

# CAIO Connect Podcast: Hitachi's Simon Ninan Tells Sanjay Puri Why AI Needs Standards, Regulation & Human-Centric Future

*Simon Ninan of Hitachi tells CAIO Connect Podcast host Sanjay Puri at TechEx that AI's future depends on regulation, safety, and keeping humans at the core.*

SAN JOSE, CA, UNITED STATES, June 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- At the TechEx conference at the San Jose Convention Center, the [CAIO Connect Podcast](#) host [Sanjay Puri](#) sat down with

[Simon Ninan](#) of Hitachi for a wide-ranging discussion on artificial intelligence, workforce disruption, physical AI, and the urgent need for industry-wide governance. Speaking to an audience of chief AI officers, enterprise leaders, and technology professionals, Ninan argued that

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Responsible innovation is sustainable innovation. It stands the test of time.”

*Simon Ninan*

while AI's rapid advancement is inevitable, its long-term success depends on balancing innovation with responsibility, regulation, and human-centered decision-making.

During the CAIO Connect Podcast interview, Ninan reflected on his unconventional journey from early

interests in artificial intelligence and inspiration from his father's work at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to leadership roles at Deloitte and eventually Hitachi. He explained that Hitachi, a 115-year-old industrial and technology conglomerate, operates at the intersection of operational technology and information technology, combining physical-world expertise with digital innovation. According to Ninan, the company's longevity stems from its commitment to “responsible innovation,” a philosophy that prioritizes people, institutions, and sustainable growth rather than pursuing technological disruption for its own sake.

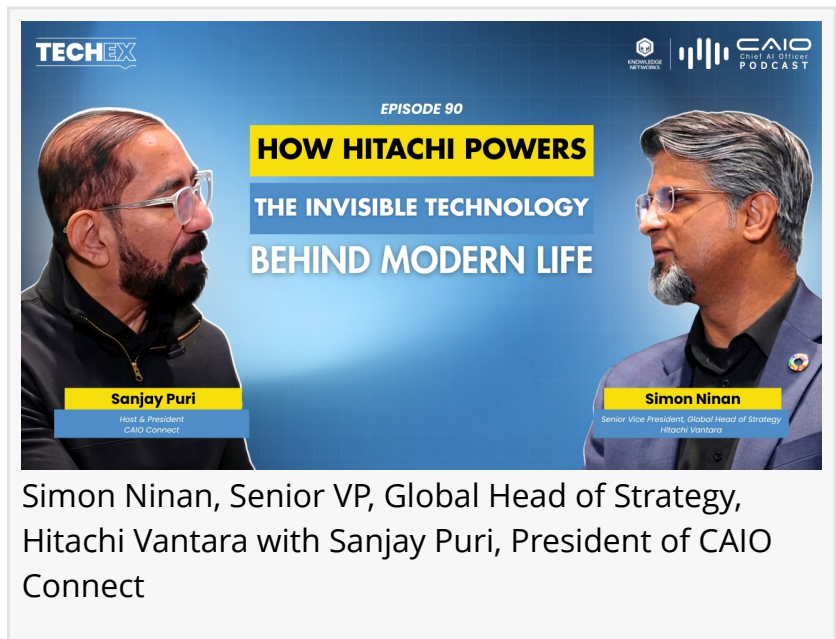
A major focus of the conversation was the rise of agentic AI and its implications for the workforce. Responding to questions from host Sanjay Puri, Ninan described workforce transformation as “the existential question of our times.” While acknowledging that AI could



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replace certain jobs, he warned against removing entire layers of organizational talent development. He argued that businesses risk creating a future skills vacuum if entry-level and middle-management roles disappear without a plan to cultivate future leaders. Ninan predicted that organizations would eventually recognize the importance of preserving human expertise and ensuring technology serves people rather than the other way around.



The discussion also explored the growing field of physical AI, which powers autonomous machines, industrial systems, and other real-world applications. Unlike generative AI, which often tolerates non-deterministic outcomes, physical AI requires highly predictable and reliable performance because safety is directly involved. Ninan emphasized that industries deploying autonomous vehicles, heavy machinery, power infrastructure, and robotics must achieve near-perfect levels of reliability before scaling these technologies. He noted that while many current applications remain experimental, the next decade will be defined by efforts to move physical AI from controlled demonstrations into complex real-world environments where safety and performance standards are paramount.

One of the strongest themes to emerge from the CAIO Connect Podcast conversation was the need for governance. Addressing concerns about accountability in situations involving autonomous systems and workplace accidents, Ninan said companies must take responsibility for the outcomes of the technologies they deploy. However, he stressed that individual corporate commitments alone are insufficient. He called for collaboration between industry leaders and governments to establish standards and regulatory frameworks for AI, particularly physical AI. Drawing on discussions with executives from major technology companies, including Nvidia and Qualcomm, Ninan argued that the absence of standards creates fragmentation, higher costs, and slower adoption. In his view, regulation is not an obstacle to innovation but a necessary foundation for building trust and enabling large-scale deployment.

Looking ahead, Ninan advocated for a collaborative AI ecosystem built on partnerships rather than competition. Discussing the build-versus-buy debate, he said companies should focus on their unique strengths while working with specialized AI providers. He highlighted Hitachi's partnerships with leading AI firms, including OpenAI, Anthropic, Microsoft, Google, and Nvidia, while emphasizing the company's differentiator: deep operational and domain expertise. Concluding the CAIO Connect Podcast interview with Sanjay Puri at TechEx, Ninan rejected the notion that AI will replace human purpose. Instead, he argued that the most powerful future will combine human judgment, community, and expertise with advanced technology, creating a

model of innovation that is both transformative and sustainable.

Upasana Das

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