

ISSUE 1 · September 1, 2026 · Matt Citardi

Every Seat at the Table: What 30 Years in LIMS Actually Teaches You

Welcome to InCogSights, Issue One.

This is where I'll be writing, roughly every other week, about LIMS across every platform and industry, from the vantage point of someone who has sat in nearly every seat at the table: bench chemist, customer-side project lead, vendor-side implementer, and now independent consultant. No vendor agenda here, just what I've learned from watching real labs run real systems under real regulatory pressure. This first issue starts close to home, with the platform where that experience runs deepest: WinLIMS/eLIMS.

For issue one, I want to start where this all began for me.

From the bench to the platform

Thirty plus years ago, I was mixing reagents on a bench at American Cyanamid, not writing code. I didn't set out to become a LIMS specialist. But somewhere along the way, WinLIMS became my specialty, first at Barr Labs in 1995, where I evaluated and project-managed our WinLIMS implementation from the customer side, then for nearly three decades on the vendor side helping other labs get it right at QSI, later Confience.

That path matters more than it might seem. Most people who work with a LIMS platform see it from one seat: the lab tech entering results, the QA manager defending a Part 11 audit trail, the project lead trying to hit a go-live date without breaking validation, or the vendor trying to translate "the system should just work" into a configuration that actually holds up under GxP scrutiny. I've had all four of those seats, sometimes on the same project.

What thirty years actually teaches you

That kind of depth doesn't come from a certification. It comes from thirty years of watching the same platform evolve, break, get patched, get validated, and get used, or misused, by real labs under real regulatory pressure, over and over, across very different organizations.

A few things I've learned that don't show up in a training manual:

Audit trails fail quietly, not loudly. By the time a Part 11 gap surfaces in an audit, it's usually been there for months. The fix isn't a bigger checklist. It's understanding how the platform actually logs what it logs, and where the blind spots are.

Go-live pressure and validation rigor are natural enemies. Every project I've worked has had a moment where the deadline and the documentation started pulling in opposite directions. Knowing which corners are safe to round and which ones aren't is the difference between a smooth go-live and a very bad one six months later.

"It should just work" is a translation problem, not a technical one. The gap between what a lab manager wants and what a system can actually be configured to do is almost never about the software's capability. It's about someone not knowing the platform well enough to bridge that gap. That's the seat I've spent most of my career sitting in, on both sides of it.

Why I do this independently now

At Cogsult, that history is the whole point. I'm not selling a platform. I'm bringing lived-in WinLIMS/eLIMS knowledge to labs that need someone who's already made, and fixed, the mistakes. No product to push, no quota to hit, just the experience, put to use for your system.

That independence also means I'm not limited to one industry. Whether you're running WinLIMS or eLIMS in an environmental lab, a food and beverage operation, chemicals, a contract testing lab, or somewhere else entirely, the underlying platform challenges tend to rhyme, even when the regulatory context doesn't.

What to expect from InCogSights

Every other week, I'll dig into something specific: a pattern I keep seeing across implementations, a decision point that trips labs up during vendor selection, a validation approach that actually holds up, or a real (anonymized) story from the field. My goal is for each issue to be useful even if you never hire a consultant at all, me included.

If your lab is running WinLIMS or eLIMS and something feels harder than it should be, reach out. I'm always glad to talk through what you're seeing.

Thanks for reading, and I'll see you in the next issue.

Matt

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