

Dr Stephen D. JONES

Interim Chief Information Officer | Data & AI Transformation for Investment Organisations

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Interim technology executive and Chief Data & AI Officer with a PhD in AI, specialising in standing up data and AI capability at pace in regulated, high-stakes organisations. Recruited and led a 40-person data organisation and delivered a city-wide Data Mesh platform in six months at NEOM; industrialised AI and MLOps and sponsored Databricks adoption at Kantar Media; embedded GenAI and agentic AI across product and delivery at Opus 2. Over 20 years leading technology in regulated environments (HSBC, AXA, UK Passport Service), directing a £100M portfolio and up to 400 specialists. Retained by Bain Capital, Astorg, Five Arrows, HSBC and FedEx on M&A, carve-outs and cost transformation, delivering £30M+ EBITDA improvements and cloud cost reductions of up to 30%. Used to mobilising as an interim leader and building a capable team and roadmap.

FS • Private Equity • Sovereign Programmes • Regulated & CNI • Media • Logistics • Telco • LegalTech • SaaS

EXECUTIVE CAPABILITIES

- **Data & AI Strategy:** Data operating model and governance, data platform and Data Mesh strategy, GenAI, Agentic AI, GraphRAG, MLOps and data product monetisation; embedding AI into products and the delivery lifecycle.
- **Regulated Governance & Risk:** Technology governance, GRC frameworks and compliance leadership in FCA/PRA-regulated financial services and sensitive CNI environments; delivery within ISO 27001-certified environments (Kantar Media, Opus 2); review of EU AI Act implications (Opus 2); security-cleared (UK DV/SC) programmes; NIST-aligned risk management.
- **Technology Operating Model & Cost Control:** Estate rationalisation (800+ and 2,000+ application estates), FinOps and unit cost optimisation (including ESG-linked cloud and carbon reduction), cloud migration (AWS/Azure), ERP and enterprise architecture, and outsourcing and vendor renegotiation.
- **Interim Leadership & Transformation Delivery:** Retained executive mandates and rapid mobilisation, operating model redesign, post-acquisition integration, carve-outs, TSA/CSA planning and technical due diligence across PE-backed assets.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

MEERTEC LTD | Founder & Managing Principal (August 2013 – Present)

Interim and retained executive mandates in enterprise transformation, data and AI, including sovereign data platforms and specialist technology solutions.

Opus 2 (Astorg & Five Arrows) | May 2024 to May 2026

CTO Advisor | International LegalTech Platform (\$70M+ Revenue)

Retained to reverse declining delivery metrics across a \$70M+ LegalTech asset; restructured engineering capability to cut time-to-market by 97% and operating costs by 30%.

- **Re-organised engineering for product alignment**, restoring delivery credibility and repositioning the technology strategy for renewed growth.
- **Institutionalised FinOps disciplines and cloud architecture optimisation** across AWS to capture 30% annualised opex savings.
- **Accelerated time-to-market** by compressing release cycles from 90 days to 2, combining automated QA with standardised client environments, fixed deployment windows and a drive to multi-tenancy.

- **Embedded AI in the product and the SDLC:** entity extraction, document summarisation and full traceability in the product, and Copilot, Claude, agentic AI and a fully automated QA capability across delivery. Assessed the implications of the EU AI Act for the product's AI features.

GlobalSouthIT | December 2023 to Present

Co-Founder | International Technology Innovation Partnership

Co-founded an international technology partnership spanning the UK, US, and Morocco to combine executive advisory services with global engineering capability for innovative digital platforms.

- **Established a cross-border engineering team** to support ERP transformation; customised lightweight integrated architecture for dynamic real-time ledger updates; physical events to financial records.
- **Led technical architecture and design assurance** for a vertically integrated retrofit platform combining AI, IoT, edge intelligence, and smart building management, at offer stage with a housing co-operative.

Providence | Marlink Group | June 2023 to October 2023

Digital Capability & Efficiency Roadmap | \$550M Satellite Communications Group

Appointed to define a digital capability strategy; 5 BUs and 30 countries following international expansion.

- **Developed the enterprise digital, technology, and data strategy** across all geographies.
- **Standardised application ecosystems and governance** in global operations (ERP/CRM/HR) to establish foundations for scalable growth.
- **Set the ERP roadmap, including the upgrade from Dynamics to D365**, business capability and data modelling, mapping the D365 footprint, to identify the data sources and capabilities impacted.
- **Simplified group reporting** by aligning and reducing the number of SAP installations.

PIF / NEOM | April 2022 to January 2023

Head of Data Strategy & Architecture (NEOS) | \$50M Sovereign Data Platform

Selected to establish the data organisation, operating model, and governance framework for NEOM's Cognitive City initiative, creating a greenfield capability for national-scale digital services.

- **Built the Data Platform Strategy & Architecture function** from inception, recruiting and leading a multidisciplinary team of 40 specialists.
- **Delivered a city-wide Data Mesh platform** within six months, partnering with leadership across 14 distinct sectors to establish decentralised data ownership.
- **Planned SAP data products** over the Data Mesh platform.
- **Identified \$30M in first-year commercial opportunities** through the definition of strategic data products and AI-enabled capabilities.

Bain Capital | Kantar Media | May 2019 to April 2022

CTO, Post-Acquisition Transformation | 3-Year Retained Engagement

Engaged ahead of Bain Capital's acquisition of Kantar Group (valued at c.£3Bn) to support technical due diligence, then retained through post-acquisition separation to simplify a complex technology estate and build the operating model required to accelerate value creation.

- **De-risked the core infrastructure** by leading technical due diligence, TSA/CSA planning, and the creation of a three-year transformation roadmap, setting the asset up for its subsequent \$1B sale to H.I.G. Capital.
- **Built a multi-dimensional carve-out cost model** spanning people, process, technology, location and IP, integrated with Workday for FTE data, which drove the carve-out decisions.
- **Delivered £30M+ EBITDA improvement** by rationalising a legacy estate of more than 800 applications and reducing cloud operating expenditure by 20% via targeted FinOps integration.

- **Provided architecture assurance for the back-end transformation**, upgrading and stabilising Maconomy into a healthy state ahead of the eventual migration to D365.
- **Authored the technology and engineering components** of the strategy for the anchoring BARB contract renewal through 2029, supporting the £7.5B UK TV industry's core data currency.
- **Industrialised AI and MLOps** across Kantar Media and the Audience Measurement business.
- **Sponsored and technically led** the adoption of Databricks within Kantar Media and the wider group.

HSBC | July 2016 to December 2016

Architecture Governance & DevOps Transformation

Engaged to modernise IT governance for a global community of 450 architects across the UK, US, India, and China while maintaining strict regulatory compliance.

- **Redesigned the enterprise operating model** to reduce architecture governance overhead, began automating manual processes, and planned the consolidation of around 50 IT governance boards.
- **Embedded modern delivery practices** as product owner for Agile@HSBC, securing FCA agreement on the DevOps approach and its associated quality processes.

FedEx / TNT | May 2014 to June 2016

Acquisition Technology Strategy & Integration | 60+ Countries

Engaged by TNT to simplify enterprise technology and improve operational performance; continued through FedEx's acquisition of TNT to establish a unified post-merger technology strategy.

- **Identified £30M+ EBITDA improvement** across the acquisition by designing the target operating model and a plan to simplify an estate exceeding 2,000 applications, in partnership with BCG and Accenture, with early results delivered through API rationalisation and SuccessFactors.
- **Compressed month-end financial reporting timeframes from weeks to days** through SAP reporting and BI/ML optimisation and reduced the API landscape by 75%.
- **Evaluated Workday against SuccessFactors** for HR information systems, then selected and rolled out SuccessFactors, including the LMS, across TNT.

Specialist Advisory & Proprietary Solutions (Concurrent via Meertec)

Targeted enterprise architecture, AI, and cloud technology engagements applied to complex public and private sector challenges.

- **Led Target Operating Model (TOM) and High-Level Design (HLD)** for large-scale border and customs transformation programmes.
- **Provided strategic ERP architecture for UoL**, including the upgrade to SAP S/4HANA, rationalisation of HR/SIS, and reduction of custom ABAP code in favour of a more out-of-the-box installation.
- **Provided architecture assurance for Dynamics 365 and Salesforce** at Audley Travel ahead of a business transformation programme.
- **Developed Secure Factory concepts** applying Industry 4.0, Zero Trust, and Operational Technology (OT) security principles to complex manufacturing environments.
- **Scaled AI/ML capabilities for technology ventures** including GenAI and Retrieval Augmented Generation (RAG) solutions.
- **Developed ESG-focused cloud optimisation capabilities** combining FinOps with sustainability and carbon reduction objectives.

Hewlett-Packard | August 2011 to April 2013

Solution & Strategy Director, Asia Pacific & Japan

Provided technical and strategic leadership in pre-deal client engagements across China, South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, and Taiwan. Led the technical architecture and strategic design assurance that

secured a private \$250M global cloud services framework with Samsung, unlocking an additional \$50M+ in regional services business.

CSC (now DXC Technology) | September 2007 to September 2010

CTO | Solution Director | Government & Business Services Portfolio

Directed a £100M annual portfolio and led 400 specialists on work requiring UK DV-level security clearance. Served as CTO for the £2.5Bn National Identity Consortium and directed the delivery of the £400M UK Passport Service transformation, introducing AI-enabled fraud detection into critical national infrastructure.

Anakata Ltd | August 2004 to August 2011

Founder | Consulting Vehicle for Enterprise Architecture Services

Enterprise Architecture Consulting vehicle utilised to deliver multi-million-pound transformation engagements across Siemens/BBC and Steria/Criminal Justice IT.

Steria | Criminal Justice IT | June 2006 to July 2007

Chief Architect

Stabilised a high-profile £90M criminal justice transformation programme, SC cleared. Defined the enterprise architecture for a national platform integrating 50+ cross-government organisations for 400,000 users.

Siemens | BBC IT Carve-Out | August 2004 to June 2006

Programme Architect (Enterprise Transformation)

Led Enterprise Architecture for the BBC's £1.5Bn, 10-year technology outsourcing contract with Siemens. Designed the separation and IM strategy across 38,000 users; delivered £16M+ through rationalisation and £2M/yr through contract renegotiation. PAC (HC 118) reported £22M of first-year savings for the contract.

CAREER FOUNDATIONS (PRE-2004)

- **AXA** | Enterprise Architect (Consolidated a ledger per business into a single SAP General Ledger for the group after the Sun Life, Provincial, Equity & Law and Guardian Royal Exchange (PPP) acquisitions, aligning legacy interfaces, processes, and data in a regulated financial environment).
- **Alterian** | Head of Solution Architecture (Architected and engineered a high-performance, multi-threaded analytics suite (ATL/C++) over a proprietary columnar database to optimise product cross-placement in 5 dimensions for retail and FMCG clients).
- **C-Bridge Internet Solutions** | Head of Architecture & Engineering (Took a greenfield wealth management platform for Oslo startup formue.no from concept to launch in 12 months, directing architecture and engineering, including stock exchange connectivity and financial planning).
- **Science Systems Space Division | Intelligent Automation Division** | Head of Mission Planning & Scheduling; Senior AI Consultant (Early AI career: AI planning and scheduling for space flight operations for ESA, EUMETSAT and Skynet; advised Yorkshire Water, British Nuclear Fuels, Mobil and Total on deploying AI into real-time control loops and OT).

EDUCATION & CREDENTIALS

- **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Artificial Intelligence & Robotics** | Grenoble INP-UGA, France
- **Master of Science (MSc) with Distinction, Artificial Intelligence** | University of Essex, UK
- **Languages:** English (Native), French (Professional), Mandarin (Basic)
- **Frameworks:** TOGAF, ITIL, Lean Six Sigma, NIST, ISO 27001, EU AI Act, OWASP, FinOps, GRC