The AI race: barriers, opportunities and optimism
Key Findings

85% of US CEOs and business leaders are AI optimists

87% of respondents are investing in AI initiatives this year

47% of respondents see China as the biggest obstacle to the advancement of AI in the US

52% ranked the US first when asked which country was leading the global AI race

33% cite employee trust as one of the greatest barriers to AI adoption even though CEOs and business leaders completely or somewhat trust AI

80% feel that the US government is most open to working with companies looking to adopt AI technology
The vast majority (85%) of respondents consider themselves AI optimists, and (87%) expect their companies to invest in AI initiatives this year.

**Are you an AI optimist or an AI pessimist?**

- 85% An AI optimist
- 15% An AI pessimist

**Do you expect to invest in AI initiatives this year?**

- 87% Expect their company to invest in AI initiatives this year
- 13% Do not expect their company to invest in AI initiatives this year
More than half of respondents (52%) ranked the US first when asked which country was leading the global AI race.

**Which five countries do you think are currently leading the AI race?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada (tie)</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (tie)</td>
<td>4%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

![World map with highlighted countries](image-url)
Nearly half (47%) of respondents believe China is the biggest obstacle to the advancement of AI in the US.

Which country is the biggest obstacle to the advancement of AI in the United States?

- China: 47%
- Russia: 14%
- Japan: 12%
- UK: 7%
- Canada: 5%
Most respondents (80%) feel the US has the government that is most open to working with companies to adopt AI technology.

Which three countries have a government that is most open to working with companies to adopt AI technology?

- **US**: 80%
- **China**: 49%
- **Japan**: 43%
Most respondents (71%) feel that AI should be regulated uniformly on a global level.
Respondents believe the US has the best long-term AI strategy.

Which three countries do you think have the best long-term AI strategy and will be winning the AI race three years from now?

- **US**: 50%
- **China**: 24%
- **Japan** (tie): 7%
- **Canada** (tie): 7%
87% of CEOs and business leaders trust AI, but employee trust (33%) was cited as one of the greatest barriers to AI adoption.

How much do you trust AI?

- 37% I completely trust AI
- 50% I somewhat trust AI
- 10% I do not trust AI very much
- 3% I do not trust AI at all

What is the greatest barrier(s) for companies when it comes to AI adoption? (select up to three)

- Lack of AI talent: 46%
- Regulatory/security risk: 40%
- Inefficient infrastructure support: 37%
- Insufficient quantity/quality of data: 36%
- Employee trust: 33%
- Consumer trust: 32%
- Lack of support from senior leadership: 26%
When it comes to trusting AI within their companies, respondents feel that reliability and performance of the technologies (44%) is the most important.

Which of the following is most important to you in trusting AI within your company? (select up to three)

- Reliability and performance of the technology: 44%
- Security and incorruptibility of the technology: 38%
- Ethics surrounding the use of AI: 29%
- New opportunities driven by AI: 27%
- Governance and supervision of the technology: 27%
- Education and awareness training surrounding use of AI: 23%
- Policies and standards for the development of AI: 23%
- Explainability of AI conclusions: 22%
- Changes in the industry or supply chain driven by AI: 21%
- New competitive pressures driven by AI: 16%
- Minimization of bias: 12%
Most respondents (82%) expect their businesses will be disrupted by AI to some extent within the next three years; 29% expect AI to disrupt more than half of their business.
Methodology

**Who**
The data was collected via an online study conducted by Engine on behalf of EY among a sample of 500 US CEOs and business leaders ages 21 and older who work for a company with US$25m–US$50m in revenue or US$50m + in revenue. To qualify for the study, respondents also had to have C-suite job titles, or director or above titles and involvement in technology-related decisions for their company.

**When**
Online interviews took place in March 2019
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