



## ISITC Securities Operations Summit 2025- Event Recap by Meradia: Shifting Cycles, Smarter Tech, and the Future of Ops

The 31st Annual ISITC Securities Operations Summit, held earlier this week, brought together professionals from across the financial services industry to engage with thought leaders shaping the future of operations. Centered around the theme Resilience Through Innovation: Preparing for the Next Decade in Financial Services, the event explored topics including accelerated settlement, AI, U.S. Treasury clearing, and the evolving role of technology and data. While sessions spanned a range of themes, a common message emerged: the future will reward those who adapt quickly and wisely. The Meradia team has compiled a collective recap, highlighting key takeaways and recurring points from this year's discussions.

### THE CAPITAL CYCLE: FROM TAILWINDS TO HEADWINDS

The conference kicked off with a keynote address from Rob Almeida, Global Investment Strategist & Portfolio Manager, MFS Investment Management. He readily admitted to having a bias here, but his facts and points created a strong case for how, after a solid 10 years, we should be seeing a movement within the Capital Cycle. Over the past 10 years, markets benefited from low-cost labor and high access to cheap capital. But those tailwinds have shifted. As capital becomes more discerning, stock selection and fundamental research reassert their importance. For investment firms, this shift requires more than a strategy change; it calls for operational flexibility and an infrastructure that supports accuracy.

Passive investing thrived in a decade of low interest rates and cheap labor. Now, capital efficiency, service quality, and competitive differentiation are core value drivers. In a world where information is everywhere, the real edge lies in knowing what not to pay attention to. Leading firms continue shifting their focus to operational alignment: refining data flows, exception handling, and reporting structures to support smarter, faster decision-making.

### AI + OPS: A FUTURE OF SPEED, SCALE, AND COMPLEXITY

Artificial Intelligence (AI) was a central theme throughout the Summit, from discussions around regulatory implications to real-time data enablement. Sessions highlighted the rapid adoption of generative AI across financial services and the growing importance of prompt engineering, data governance, and responsible implementation. As Large Language Models (LLMs), agent-based AI, and rule-based automation reshape operational workflows, firms are racing to integrate these tools with clarity and scale. But amid the excitement, a consistent reminder surfaced: While AI transforms how we work, it won't replace the value of human judgment. Keynote speaker Rob Almeida captured this sentiment best: ***"The wisdom of humans: tomatoes are fruit, but they don't get tossed into a fruit salad."***

This simple but memorable quote is a reminder that human judgment still matters and will continue to play a key role as firms find the right balance between innovation and oversight.

### DIGITAL ASSETS & TOKENIZATION

Digital asset custody continues to mature, but key questions remain: Can the digital ledger stand alone, or do traditional systems still play a critical role? Conversations explored the growing divide between crypto-native platforms and tokenized versions of traditional assets.

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## DIGITAL ASSETS & TOKENIZATION (continued)

Recent regulatory momentum, including eased custody capital requirements, is pushing the space forward. Emerging platforms are beginning to bridge legacy and blockchain operations, signaling that real-world asset tokenization is transitioning from proof of concept to production. As expectations shift toward 24/7, fractional, and instant settlement, custodians and administrators must be prepared for things already taken for granted today such as how should yield or interest accrue in this “never close” environment?

## REPO MARKET & CLEARING COMPLEXITY

Discussions around U.S. Treasury repo clearing highlighted the complexity of what’s ahead. With sponsored and agent models gaining traction and a shift from bundled to unbundled pricing structures, operational knowledge gaps are becoming more visible. This is seen particularly among funds governed by strict regulatory frameworks. There’s uncertainty around how sponsor models will evolve, especially when it comes to margin responsibilities. What’s clear is that education, transparency, and full end-to-end readiness will be critical.

## DATA & DECISION-MAKING: FROM PASSIVE TO PROACTIVE

Forward-looking data strategies are now centered around real-time access, integration of alternative datasets, and full end-to-end digitalization. The vision is no longer just about collecting data, it’s about enabling action and decision making. Access and usability are emerging as competitive advantages, with firms shifting from passive data consumption to proactive, insight-driven operations. This requires more than new technology; it requires well-designed workflow and streamlined operating models.

## T+1, T+0, AND GLOBAL SETTLEMENT PRESSURE

***The shift from T+3 to T+2 took twenty years, but the move to T+1 happened in just seven. The next logical step, T+0, may be closer than we think.***

The U.S. transition to T+1 was smooth, thanks to early preparation, but the global road ahead is more complex. The 2027 deadline for markets like the UK and Europe comes with challenges. The EMEA challenge includes many more regulatory cooks in the kitchen as well as managing issues presented by multi-listed securities. Settlement tracking and exception handling will be key. Internal alignment and testing need to begin now. Firms that wait risk falling behind as the push toward T+0 accelerates. Clients who future-proof their operations, build flexibility and resilience into post-trade processes are best positioned to keep pace with evolving settlement cycles.

## THE EVOLVING FINANCIAL ECOSYSTEM

***“The back office used to be the backbone. Now it’s a differentiator.”***

What used to be a behind-the-scenes function is now a visible differentiator. Those with real-time data, cloud-native technology, and flexible workflows quickly become standard. These capabilities provide a critical advantage to those with them versus those without. This is also seen as Alternative investments continue to grow. There is a shift to these assets being required as they were more a “nice to have” in the past, which will ultimately reshape operational demands as they become required.

## REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE & INCLUSION

Upcoming AI regulations are likely to have global reach, particularly for firms that haven’t previously operated under strict governance structures. At the same time, the new urgency for U.S. policy is expected to introduce additional guidance and structure. This will, without a doubt, create more complexity. Meanwhile, diversity and inclusion remain high priorities as there is still added value in this space. Firms are navigating how to stay true to their values while responding to shifting political and regulatory landscapes.

## KEY TAKEAWAY: TURNING INSIGHT INTO ACTION

From AI and data to tokenization and clearing reform, this year’s ISITC Summit reinforced that staying informed is no longer enough. The industry is entering an era that requires thoughtful execution, cross-functional alignment, and a commitment to modernization. As firms look ahead to T+0, adapt to new regulatory frameworks, and integrate emerging technologies, turning insight into action will be critical to long-term success.