Public's Unease With AI Is Creating Another Hurdle for Adoption

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Body

More than half of the U.S. population is concerned about the increased use of artificial intelligence in their daily lives, a recent Research Center study recently reported.

The study's findings, published late last month, indicate that older generations have the most concerns about AI, but it did also show that the younger Millennial and Gen Z cohorts are becoming more skeptical of the technology.

The findings underscore that it won't be enough for AI developers to develop technological breakthroughs and navigate the complex legal landscape. A lack of widespread comfort with the technology would be major headwind slowing down AI adoption.

The Pew study did have some bright spots for AI advocates. For example, it found that certain advancements, such as accessibility finding products online or making safer vehicles, are seen as potential advantages of machine learning.

Growing public awareness of AI and its capabilities has coincided with the increased concern, and, as the study notes, the divide in trusting AI splits among different demographics, such as gender, income and education.

The study indicates that Americans with higher incomes tend to view AI as beneficial for completing certain tasks. This trend also can be seen regarding education level, with 46% of college graduates saying AI will do more to help their patients in comparison with only 32% of adults with less education sharing this opinion.

For businesses, a growing concern with AI innovation includes greater susceptibility to data breaches, which is why it's incumbent upon the attorneys advising those clients to be diligent about horizon-scanning.

"Management of AI-related risks is currently one of the top challenges for businesses," said ***Stephanie Goutos***, the practice innovation attorney for Gunderson Dettmer Stough's labor and employment practice in New York. "Lawyers can proactively begin to address this by developing and implementing best practices to encourage the responsible use of [generative] AI within their organization."

About 6 in 10 college graduates say that AI hurts more than it assists with keeping people's information private. Adults with some college or less also shared the same concern, with 50% of those saying it would be harmful, compared with 10% saying it would be beneficial, the study said.

Goutos said the best practices for responsibility using generative AI incorporate cybersecurity and safety, including having firms educating clients and their own lawyers and staff about the benefits, limits and risks of generative AI.

Firms could host hands-on workshops, online learning sessions or work with consultants to educate about the risk. However, at a minimum, employee training should emphasize existing obligations, professional responsibilities, and relevant laws and regulations governing the use of generative AI technologies in the practice of law, Goutos said.

As for the future of its use in the legal profession, Goutos said she doesn't believe AI will replace lawyers, but she does suspects those lawyers who use AI will replace those who do not.

"Responsibly and effectively managing the risks associated with AI should be a natural extension of an organization's already robust risk management practice," she said. "Most importantly keep abreast of trends and developments, remain agile, and be ready to pivot. While we may not have all of the right answers yet, the wrong answer is to do nothing."

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