakeholders might list out business problems that AI could help solve and sketch out the potential benefits.
- **Assessing Current Resources and Limitations:** Before diving into a full plan, the organisation typically reviews its existing setup by auditing its IT capabilities and data practices to see what's already in place.
- **Defining Objectives:** Here, the organisation pinpoints the specific problems it wants to tackle and decides how it'll measure success during implementation.
- **Building a Roadmap:** Finally, when creating a roadmap, the organisation picks AI projects based on practical needs, deciding what support is required and which partners or vendors with AI expertise should come on board.



Stages of AI deployment

Some stages that facilitate a responsible and effective AI deployment include:

- Collecting and managing data
- Organising data
- Building, training and tuning AI models
- Automating workflows and adding AI to applications
- Infusing AI across an enterprise

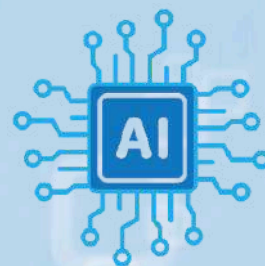
Collecting data

The first stage of AI transformation is about identifying and making the most of the raw data needed to train and fine-tune an AI. This phase also involves figuring out which third-party data sources could be useful. Often, organisations face the challenge of rigid architectures and data silos, which may require a complete overhaul. This process might involve pulling data from different departments, digitising existing records, or setting up a more robust data management system.

Organising data

Data quality and data governance are at the heart of any successful AI transformation. During this phase, an organisation works to ensure that its data pipeline is not only accurate and clean but also easily discoverable and governed by clear rules. This may involve automating certain workflows, optimising data warehouses and infrastructure, and investing in modern data management solutions. At the organisational level, business leaders also decide who is responsible for the data, implement the necessary security measures, and set the guidelines for its use.

Training AI models



Using clean and organised data, a business can build, train, validate, and fine-tune its AI models. If the organisation has enough in-house AI engineering talent, the entire process can be handled internally; however, many choose to collaborate with reputable third-party vendors. During this phase, AI models learn from vast datasets and are then refined with smaller, task-specific ones. Once the initial development and testing period is complete, ongoing validation and testing ensure that the model remains consistent as it continues to learn and improve.

01

Data Preparation

02

Model Selection

03

Model Training

04

Model Evaluation

Automating workflows



Once the AI is ready, it gets integrated into the workflows and applications that were previously identified across the organisation. Usually, AI is used alongside other technologies, and its rollout involves working closely with IT, engineering, and infrastructure teams, as well as other stakeholders. As AI streamlines routine business processes and becomes part of everyday operations, a solid change management strategy may be needed, especially as roles evolve within the organisation.

Final transformation

**BOOST**

With a solid foundation in automation and intelligent applications, organisations can embed AI more deeply into their operations and truly transform how the business functions. As employees spend less time on mundane tasks, company-wide changes might be necessary to encourage more creative and valuable contributions from their human colleagues. In fact, at this stage, even complex workflows can be replaced by a suite of AI-powered tools. The AI transformation might also extend to include AI-assisted analyses of enterprise-level practices, delivering keen insights into consumer behaviour and providing advanced forecasting capabilities. With AI fully woven into the fabric of the business, organisations can even automate the entire AI lifecycle, speeding up experimentation and building purpose-specific models at a rapid pace. It's like giving your business a turbo boost – it's quicker, smarter, and more efficient, all while keeping human ingenuity at its core.



Transformation use cases

An AI transformation can improve performance across every aspect of a business. Adoption allows organizations to automate administrative tasks, facilitate hyper-personalised customer experiences and modernize the IT process by automatically generating code. Some use case examples include:

- IT modernisation
- Customer service workflow
- Supply chain
- HR and talent management
- Sales and marketing
- Core business operations



Overcome the challenges

A strong, responsible AI project with a solid methodology behind it can improve performance and give businesses a significant competitive advantage. But as in all digital transformations, successful adoption and tangible business impact are far from guaranteed. While 90% of businesses start some form of digital transformation, only one-third of the expected revenue benefits are realised. To fully achieve the positive impact of AI, you might need to overcome some common challenges, including:

- Transformation and scaling of AI
- Data governance and security
- Upskilling



OPEN INCLUSIVE ETHICAL

On 10 and 11 February, France hosted the AI Action Summit, gathering at the Grand Palais in Paris, Heads of State and Government, leaders of international organisations, CEOs of small and large companies, representatives of academia, non-governmental organisations, artists and members of civil society. Politicians included U.S. Vice President, JD Vance, French President Emmanuel Macron and Matt Clifford, the UK government's go-to brain on all matters tech. The tech world's elite was also in the French capital, with OpenAI CEO Sam Altman, Microsoft president Brad Smith and Google chief executive Sundar Pichai in attendance. The UK convened the first international AI summit in London in 2023. Its focus was on AI safety and how governments could ensure their citizens' jobs or even lives, weren't threatened by the rapid rise of superintelligent AI.

International AI declaration

A total of 61 countries endorsed a joint declaration on the need for "open, inclusive, and ethical" AI at the summit. The declaration highlighted that questions concerning AI and energy were addressed in a multilateral setting for the "first time." It emphasised the need to raise awareness about AI's impact on the labour market and to promote technologies that positively shape the sector's future. The signatories stressed the importance of strengthening coordination in AI governance and preventing market monopolisation to make AI more accessible. The declaration also underscored the need for progress in ensuring AI's security and reliability, stating that making AI "sustainable" for societies and the planet should be a priority. Notably, the US and the UK opted not to sign the final statement, citing national interests and regulatory concerns.

China joins the fold

With Donald Trump being sworn in as the 47th President of the USA and vowing to make the States the world's AI superpower, things are different. Almost as soon as those words left his mouth, a Chinese company, DeepSeek, proved that it could rival American "big tech" despite strict controls on leading AI hardware. It's no accident that China, which remained on the sidelines of previous summits, has sent VP Zhang Guoqing - seen as President Xi Jinping's right-hand man.



United States versus France

"At this moment, we face the extraordinary prospect of a new industrial revolution, one on par with the invention of the steam engine. But it will never come to pass if overregulation deters innovators from taking the risks necessary to advance the ball."



US Vice President JD Vance told delegates in Paris that excessive regulation of artificial intelligence (AI) could "kill a transformative industry just as it's taking off." He emphasised to world leaders that AI represented "an opportunity that the Trump administration will not squander," and argued that "pro-growth AI policies" should be prioritised over safety concerns. His remarks seemed to contrast with those of French President Emmanuel Macron, who defended the necessity of further regulation. Macron stated at the summit, "We need these rules for AI to move forward."

Why the UK said No

A UK government spokesperson stated that the declaration did not go far enough in addressing global governance of AI and its impact on national security. While acknowledging broad agreement with the statement and reaffirming the UK's commitment to international cooperation, the spokesperson highlighted the country's decision to sign separate agreements on sustainability and cybersecurity at the Paris AI Action Summit. However, they noted that the declaration lacked practical clarity on global governance and did not sufficiently address the more complex challenges AI poses to national security. Andrew Dudfield, head of AI at fact-checking organisation Full Fact, said the government's decision not to sign put AI safety in jeopardy.



"By refusing to sign today's international AI Action Statement the UK Government risks undercutting its hard-won credibility as a world leader for safe, ethical and trustworthy AI innovation."

Balancing acts

"AI can be a gift to humanity. But we must make sure that benefits are widespread and accessible to all. We want AI to be a force for good. We want an AI where everyone collaborates and everyone benefits. That is our path – our European way.."



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stated that the summit was focused on action, which is exactly what is needed at this moment. She emphasised that Europe's approach to AI, which has been highlighted throughout the summit, would prioritise innovation, collaboration, and the adoption of open-source technology. The meeting is taking place amid growing trade tensions between the US and Europe, as President Trump has decided to impose tariffs on steel and aluminium imports into the US, a decision that will affect both the UK and the EU. Despite this, the two close allies decided to stand in unity at the AI summit by not signing the international agreement, the United States citing over-regulation of its AI tech industry and the UK global governance as a reason..



A fortnight ago, the United States would have been considered top dog in AI, being home to AI giants like Microsoft, Google, OpenAI and Nvidia, with a combined AI market capitalisation of \$184 billion in 2024. Then along came China's DeepSeek, and everything changed overnight. Collectively, Wall Street, the White House and Silicon Valley were in a state of shock, and U.S. Tech stocks lost \$1 trillion overnight. DeepSeek's rise to the top of the Apple App Store charts and surpassing downloads of ChatGPT, has cemented its place in the public consciousness, challenging the notion that the U.S. would remain the undisputed global leader in AI. While U.S. dominance has largely been driven by massive capital investment, China's DeepSeek achieved its success at a fraction of the cost of its American competitors. President Donald Trump made an unusual remarks about the Chinese competition.



"I view that as a positive, as an asset... you won't be spending as much, and you'll get the same result, hopefully."

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AI insights

Wesley Harris, our awesome and talented Head of Development, has some amazing advice on how we can use AI as an effective cybersecurity tool. Here are his wise words on how to really put AI to good use!



Cyber threats aren't just something I hear about in the news—they're a growing problem that affects businesses of all sizes. Whether it's ransomware attacks locking up company files, phishing scams tricking employees, or hackers exploiting security gaps, staying ahead of cybercriminals has never been more critical. But here's the good news: Artificial Intelligence (AI) is changing the game.

Catching cyber threats

I like to think of AI as a security guard who never sleeps. Unlike traditional security systems that rely on pre-written rules to block threats (which works until hackers find a way around them), AI learns from patterns in real-time. For example, if someone logs into my system from a location they've never used before, AI can recognise that it's unusual and take action immediately, such as flagging it for review or blocking access. The same applies to detecting viruses, malware, and network intrusions: AI spots suspicious behaviour before it turns into a full-blown attack.

*** What this means for you:** AI-powered security can identify and stop cyber threats faster than human teams alone, reducing downtime and potential damage.

Predicting attacks

Wouldn't it be nice if your security system could predict where the next attack might come from? That's exactly what AI does. By analysing millions of data points, AI can detect patterns that indicate where cybercriminals are likely to strike next. It's like having a weather forecast for cyber threats - helping businesses prepare for storms before they hit. Example: If hackers start targeting a specific industry (say, healthcare or finance), AI can alert your MSP so they can put extra safeguards in place before your business is targeted.



🧐 What this means for you: Your security team isn't just reacting to attacks - they're staying ahead of them, keeping your business one step ahead of cybercriminals.

Reducing false alarms



AI helps filter out the noise by distinguishing between genuine threats and routine activities. By analysing user behaviour, network traffic, and historical patterns, AI can determine whether an activity is unusual enough to warrant an alert. For example, AI can recognise the difference between an employee logging in from a new location due to travel and a potential account takeover attempt, reducing false alarms and improving security efficiency.

🔍 What this means for you: You won't be bogged down with security alerts for things that don't matter and you'll only be notified when there's a genuine risk.

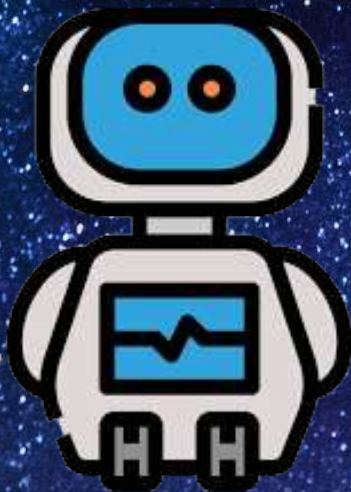
Automatically stop attacks

Cybercriminals don't wait for business hours to attack: Whether it's 3 AM on a weekend or during a busy sales day, an attack can happen at any time. That's where AI-powered automation comes in. Instead of waiting for IT teams to respond, AI can take action instantly to stop an attack in progress. For example, if ransomware starts encrypting files, AI can quarantine the affected systems to stop it from spreading. If a phishing attack is detected, AI can prevent employees from clicking on malicious links.



⚡ What this means for you: Instead of reacting after an attack has already done damage, AI helps stop threats in real-time—often before you even know something is wrong.

Learn and adapt



AI works like a self-improving security system—learning from each new attack and getting smarter over time. For example, when a new type of malware emerges, AI-powered security tools can analyse its behaviour, compare it to past threats, and adjust defences accordingly. This means that even if attackers try to change their tactics, AI can quickly adapt and neutralize potential risks.

✓ What this means for you: Your business benefits from a security system that's always learning and evolving—so you're protected from both today's cyber threats and tomorrow's.

On 22 January, Izak was one of the valued attendees at the CISO roundtable at City, Univeristy of London. Hosted by Cyber London and AI cybersecurity firm, CloudSek, Izak, along with another Cyber London director, Mark Child, had the opportunity to share invaluable insights and enable security experts to engage in high-value dialogue on strengthening defences against cyber threats.



On 29 January, Izak, along with Cyber London co-directors, Mark, Paresh and Prof Raj attended another event at City, University of London, this time focusing on how SMEs can boost their cyber resilience by adopting a robust cybersecurity framework. Hosted by Cyber London and Armis, the event was an enormous success, with everyone engaging with Izak's wise words on building a resilient cybersecurity framework. Izak also had the honour of meeting Madush Gupta, an acclaimed City of London councillor and tech innovator.



Meet the team



Tim October
SERVICE DESK ENGINEER

Hi Tim! What made you realise you want to go into the IT industry?



My father was big into tech and was a teacher, before he passed he focused his attention on computers and I was always assisting him. Since then my passion and career aspirations has always been IT.



What's your most-used productivity tool?



My top three are ChatGPT, Canva, and Autodesk Maya. What's not to love about gen AI.



How would you describe yourself?



I'd describe myself as proactive and adaptable. I'm focused on achieving goals and enjoy learning new things.



What do you enjoy the most about your role?



The opportunity I enjoy solving challenges and contributing to team success.



Do you have any hidden talents or hobbies?



I would say I'm good at what I do and what I do isn't very nice lol. I love the entertainment and sports aspect of pro wrestling, which I do as often as I can.



What is your favourite movie or TV show?



Right now, Supernatural is totally my vibe.... otherwise my favourite movie is a tie between Disney's 1992 Aladdin and Disney's 1997 Hercules s just brilliant!!!



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