

OhioX

STATE OF AI_2025



presented by

F FAIR™

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly transforming industries and impacting all aspects of daily life across the globe. Ohio, with a strong industrial base, nationally recognized research institutions, and a growing technology sector, has a unique opportunity to harness AI's opportunity for economic growth, workforce development, and enterprise transformation.

A simple question guided our work around AI in over the past year: What is Ohio's AI opportunity? Throughout 2024, OhioX, with underwriting sponsorship support from Foundry for AI by Rackspace (FAIR™), led a statewide effort to better understand this question, engaging with key technology-focused stakeholders and gathering their insights.

While we may not have arrived at a definitive answer, with the help of technology leaders from across the state, we now have a clearer picture of where Ohio's AI strengths lie and the areas where we can establish a competitive edge. This effort captured insights from enterprise leaders, AI practitioners, and entrepreneurs to inform and highlight Ohio's AI strengths and opportunities.

Our findings are derived from:

- **Six AI Roundtables** with senior technology leaders from some of Ohio's largest enterprises, held in Cincinnati (2), Columbus (2), and Cleveland (2). These discussions provided a deeper understanding of industry-specific AI challenges and opportunities, perspectives on AI's role in driving business value, and challenges companies face in AI implementation.
- **The Ohio AI Summit**, a sold-out statewide event in November 2024, which gathered qualitative insights and quantitative data from a diverse audience, including executives, academics, and entrepreneurs around topics such as real-world Ohio AI applications.
- **A statewide AI survey**, capturing responses from 106 participants across various industries and organization sizes, offering quantitative insights into AI adoption, business use cases, and future expectations.

This State of AI_2025 Survey synthesizes key findings from these engagements, providing an overview of Ohio's AI strengths, emerging trends, and areas of opportunity. Moving forward, we hope this report will serve as a roadmap for organizations and leaders looking to align their AI strategies with Ohio's strengths. Through continued investment in AI infrastructure, workforce upskilling, and innovation-friendly policies, Ohio can continue to build a strong reputation as a hub for practical and ethical AI excellence.



A Message from OhioX

The world is experiencing a technological revolution, and artificial intelligence is at the forefront of that transformation. For Ohio, this moment presents both an opportunity and a challenge: How do we position our state as a leader in AI while ensuring we build a workforce and economy that can thrive in this new technological revolution?

Over the past year, OhioX has convened business leaders, entrepreneurs, and tech professionals to explore that very question. Through roundtables, a statewide AI Summit, and an extensive survey, we have worked to understand where Ohio stands today and what must be done to seize our AI opportunity. While we may not have all the answers yet, this report provides a clearer picture of where we have strengths to build upon—Ohio's dozens of Fortune 1000 companies, our expanding research ecosystem, and our capacity to implement AI in real-world, responsible ways.

Our work in this space also included partnerships with the State of Ohio and then-Lt. Governor (now U.S. Senator) Jon Husted on three major AI initiatives: Ohio AI Forums, the Ohio AI Toolkit, designed to introduce AI concepts to Ohio schools, and Ohio's AI in Education Strategy, a framework to help schools and students for the transformative potential of AI.

In Fall 2024, OhioX led a statewide initiative called “Ohio for Computer Science” where over 100 CEOs and business leaders published an open letter to Ohio’s state leaders and policymakers calling for renewed support for K-12 computer science education in the age of AI. Efforts like these, developed with direct input and leadership from OhioX members, reinforce the idea that AI is not just a technological shift—it’s a workforce and economic opportunity.

What’s clear is that AI is not just about technology; it’s about people—the workers and innovators who will build Ohio’s AI future. This report captures the insights from the past year’s work and serves as both a benchmark and a guide for what’s ahead. The path forward will require collaboration between industry, education, and government to ensure that AI benefits all Ohioans. Whether through continued investment in AI education, strengthening our innovation ecosystem, or driving responsible AI policies, now is the time to act.

This report marks a starting point. We now have a roadmap to guide our efforts, and I encourage Ohio’s business and technology leaders to lean into this moment. The future of AI is being shaped now, and with the right investments, policies, and partnerships, Ohio can lead in the AI-driven economy of tomorrow.



**Chris
Berry**

President + CEO
OhioX

A Message from Foundry for AI by Rackspace (FAIR™)

The Ohio AI Report clearly demonstrates that our state stands poised to become a national leader in responsible AI adoption. Our state's industrial strength, world-class research institutions, and collaborative ecosystem create a unique foundation for AI leadership. Yet challenges remain—talent access, responsible implementation, and bridging the gap between AI experimentation and real-world impact require coordinated action across business, education, government, and communities.

At Foundry for AI by Rackspace (FAIR™), we understand that AI represents more than technological advancement—it's an opportunity to build smarter, more resilient businesses. Through our partnerships with enterprises across Ohio, we've witnessed how organizations maximize AI's potential through strategic implementation. Across financial services, healthcare, and manufacturing, AI drives transformation when deployed thoughtfully and responsibly.

FAIR focuses on scaling AI through three core principles:

Architect to Evolve – AI solutions must be designed with flexibility, adapting to changing business needs, emerging technologies, and evolving regulations. Organizations building with iterative, scalable architecture position themselves for long-term success.

Design to Sustain – AI must be sustainable in cost, compute efficiency, and integration with existing workflows and talent strategies. AI should enhance human capability, not replace it, ensuring businesses thrive in an AI-augmented economy.

Engineer to Operate – Success requires moving AI from experimentation to production at scale. Models and processes must be reliable, secure, and continuously optimized for performance to deliver measurable business value.

FAIR is an industry-leading global practice driving practical innovation through strategic AI adoption. With over 70 successful Enterprise AI implementations across industries, we help organizations navigate complex challenges to achieve measurable business outcomes. Our team provides the expertise needed to accelerate revenue growth, improve operational efficiency, and enhance customer experiences—delivering tangible returns within weeks rather than months.

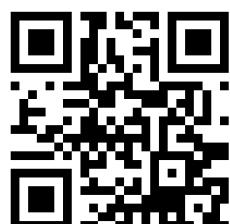
As members of the Ohio community, we're committed to supporting the state's AI journey by providing expertise, infrastructure, and strategic guidance that transforms AI potential into impact. We look forward to collaborating with industry leaders to shape an AI-powered future that is both responsible and transformative.



**Srini
Koushik**

President AI, Technology, and Sustainability,
Rackspace Technology

Learn more about Foundry for AI by Rackspace (FAIR™) click [here](#) or scan QR code.



Who Did We Hear From

Overall, we collected data from about 600 people: over 100 senior executives at our six AI Roundtables, 400 people from diverse backgrounds who joined us at the Ohio AI Summit, and slightly over 100 people via the survey. These 600 people had a diverse range of roles/seniority, industries, company size, and Ohio metro areas.

The six Roundtables were invite-only events focused on senior technology leaders, held in Columbus, Cleveland and Cincinnati. The AI Summit (held in Columbus) was attended by a wide variety of attendees from across Ohio that included startups, Fortune 500 companies, higher education institutions, and small businesses.

For our survey, and overall, we had high representation from central Ohio. Technology leaders (like CIOs and CTOs) were prevalent. People who work for companies in the technology and software industry were the most common respondents, but other industries had representation and were, by and large, reflective of Ohio's overall economy. Company size varied, with both a lot of startups and large enterprises answering the survey, but also from companies in between.

The survey, and our work at large, was a “sample of convenience” and not a scientific study that tried to achieve full representation from across metro areas, industries, and the like. As such, it is important to know the basic demographics of where the data came from.

In the future, we'd love to have more robust research done, but this is a start.



AI Roundtables

100+ senior executives



AI Summit

400 attendees



AI Survey

100+ respondents



OhioX

Key Survey Findings

- **Does Ohio have an "AI" opportunity?** Yes, 52% of Survey respondents said they are bullish on Ohio's AI opportunity.
- **What is Ohio's top AI opportunity?** Startup incubator was the top answer at 28% with responsible adoption and infrastructure/services provider tied for 2nd at 19%.
- **What phrases represents the most important aspect of Responsible AI?** The top 2 answers were: Transparent and Accountable (41%) and Ethical, Fair, and Inclusive (17%).
- **Where is Generative AI on the Gartner Hype Cycle for their company?** The top two answers were Technology Trigger (27%) and Slope of Enlightenment (25%).
- **What level of priority does your organization currently place on integrating AI technologies into production by 2025?** 48% of respondents said it was a "High" priority for their company. Next was "Moderate" at 31%.
- **Which approach are you using for your top AI use cases?** The runaway answer was "Doing It Yourself" at nearly 70% followed by "Buying a Solution" at 42%.
- **What ways are you capturing business value using AI?** "Process efficiency by reducing manual steps" was a clear winner with 86% of respondents choosing this answer followed by "Discovery & insights to unleash creativity" with 55%.
- **What types of generative AI applications have you put into production or plan to deploy in the next 6 months?** Co-pilots (65%) and Tools (63%) were the two runaway answers.
- **What is the biggest single barrier your organization faces in adopting Generative AI?** Lack of clear business case (28%) was the top answer.
- **How would you rate your organization's current level of Generative AI adoption?** 34% said they are "exploring potential applications (pilot stage)" and 28% said they are "actively implementing GenAI in limited areas."
- **Which of the following strategies has your organization employed to overcome barriers to Generative AI adoption?** Workforce was the clear answer with 64% of respondents saying "upskilling" current employees on AI skills was a top priority.
- **What resource does your organization need most to advance Generative AI adoption?** Increased budget and funding was the clear #1 choice with 38%.
- **How effective has executive support been in advancing Generative AI adoption in your organization?** 37% of respondents said their executive support has been "very effective" followed closely by 32% saying "somewhat effective."
- **How would you rate the ROI of your Generative AI initiatives so far?** 31% reported that they have not found "measurable ROI yet" while 29% stated they have found "moderate" ROI.

Does Ohio have an AI opportunity?

What is Ohio's AI opportunity? In our in-person sessions and in the survey, we raised the question this way:

Does Ohio have an "AI" opportunity?

Is there an Ohio "right to win" in AI vs. coastal hubs, better funded ecosystems, etc.?

The options for responses:

- Yes, I'm bullish on Ohio's AI opportunity
- Maybe, if do we do certain things well and overcome some obstacles
- No, I'm skeptical that Ohio can compete in AI

In the survey, and in our in-person conversations, the community was optimistic about Ohio's AI opportunity, but people saw obstacles to competing on a national level. Most noted is the amount of venture capital dollars and general AI investment going to a few companies in places like Silicon Valley.

In the survey more people answered "Yes, bullish" than "Maybe, if we overcome obstacles." Only 2 of 106 said they were very skeptical that Ohio could compete.

At the AI Summit, we had a less optimistic crowd, with 58% "maybe" and 40% bullish.

At Roundtables, the positive people cited practical reasons why we can compete, such as being historically good at grinding out practical solutions. The less positive people cited our lower risk-taking tendencies compared to the coasts, for example.

As for difference by respondent, in the survey, CIOs/CTOs and Directors were more bullish than other job titles/seniority. VPs were, generally, less bullish.

By industry, Government/Public Sector and Education/Research were more bullish than other sectors. People in the Tech/Software sector were a little less bullish than others.

Surveyed people in Cleveland and Cincinnati were slightly more bullish than people from other parts of the state. This differed from the Roundtable, where our Cleveland attendees were more skeptical than Roundtable attendees in Columbus and Cincinnati.

AI Summit

40% Yes

58% Maybe

2% No

AI Survey

53% Yes

45% Maybe

2% No

What is Ohio's top AI opportunity?

After taking the insights on “if” Ohio has an AI opportunity, we wanted to dive into “what” that might look like. We phrased the question this way:

What is Ohio's top AI opportunity?

What can we do in Ohio to excel at AI? Where do we have an advantage that can differentiate how we do AI compared to other parts of the US (and world)?

In the survey, startup incubator was the top answer at 28% with responsible adoption & infrastructure/services provider tied for 2nd at 19%.

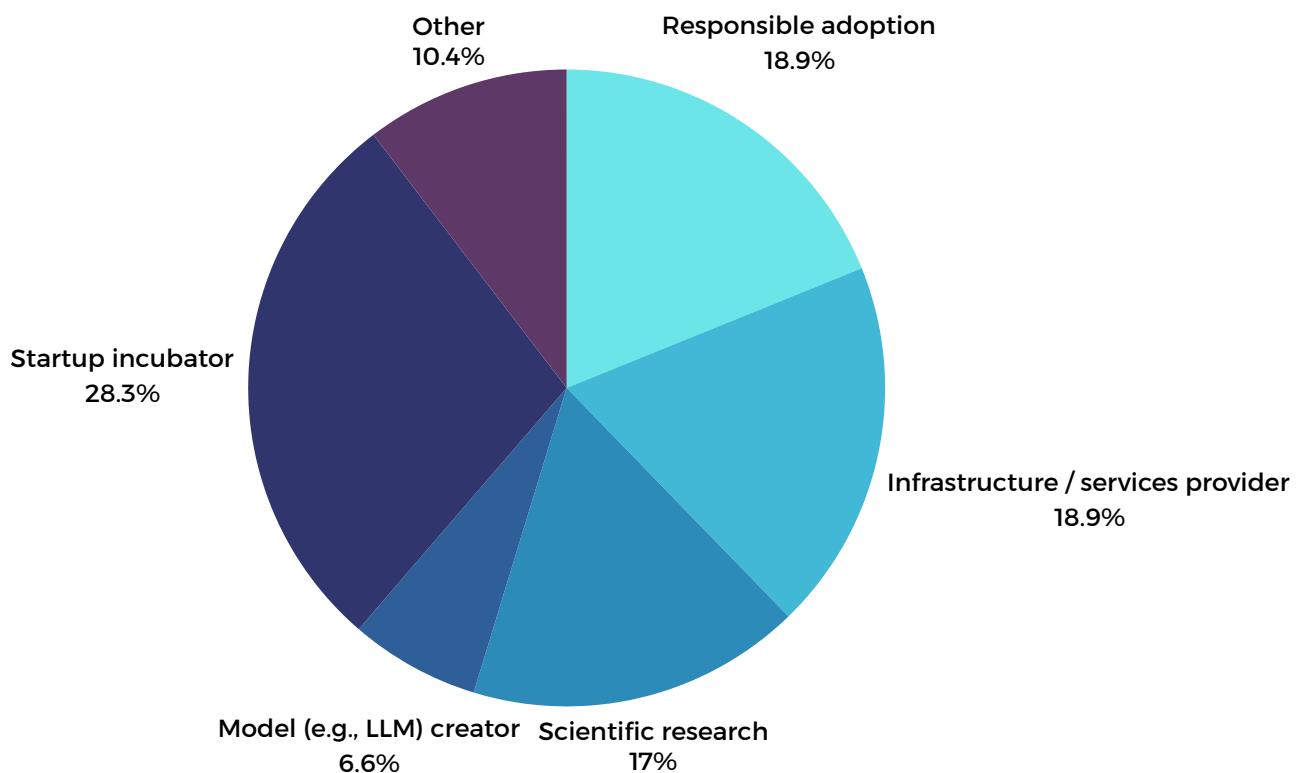
This was a little different than at the Roundtables, where responsible adoption was #1 and Startup Incubator was #5. This is likely because Roundtables were attended by a lot of large enterprise leaders and we had a higher representation from smaller companies in the Survey.

At the AI Summit, responsible adoption was #1 and infrastructure was #2.

Scientific research ends up about 4th most of the time, getting about 15% of the votes.

Model building consistently ends up at the bottom of the list. In the survey, smaller companies (e.g., startups) and Toledoans responded with that choice at a much higher rate than others.

In the survey, we let people answer “other” for this question. Manufacturing was the most common industry mentioned.



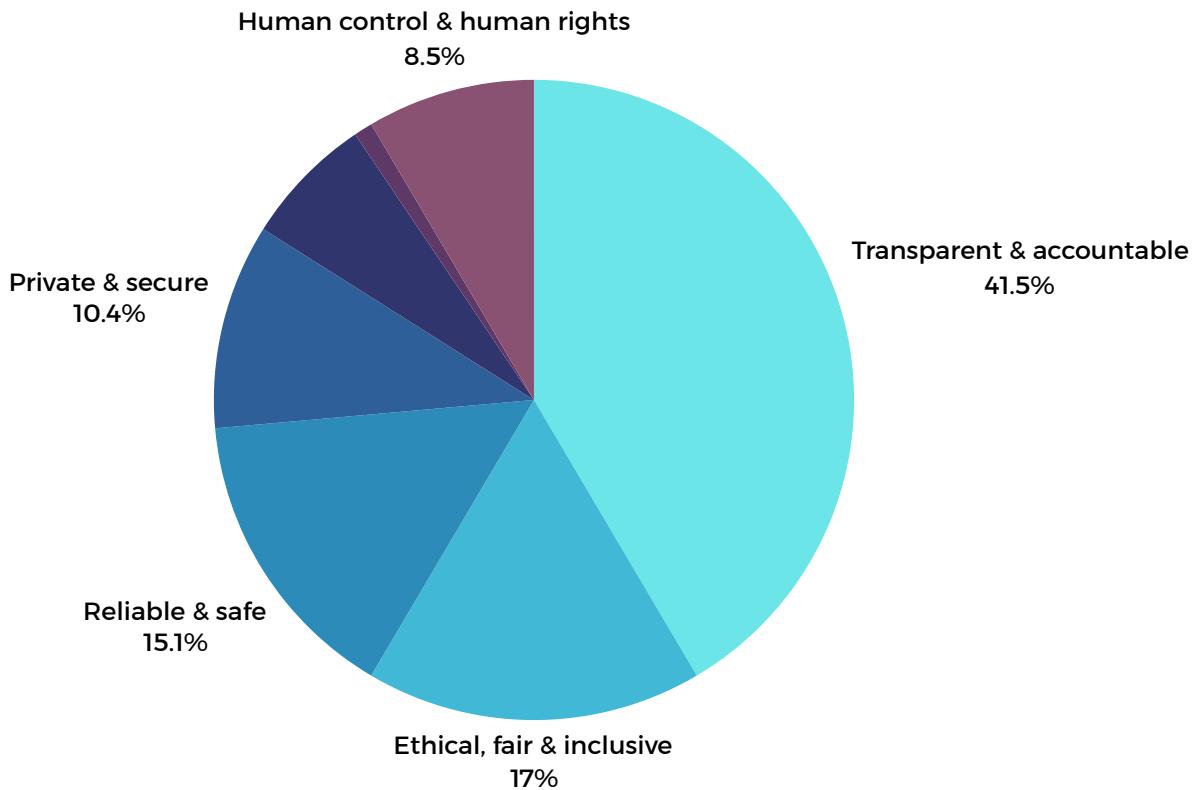
What phrase represents the most important aspect of Responsible AI?

One theme that continues to come up across Ohio when it comes to Ohio's AI opportunity is the idea of "responsible AI." We wanted to delve a little deeper on this and asked people to tell us which aspect was most important to them:

Transparent and accountable was the clear top choice in the survey. It was also top at the Roundtables and #2 at the AI Summit. In discussions, people noted that being transparent and accountable helps enable the other aspects of Responsible AI, which is why they choose that from the list.

Ethical and reliable were the next most popular choices in the survey, which is consistent with the Roundtables and AI Summit audience answers.

Net: People think there is opportunity for Ohio to excel at AI, but we will have to do some things differently/better. We excel at "practical solutions" and lower-risk activities.



What should we invest in to build Ohio's AI future?

At the Ohio AI Summit we held a design session with attendees, asking them to weigh in more deeply with their thoughts and perspectives. It was a robust conversation.

To conclude, we asked the participants to summarize their thoughts with a few words many to summarize our design session with a few words on where we, as a state and tech community, need to invest in order to successfully build Ohio's AI future. Here is their word cloud:



What should we invest in to build Ohio's AI future? (cont'd)

As you can see from the word cloud (previous page), many answers explicitly mentioned education, workforce, and training. Collaboration was the next more common category. There were a lot of single, more detailed answers like inclusion, culture, and existing industries. We think it's important to note that when education was discussed it did not solely focus on just tech workers. It was often mentioned for employees at large and leaders expressed the need for AI education across the entire workforce of a company.

A lot of these responses can be categorized as "excel at AI in areas we are already good at," such as manufacturing and education.

As mentioned in the opening, OhioX's AI education work has already been underway. It has included partnerships with the State of Ohio and then-Lt. Governor (now U.S. Senator) Jon Husted on three major AI initiatives: Ohio AI Forums, the Ohio AI Toolkit, designed to introduce AI concepts to Ohio schools, and Ohio's AI in Education Strategy, a framework to help schools and students for the transformative potential of AI.

These efforts, developed with leadership and input from OhioX members, reinforce the idea that AI is not just a technological shift—it's a workforce and economic opportunity.



What are Ohio business AI capabilities and challenges?

We also collected data about where Ohio companies are at in their AI journey, both overall and with respect to Generative AI. This will help us put their "opportunity" answers in context and can be a foundation for understanding how AI evolves in Ohio in the years to come.

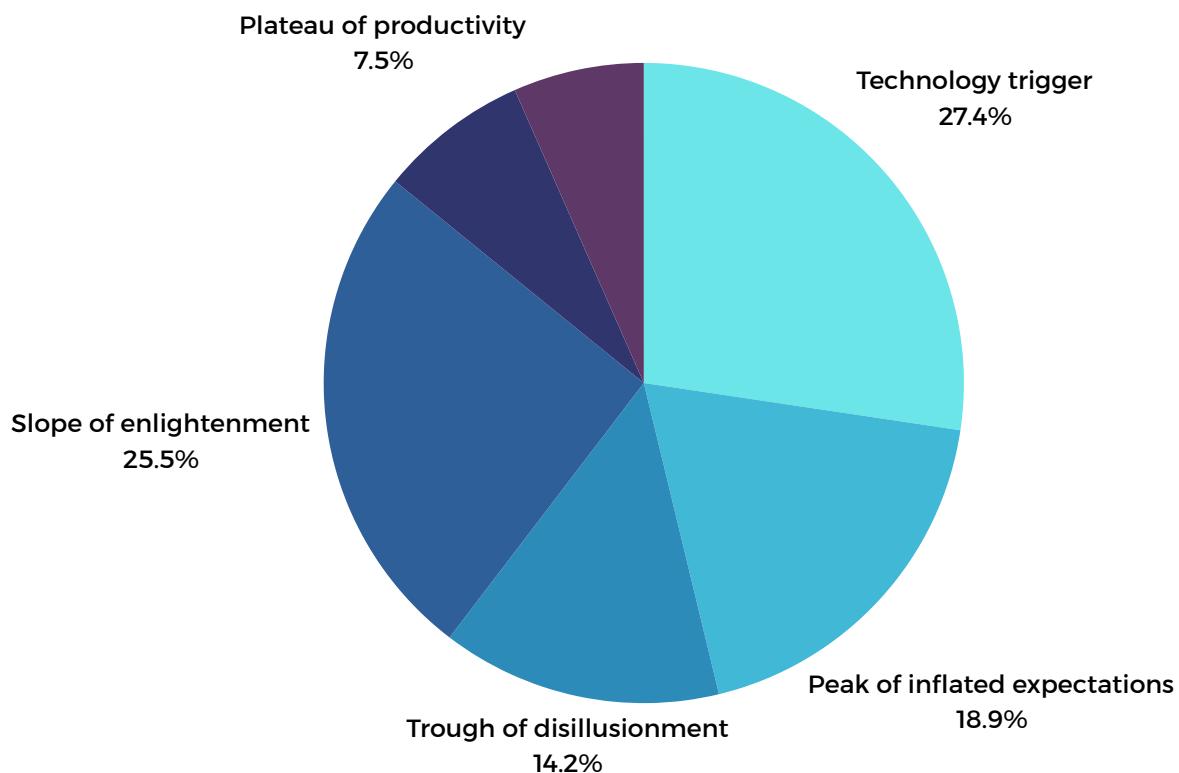
It's important to note that technology leaders often reminded us that AI is not new to them. They have been using the technology for many years. It is Generative AI, thanks to the launch of ChatGPT in November 2022, that made AI more democratized and decentralized for anyone to use.

We asked where Generative AI was on the Gartner Hype Cycle for their company.

Trigger and slope were the top answers with peak #3 and trough #4.

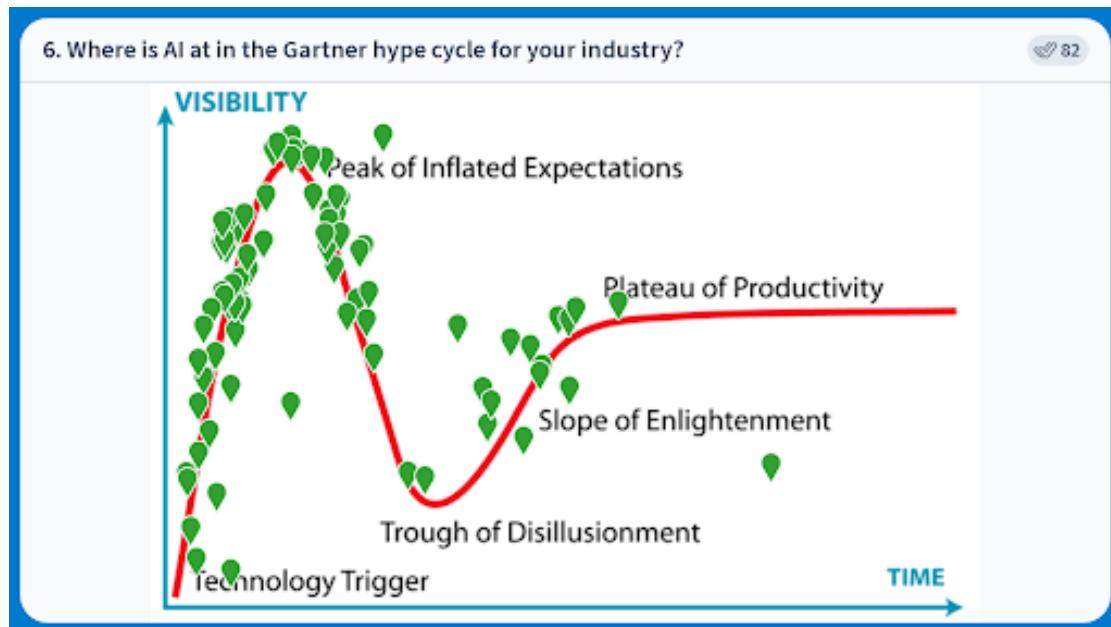
At Roundtables, earlier in the year, we had a much higher percentage of people say "Peak of inflated expectations," so it may just be the case that AI is moving along quickly and six months later, it has advanced for them.

But we also had a lot of discussions where AI is too vague of a term to place on a single place on the hype cycle. Some parts of AI are at each stage, such as "traditional AI" which some companies have been doing for decades and it is no longer on the hype cycle for them. We also had people from the same company disagree: AI adoption was not evenly distributed within organizations.



What are Ohio business AI capabilities and challenges? (cont'd)

At the AI Summit, we let people place their dot on the Gartner Hype Cycle curve, which gives a visual representation similar to the survey results:



With the survey data, we could look a little deeper into trends about who answered what to the hype cycle question:

- CIOs/CTOs were beyond Trigger more than other roles.
- Engineers, while a small sample, were almost all at the Trigger stage.
- Technology and Software companies answered Plateau more than other industries.
- Financial Services companies tended to be at the Peak and Trough stages.
- Only companies with under 500 employees said they were at the Plateau.
- Respondents in Cincinnati said they were farther along the hype cycle.
- Columbus had a lot of respondents at the Plateau stage.



State of AI_2025 Survey

Additional questions in the survey gives us an indication where Ohio companies are at on their overall AI and GenAI journeys. These are results from the survey.

What level of priority does your organization currently place on integrating AI technologies into production by 2025?

High

51%

Moderate

33%

Low

33%

Unsure

3%

Commentary: Almost half have a high priority of integrating AI into production.

**Which approach are you using for your top AI use cases?
(select all that apply)**

Buying a solution

45%

Doing it yourself

74%

Partnering with a consulting company

40%

Commentary: Most are “doing it themselves” when it comes to AI, with “Buying” and “Partnering” listed almost half of the time. That is, most companies are doing at least 2 of the 3 and many are doing all 3 approaches.

State of AI_2025 Survey

Additional questions in the survey gives us an indication where Ohio companies are at on their overall AI and GenAI journeys. These are results from the survey.

**What ways are you capturing business value using AI?
(select all that apply)**

Process efficiency by reducing manual steps

91%

Discovery & insights to unleash creativity

58%

Cost reduction

53%

Growth through personalized customer experiences

50%

Faster products & services to market

38%

Commentary: Process efficiency is by far the top way they are capturing business value. Discover/insights, cost reduction, and customer growth are clumped together as the next choices.



State of AI_2025 Survey

Additional questions in the survey gives us an indication where Ohio companies are at on their overall AI and GenAI journeys. These are results from the survey.

How would you rate your organization's current level of Generative AI adoption?

Exploring potential applications (*pilot stage*)

36%

Actively implementing GenAI in limited areas

30%

Broadly deploying GenAI across multiple departments

18%

Fully integrated GenAI into core business processes

14%

Not currently using GenAI

8%

Commentary: Most companies are at the Exploring and Limited implementation stages for Gen AI (62% in total) with 30% more advanced (more broadly deploying and fully integrating). 8% are not using GenAI at all.



State of AI_2025 Survey

Additional questions in the survey gives us an indication where Ohio companies are at on their overall AI and GenAI journeys. These are results from the survey.

What types of generative AI applications have you put into production or plan to deploy in the next 6 months? (select all that apply)

Copilots: The AI works alongside users in an app in multiple ways, a mix of everything

69%

Tools: Users control the AI to generate something, in accurate and reliable ways

67%

Chats: Users converse with the AI as a peer, using natural language, in real time

54%

Agents: AI has autonomy over how it approaches a task, works across other systems

26%

None

10%

Commentary: Copilots, Tools, and Chats are the most common types of GenAI applications, each at over 50% of the responses. Agents are less common.



State of AI_2025 Survey

Additional questions in the survey gives us an indication where Ohio companies are at on their overall AI and GenAI journeys. These are results from the survey.

What is the biggest single barrier your organization faces in adopting Generative AI?

Lack of clear business use cases

30%

Limited technical expertise or talent

19%

Data privacy and security concerns

19%

Other

14%

Regulatory or compliance constraints

7%

Commentary: The biggest barrier is lack of business use cases. Regulatory compliance was the least common barrier.



State of AI_2025 Survey

Additional questions in the survey gives us an indication where Ohio companies are at on their overall AI and GenAI journeys. These are results from the survey.

Which of the following strategies has your organization employed to overcome barriers to Generative AI adoption? (select all that apply)

Upskilling current employees on AI skills

68%

Implementing data privacy and security protocols

51%

Partnering with third-party AI vendors

41%

Aligning GenAI projects with executive sponsors

40%

Investing in dedicated AI governance frameworks

25%

Commentary: To overcome these barriers to GenAI adoption, most companies are upskilling employees. Data privacy protocols is #2.



State of AI_2025 Survey

Additional questions in the survey gives us an indication where Ohio companies are at on their overall AI and GenAI journeys. These are results from the survey.

What resource does your organization need most to advance Generative AI adoption?

Increased budget or funding

40%

Skilled AI/ML professionals

24%

Other

14%

Knowledge of regulatory and ethical guidelines

11%

Access to high-quality datasets

9%

Enhanced GenAI tools and platforms

8%

Commentary: Increased funding was the top need to advance GenAI adoption. Skilled professionals was #2. At the AI Summit, high quality datasets was #2.



State of AI_2025 Survey

Additional questions in the survey gives us an indication where Ohio companies are at on their overall AI and GenAI journeys. These are results from the survey.

How effective has executive support been in advancing Generative AI adoption in your organization?

Very effective – GenAI is a top priority with strong support

39%

Somewhat effective – support is present but not prioritized

34%

Neutral – limited executive involvement

22%

Very ineffective – GenAI is not on the executive agenda

7%

Somewhat ineffective – executive support is minimal

4%

Commentary: In general, executives have been supportive of GenAI, 70% of the time.



State of AI_2025 Survey

Additional questions in the survey gives us an indication where Ohio companies are at on their overall AI and GenAI journeys. These are results from the survey.

How would you rate the ROI of your Generative AI initiatives so far?

No measurable ROI yet

33%

Moderate – some progress but room for improvement

31%

High – meeting expectations

19%

Low – limited benefits realized

15%

Very high – exceeding expectations

8%

Commentary: ROI from GenAI has been moderate, when measurable, but one-third of the time there has not been any measurable ROI.



About OhioX

OhioX is a statewide 501c6 nonprofit trade association on a mission to build Ohio into a tech hub. Our members include Fortune 500 companies, leading startups, tech-focused businesses, universities, research institutions, and more.

As a nonprofit organization, we center our efforts around connecting, promoting, and advocating for Ohio's tech and innovation economy. We, and tech in Ohio, are just getting started. Join us.

Next Steps

OhioX aims to keep the AI conversation going through ongoing Roundtables, the 2025 Ohio AI Summit (November 19, 2025), and industry forums, ensuring that AI advancements align with Ohio's strengths and workforce capabilities. We invite leaders to share case studies, engage in future discussions, and contribute to shaping Ohio's AI future.

This report serves as both a benchmark and a roadmap for Ohio's AI journey. As AI continues to evolve, we believe Ohio's opportunity lies in responsible innovation, industry collaboration, and scalable solutions that leverage its existing strengths in research, enterprise AI, and workforce training. By doubling down on these strengths, Ohio can cement its status as a leader in practical, responsible, and impactful AI implementation.

Acknowledgments

The 2025 Ohio State of AI report represents more than a year of work—spanning major events, curated roundtables, and countless hours shaping questions, gathering insights, and compiling this report.

A special thank you to Keith Instone, OhioX's Director of Community Experience, who led this effort from day one. His leadership, dedication, and deep belief in Ohio's potential shaped every step of this journey.

We're especially grateful to Foundry for AI by Rackspace (FAIR™) and Ben Blanquera, whose support and partnership made this work possible. Joining us on the road, sharing his expertise, and helping connect dots statewide, Ben's leadership is making a difference for Ohio.

Thank you also to our partners—Worldpay, John Carroll University's Boler College of Business, Rev1 Ventures, the 1819 Innovation Hub at the University of Cincinnati, and CO Hatch—for hosting key gatherings that helped power this statewide conversation.

And finally, thank you to the hundreds of leaders who participated in our Roundtables, AI Summit, and survey. Your insights and voices are what bring this report to life.