



# Tech Trends 2021

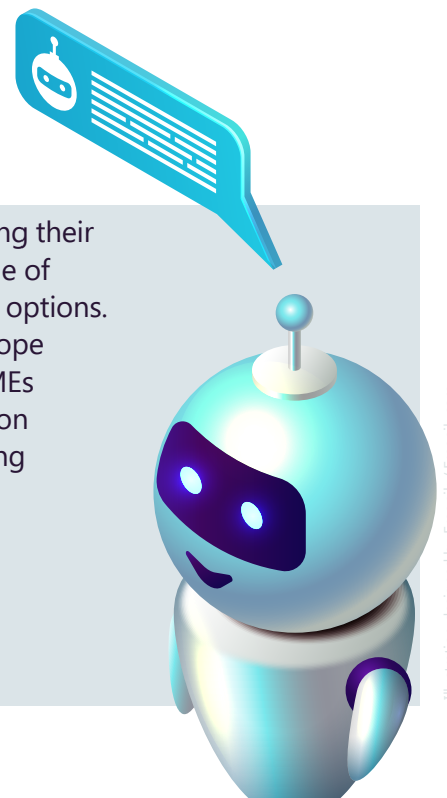
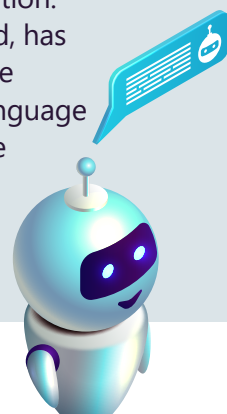
## Tech trends take centre stage in our latest SME webinar

As part of our recent series focusing on the major technology trends driving opportunities and change for SMEs, we hosted a Tech Trends webinar, which brought together technology experts to share their experiences and insight. Joining us online were over 100 attendees from the UK and around the world, underlining the interest and enthusiasm organisations everywhere have in harnessing tech-led innovation.

### Artificial Intelligence

**Covering a range of key topics, we began with a look at Artificial Intelligence.** Andrew Burgess Author of *The Executive Guide to Artificial Intelligence*, discussed how AI has moved from theory and experimentation to mainstream adoption. The 'democratisation' of AI, he argued, has opened up a huge range of innovative business applications from natural language processing and understanding, image and speech recognition to reasoning and problem solving.

Organisations beginning their AI journey have a range of practical development options. While there is huge scope for positive impact, SMEs should balance ambition with pragmatic planning to ensure AI makes a strong impact.



## Analytics

**Analytics is another fast-emerging trend, as businesses look to their use of data to build better insight and improve decision-making, among many other applications.** Trevor Hunt, CTO Advisory at Behind Every Cloud, began by reminding us that for many organisations, their objectives for analytics still don't match practical realities.

While businesses often set out to deliver powerful, versatile, instantaneous analytics that are easily shared and deliver meaningful insight, organisations of all sizes still rely on data contained within Excel spreadsheets. This places major limitations on the ability of teams to maximise the value of the data they collect, and requires a different approach to bring skills, processes and technologies up to date.

Instead, analytics needs to be a strategy designed from the ground up to deliver strong data governance, integrity and security across the organisation. Technology choices are key in order to avoid ending up with solutions based on stitched together platforms that are fragile and difficult to change. Done well, analytics can be truly transformational.



Illustration designed by Mangostar / Freepik.com

## Remote working

**While businesses will be at very different places in their adoption of AI and analytics, the issue of remote working is relevant across the board.**



Illustration designed by Vectorpouch / Freepik.com

As Jack Lewis from Microsoft explained, the hybrid office is set to become a permanent feature for businesses across the globe. Last year, as organisations quickly adapted to lockdown, the emphasis was largely on getting technology services up and running so people could continue to work despite the difficult circumstances.

“ the hybrid office is set to become a permanent feature for businesses across the globe ”

But today, the focus is more heavily falling on optimising the user experience and preparing for a situation where people will work at home and in the office. The performance of collaboration and communication tools will remain key, and as businesses start to bring teams back to the office – or at least prepare for their arrival – they must ensure that the speed, reliability and security of their systems is maximised.

## Internet of Things

**We concluded the discussion with our CEO, Chris Pont, who looked at the growing impact the Internet of Things 'IoT' will have as businesses continue to leverage the power of internet connectivity to build smart devices of just about every conceivable nature.**

For instance, SMEs are now looking to connect a huge range of sensors, switches and displays that are vital across their infrastructure and customers. In doing so, he explained that they stand to see enormous operational, service, maintenance and competitive benefits.

IoT is helping to develop better products, monitor the health of remote equipment to improve proactive maintenance and ensure there is less downtime across production facilities – the list of applications continues to grow. As a result, businesses are able to more effectively use their human resources, create safer environments, better understand customer behaviour and protect valuable assets.

Illustration designed by Vectropouch / Freepik.com



It's certain that each of these trends will play an important role for SMEs who see technology as a strategic investment over the long term. By remaining in touch with the direction of travel across these and other issues, and by building partnerships with technology providers who understand the opportunities available to SMEs, business leaders can be confident they are investing in areas that will deliver the greatest return.

**You can watch a full replay of the webinar here**

### For more information

**Email** [marketing@ijyi.com](mailto:marketing@ijyi.com), or

**Call** +44 (0)1473 558 748

Microsoft  
Partner



Gold Application Integration  
Gold DevOps  
Gold Data Platform  
Gold Application Development  
Silver Data Analytics