2026 AGENDA

INFO~TECH
RESEARCH GROUP

IGNITE

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Atlanta, GA
November 2-3

IGNITE Agenda

Nov 2, 2026

Time	Session Type	Session	Track	Role	Description
9:00 am	LEVEL-UP EVENT	**IT Leadership Development – Leading Through Uncertainty** Speaker: Amanda Mathieson	Adaptive IT Workforce	All Roles	A key enabler in a world of constant change and uncertainty is building psychological safety. Creating psychological safety as a leader for your team will drive their ability to face the challenges of exploring and learning changing technologies. Learn the key people change concepts to help you build a resilient team that isn't afraid to take risk, navigate uncertainty and has the confidence to drive results. Take away insights and tactics to build a highly productive, inclusive team. **Access this link to register:** https://go.infotech.com/level-up-atlanta-it-leadership-development
1:30 pm	REGISTRATION & NETWORKING				
2:00 pm	OPENING REMARKS	**Welcome and Opening Remarks** Speaker: Amanda Mathieson	All Tracks	All Roles	
2:15 pm	TECHNOLOGY KEYNOTE	**Agentic IT: From Hype to Value** Speaker: Davin Juusola	Agentic IT	All Roles	In this age of AI, you're expected to make confident bets on emerging technology while balancing credibility, delivery pressure, and board-level expectations. This opening keynote reframes the conversation, challenges familiar narratives, and sets out how CIOs and senior IT leaders can drive sustained, enterprise-level impact beyond the hype.
2:45 pm	TECHNOLOGY KEYNOTE	**Talent Trends 2026** Speaker: Amanda Mathieson	All Tracks	All Roles	Explore IT talent trends for 2026 and beyond. The session examines what the IT talent trends mean for IT leaders with a forward-looking view on human–AI teams and securing and retaining top IT talent amid technological advancement.
3:15pm	NETWORKING BREAK				

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Time	Session Type	Session	Track	Role	Description
3:45 pm	ACTIVITY	**CIO Agents: Taming Email at the Executive Level** Speaker: Mahmoud Ramin	Agentic IT	CIO	Your inbox shouldn't run your day. Learn how to build three simple AI agents to manage your inbox. Analyze flagged emails, surface missing context, and draft responses in seconds. Build tools that can automatically route messages to the right person, and scan for missing decisions or next steps that are waiting on you or others, so nothing critical falls through the cracks.
3:45 pm	ACTIVITY	**Lead IT Like a Business: From Cost Center to Value Engine** Speaker: Tom Larson	Agentic IT	CIO	Get a clear and actionable playbook on how to allocate and control IT spend, communicate real business value to your organization's top executives, and turn IT finance into a competitive advantage for you and your team.
3:45 pm	ACTIVITY	**Data Playbook Deep Dive: How to Systematically Achieve IT Excellence in Data & Analytics** Speaker: Andy Neill	Agentic IT	CIO	In this interactive workshop, we'll dive deeper into the methodology behind the 12-step Data & Analytics Playbook and help you understand how to apply it to your unique environment. Participants will not only gain a deeper understanding of what each of the 12 steps means for them but will also leave with a prioritized roadmap to begin implementing the playbook and start transforming D&A from firefighting to forward-driving.
4:30 pm	TECHNOLOGY KEYNOTE	**From Data as a Product to the Data Value Chain: Reframing How Organizations Create Value From Data** Speaker: Andy Neill	IT Playbooks	Data & Analytics	This keynote challenges the dominant "data as a product" mindset, not by rejecting it, but by exposing why it so often fails to deliver meaningful enterprise value. Through the lens of the data value chain, this session explores where initiatives break down and how leading organizations overcome those gaps. This session gives leaders a clear, practical blueprint to move beyond data curation and into decisions, action, and outcomes.
5:00pm	CLOSING AND RECEPTION				
6:30pm	NETWORKING DINNER				

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Nov 3, 2026

Time	Session Type	Session	Track	Role	Description
8:00 am	NETWORKING BREAKFAST				
9:00 am	TECHNOLOGY KEYNOTE	**Become an Exponential CIO** Speaker: Davin Juusola	IT Playbooks	CIO	As technology increasingly shapes how enterprises operate and compete, many CIOs remain constrained by governance, funding, and metrics designed for a different era. This keynote challenges the assumption that the role must change through leadership alone, revealing how redesigning enterprise context and use of data and technology enables CIOs to move beyond firefighting and reliably shape enterprise-level outcomes.
9:45 am	ACTIVITY	**CIO Agents: From Contracts to Action in Minutes** Speaker: Mahmoud Ramin	IT Playbooks	CIO	IT leaders spend hours buried in contracts, policies, and technical agreements. Learn how to build a simple AI agent to rapidly analyze complex documents, flag key clauses, surface risks to automate repetitive document workflows and compress review cycles to free your team to focus on decisions, not paperwork.
9:45 am	ACTIVITY	**The Enterprise Architecture Playbook: Secrets & Steps to Systematically Achieve IT Excellence** Speaker: Andy Neill	Playbooks	Enterprise Architecture	In this interactive workshop, we'll dive deeper into the methodology behind the 12-step EA Playbook and help you understand how to apply it to your unique environment. Participants will not only gain a deeper understanding of what each of the 12 steps means for them but will also leave with a prioritized roadmap to begin implementing the playbook and start transforming EA from firefighting to forward-driving.
9:45 am	ACTIVITY	**The Security Playbook: Secrets & Steps to Systematically Achieve IT Excellence** Speaker: Carlos Rivera	IT Playbooks	Security & Privacy	In this interactive workshop, we'll dive deeper into the methodology behind the 12-step Security Playbook and help you understand how to apply it to your unique environment. Participants will not only gain a deeper understanding of what each of the 12 steps means for them but will also leave with a prioritized roadmap to begin implementing the playbook and start transforming Security from firefighting to forward-driving.

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10:15am	NETWORKING BREAK				
10:45 am	LIGHTNING	**Lightning Talks** Speakers: Andy Neill, Amanda Mathieson, Tom Larson, Carlos Rivera, Mahmoud Ramin	All Tracks	All Roles	Lightning round presentations offer attendees brief but incisive looks into the most critical topics impacting IT today, guided by some of the best thinkers and researchers in the field.
10:45 am	BREAKOUT	**AI Can't Operate What It Doesn't Understand: Why Network Context Is the Missing Layer for Agentic IT** Speakers: Josh Townsend, BlueCat Networks	Exhibitors	All Roles	AI agents are being asked to investigate, recommend, and eventually act on enterprise infrastructure — but they can't safely touch what they don't understand. Before an agent can answer "what changed," "what's connected," or "what happens if I act on this," someone has to give it trustworthy context about the network underneath it. This session applies a pattern that has reshaped IT infrastructure every decade or so — abstraction has to exist before automation can — to argue that networking is at the same inflection point now. A simple five-stage model, Observe → Understand → Reason → Act → Validate, reframes the real question CIOs should be asking: not whether AI is smart enough to run the network, but whether the network is trustworthy enough for AI to run.
10:45 am	BREAKOUT	**Beyond the Copilot: Building an Enterprise AI Operating Model for the Agentic Era** Speakers: Ajay Madwesh, SVP, Global Data and AI at Prolifics; Panelists: Bobu G Putheeckal, Principal Architect at CVS	Exhibitors	All Roles	Most organizations have moved beyond asking whether AI will transform the enterprise. The real question facing CIOs and business leaders today is how to operationalize AI at scale and create sustainable business value.
11:30am	TECHNOLOGY KEYNOTE	**Securing Agentic AI and the New Security Reality** Speakers: Carlos Rivera	All Tracks	Security & Privacy	Agentic AI is moving fast. Autonomous systems that can reason, plan, and take action across your enterprise are the new reality. With the AI risk landscape changing rapidly, it is difficult to prioritize which security control to tackle first. Whether you are implementing your first AI agent or evaluating vendor solutions, this session will help you gain clarity on what to focus on now, what to wait on, and the right conversations to have with your security teams starting tomorrow.

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12:00pm	NETWORKING LUNCH				
1:00 pm	CLIENT/ EXPERT PANEL	**AI Impact on the IT Organization for Government** Speakers: Tom Hawley, Serena Sachs-Mandel (Gwinnett County), CTO, Tim Moody (City of Savannah), CTO , Leo Howell (Georgia Tech), CIO	All Tracks	All Roles	Join this engaging panel discussion to explore how AI is reshaping IT organizations across government agencies. Panelists will share real-world insights on workforce and headcount implications, evolving skill requirements for public sector IT staff, strategies for governing citizen developers within compliance-driven environments, and approaches to agentic AI strategy, scaling, and governance in the public sector.
1:00 pm	CLIENT/ EXPERT PANEL	**AI Impact on the IT Organization for Commercial Sectors** Speakers: Steve Schmidt, Vishal Bedi (JAS Worldwide), CIO, Roxanne Seymour (Beazer Homes), CIO/CTO	All Tracks	All Roles	Join this engaging panel discussion to explore the real-world impact of AI on enterprise IT organizations. Panelists will share insights on headcount and workforce implications, the evolving skill sets IT teams need to develop, strategies for governing citizen developers, and how organizations are approaching agentic AI strategy, scaling, and governance.
1:45 pm	TECHNOLOGY KEYNOTE	**Lead IT Like a Business: Every Dollar is a Decision** Speaker: Tom Larson	IT Playbooks	All Roles	All CIOs and IT leaders face the test of proving IT's value in the language of the business. This keynote walks you through a proven, end-to-end ITFM framework – spend allocation, budgeting, forecasting, reporting, and optimization – illustrated with real-world data and results.
2:15 pm	TECHNOLOGY KEYNOTE	**Five Key Takeaways from Info-Tech IGNITE** Speaker: Amanda Mathieson	All Tracks	All Roles	At every conference, you're supposed to learn things, bring back your insights, and share them with your colleagues. But that can be hard when there's so much great information packed into such a short period. Please allow us to help you out. In this keynote, we'll walk you through what we think the five most important takeaways are and what your next steps should be. Make your trip home stress-free!
2:30pm	EVENT WRAP UP				

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