

# Balancing Innovation and Control: Tom Andriola's Blueprint for Al at Scale

Tom Andriola shares how to build responsible Al—balancing innovation & governance while redefining the Chief Al Officer's role in digital transformation.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, November 17, 2025 / EINPresswire.com/ -- In this episode of CAIO Connect, host Sanjay Puri sits down with Tom Andriola, former Vice Chancellor and Chief Digital Officer at



UC Irvine and now at Dynatrace, to explore how universities and enterprises can scale Al responsibly. Tom—who led UC Irvine's pioneering ZotGPT initiative—shares how he built one of the first university Al platforms in the U.S., branded business transformation, and prepared



You have to have a strategy for how you deal with a large amount of decentralized activity, because if you have a structure for working with it, you can effectively build an enterprise strategy."

Tom Andriola

students for careers in the Age of Al. From agentic Al to the evolving role of the Chief Al Officer, this is a must-listen masterclass for leaders shaping enterprise Al strategy.

## Walking the Razor's Edge

Chief AI Officers today sit on a razor's edge—pulled between innovation and compliance. As Tom notes, their mandate is twofold: drive competitive advantage while managing risk. And the challenge isn't confined to IT. "AI will change every role," he says, echoing Walmart's CEO, who reminded 2.1 million employees that everyone's job will evolve.

For UC Irvine, that realization led to a threefold mission: equip 30,000 employees for new workflows, empower 40,000 students with responsible AI fluency, and ensure the university itself stays competitively agile in an accelerating digital world.

#### The ZotGPT Moment

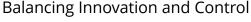
In 2023, Tom and his team launched ZotGPT—a secure, university-branded AI platform. Why build instead of buy? Control, trust, and culture. Commercial tools were powerful but generic. UC Irvine needed a platform that reflected its brand, data ethics, and learning mission.

"Transformation needs branding and cache," Tom explains. By connecting UC Irvine's mascot, Peter the Anteater, with "Zot," the school's iconic rally cry, ZotGPT became more than a tool—it became a movement. Faculty, students, and staff rallied around a shared call to innovate responsibly.

How Al Adoption Scales UC Irvine's journey mirrors what every enterprise faces. Adoption follows three stages:

- 1. Privacy & Trust—Calm fears with clarity. As Tom puts it, "What you do in the backyard stays in the backyard."
- 2. Data Quality—Move from fear to confidence.
- 3. Integration & Accountability—Treat Al as a silicon-based coworker, with performance metrics and ethical oversight.

Once trust and clarity took root, adoption surged from 15% to nearly 40%. "That's when the magic happens," says Tom.



Tom calls this tension the CAIO's razor's edge: growth leaders push for speed, while compliance teams hit the brakes. His advice? Don't choose sides—build balance through technology itself. Guardrails, audit tools, and model flexibility let organizations stay innovative and safe. At Dynatrace, he now helps enterprises adopt that mindset—addressing technological challenges with technology, not bureaucracy.

# Leading the Transformation

Tom believes the modern Chief AI Officer isn't a technologist first—they're a translator, bridge-builder, and transformation leader. The CAIO's job is to turn AI from an abstract capability into tangible business outcomes.

"Technology and innovation are one and the same now," he says. "The Chief Al Officer and Head of Business Transformation? That's the same person."

Upasana Das Knowledge Networks email us here Visit us on social media: LinkedIn Instagram Facebook



Tom Andriola, former Vice Chancellor and Chief Digital Officer at UC Irvine with Sanjay Puri, President, Knowledge Networks

## YouTube X

This press release can be viewed online at: https://www.einpresswire.com/article/867017450 EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable

in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.