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House of Advania

House of Advania London

5 June 2026

Executive briefing



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Thank you to our customers, partners and employees for making the first House of Advania UK event a huge success. We welcomed 650 attendees from nearly 200 organisations, walking the exhibitor hall and attending six breakout sessions led by Advania experts.

Hege Støre
Advania Group CEO

This executive write-up summarises the high-level insights, case studies, and strategic debates from across the event's breakout sessions. Moving decisively past jargon, the sessions focused on the practical realities of navigating cost, complexity, and risk in a mature digital marketplace.

Deconstructing AI hype

Advania Group CEO Hege Støre opened the afternoon sessions by framing the core theme of the event: the rapid transformation of the IT landscape under the pressure of mass artificial intelligence adoption.
She highlighted ten urgent considerations for modern enterprise operations:

AI adoption and execution

1. **Agentic AI is not the future, it's happening now**
   We've moved from AI answering questions to AI acting on our behalf. Autonomous agents can take on complex work, but they're not perfect. They need governance, just like humans.

2. **Data is your biggest competitive advantage - not the model**
   AI models are becoming a commodity. Your data, insights, and expertise will set you apart - customer relationships, business processes, operational knowledge and decades of experience.

3. **Move from pilot to production**
   With the right infrastructure, expertise and operating model in place from day one, organisations can move from experimentation to implementation and realise AI's full potential.

Governance and sovereignty

4. **Responsibility follows autonomy**
   When AI agents make decisions and take actions on our behalf, accountability remains firmly with humans. This makes AI governance a leadership challenge, not a technology challenge.

5. **Cloud AI isn't always the answer**
   Demand for sovereign AI is growing. We're building a trusted, UK-based AI platform where data, processing, and operations stay entirely within the country.

Cybersecurity and supply chain resilience

6. **The cyber threat is no longer growing gradually**
   Mythos from Anthropic showed the speed at which AI can uncover vulnerabilities. The challenge is facing attackers leveraging the same capabilities to exploit at scale.

7. **Technology supply chains are now strategic risks**
   We've all seen the impact the component shortages are having on prices and predictability. Clients need partners who can navigate the storm and avoid disruption to their business.

Maximising tech investments

8. **Tokens are the new cost line**
   Think of tokens as electricity for AI - even if the cost falls, its use is increasing even faster. Those who understand their token costs now will have a real competitive advantage going forward.

9. **Infrastructure decisions you make today will define your AI capability for years**
   From Copilot-ready PCs to smarter ways of working, AI delivers its greatest impact when it is seamlessly integrated into everyday workflows.

10. **If you're Microsoft-centric, getting the most from your investment is vital**
    Most organisations have unrealised value in their Microsoft investments. Copilot, Azure AI, and the wider Microsoft estate represent a major opportunity, if unlocked with intent and a clear roadmap.



Chris O'Brien
CTO, Advania

Highlights from the six breakout sessions

Session 1: The looming vulnerability storm

During the first breakout session of the afternoon, Advania experts Pravesh Kara, Tristan Watkins, and Andrew Bogard discussed how criminal syndicates have automated cyberattacks using AI.

The panel discussed how attackers are combining generic AI platforms such as Claude Code agents and OpenAI's GPT models to detect and exploit system flaws at an unprecedented scale.

They detailed a sophisticated breach from early 2026 where cybercriminals bypassed model guardrails by sequentially "nudging" a public AI to build a custom data exfiltration API. The magnitude of these growing risks has been validated by the US government's surprise export controls of Anthropic's Mythos, Fable and now GPT-5.6.

"Some of the most widely tested code in the world has vulnerabilities that have been there for sixteen years and have only now been discovered by Mythos."

- Tristan Watkins, Director of Services Innovation, Advania

Key takeaway: Mid-market organisations must focus on securing human and process gaps. This includes securing unmanaged MFA exceptions, closing legacy authentication gaps, enforcing Active Directory baselines, and baselining networks to mitigate "Shadow IT" where employees input sensitive data into unapproved tools.

Session 2: Reshaping the threat landscape

Advania's Julie Nicholson spoke to fellow cybersecurity leaders from Cisco, Sophos and Arctic Wolf about moving away from static compliance checklists toward a dynamic, continuous validation model.

The discussion detailed how modern enterprise risk management must evolve to face highly targeted threats, including deepfake financial fraud, AI-assisted recruitment infiltration, and highly localised ransomware extortion.

The speakers explored how traditional point-in-time security audits and "tick-box" spreadsheets fail to prove whether defensive controls are actually working in real time. To combat this, they outlined how companies must continuously validate their technology environments to remain insurable and maintain operational visibility.

"If you could redesign cybersecurity from scratch, what would you change first?"

- Julie Nicholson, Director of Cyber Security, Advania

Key takeaway:
Modern risk demands:

1. **Continuous validation** - It is no longer enough to ask "Is MFA deployed?"; organisations must prove it is effective everywhere.
2. **Insurability** - Cyber insurance requirements are escalating, meaning 24/7 Managed Detection and Response (MDR) will soon be a mandatory requirement for insurability.
3. **Measurable security posture** - The panel proposed a "Three-Lens Model" for security: expanding visibility (endpoints, cloud assets), reducing exposure (misconfigurations), and tracking active threats.

Session 3: From pilot to production: high-value AI automation

Advania's Chris O'Brien and Jake Harvey talked about moving artificial intelligence out of isolated pilot sandboxes into production-level, complex workflow automation.

The session focused on moving away from the common corporate narrative of using AI simply to reduce headcount, focusing instead on long-term business ROI.

Chris and Jake detailed an Advania case study of a global legal firm with 1,200 lawyers across 25 countries that integrated an automated AI engine directly into its secure internal Microsoft 365 data layers.

The discussion showed how the system removed a lot of the heavy cognitive burden of manual RFP reconnaissance and bid research by aggregating historical case studies. This allowed human experts to focus on final strategic validation.

"We're not trying to produce anything sub-standard or replace people with AI. We're trying to accelerate them. Leaders need to stand shoulder to shoulder with employees, rather than demanding they 'use more AI'."

- Chris O'Brien, CTO, Advania

Key takeaway: Productivity tools like Microsoft 365 Copilot offer instant daily time savings, but true competitive edge lies in deeply integrated process automation. Advania's legal customer case study resulted in more proposals submitted and more new business won - without cutting headcount.

Session 4: AI and the modern workspace

Advania's Dayne Wood was joined by tech leaders from HP, Dell, Lenovo and Lifeplus evaluating how artificial intelligence is transforming today's workspace into a personalised, user-adaptive environment.

The panel discussed how AI is fundamentally reshaping employee interactions with physical hardware and enterprise software, turning static tools into proactive workspaces that adapt to user habits.

Moving beyond industry hyperbole, the panel focused on the practical trade-offs of performance, cost, and complexity to enable mainstream AI adoption. They detailed how intelligence is moving closer to the user through Copilot-ready PCs, explaining that the ultimate goal of workplace AI is to eliminate repetitive administrative tasks so employees can focus on human-centric value.

"Companies used to ask 'How will AI impact our work lives?' Now they're starting to ask 'What work will we be doing tomorrow because AI has transformed today's jobs?'"

- Dayne Wood, UK Sales Director, Advania

Key takeaway: The future of work is undoubtedly hybrid. Your strategy shouldn't force a choice between on-device AI and cloud AI. Instead, organisations must find the right equilibrium between performance, cost, complexity, and user experience. AI delivers ROI when organisations transition from small-scale AI experimentation to full operational adoption.

Session 5: Value-led Microsoft modernisation

Advania's Microsoft experts Jon Jarvis, Mark Brooks and Darren Sharpe spoke to cloud intelligence platform Surveil about how to reframe Microsoft licensing from a cost of business to something that truly drives value.

The panel discussed how a critical lack of internal visibility across IT estates serves as the root cause of unnecessary corporate expenditure. The speakers explained that organisations often attempt to cut budgets by blindly downgrading software tiers, completely unaware of the severe compliance and security gaps they are opening up.

The conversation outlined how businesses can use telemetry to discover underutilised features already included in their existing packages, while leveraging cloud endpoints to extend physical asset lifecycles.

"A lack of internal visibility triggers wasteful IT spend; blindly downgrading software tiers to save cash inadvertently introduces severe security and technology gaps."

- Jon Jarvis, Microsoft Field Technologist, Advania

Key takeaway: Blindly downgrading license packages to cut short-term costs increases business risk by introducing technology and security gaps. Just because a service or feature within an existing package isn't heavily used today doesn't mean it should be cut. One way enterprises can lower hardware capital costs and meet ESG mandates is by pairing refurbished physical devices with Microsoft 365 cloud endpoints to run high-performance Cloud PCs.

Session 6: Power, cooling, and the data centre renaissance

Advania's Director of Sales Expertise Peter Wilson spoke to tech experts from HPE, Lenovo, Dell and Cisco about modern data centres facing huge data and power demands of widespread AI adoption, which current UK infrastructure cannot support.

The panel discussed how heavy AI workloads are breaking traditional enterprise hosting models. Huge AI clusters trigger severe network traffic and latency bottlenecks that legacy data centres lack the infrastructure to handle.

The debate focused on the extreme heat and power loads generated by model training, explaining why direct-to-chip liquid cooling has rapidly shifted from a niche engineering solution into a mainstream business necessity.

"AI workloads have shattered traditional data center baselines, shifting the engineering challenge entirely from rack space to power availability."

- Peter Wilson, Director of Sales Expertise, Advania

Key takeaway: Production AI clusters have driven rack power demands from a historical 4–8kW up to an unprecedented 25kW+. This is forcing an industry-wide transition to liquid direct-to-chip cooling and ultra-low latency memory fabrics to sustain intensive GPU-to-GPU traffic.

This infrastructure crisis is re-establishing geography as a primary business constraint, sparking a massive development boom in colder Nordic regions like Iceland and Sweden who can leverage natural ambient cooling and abundant renewable energy.



Dayne Wood
UK Sales Director, Advania

Looking ahead: the continuous journey

The overarching message from House of Advania London 2026 was clear: the mid-market is undergoing an irreversible, structural reset, thanks in part to AI adoption.

Competitive advantage no longer belongs to organisations that treat cybersecurity, workspace modernisation, or infrastructure migrations as static IT projects with a definitive end date. Modern technology management must be treated as a continuous loop of expanding visibility, reducing exposure, and validating controls against an exponentially shifting landscape.

How Advania can help your organisation today

Racing to use AI because your competitors are using it can create risks to your IP and run up huge cloud AI bills while delivering very little business value.

At Advania, we work closely with your team to understand how to:

- **Maximise tech stack visibility to balance cost and risk**
  Advania uses deep data telemetry to audit your software estate, eliminating wasteful spending while ensuring short-term cost-cutting doesn't introduce security risks
- **Prioritise and defend your most valuable assets**
  Advania helps you identify, map, and ring-fence your organisation's most vital data assets and core configurations
- **Optimise performance and sustainability**
  Advania helps you manage soaring energy usage and costs triggered by AI adoption by combining sustainable data strategies with refurbished hardware to keep your budget balanced



Ready to transition from AI experimentation to full operational adoption?

Contact your Advania account team today to schedule a comprehensive Tech Stack Visibility Audit or a Cyber Resilience Assessment

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