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AI POLICY FOR CTOs: A SUMMARY

AI Agents Are a Normal Technology: What That Means for the CTO

CTOs will be held accountable for a technology that takes time to prove. You need rules of engagement. These are Pivot's.

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Now The Software Learns Our Language

It’s the biggest shift in ERP in 30 years



Which resource should make this product? An AI agent answers straight away.

Without the agent, that answer takes several steps across several screens. The planner has to know where to look and which transaction to use. With the agent, they ask, in plain English, and get the answer from the live SAP system.

Pivot built that agent for our demo. And a second agent that looks at customer demand, spots patterns a planner might miss and recommends the next best action. Both work alongside SAP Joule. Both do one clear job. And both are built on SAP’s own cloud platform, alongside the core system, not inside it. Nothing in the core is touched, nothing breaks when SAP is upgraded.

It is a small example of something big.

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For 30 years, ERP software has asked people to learn its language: its menus, its codes, its screens. AI reverses that. Now the software learns ours. You ask, it answers. You approve, it acts. This is a seismic shift in how business systems work, and it is a good one. It puts the power of SAP in the hands of people who never had the time or training to use it.

Pivot is enthusiastic about AI and AI agents. We take them seriously.

AI agents are arriving fast. And so is the worry. Who controls them? What data can they see? What happens when they get something wrong? And who answers for it?

For a CTO, these are not abstract questions. You carry the risk personally. If an agent fails, the board will not ask which product failed. It will ask who chose it.

At Pivot, we see ourselves as the CTO's best friend. A good friend tells you where they stand before you have to ask. So we have written down how we work with AI agents.

Whether we are switching on SAP Joule, advising on an agent you have been offered, or building one where standard SAP stops, these are the rules we hold ourselves to.

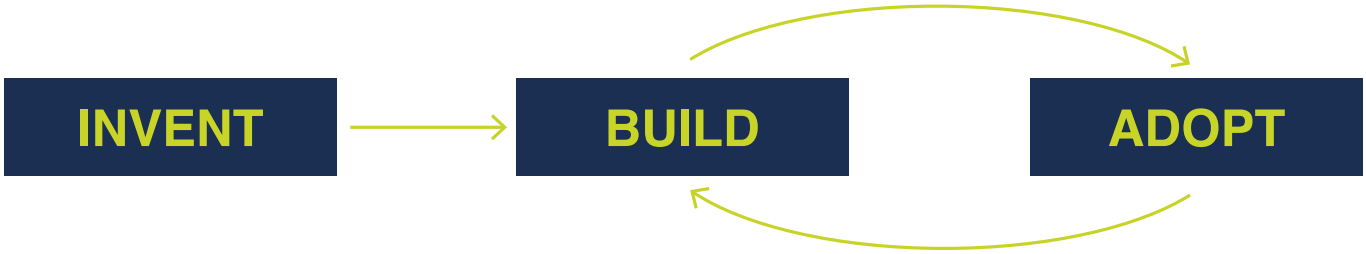
Our Foundation: AI As A Normal Technology

Our thinking rests on one piece of work. In 2025, two Princeton researchers, Arvind Narayanan and Sayash Kapoor, published an essay called AI as Normal Technology. It is the clearest account we have read of what AI is, how it will spread, and how it should be handled.

Their argument has three parts. First, AI today is a tool. It is not a new kind of mind. Second, its impact will build over years and decades, not arrive overnight. Third, it is a tool we can and should keep under human control.

Normal does not mean small. Electricity was a normal technology. So was the internet. Both changed the world. But neither did it overnight, and neither did it on its own.

Speed of Progress



Adapted from Narayanan and Kapoor, AI as Normal Technology (2025).

The researchers separate three steps. First, someone invents a new technology. Next, companies build products with it (innovation). Finally, businesses adopt those products and change how they work (Diffusion). Each step moves at its own speed. Today's headlines are about the first two steps. The value arrives at the third. That's the part Pivot is interested in.

Electricity shows how this works. When factories first got electric power, they swapped it in for their old steam engines. For nearly 40 years, the gains barely showed. They came only when factories redesigned around the new power. They rebuilt their layouts, changed how work was organised, and hired and trained people differently. Every factory could buy the same motor. The difference was the context each one built around it.

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What That Means For The CTO

When it comes to AI and AI Agents, today's CTO faces hard truths.

You are accountable, not the vendor. Organisations that build and deploy AI carry the main responsibility when it goes wrong. Earlier this year, the UK's audit regulator put it bluntly to auditors using AI. "You can't blame it on the box," said Mark Babington of the Financial Reporting Council. "If you use this technology, you are still accountable for it." The same is true in every boardroom.

A demo proves nothing about your business. Researchers call this the capability-reliability gap. What an AI can do once, on a stand, is not what it will do every day in the real world. They name this gap as a major barrier to building useful AI agents. A great rule of thumb: the easier a task is to test, the less it resembles genuine work.

AI will take longer, and need more change, than you think. Value arrives at adoption, and adoption means changing how work is done. The vendor delivers the technology. The change is yours.

"You can't blame it on the box"

"A human approves everything" sounds safe. But asking a person to approve every single action soon turns them into a rubber stamp. Proper control is more varied. Think audit trails, monitoring, limited access, and actions that can be undone.

No one can do the learning for you. Much of what makes your business run is not written down. It lives in your processes, your exceptions and your people's heads. This knowledge has to be learned sector by sector, and business by business. Your context is yours to build.

Poorly controlled AI does not make business sense. AI without proper control makes too many mistakes to pay its way. Discipline is how you make it pay.

None of this is a reason to stand still. Agents work, in the right job, under the right control. These truths are why we work to rules.

Pivot's Eight Rules Of Engagement

Standard first. We use Joule and standard SAP wherever they do the job. Standard is tested, supported and upgraded by SAP. We build only where standard stops.

One agent, one job. Every agent we recommend or build has one clear job you can describe in a sentence. A narrow agent can be tested, trusted and improved. The most reliable automation is tightly scoped. Agents doing whole tasks end to end become harder to see into and control.

Alongside, not inside. Agents sit on SAP's own cloud platform, alongside your core system, never inside it. If something goes wrong, your core is untouched. Every upgrade runs as normal. Systems should be designed to fail safely.

A human says yes when it matters. Before an agent changes anything in SAP, it states what it will do and waits for a person to confirm. For everything else, we use audit trails, monitoring and actions that can be reversed.

A great rule of thumb: the easier a task is to test, the less it resembles genuine work

Your data, with sources. Agents answer from your own data, never from the open internet. Every answer shows where it came from, so you can check it.

Only the access it needs. An agent sees what its job requires, and nothing more. This is the security principle of least privilege, which applies directly to AI.

Start small, then scale. Before any work starts, Pivot agrees what success looks like and how we will measure it. Then we put the agent to work where a mistake would do little harm. We check the results against that measure. Only when it has earned your trust do we let it handle work where the stakes are high.

Get the process ready before you add the agent. An agent is only as good as the process it works in. Put one into a process that is not ready and it simply speeds up the problem. Pivot looks at the process first, and fixes it where it needs fixing. With electricity, the gains came from redesign, not from the motor.

Our demo on the stand shows these rules at work. Almost all of it is standard SAP, switched on and configured by Pivot. Nothing is written back to SAP without a human saying yes. Every answer shows its source. And where Joule stops, the agents we have built each do one job, alongside the core, not inside it.

Our loyalty is to the CTO. These rules are how we keep it.

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How Pivot Works With You

We don't sell licences, so we have no reason to oversell anything. If you don't need an agent, we will tell you. If standard Joule does the job, we will tell you that too.

Get In Touch

3 Maritime House
The Hart, Farnham
Surrey GU9 7HW

info@pivot-consulting.com
+44 (0)1252 711 825
pivot-consulting.com

Sources: Arvind Narayanan and Sayash Kapoor, AI as Normal Technology, Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University, April 2025. knightcolumbia.org/content/ai-as-normal-technology
Mark Babington, Financial Reporting Council, quoted in the Financial Times, March 2026.