
Trimble
The
£36bn
Question
Is your
operation ready
for hyperscale?

# The world has not seen something like the rise of artificial intelligence since the Industrial Revolution.

The seismic shift in the economy, how things get done, and the technology we use to do them is the same, but while that earlier transition took decades, the AI revolution is progressing at breakneck speed.

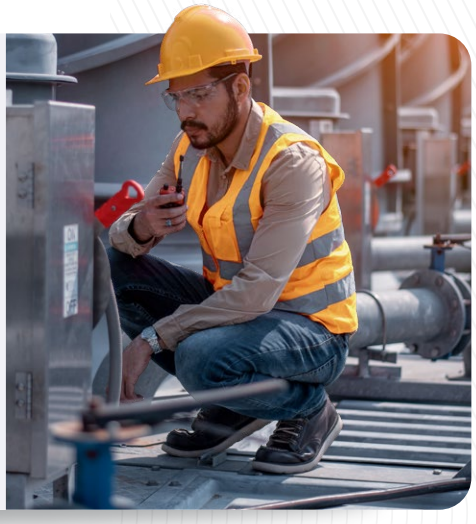
Like any major global change, there are a lot of opinions about whether AI will be good, bad, or somewhere in between for humanity, but one thing is certain: there's boundless opportunity in this digital gold rush.

## According to credible sources, the AI revolution in the United Kingdom will cost key players £36 billion, and the energy infrastructure upgrades necessary to make it all work will add another £35 billion.

But when you're talking about an industry where office hours are often 12 hours and weekends don't exist, there's nothing slow about anything that happens in this corner of the tech world.

That means that any construction companies hoping to get a slice of this particular pie will need to move faster, be more efficient, meet seemingly impossible deadlines, and deliver precise, high-quality results.

**In short, it's going to take a new breed of contractor to keep up with the AI industry, and in this report, we're going to take a closer look at why, and more importantly, how construction companies can position themselves as preferred contractors for this exciting and demanding new customer base.**



# Market context: Why this boom is different

## The Industrial Revolution undoubtedly changed the world, but if you look at technological advancements, the vast majority have occurred in the last 50 years.

It took a long time to go from steam engines to VHS machines and CD players, but once we did, it turned into a tsunami of new ideas.

Smartphones, streaming, online shopping. All happened in a historically short amount of time, but none of them compares to the speed at which artificial intelligence went from something we saw in science fiction television to the tool that organises your email inbox or suggests theme ideas for your next birthday party.

AI has become embedded in everything, and there's no sign it will slow down any time soon.

AI is the largest investment sector right now by a wide margin.

**In 2025, that translated into**

over

**50%**

of all venture capital investment

**and there's no end in sight.**

# AI started seemingly from nothing, gained traction quickly, and has become an indelible part of nearly everything we do in the modern world.

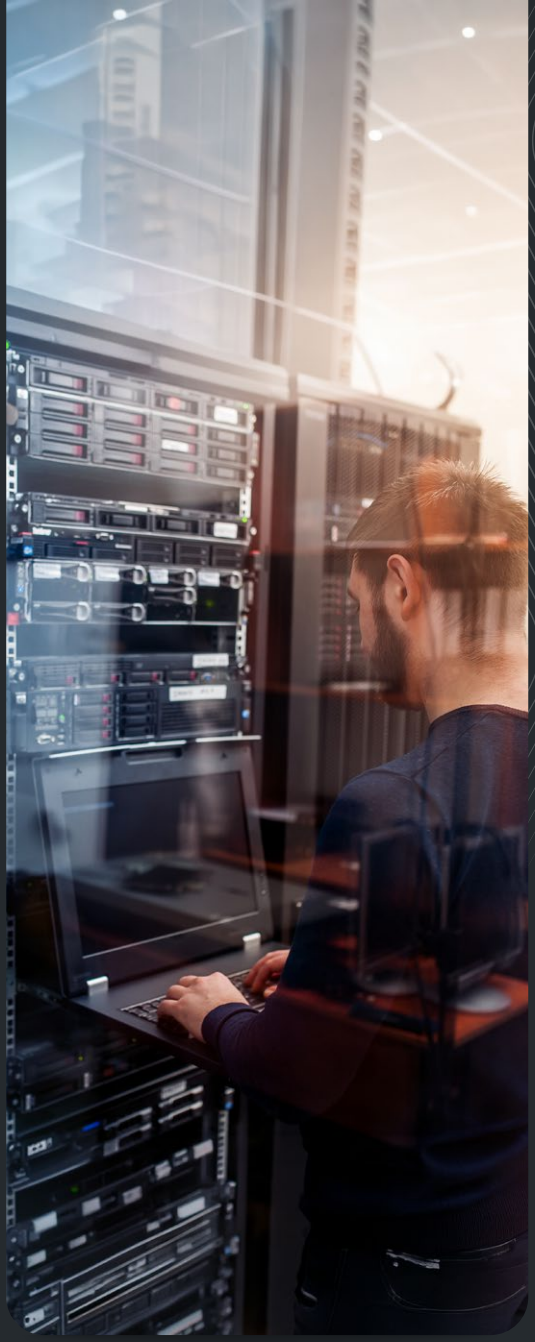
All that computing power requires an enormous amount of infrastructure.

Processing that much information in as short a time as modern users demand requires massive banks of the world's fastest computers. Those computers generate an extraordinary amount of heat as they run all those ones and zeroes, and that demands buildings with incredibly specific capabilities.

**That is exactly why the AI construction boom is inevitable.**

AI data centres are not nice to have. They are absolutely essential to the functioning of this industry and to its growth, and as long as the industry keeps growing, so will the demand for purpose-built facilities.

Of course, something as new and groundbreaking as the AI industry also requires facilities that are just as remarkable.

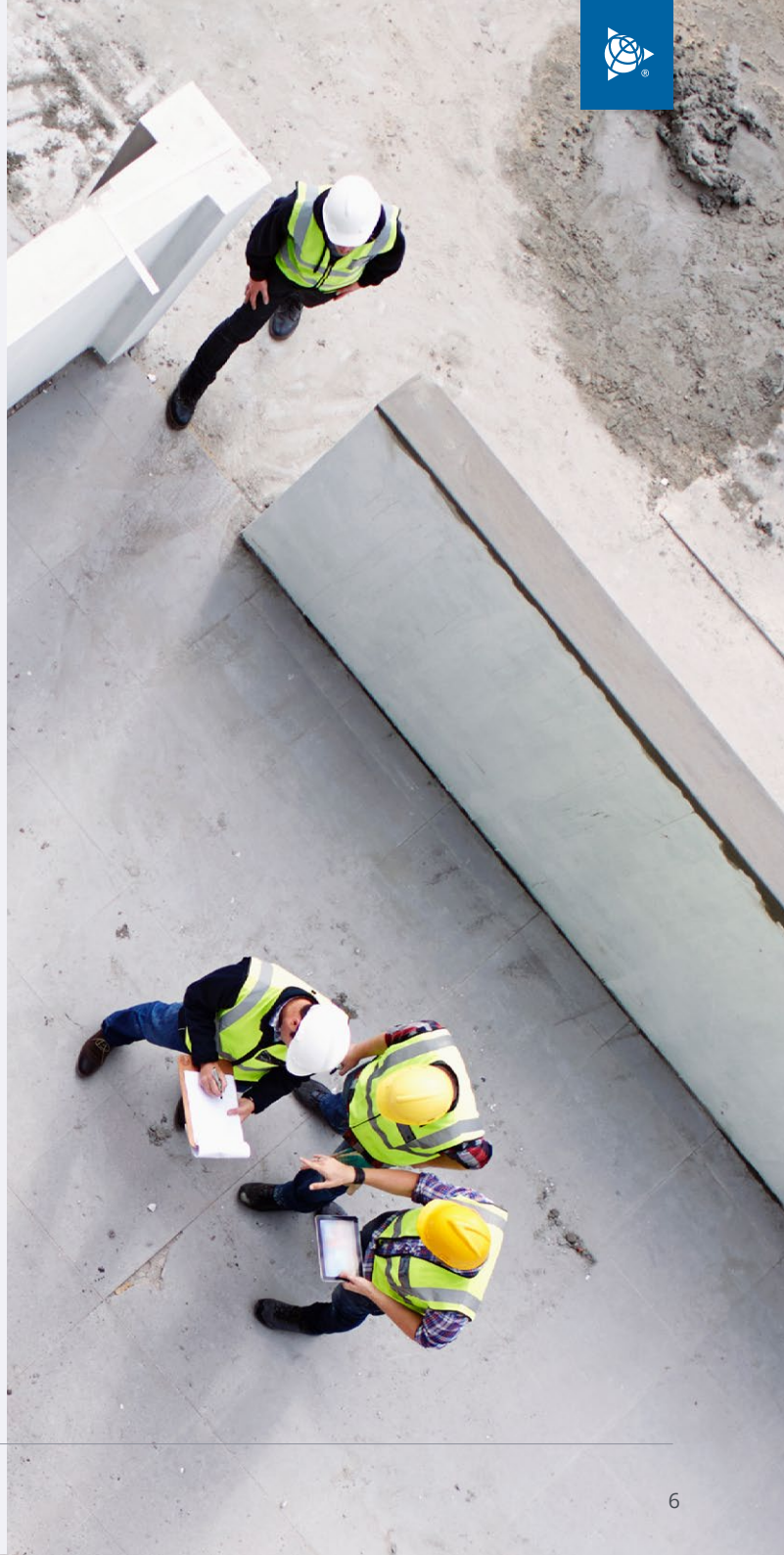


# AI hyperscale projects are breaking all the rules we thought applied to construction.

They're bigger, by a large margin. In fact, many of the projects currently in planning or underway measure tens of thousands of square feet, and dwarf nearly every other kind of commercial or industrial building projects out there.

Then there's the pace of building. AI moves fast, and there's no time to wait for traditional building timelines. So many of these projects are being completed on massively compressed schedules, in timeframes no one really thought were possible before.

Everything about AI is different, so it's not that surprising that the construction processes needed to support it are changing and challenging what we thought we knew about building, too.



# A changing world

## Artificial intelligence is certainly the biggest and most impactful change we have seen in the world in some time, but it's not the only big shift we have experienced lately.

In the software world, we've gone from locally deployed programs installed from CDs to subscription-based tools and cloud-based storage.

Work has changed too, with more people than ever working remotely or in hybrid roles, and it's not at all strange anymore to have teams that are spread across the world, rather than concentrated in one or two cities.

**Data centres are also taking critical infrastructure outside of major cities like London, and are increasingly being built in smaller cities or even towns.**

# AI projects by the numbers

Even when we are told that AI is already a multi-trillion-dollar industry, it's hard to wrap our heads around numbers that large. So it's worth looking at some recent and current AI construction projects for context:

WALTHAM CROSS

Tech giant Google is building an

**£800m**

AI data centre

WICKFORD

Developer Caineal is building a

**£500m**

AI data centre

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE

Humber Tech Park is building a

**£3b**

AI data centre

MANOR FARM

Tritax Facility is building a

**£356m**

AI data centre

AI companies need complex, highly specialised facilities to compete, and they have the budgets to finance those facilities.

This is why these hyperscale projects are such a valuable new market for construction companies of all types and sizes.

All those high-tech AI facilities still need people and boots on the ground to go from concept to completion.

# A different kind of customer

## The first thing any construction company hoping to work for AI hyper scalers is that they are a different breed from nearly every other type of customer out there.

Tech giants and the energy infrastructure operators growing capacity to service them don't use technology as an afterthought. It is baked into everything they do.

Procurement departments working on data centre and similar projects aren't relying on emails and hardcopy submissions. They're data-native, using complex tools to source, purchase and manage projects and services.

This part of the tech world is geared to work long hours, expect reporting to happen in real time, and have zero tolerance for data lag.

In a nutshell, they're looking for construction partners that are just as obsessed with harnessing technology as they are, and anyone who wants to be that company needs to be ready for a rapid, permanent mindset shift.

# Raising the bar: What hyperscale actually demands

## Speed. Technology. Innovation.

They're all common terms to describe the AI industry and the companies operating within it, but what does that really mean for construction companies and teams?

## Speed requirements

The first thing most construction companies will have to adjust to if they want to compete in the hyperscale construction world is that everything happens a lot faster than it would in nearly every industry.

With the competition moving so fast, tech companies cannot fall behind, and that includes when building infrastructure.

Construction companies that want to work in this sector will need to get used to moving fast, including 24/7 building schedules, overlapped, stacked and concurrent work streams, and compressed commissioning timelines.

The pace is relentless, the critical path non-negotiable, and the tolerance for delays almost entirely absent, in fact, according to most sources.

**If you want to work on hyperscale projects, you will need to:**

build **20%** ▲ **faster**

with **10%** ▼ **fewer skilled staff**

## Technical complexity

Data centres are enormous structures, but often have a relatively small number of humans working on site.

Instead, most of the floor space is taken up by rows and rows of insanely powerful servers and network hardware, and that kind of tech demands an incredible amount of complex services and equipment, including:

- Dense MEP environments
- Advanced cooling systems
- High power infrastructure

Because these systems also need to be installed and commissioned in drastically compressed timelines, many datacentre projects also make use of prefabricated components, which adds another layer of complexity to the planning and construction process.

**Margin for error is also nearly non-existent on this type of project, and construction accuracy is critical to future operations.**

## Detailed handover mandates

While digital twin and similar technologies might be taking some time to become the norm in traditional construction, they tend to be the baseline standard for datacentre handover requirements.

Construction companies working in this space are routinely required to provide incredibly detailed documentation for every aspect of the project, including structured asset data requirements, real-time progress visibility during the project, and integrated reporting at every stage.

Hyperscale projects leave nothing up to chance, and documentation and detail requirements are unlike nearly any other type of project.

# Legacy operations under hyperscale pressure

With so much money on the table in the AI datacentre and energy infrastructure support world, it's no surprise that many construction companies are taking note, hoping for a piece of what is and will continue to be a very lucrative pie.

However, this level of accuracy, detail and pace is not something you can fake till you make it, and it's not something you can learn on the job.

**Companies that want to compete in this incredibly demanding environment will need to set themselves up for success.**

## Where traditional workflows break

One of the biggest and most common traps construction businesses fall into is "we've always done it this way."

Our industry, traditionally, has preferred comfortable, well-worn processes and systems over adopting new technology, even if it means a sacrifice in efficiency and even profits.

However, hyperscale customers are not willing to accept those legacy systems and their shortfalls.

Companies that are still using spreadsheet-based reporting, tracking RFIs manually and have slow, broken communication between the field and the office simply will not be able to compete or keep up.

## Tech stack prequalification

One of the biggest differences most construction businesses are going to encounter when investigating hyperscale projects is that, rather than being an afterthought or a footnote, their tech stack will be a central part of the prequalification process.

Most tender packages and RFQs for this type of project will include sections about the types of software and integration your company uses for various parts of the planning and construction process.

Some may even mandate integration between the contractor's tech stack and the client and their professional teams. So being tech savvy is no longer a feature; it's a fundamental requirement of many of these contracts.

## Margin killers and reporting lags

Outdated systems and processes may well exclude construction companies from hyperscale projects altogether, but even if they don't, the usual risks will be amplified.

**Rework from outdated drawings and information becomes even more damaging when timelines are razor-thin, and every lost day risks incurring stiff penalties.**

**Clashes not caught on digital models and in the planning and design stage become exponentially more damaging to the critical path.**

**Fixed price contracts and hefty financial penalties add real monetary consequences to every mistake.**

**Weeklong reporting and data sharing cycles may already mean non-conformance on these kinds of contracts.**

Any of these issues can also cause **irreparable reputational harm**, and erase the chance of becoming a preferred contractor, and the repeat business that usually comes with that.

# Risk versus reward: The opportunity cost of standing still

## Because AI has evolved and grown so quickly, hyperscale construction projects are still a new, largely uncharted market for construction companies, but it's unlikely to stay that way.

While major players are working on their first big projects today, it won't take long before their own systems and processes become routine, and that includes procurement processes.

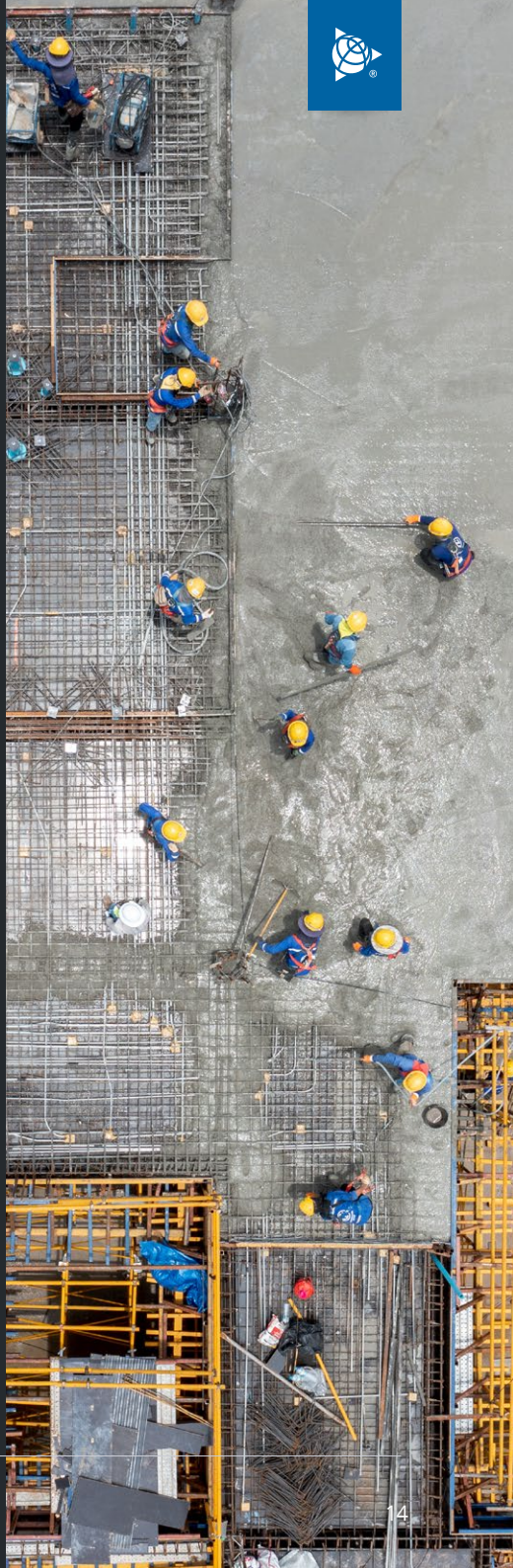
Historically, it has always been easier to become a preferred contractor or service provider earlier rather than later. So when a major customer opens a new branch in your area, or the local municipality puts out a call for contractor prequalification, it's always wise to get a foot in the door early.

The same will happen with the companies building tech infrastructure.

There are always reasons why modernising software, systems and processes can't happen right now.

You're too busy. There's no time for onboarding. The learning curve is too steep, or the investment of time, money or energy seems too high.

**But the cost of not taking those steps is now your ticket to working on hyperscale projects. Or not.**



# Modernising construction operations isn't about internal efficiency anymore.

Instead, it is very much about external eligibility, and if you can't keep up with the reporting and data management systems of the tech giants signing the cheques, it's likely you won't be working on their next big project.

## Construction digitisation

Enables companies to gain traction with some of the largest spenders and helps address other critical issues.

## Shrinking skilled workforces

Means construction companies need to do more with less.

## Increased competition

Means margins are thinner at tender close, and project efficiency is critical to the bottom line.

# In an interconnected industry, reputation is more important than ever.

The simple truth is that in a world where hyperscale projects exist, anyone who wants to compete in that arena simply cannot afford to attempt it using the same old, inefficient tools and processes they've always relied on.

The £36 billion infrastructure boom is real, and it's happening right now. It belongs to the contractors who can prove they are in control. Don't let legacy workflows cost you the contract of the decade.

# The hyperscale stress test

**If you're wondering how your company would stack up when competing for hyperscale projects, ranking certain key factors is a good way to get a quick overview.**

| Ranking Factor | Red | Amber | Green |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Reporting Speed** How long does it take to compile a full client report? | | | |
| **Field to Office Sync** Are site updates reflected in real time? | | | |
| **Coordination Control** When was the last clash detected before arriving on site? | | | |
| **Version Control** Can you guarantee no outdated drawings are in circulation? | | | |
| **Executive Visibility** Can your top management see project health metrics right now? | | | |

## Understanding your score:

- **Mostly red** – you are exposed.
- **Mostly amber** – you are competitive but vulnerable.
- **Mostly green** – you are ready for hyperscale projects.

Trimble UK
Trimble House, Gelderd Road
Morley, Leeds, LS27 7JP, England
+44 (0)113 887 9790



TRIMBLE.COM