Turning AI Hype into Action: Strategy, Governance, and Execution.

AI is moving faster than most organizations can keep up and many feel pressure to "do something with AI" without a clear plan. But adopting AI without proper governance can lead to costly missteps, compliance gaps, and reputational risk. This keynote helps you build a structured, business-aligned strategy that makes AI a sustainable part of your organization.

Successful AI initiatives start with strategy, not just technology. This keynote will guide you in defining an AI vision that aligns with your organization's mission, culture, and risk tolerance. You'll learn how to assess your readiness across key areas: people, processes, data, and technology. Using real-world examples, the session explores governance models that embed accountability where it matters most and provides a practical approach to prioritizing AI use cases based on impact, risk, and feasibility. The session concludes with actionable strategies to operationalize responsible AI through structured controls, monitoring, and audit mechanisms that turn principles into practice. Why attend? If your organization is exploring AI, but lacks a clear plan to manage it responsibly, this session is for you. You'll walk away with a practical roadmap, an easy-to-use readiness checklist, and clear steps to govern AI with structure, accountability, and confidence.

Mary Carmichael

Leading IT Risk, Cybersecurity, Audit Programs and AI Governance and Risk Strategist

Mary Carmichael is a cybersecurity, risk, and governance leader with over 15 years of experience in both the public and private sectors. A CPA by training, she brings a unique blend of financial, audit, and cybersecurity expertise to help organizations manage risk, meet regulatory demands, and adopt emerging technologies responsibly. Currently, Mary is a Catalyst Fellow at Toronto Metropolitan University, where her research focuses on the growing area of AI governance, specifically third-party AI risk management and procurement. Her work explores how organizations can ensure transparency, accountability, and trust in AI adoption, particularly in public sector environments.

She serves as the Immediate Past President of the ISACA Vancouver Chapter and continues to sit on the board, leading global partnerships and strategic initiatives. During her presidency, the chapter received ISACA Global's Outstanding Chapter Achievement Award for excellence in member engagement, community outreach, and innovation in digital trust programming. Also, Mary is a contributor to ISACA Global and has served as lead developer for several of its white papers on IT risk, audit, and governance. She actively writes and speaks on topics related to cybersecurity, AI risk, and responsible innovation and has presented at RSAC, ISACA North America, and IIA GRC conferences. In 2025, Mary was named one of Security Magazine's Women in Security, recognizing her leadership and contributions to the field. She is a committed mentor, advocate for inclusion, and a driving force behind building future-ready cybersecurity and GRC programs.