

# Preparing to power up:

EMEA leads the way to an  
AI-driven future

In collaboration with

 **LONGITUDE**

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## Introduction

### EMEA's business leaders are preparing for AI's opportunities

The incoming impact of artificial intelligence and machine learning (AI and ML) is at the forefront of every savvy business leader's mind.

And it's approaching at speed: AI adoption more than doubled globally between 2017 and 2022 according to management consultancy firm McKinsey.<sup>1</sup> And our own global survey of senior business executives – including 1,410 from Europe and Africa (we refer to this region as EMEA) – shows that organisations in several countries are preparing to increase their AI investment over the next five years.

Alongside this growth and investment, it will be business critical for EMEA organisations to strike the right balance between effective mitigation of AI-related risks and over-regulation. The region's track record on policy has set a helpful precedent, giving many leaders here greater confidence as the EU AI Act<sup>2</sup> is developed.

Against this backdrop and continuing economic pressures, EMEA's organisations know they need to adapt their tools, processes, skills, and capabilities for an AI- and ML-driven future – or they might get left behind.



**52%**

of EMEA leaders welcome AI and ML adoption in their organisation, compared with 50% in the Americas and 46% in APJ (Asia-Pacific and Japan)\*

**44%**

of EMEA firms have made progress ensuring that the business is agile enough for resources to be reallocated at speed, compared with 40% in the Americas and 39% in APJ\*

**48%**

of EMEA CEOs see a lack of transparency as one of the greatest risks of AI and ML, compared with 58% in the Americas and 53% in APJ

# AI: The state of play in EMEA

## 1. EMEA leaders welcome AI adoption in their organisation

Our research shows 52% of EMEA business leaders welcome AI and ML adoption in their organisation – the highest of all regions we surveyed.\* Leaders in EMEA are generally more trusting of AI and ML, with CEOs in the region the least concerned about a lack of transparency and accountability (48% say it's one of the greatest risks of AI and ML, compared with 58% in the Americas and 53% in APJ).

Their lower levels of concern could be because Europe is seen as the region that's leading on global AI and ML policy and regulation. Following its introduction of GDPR, the EU is in the process of proposing a new legal framework for AI – the EU AI Act<sup>3</sup> – which focuses on strengthening governance around data quality, transparency, human oversight, and accountability.<sup>4</sup>

“These new laws have actually learned from some of the critiques of GDPR, which was that it was very onerous on companies – it didn't understand how they stored and collected data,” says Dr. Rumman Chowdhury, Responsible AI Fellow at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. “Frankly, a world in which we have bad regulation on AI is just as bad as a world in which we have zero regulation or standards on AI.”

## 2. Data management and bureaucracy are holding back progress

Despite EMEA's enthusiasm for AI and ML, not all business areas are ready. The region's IT leaders are the most likely to say that unreliable or unusable data is preventing them from achieving their aims (35%, compared with 30% in APJ and 29% in the Americas). Ironically, this could be attributed to EMEA's higher levels of regulation.

Meanwhile, 60% of EMEA organisations say their data is siloed, which makes it difficult to access usable insights in real time. They are slightly more likely to say this than organisations in the Americas, where 57% say their data is siloed. Are EMEA organisations finding it harder to break down traditional divides between teams?

As well as these silos, businesses in EMEA are struggling to remove internal roadblocks. Only a third have made good progress removing bureaucratic processes that slow down decision-making.\* Organisations need to develop a corporate strategy to mitigate data silos, and data integration in the cloud is already helping some businesses overcome this challenge.

# 52%

of EMEA business leaders welcome AI and ML adoption in their organisation. Leaders in Austria are the most likely to say this – 62% agree – followed closely by the UK at 60%. This could be because the UK is ahead on AI deployment, the survey shows.\* Meanwhile in Austria, the government set up an AI strategy in 2021, suggesting a proactive and positive culture around the technology.

# 70%

of German organisations say data is somewhat or completely siloed, compared with 63% in France. This suggests that French organisations have spent more time normalising and integrating their data.

### 3. Finance teams in EMEA lead the global pack on use of AI

EMEA finance teams have made more progress deploying AI and ML than finance teams in any other region.

Our data shows that 60% of EMEA finance teams are piloting, rolling out, scaling, or at maturity in AI adoption (compared to 47% of finance teams in the Americas and 52% of organisations in APJ). This suggests that they are more forward-thinking and open to change.

The region's IT leaders are also most likely to say that AI and ML will make it easier for IT to support other business teams, at 51% versus 45% in APJ and 43% in the Americas. And despite slower adoption rates than all other business functions in EMEA, the region's HR leaders are the most excited to use AI and ML in their roles, compared with both the Americas and APJ.



**30%** of firms in EMEA believe that AI and ML will have a high impact on one or more organisational functions such as finance, HR, and IT, while 48% believe it will have a moderate impact.



# EMEA leaders welcome AI

While AI and ML uptake could be faster in EMEA – 38% of organisations have yet to begin piloting the technologies – business leaders here are doing more than their peers in other regions to lay the groundwork for its arrival.

Our research highlights that 44% of EMEA organisations have made good progress in ensuring their business is agile so that resources can be reallocated at speed, compared with 40% in the Americas and 39% in APJ.\*

And business leaders are aware that accessing quality data is critical. When EMEA finance and HR leaders were asked which investments they will prioritise to ensure their teams continue to meet the needs of the business as they evolve, the top response for both departments was that they will invest in improved access to quality, usable data.

When we compare the adoption plans of different regions within EMEA, we find nuance.\* Organisations in Africa are least likely to be planning to invest more in AI and ML in the next six months, but are planning a steep investment curve after that. This reflects the continent’s strong and growing tech ambitions.

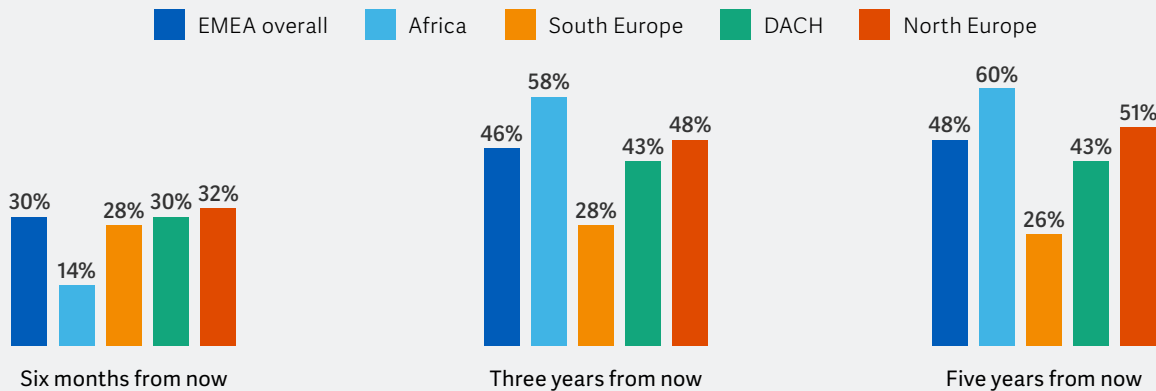
North European organisations are most likely to be investing the highest proportion in AI and ML in the next six months, and are then planning a steady rise in investment. The UK is currently the most likely to be already at the scaling-up stage of AI adoption or at maturity already. The UK government recently claimed that there are twice as many companies providing AI products and services there compared to any other European country, and this appears to be paying off.<sup>5</sup>

South European organisations are the least likely to be planning an increase in AI and ML investments within the next five years, which might be a result of a more traditional approach to business.

“ AI has changed the way we live and work, whether we humans like it or not. Whether you love it or hate it, AI has an ability to grow by itself – and very quickly. Quicker than our imaginations.

**Kirk Chang**  
Professor of Technovation and People Management and Director for the Centre of Innovation, Management and Enterprise, University of East London

## Proportion of EMEA organisations that intend to increase investment in AI and ML over time\*



**Survey question:** How do you think levels of investment into AI and ML at your organisation will change over time? (All EMEA respondents n=1,140; Africa respondents n=50; Southern Europe respondents n=100; DACH respondents n=360; Northern Europe respondents n=900)

## A nuanced approach to risk can make businesses less fearful

Chandler Morse, Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Workday, stresses that a nuanced approach to AI-related risk mitigation, like that being pursued in Europe, helps to safeguard public trust in the technologies. That means finding the balance between progress and protection.

“When we started these conversations in 2019, the first thing we said was that there needs to be a risk-based approach,” says Morse. “That risk-based approach needed to be nuanced to separate out the things that will have dramatic impacts on employment opportunities and the things that are less impactful. We think the Europeans have done a fairly good job of this.”

Sure enough, EMEA respondents are less concerned than those in APJ about the trustworthiness of AI and ML. This could be attributed, in part, to the regulatory framework in place in EMEA concerning data-related aspects of AI and ML. The region’s CEOs are also less likely than their counterparts in the Americas and APJ to see a lack of transparency as one of the greatest risks of AI and ML.



We’re going to see a lot of implementations of these technologies. There are concerns around some use cases and around some applications. And those concerns need to be addressed in a policy context.

### Chandler Morse

Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Workday

## Leaders in EMEA are generally more trusting of AI

CEOs who see a lack of transparency and accountability as one of the greatest risks of AI and ML



Business leaders who are concerned about the trustworthiness of AI and ML\*



**Survey question:** What are the greatest risks of integrating AI and ML into your organisation? (EMEA CEOs n=185; Americas CEOs n=175; APJ CEOs n=75)/To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the potential impacts of AI and ML? (EMEA respondents n=1,140; Americas respondents n=895; APJ respondents n=850)

# Within EMEA, leaders in Germany are more worried about AI transparency

CEOs who see a lack of transparency and accountability as one of the greatest risks of AI and ML

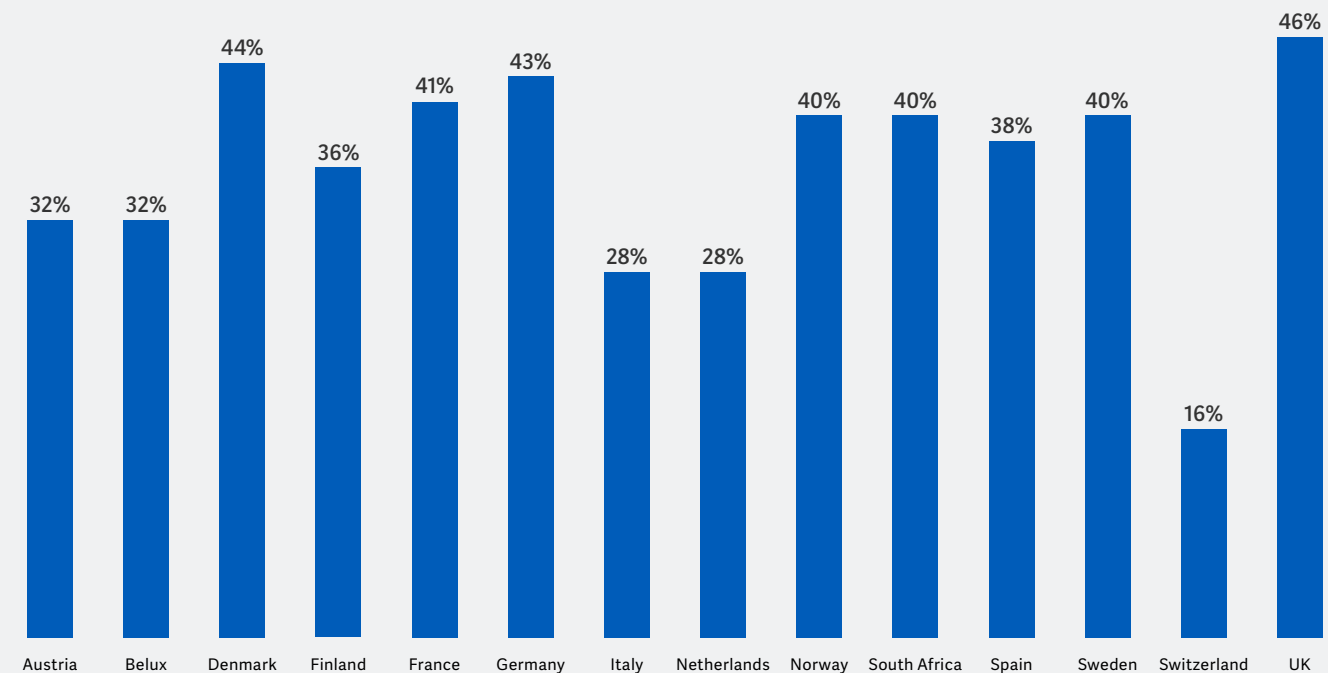


**Survey question:** What are the greatest risks of integrating AI and ML into your organisation?  
(France CEOs n=50; Germany CEOs n=50; UK CEOs n=85)

Within EMEA, business leaders in Germany are the most sceptical about AI's transparency and are also some of the most concerned about its trustworthiness, alongside the UK and Denmark. Business leaders in Switzerland are far less concerned about trustworthiness, which could be because of the country's clear and transparent regulatory environment.<sup>6</sup>

# Within EMEA, leaders in Switzerland are most trusting of AI\*

Business leaders who are concerned about the trustworthiness of AI and ML



**Survey question:** To what extent do you agree with the following statements about the potential impacts of AI and ML? (Larger EMEA sample n=1,410)



## Take 5:

# How to use AI to create business value

With myriad potential applications for AI and ML, implementing the technologies at scale can be a daunting exercise. Done effectively, however, they can form the foundation of your overall business strategy.



## Five ways to yield business value from AI

### 1 Separate the hype from reality.

Ensure your expectations match up with the reality of what the technologies can deliver for your business by asking questions. For example: Does the product learn on its own? How big are the data volumes? Start with the problem, not the solution.

### 2 Be clear about your capability.

There is little value in pursuing an AI and ML opportunity if you are not set up to implement it. Identify the gaps in your organisation and then set about filling them.

### 3 Choose trends that align best with your organisation.

Only put money and resources into AI and ML opportunities that are the right fit for your business. Start by identifying the problems or difficulties you would most like to fix today. Lean on business leaders who understand how the product could fundamentally help the business and which problem it could address.

### 4 Establish a roadmap.

Define your AI and ML goals and metrics, and develop a short-term and long-term framework to help you achieve them.

### 5 Evaluate your progress.

AI and ML solutions are forever evolving. Make sure you track their effectiveness, and adapt them regularly according to the changing needs of your organisation and the wider business environment.

# Data management and bureaucracy are holding back progress

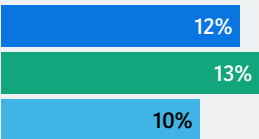
Alongside enthusiasm for AI and ML and the need for meaningful investment in these technologies, organisations need to work on the accessibility of their data – because it continues to make them less agile.

While the majority of EMEA organisations – 60% – say their data is siloed, which makes it difficult for them to access usable insights in real time, 39% of the region’s organisations have somewhat accessible or fully accessible data. This presents a compelling opportunity for competitive advantage by fully leveraging ML for prediction, anomaly detection, data analysis, and market trend forecasting.



## More organisations in the Americas are cutting back on data silos than in EMEA

Completely siloed



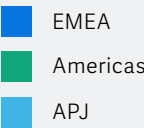
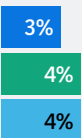
Somewhat siloed



Somewhat accessible

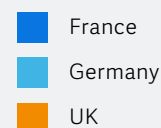


Fully accessible

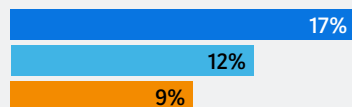


**Survey question:** To what extent is data readily usable across your organisation for those who need it?  
(EMEA respondents n=860; Americas respondents n=895; APJ respondents n=600)

## Within EMEA, UK organisations have more accessible data



### Completely siloed



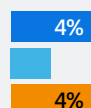
### Somewhat siloed



### Somewhat accessible



### Fully accessible



**Survey question:** To what extent is data readily usable across your organisation for those who need it?  
(France respondents n=260; Germany respondents n=260; UK respondents n=340)

Within EMEA, UK organisations are most likely to say their data is at least somewhat accessible, which may explain the country's strong AI progress.

Just 37% of organisations in EMEA say they have made progress on using AI and ML to streamline or augment workflows – but they are ahead of the Americas (34%) and APJ (31%).\*

And EMEA organisations' appetite for AI and ML might be strong, but our research shows that not all business areas are ready for the technologies.

Leaders who want to increase their teams' confidence that they can adopt AI and ML successfully should focus on a data strategy and bringing the team together to define the AI and ML use cases.



## Leaders say the areas that are least prepared for AI and ML are:\*

### 1 Planning models and operational analytics

39% say this is in the top 3 least prepared areas

### 2 Decision-making processes

35% say this is in the top 3 least prepared areas

### 3 Technology infrastructure and business applications

34% say this is in the top 3 least prepared areas

## Cultural change can lead to business change

For many organisations, greater use of AI and ML demands a significant cultural shift – but for that to happen, top-level management needs to be on board. According to our research, 37% of EMEA's leaders believe their organisation's business leaders do not yet recognise just how pivotal AI and ML will be.\* While it's encouraging that 63% did not agree with this sentiment, the level is still slightly higher than the other regions, with 34% saying this in APJ and 35% in the Americas.

"If managers themselves have a good understanding of AI and they're willing to help their employee to accept the AI, and appreciate the value and merit of it, then they can help their employee to work with it in a professional manner," says Kirk Chang, Professor of Technovation and People Management, and Director for the Centre of Innovation, Management and Enterprise at the University of East London. "When the employees have a better understanding of AI, for example, and what they can do, they are more likely to accept it and work with it."

Although each employee's personality has a big part to play in AI adoption – for example, if they are innovation oriented and open to learning new skills – managers will make a difference, according to Chang.

"For the nearer term, you need more people who are more cognizant in AI, who understand it and the applications," says Maria Ingold, Founder and CEO of media innovation consultancy mireality. "In the longer term, when AI becomes invisible or when it becomes 'productised', it makes less of a difference, because at that point we're just using it. It's become part of our daily life."

According to Maryjo Charbonnier, CHRO at information technology company Kyndryl, culture change will encourage business change. "Everything we do in culture change is really about three things: Changing behaviour, changing systems, and changing symbols," says Charbonnier. "And HR transformation is a way to put a proof point on the culture change to enable the business change."

“

The value and interpretation of human rights is very, very different. This has affected everything we do in our workplace. In order to make sure AI can work, we really have to understand the contextual factors – and culture is one of them.

### **Kirk Chang**

Professor of Technovation and People Management, and Director for the Centre of Innovation, Management and Enterprise, University of East London

“

AI and machine learning can't be standalone tools. They have to be integrated into your business strategy, integrated into your culture strategy, and then integrated into your HR strategy.

### **Maryjo Charbonnier**

CHRO,  
Kyndryl



## Take 5:

# How to overcome AI resistance

Overcoming organisational resistance to AI and ML adoption is an iterative process. It requires education, communication, cross-functional collaboration, and reassurance to create a supportive environment that encourages employees to embrace change.



## Five ways to kickstart a culture of innovation

### 1 Communicate clearly.

Be clear about the goals and objectives of AI and ML integration. Highlight how these technologies align with your organisation's strategic vision and how they can lead to improved efficiency, cost savings, and better decision-making.

### 2 Train and upskill.

Offer training programmes to equip employees with the necessary skills to work with AI and ML technologies. This will empower employees and encourage them to see these technologies as tools that can help them with their work.

### 3 Use change management.

Change management principles can help to ensure a smooth transition. Get leadership buy-in and establish a change management plan that addresses the people, processes, and technology sides of AI adoption.

### 4 Create a culture of continuous learning.

Emphasise that AI technologies are constantly evolving and your organisation's approach will evolve accordingly. This helps to create a culture of adaptability and continuous learning.

### 5 Celebrate achievements.

Celebrate AI-related milestones and achievements. This recognition will help to encourage greater engagement.

## Finance teams in EMEA lead the global pack on use of AI

Our research finds that 19% of EMEA’s finance teams are scaling their AI or at maturity, which is almost three times the level of finance teams in the Americas (7%). In APJ it’s just 4%. And their experience is helping them understand the benefits they can reap. EMEA’s finance leaders are the most likely of all regions to say AI and ML will make finance and procurement jobs more rewarding. They’re also the most likely to say it will help them meet their ESG goals.

19%

of EMEA’s finance teams are scaling their AI or are at maturity, which is almost three times the level of finance teams in the Americas (7%).

### Finance leaders in EMEA are most excited about AI’s potential for ESG goals

AI and ML will make finance and procurement jobs more rewarding



AI and ML will make it easier for finance and procurement to fulfil its sustainability/ESG goals



My team is not fully prepared for AI and ML



**Survey question:** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the impact of AI and ML on finance and procurement? (EMEA finance respondents n=225; Americas finance respondents n=240; APJ finance respondents n=175)

Overall, it’s encouraging that only 38% of EMEA finance leaders say their team is not fully prepared for AI and ML. But it’s clear that, for this group, there is work to do to upskill every employee to the necessary level of expertise. Within EMEA, UK finance leaders are most convinced that AI will make their roles more rewarding, but are also slightly more likely to believe their team is not prepared for it.

## Within EMEA, UK finance leaders are most convinced that AI will make their roles more rewarding

AI and ML will make finance and procurement jobs more rewarding



AI and ML will make it easier for finance and procurement to fulfil its sustainability/ESG goals



My team is not fully prepared for AI and ML



**Survey question:** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the impact of AI and ML on finance and procurement? (France finance respondents n=70; Germany finance respondents n=70; UK finance respondents n=85)



Dr Ansgar Walther, Associate Professor of Finance at Imperial College London, says it will be crucial for finance teams to close the gaps between employees who are more confident with new technologies and those who are more sceptical.

“The most impressive students have a good understanding of both the tech and the economics,” says Walther. “Companies need people to translate between management and the coders. This issue of trust sometimes creeps in because there is a little bit of segmentation in companies between the people that know how to use the tech and the decision-makers.”



### EMEA finance leaders say the areas where finance and procurement teams will get the most immediate value from AI and ML are:

- 1 Improving forecasts and budget decisions**  
**33%** say this will be in the top 3 areas of immediate value
- 2 Improving scenario-planning**  
**31%** say this will be in the top 3 areas of immediate value
- 3 Strategic planning support across business lines**  
**30%** say this will be in the top 3 areas of immediate value

### There are persistent questions about trust and transparency

Morse of Workday says that dealing with questions of trust and transparency is crucial to increasing the use of AI and ML in EMEA.

“We believe in the power of AI to unlock human potential,” says Morse.

“We know how these technologies can benefit economic opportunities for people – that’s our business. But people won’t use technologies they don’t trust. Skills are the way forward, and not only skills, but skills backed by a thoughtful, ethical, responsible implementation of AI that has regulatory safeguards that help facilitate trust. It’s incredibly exciting.”





## View from the top: CEOs' vision for AI

As the visionary, the CEO plays a crucial role in shaping an organisation's culture – including its willingness to use AI and ML.

"How AI and ML get used becomes really important," says Kyndryl's Charbonnier. "How you talk about how they get used becomes really important, especially as you're trying to create a very different culture."



### How do CEOs in EMEA feel about these technologies?



**53%** are excited to use AI and ML in their organisation – the highest percentage of all regions surveyed.



**74%** are not concerned about AI and ML minimising the importance of the role of the CEO, compared with 69% in the Americas and 60% in APJ.



**56%** say their organisation is prepared for AI and ML adoption, compared with 48% in the Americas and 45% in APJ.



**43%** agree that AI and ML will reduce risk, compared with 36% in both the Americas and APJ.



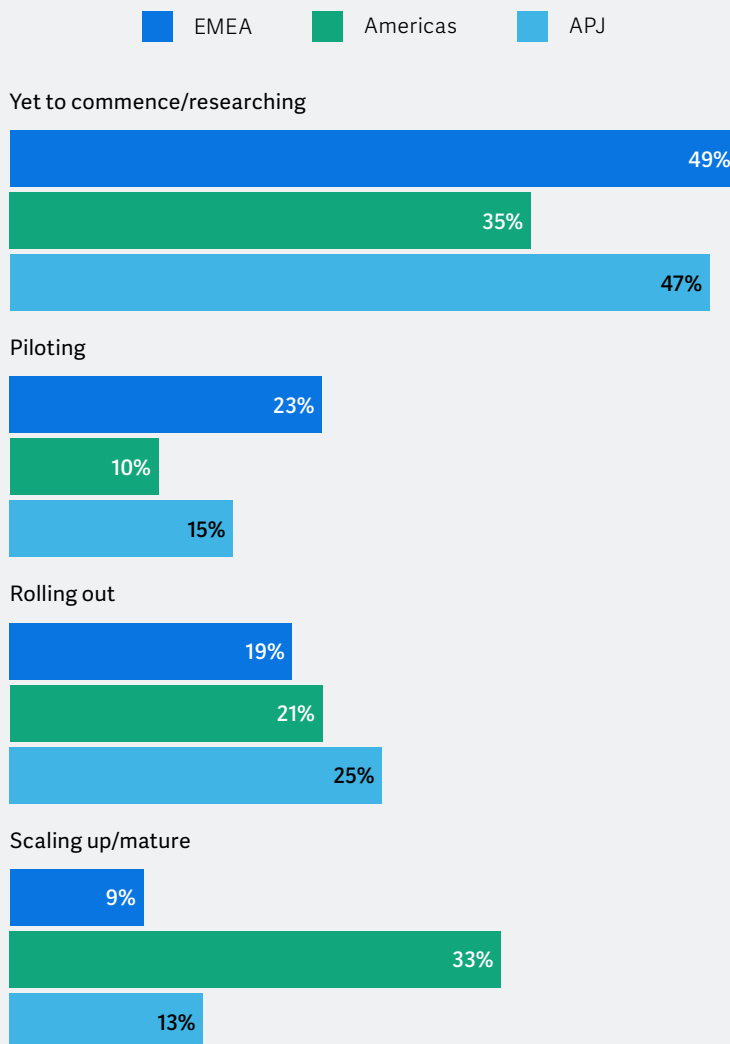
They say that **the number one risk** of AI and ML is potential errors. This is in line with CEOs from the other regions, although the EMEA cohort feels the most strongly about it (72% are concerned, compared with 65% in the Americas and 59% in APJ).

EMEA's CEOs are ready to lead their organisations into an AI-powered future, and they know how important their role will continue to be. Once they have increased their trust in the accuracy of these technologies, they will be even more confident of success.

## HR gets ready to increase its use of AI

Across business functions, EMEA's HR leaders have the slowest AI adoption rates. Our research finds that 44% are excited to use AI and ML in HR – the highest of all the regions – and they are also the most likely to say that it will bring new opportunities to leverage skills across the business. But about half (49%) have not started using it in their team.

### EMEA HR departments have work to do on AI adoption



**Survey question:** Which of the following best describes the current level of AI and ML adoption within your HR team? (EMEA HR respondents n=225; Americas HR respondents n=240; APJ HR respondents n=175)



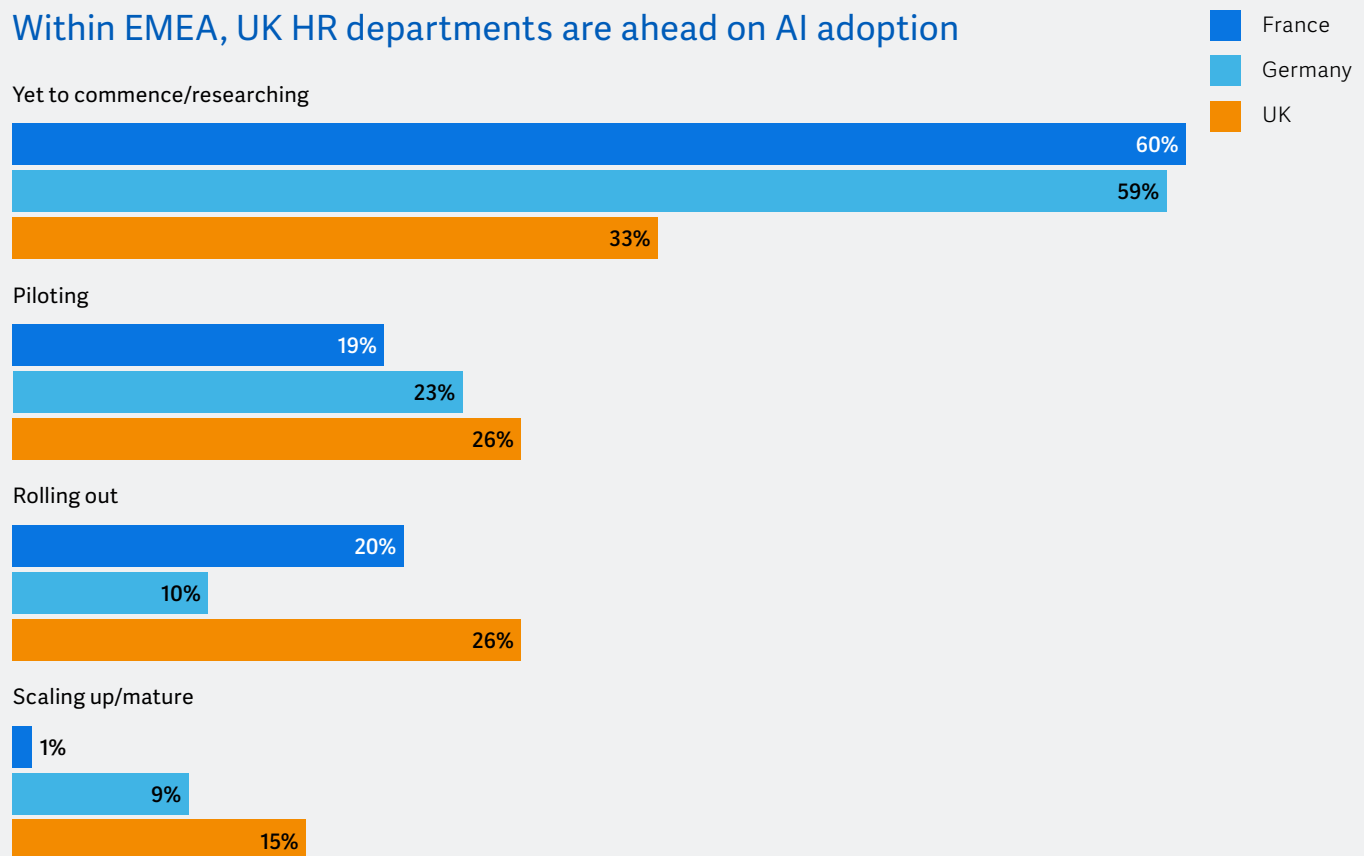
# 44%

of EMEA HR leaders are excited about using AI and ML in HR.

# 43%

say it will bring new opportunities to leverage skills across the business.

## Within EMEA, UK HR departments are ahead on AI adoption



**Survey question:** Which of the following best describes the current level of AI and ML adoption within your HR team?  
(France HR respondents n=70; Germany HR respondents n=70; UK HR respondents n=85)

The University of East London's Chang says that resistance from some HR managers comes down to concerns about how the technology could change their roles.

"Human beings are not willing to give their power away," says Chang. "They don't want to share their responsibility with AI for different reasons. Maybe for the fear, maybe for the job opportunity, maybe they worry other people will have different views about their status or their leadership. There are a lot of mixed feelings there."

## AI could reshape HR

Nathalie Carruthers, who is Chief Associate Success Officer at supply chain management organisation Blue Yonder, says people will feel more reassured about changes if they understand them and how they can benefit. “There’s always fear or anxiety with things we don’t fully understand, and it can be challenging to see the bigger picture,” says Carruthers. “But it’s really about looking at how you focus the skills and capabilities of your associates in a different way.”

Organisations need to invest in training or upskilling their existing talent so that everyone in the organisation can feel more confident about using AI and ML.

Skills will be valued differently as the new technologies grow in importance. But people skills will be as important as ever, says Carruthers: “There is no tool out there that can do what our HR professionals do. It’s about how we create the environment for our people to be more active in the things that require more human connection.”



“

My hope is that AI allows humans to do what we’re really good at and machines to do some of the things that are more tedious and time-consuming.

**Hari Dorai**  
SVP, HR operations,  
PVH Corp

## EMEA HR leaders say the areas where HR teams will get the most immediate value from AI and ML are:

### 1 Skills management

**34%** say this will be in the top 3 areas of immediate value

### 2 Payroll management

**33%** say this will be in the top 3 areas of immediate value

### 3 Recruitment and onboarding

#### Resource scheduling and deployment

*(equal percentage selected)*

**32%** say these will be in the top 3 areas of immediate value



## IT leaders are looking to AI to help them support business teams

### AI can turn IT leaders into co-pilots

As technology has grown more pervasive, business functions increasingly see IT teams as an extension of their own. And our research suggests the feeling is mutual.

Across the regions surveyed, EMEA's IT leaders are most likely to say that AI and ML will make it easier for IT to support other business teams, at 51% versus 45% in APJ and 43% in the Americas.

They are also most likely to say that AI and ML technologies will enable IT teams to deliver more strategic value – again at 51% compared with 48% in APJ and 46% in the Americas. This suggests that the region has built a better culture around the changes and that there is optimism about the opportunity for IT professionals.

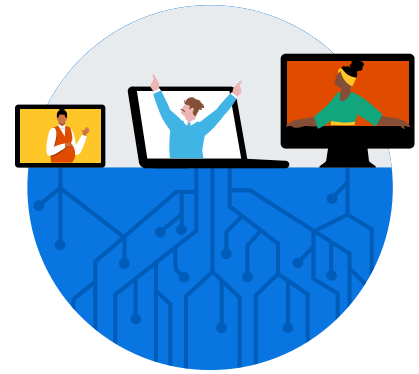
“The thing I’m really starting to hear people talk about is having somebody sitting next to you, essentially helping you write better code faster,” says mireality’s Ingold. “People say, ‘We had a hackathon at the weekend, and we innovated so quickly using [cloud-based AI tool] GitHub Copilot. It was so much faster than we’ve ever done it before, but it made a few mistakes. So you still need somebody who’s technical to work alongside it, but it really sped things up.’”

### Where subject-matter expertise meets AI

Alongside IT leaders in the Americas, EMEA's IT heads are the least likely to worry that they will be under pressure to make difficult decisions about where to apply AI and ML, even if IT may not have domain expertise – both 29%, compared with 52% in the APJ region. This could be linked to the perception that, as a region, EMEA is leading on AI legislative frameworks, so there are guardrails, as well as the experience of GDPR.

“This is where subject-matter expertise intersecting with understanding of AI is going to make a difference,” says Ingold. “You need to understand what’s possible, because AI is a big term that covers a lot of different areas.

“What’s important is that we learn how to use the tools that are available to us, and we’re going to need the elasticity in our brains to adapt.”



## Take 5:

# How to break through AI's trust barrier

When it comes to the potential impacts of AI and ML, 40% of EMEA business leaders say they worry about the trustworthiness of the technologies.\*



## Five ways to break through the AI trust barrier

### 1 Establish data privacy and ethics.

Robust AI guidelines will ensure that you safeguard data privacy and ethics within your organisation while getting the full benefits of the technologies.

### 2 Build normalised data.

Normalising data – transforming it into a standardised format – vastly improves accuracy and integrity. Applying AI to datasets that are large and of high quality is also important – ideally close to where the data is created. The further away the data is from the AI and ML engine, the higher the risk that its quality will be eroded.

### 3 Start small.

Don't let perfect be the enemy of good. Start your AI and ML pilot project by identifying what your stakeholders want. Then assess how the technologies can help to get you there.

### 4 Don't wait to test.

People won't start trusting new technology until they have seen it perform well with their own eyes. Starting with small projects for which results can be quickly verified will help people feel more confident.

### 5 Set up channels of communication.

If there are pockets of greater knowledge within teams, make sure they share their experiences with others to build confidence around them.

## Small steps, big results

Maximising AI fully is a collective responsibility that falls on both employees and their leaders. According to the University of East London's Chang, being proactive with the opportunity and building knowledge and expertise now will be key to long-term success.

"We advise employees to develop a more proactive attitude to welcoming the era of AI and AI-embedded workplaces, and, at the same time, upskill themselves in data analysis and retain the habit of continuous learning," says Chang.

## Elevate AI experts to shape your business strategy

Data should not be siloed within an organisation, and the same goes for AI experts. According to mireality's Ingold, they should be part of your advisory team.

"And if you're an AI company, have subject-matter experts in fields in order to help you shape your product appropriately," says Ingold. "You need to have both. That's the biggest area where people are running into problems."

EMEA's leaders are excited about the potential of AI and ML to power up their businesses, and they have every reason to be confident. The opportunity is there for the taking.



# About our research

The data in this report is based on findings from two surveys.

The first is a global survey of 2,355 senior business executives conducted in May and June 2023. Of the 2,355 respondents to the global survey, 860 are based in EMEA – in the UK, France and Germany.

Alongside this, we launched a second, shorter survey of 550 respondents in the EMEA region, which was also conducted in May and June 2023. As well as the UK, France and Germany, respondents to these questions came from Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland and Sweden.

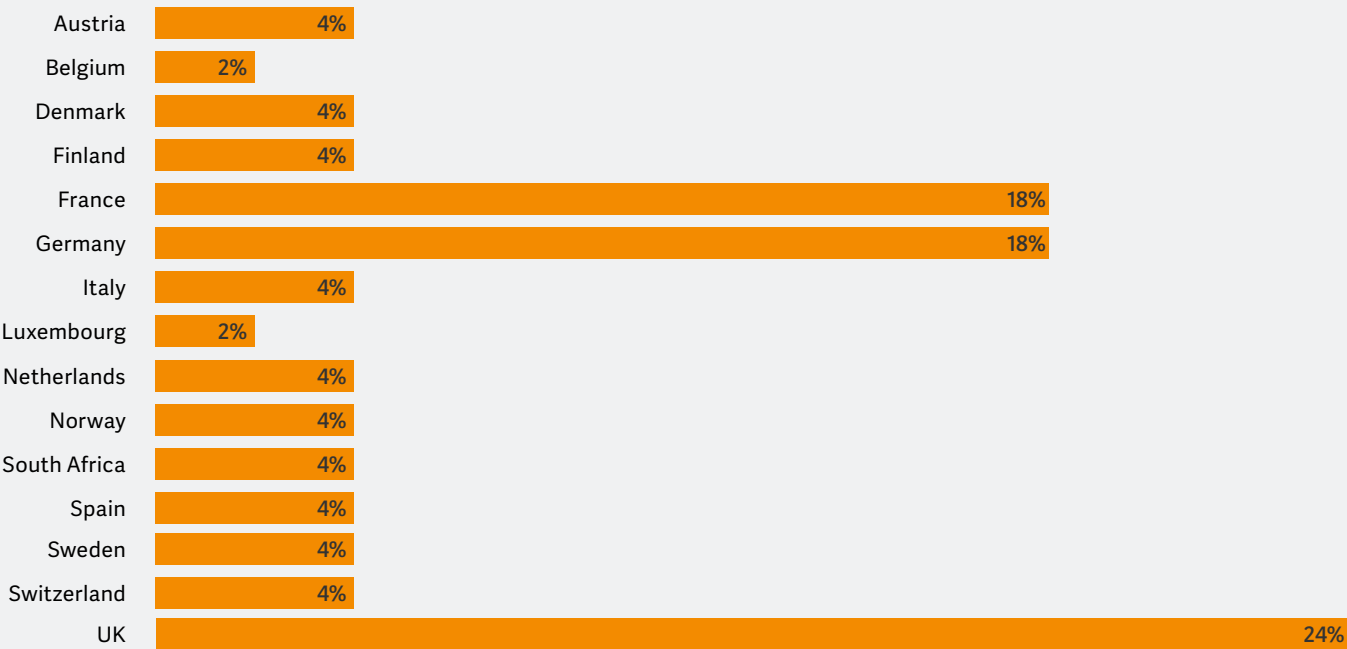
Together, these two surveys covered 1,410 respondents across EMEA. We have used footnotes to show where a question was asked of the larger sample.

Each of the respondents has oversight of or ultimate responsibility for the execution of their organisation’s digital strategy.

In addition to this qualitative analysis, we interviewed 16 global experts in AI and ML and senior business leaders from finance and procurement, IT and HR, and three AI experts based in the EMEA region.



## Respondents by country





## Glossary:

### How we define important terms in our research

**Artificial intelligence (AI):** The ability for machines to perform tasks that have traditionally required human intelligence, such as problem-solving, decision-making and understanding language. AI systems analyse and learn from data, recognise patterns and make predictions to support the automation of processes and more intelligent decision-making.

**Digital maturity:** Digital maturity can be defined as the alignment of “an organisation’s people, culture, structure and tasks to compete effectively by taking advantage of opportunities enabled by technological infrastructure, both inside and outside the organisation”.<sup>7</sup>

**Machine learning (ML):** A sub-discipline of AI that uses data and mathematical methods to learn and make predictions based on outcomes the model has already been trained on. It allows digital systems to automatically process data and analyse it for insights without being programmed explicitly.



Sources:

\* This question was asked to a larger sample of EMEA countries – see “About our research”

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/quantumblack/our-insights/the-state-of-ai-in-2022-and-a-half-decade-in-review>

<sup>2</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:e0649735-a372-11eb-9585-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:e0649735-a372-11eb-9585-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

<sup>3</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:e0649735-a372-11eb-9585-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC\\_1&format=PDF](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:e0649735-a372-11eb-9585-01aa75ed71a1.0001.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2023/06/european-union-ai-act-explained/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-unveils-world-leading-approach-to-innovation-in-first-artificial-intelligence-white-paper-to-turbocharge-growth>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.s-g-e.com/en/publication/fact-sheet/switzerland-hub-artificial-intelligence?ct>

<sup>7</sup> Kane, G. C., Phillips, A. N., Copulsky, J. R., and Andrus, G. R. (2019) The Technology Fallacy: How People Are the Real Key to Digital Transformation. MIT Press



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