



Welcome to the Summer SDE Newsletter

As the industry continues to deliver outstanding innovation, collaboration, and project success, we're excited to announce that entries for the SDE 2026 Awards are now open.

This is your opportunity to showcase your achievements and gain recognition among the sector's leading organisations and professionals. The submission deadline is 16 October 2026, so start preparing your entry today.

JOIN THE CIBSE SDE COMMUNITY

There's an SDE membership grade for everyone — whether you're starting out, an experienced professional, or simply interested in digital engineering. **Explore the options** to find the level that's right for you and become part of a growing community.

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SDE AWARDS 2026



CATEGORIES:

- Digital Change Maker
- Up and Coming Digital Champion
- Best Consultancy
- Best Contractor
- Best Software Developer
- Sustainable Impact
- Best Project and Collaboration
- Best Use of Technology in Built Environment
- Best Use of AI

ENTER NOW

Building on the success of the 2025 awards, this year's awards reflect the evolving priorities of the industry, with the introduction of two new categories: **Sustainable Impact** and **Best Use of AI**. These categories highlight the growing importance of digital solutions in advancing sustainability goals, improving performance, and unlocking new opportunities through artificial intelligence.

Open to organisations of all sizes and individuals making a significant contribution to digital engineering, the awards celebrate excellence, innovation and measurable impact across the sector. Entries will be assessed by an expert judging panel drawn from across the industry.

Winners will be announced at the SDE Awards Ceremony in London on 19th November 2026, bringing together industry leaders and innovators to celebrate outstanding achievements and the future of digital engineering.

The submission deadline is 16th October 2026. Don't miss the opportunity to showcase your work and gain industry recognition. **Visit the SDE Awards 2026** page to find out more and submit your entry.

CELEBRATING THE 2025 WINNERS

The 2025 SDE Digital Awards marked a milestone year, with the Society of Digital Engineering hosting its first standalone awards ceremony at NLA, London. Bringing together digital innovators, industry leaders and international guests, the event showcased how technology is transforming the built environment.

From AI-powered building operations and net zero planning tools to digital manufacturing, software development and organisational transformation, last year's winners demonstrated the creativity, impact and ambition driving digital engineering forward.

Buro Happold was named Best Consultancy, **Symetri Europe** won Best Software Developer, **Savills** took Best Project and Collaboration for its Carbon Pioneer platform, **Crown House Technologies** secured Best Contractor, and **Legrand UK & Ireland** was recognised as Best Product Manufacturer.



EMSD, HKSAR Government received Best Use of Technology in the Built Environment and went on to claim the prestigious Digital Champion title as the highest-scoring entry overall.

The awards also celebrated individual achievement, with **Athiya Junaid** named Up and Coming Digital Champion, while **Janine Conway** was recognised by public vote as Digital Change Maker for her outstanding leadership in driving digital transformation across the industry.



As we look ahead to the 2026 SDE Digital Awards, we encourage organisations, teams and individuals of all sizes to share their achievements. Whether you've developed innovative digital tools, transformed project delivery, championed collaboration or inspired change within your organisation, the awards are your opportunity to gain recognition and showcase your impact across the industry.

**Entries for the 2026 SDE Digital Awards are now open.
Could your work be among this year's winners? [Enter now.](#)**



Some words from Chair, **Andrew Jolly**



I am proud to be sharing the second edition of the Society of Digital Engineering newsletter, where we aim to bring you insights, updates, and perspectives from the ever-evolving world of digital engineering.

As our profession continues to develop at an incredible pace, we hope this newsletter keeps you informed, connected, and inspired by the people and innovations shaping our industry.

Earlier this month, we officially launched the 2026 SDE Digital Awards. Following the incredible response we received last year, we are excited to see the awards continue to grow and showcase the outstanding work taking place across our profession. This year, we are particularly looking forward to receiving entries not only from across the UK but from the growing number of digital engineering professionals around the world.

I encourage everyone to share the awards with your teams and take a look at the categories available. Whether you've delivered an innovative project, developed a new digital process, or championed collaboration and best practice, the awards are a fantastic opportunity to celebrate your achievements and recognise the talented individuals and teams driving our industry forward.

Another highlight has been the continued growth of our membership. It is fantastic to see new members being recognised across all our professional grades, including Associate (ASDE), Member (MSDE), and Fellow (FSDE). This reflects the hard work that has gone into developing clear membership pathways, guidance, and mentoring to support digital professionals throughout their careers.

In future editions of the newsletter, we look forward to introducing some of our newest members and sharing their stories, career journeys, and contributions to the industry. If you have been considering applying for membership, I would encourage you to explore the different grades available and become part of our growing community.

Thank you for your continued support of the Society, and I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter.



EVENT RECAP: AI IN PRACTICE

SPONSORED BY  Endra

The latest SDE Technical Event, AI in Practice, brought together industry professionals to explore how artificial intelligence is actively reshaping the AEC sector. Hosted at CIBSE in London and supported by our sponsor Endra, the evening focused not just on technology, but on how organisations, people and processes must evolve to unlock its true value.

The event welcomed a strong mix of new and familiar faces. Those in the room were treated to an engaging and thought-provoking session, with consistently excellent content that resonated across both technical and non-technical audiences alike.

A Shift from Technology to Transformation

A central theme throughout the event was that AI is not replacing jobs, but it is rapidly changing the toolkit organisations rely on. As Manny Purewal highlighted, the real challenge lies in how businesses adapt.

Technology investment is increasing significantly, with discussions pointing to an approximate 84% rise in spend, much of it driven by AI. However, simply investing in tools is not enough.

Organisations need strong partnerships, both internally and externally, as well as structured innovation initiatives such as hackathons to accelerate learning and experimentation.

Equally important is governance. Rather than restrictive controls, speakers advocated for a light-touch, centrally coordinated approach, supported by clear standards and guidelines. Crucially, human oversight remains essential, particularly for critical decision-making.

One of the most powerful insights of the evening was that adding AI onto effective existing workflows often fails to deliver meaningful improvement in outcomes.

Rather than simply applying AI to existing processes, organisations should evaluate whether those processes can be fundamentally redesigned around AI capabilities to achieve better outcomes, transforming AI from a productivity tool into a core component of how work is structured and delivered.

Measuring Value: Beyond Time Savings

The discussion around measuring AI impact moved beyond simple efficiency metrics. While time savings are often the most visible benefit, they do not necessarily equate to value. A more mature perspective introduced during the session was that “the mature metric is the token.” This reflects the balance between:

- Token cost
- Intelligence delivered
- Business value created

This approach emphasises that AI’s real value lies not just in doing things faster, but in improving decision-making, insight and overall outcomes. ability, highlighting the importance of using AI responsibly and efficiently.





EVENT RECAP: AI IN PRACTICE

SPONSORED BY  Endra

AI in Practice: Real-World Applications

Speakers shared a number of practical examples demonstrating how AI is already being embedded into workflows.

At Heatherwick Studio, Alfonso Monedero described how their approach is rooted in organisational values and collaboration. Their initiatives include developing a “Heatherwick Brain” to capture and share knowledge, as well as integrating AI tools into design platforms like Rhino. Importantly, AI is also being used proactively to assess data, identify issues early and support better decision-making before problems escalate.

From Endra’s perspective, Robert Metcalfe highlighted the importance of multidisciplinary teams in driving innovation. Their approach focuses on deterministic AI models, prioritising predictable outputs, reduced risk and increased confidence. This is reinforced through validation layers and having a human in the loop.

Across the industry, AI is already accelerating option generation, shortening iteration cycles and enhancing early-stage exploration, compressing elements of the design process and beginning to reshape traditional outsourcing models.

Using AI More Thoughtfully

A memorable point from the panel discussion came from Alfonso, who described current AI usage in relation to other less resource intensive methods with the analogy: “At the moment everyone is using a spaceship to buy bread”

Advanced tools are powerful, but not always necessary. Effective adoption requires choosing the right tool for the task, particularly given the computational and energy costs involved. This theme linked closely to wider discussions around sustainability, highlighting the importance of using AI responsibly and efficiently.

Future Skills and the Next Generation

A key question posed to the panel was whether automation risks removing the “learning through doing” experiences traditionally associated with early career development.

The response was both reassuring and forward-looking. While some technical tasks may become automated, the core skills required in the industry are evolving – not disappearing.

As Robert Metcalfe summarised succinctly: “We need to teach people to solve problems.” AI may support execution, but human value will continue to lie in critical thinking, judgement, creativity and the ability to define the right problems to solve.



INDUSTRY EVENTS WE'VE ATTENDED



NXT BLD AND NXT DEV

13-14 May 2026 | QEII Centre, London

NXT BLD and NXT DEV showcased how rapidly digital design and engineering are evolving beyond traditional BIM workflows towards AI-assisted, agentic and increasingly autonomous systems. A recurring theme throughout the event was the emergence of what many speakers described as "BIM 2.0", where AI is being embedded directly into design, analysis and documentation processes.

One of the standout sessions was delivered by May Winfield, Committee member of SDE and Global Director of Commercial, Legal and Digital Risks at Buro Happold, who provided a practical and timely perspective on AI liability and digital risk. Her key message was clear: while software may generate the error, responsibility for the outcome typically remains with the party contracted to deliver the work. She stressed the importance of maintaining human oversight, validating outputs, understanding insurance implications and ensuring contracts, processes and technology remain aligned.

Other notable discussions focused on open data ecosystems, interoperability, digital twins and the growing importance of robust data foundations. A strong takeaway for attendees was that AI should now be viewed as a core professional capability, supported by governance, quality data and investment in people, rather than as a standalone technology solution.

DIGITAL CONSTRUCTION WEEK 2026

3-4 June 2026 | ExCeL London

May Winfield also spoke at Digital Construction Week on "The AI liability risk minefield: Some practical advice." Her session focused on the legal and professional risks associated with AI adoption in the built environment, highlighting that while AI tools can improve productivity, responsibility for outputs remains with the professionals using them.

Key themes included the importance of governance, quality assurance and maintaining human oversight when deploying AI-enabled workflows.

May shared practical guidance on managing risk, ensuring appropriate contractual protection and developing internal controls to support safe and responsible use of AI across projects.



INDUSTRY EVENTS WE'VE ATTENDED



AUTODESK DESIGN & MAKE SUMMIT LONDON

23 June 2026 | County Hall, London

The Summit was less about showcasing new technology and more about the organisational mindset needed to adopt it successfully. A consistent message throughout the day was that AI is changing the role of engineers rather than replacing them, and that professionals who learn to work effectively alongside these tools will be at a significant advantage.

Particularly interesting discussions centred on outcome-based BIM, knowledge transfer from an ageing workforce and the importance of putting people and processes ahead of technology. These themes reinforced that digital transformation is as much about culture, skills and organisational change as it is about software implementation.

It was also encouraging to see practical examples of AI being integrated into day-to-day design tools to automate repetitive tasks, improve efficiency and enhance quality, demonstrating that AI is already delivering value across the industry today.

Attended by Andrew Krebs, Matt Crunden, and Kawtar Houbad

CIBSE TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION CONFERENCE

1 July 2026 | CIBSE HQ

Andrew Krebs and Matt Crunden attended the session, which explored how AI is helping to accelerate decarbonisation across the built environment. Kawtar Houbad presented on how AI can support social housing providers in improving the energy efficiency of existing housing stock by analysing large datasets, identifying the most effective retrofit interventions, and enabling more informed investment decisions. Dr Bahareh Salehi demonstrated how AI-driven simulation tools can enhance the building design process, providing rapid performance feedback that helps project teams test more design options and optimise building performance from the earliest stages.

A key message throughout was that AI is not replacing engineers, but enhancing their expertise by enabling faster analysis and better-informed decisions. By reducing the time spent processing complex information, AI allows engineers to focus on professional judgement, innovation and strategic problem-solving. The session reinforced how AI can support improved building performance across both existing assets and new developments, helping the industry move closer to its net zero ambitions.



Join SDE

Attend premier events, workshops, and conferences that bring you closer to the industry's cutting edge and offer invaluable learning and networking opportunities.

RECOGNITION & ACCREDITATION

Strengthen and maintain your professional standing with CIBSE's internationally respected qualifications and Chartership pathways, showing your continued commitment to excellence.

CAREER GROWTH & CPD

Gain access to accredited Continuing Professional Development (CPD) resources, training, and certifications that keep your skills sharp, and your expertise recognised globally.

KNOWLEDGE PORTAL

Stay informed with the latest industry research, technical guides, and best practice through our extensive library of resources and expert insights.

GLOBAL PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

Connect with a diverse community of professionals, share knowledge, and collaborate through our Societies, Groups, and Regions.

Memberships

We offer memberships for individuals who are just beginning their digital engineering journey, want to stay connected, or have a general interest in the field without needing professional registration or full professional membership.

For those seeking formal professional recognition and the right to use SDE post-nominals, professional membership and Engineering Council registration are available through our corporate grades. Members also receive free digital access to all SDE and CIBSE publications, including newly released guidance as it becomes available. **[Find out more here.](#)**

<u>Student</u>	For current students on STEM-related programmes interested in digital engineering. Free to join.
<u>Affiliate</u>	For those new to the industry or interested in staying connected to the sector. Join through CIBSE Affiliate membership.
<u>Licentiate (LSDE)</u>	Ideal for technicians and EngTech level professionals, fast-track application also available.
<u>Associate (ASDE)</u>	For experienced engineers and technical leads, aligned with IEng level standards, fast-track application also available.
<u>Member (MSDE)</u>	Recognises experienced professionals working at or towards Chartered Engineer (CEng) level, fast-track application also available.
<u>Fellow (FSDE)</u>	For sector leaders making significant contributions to the digital engineering profession. Includes a peer-reviewed assessment process.

Partner Membership

SDE Partner Membership gives organisations a powerful platform to collaborate with the Society of Digital Engineering, influence industry standards, and drive meaningful digital innovation across the built environment.

By partnering with SDE, organisations can elevate their visibility, strengthen professional networks, and contribute directly to shaping the future of digital engineering. **[Find out more here.](#)**

Open to organisations in the UK and worldwide

Software developers, tech vendors, manufacturers, engineering and design practices, FM providers, specialist contractors, property companies, and anyone committed to advancing digital engineering.

Work with SDE across technical, education, research, and standards initiatives

From one-off collaborations and event support to full strategic Partner Membership, we help organisations and the Society achieve shared goals and drive meaningful digital transformation across the built environment.

Technical Event Sponsorship Package

£500 per event - held quarterly

What you receive:

- Your company name and logo featured on Eventbrite and across all event marketing materials on website and LinkedIn (pre- and post-event)
- Opportunity to speak at the event, positioning your organisation alongside industry leaders
- Dedicated space at the event for two standard pull-up banners
- You will be the only sponsor exhibiting alongside SDE

Partner Membership

Position your organisation at the forefront of digital engineering by becoming an annual SDE partner.

What you receive:

Strategic Influence

- Input into Steering Committee meetings, with invitations to attend where appropriate
- Opportunities to collaborate with industry leaders shaping the future of digital engineering
- Involvement across technical, education, research, and standards initiatives

Brand Visibility

- Company name and logo featured on the SDE website
- Inclusion in quarterly newsletters distributed to our network
- Exposure across SDE communication channels

Thought Leadership Opportunities

- Opportunities to contribute insights to newsletters and SDE platforms
- Showcase your expertise to a targeted, engaged audience

Event Benefits

- Discounted sponsorship rates for all events, including the annual awards
- Guaranteed tickets for SDE events

Recognition & Resources

- Use of the SDE logo on letterheads, business cards, email signatures, website, and marketing materials
- Monthly access to the CIBSE Journal

If you would like to hear more about becoming a partner member, there are a range of benefits available, including having your logo featured on our website and in our quarterly newsletters, visibility at technical events and the awards ceremony, discounted rates for sponsoring future events, opportunities to speak at events, and guaranteed tickets to attend. **Email us to find out more.**

