

WILEY

# ExplanAltions 2025

THE EVOLUTION OF AI IN RESEARCH



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## FOREWORD

The momentum we're seeing in the adoption of artificial intelligence is striking. Twelve months ago, when we kicked off an ambitious project to understand how AI was reshaping the research landscape, **57%** of researchers were active users. A year after our [first \*ExplanaAlitions\* study](#), that number has jumped to **84%**.

With responses from researchers in countries around the world and across a range of disciplines, the movement we're seeing tells us that the research community is in the middle of a significant transition. But the real story runs much deeper than adoption rates.

Last year, our research documented an initial wave of excitement around AI. Researchers were testing, exploring. Asking themselves and their colleagues, "What can this do?" Today, we're seeing something different. The conversation has matured. It's become a more informed, more critical assessment. Researchers are asking deeper questions: "Where does AI add value? Where does it fall short? What should I adopt now and what should I watch and wait?"

As the community works through answers, researchers are seeking direction from trusted sources. They want clear boundaries, practical guidance, and honest dialogue about both the opportunities and the limitations of these tools.

At Wiley, we're committed to providing the research community the support they need to navigate this transition. For over two centuries, we've worked to give some of the world's leading thinkers a platform for their ideas and help their work spread around the globe. In the age of AI, we're building on this legacy: we engage proactively with AI companies, advocate for the research community, and work to ensure that advances in technology translate into progress.

Our recently published [AI guidelines for researchers](#) are part of this commitment—providing the frameworks, policies, and guidance that researchers need right now, not in some distant future when standards have somehow materialized on their own.

This report offers a roadmap grounded in real experiences from **over 2,400** researchers worldwide. It breaks down the immediate opportunities, emerging possibilities, and longer-term aspirations. Most importantly, it reaffirms what we've always known: that technology tools, however powerful, exist to amplify human curiosity, creativity, and judgement. Using them wisely will help great science achieve greater impact.

We hope these findings are useful for you, to inform your own thinking, your institution's policies, and your conversations with colleagues. The future of research will be shaped by the choices we're making together now. We're proud to be part of this journey with you.



**Matthew Kissner,**  
President & CEO, Wiley

# The current state of AI use among researchers

**AI use has increased significantly since last year, but most researchers feel they could be doing even more**

It's clear that researchers are embracing AI's potential, with major strides made in adoption over the past year. Our findings show a dramatic increase in researchers using AI tools in their work:

- **84%** of researchers are using AI tools for any aspect of their work, up from **57%** last year
- Researchers using AI for research-and/or publication-related tasks increased to **62%**, up from **45%** in 2024

Despite these gains in using AI, among many researchers there's a clear desire to extend their use of AI even further. For those who want to be early or average adopters of the technology, close to half say they've been only "a little" successful in using AI to the extent that they'd like.

**Researchers turn to ChatGPT and similar tools—not because they're best for science, but because they're most accessible**

While researchers are using AI more, they're most often using widely available, general-purpose tools like ChatGPT, rather than those specialized for science and research. **80%** of researchers have used a general-purpose chatbot, compared to just **25%** who have tried one or more specialized AI tools for research.

Access to paid tools is a barrier for most researchers: just **40%** of researchers agree that their organization provides them with access to the AI tools and models they need to successfully make use of AI in their work. Most researchers are using free tools—even if they also have access to paid options—suggesting that many researchers are employing a patchwork of solutions to try to meet their needs and goals for AI use.

## FROM INSIGHTS TO IMPACT

**Publishers and institutions:** Integrating scholarly content into the general-purpose AI tools researchers are currently using will help increase the reach of that content while also increasing the impact and effectiveness of AI tools for more researchers.

**Researchers:** The desire to be doing even more with AI is reflected in the mix of free and paid solutions that many researchers are patching together to try to meet their needs. As AI use in the research process gains wider acceptance, destigmatizing and standardizing disclosure about AI tools and methods employed could boost knowledge sharing and help researchers choose the right tools for their particular field.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Reality check: with increased use comes increased caution

As AI use has increased, so have some core concerns about AI models. More researchers are worried about potential inaccuracies and hallucinations—this year, **64%** of researchers cite these concerns as a barrier to using AI as much as they would like versus **51%** last year. Concerns about information security and privacy have also significantly increased to **58%** this year, from **47%** last year.

Increased use of AI has led to a reality check for researchers in terms of what the available tools can currently do well. Our findings suggest that researchers' views of AI are undergoing a course correction after hitting peak hype —something that's an inevitable evolutionary phase in most major technological shifts. Last year, researchers believed that AI already exceeded human ability for **53%** of the use cases we tested. This year, they think that's true for less than one-third of use cases.

This course correction aligns with recent news and studies about the adoption of AI in multiple industries and sectors (as noted in the [Gartner Hype Cycle for Artificial Intelligence, July 2025](#)). Researchers are moving beyond the initial excitement and, as they use AI, are coming to a better understanding of its present limits and future potential.

### A reality check does not mean failure: most researchers say AI helps them in multiple areas

While researchers' expectations may have been tempered, this shift doesn't mean that their use of AI has been unsuccessful. Despite changing views about what AI can currently do, the majority of researchers say that it's helped them in many aspects of their work. **85%** of researchers using AI report that it has helped their efficiency, while close to three-quarters say that it's helped them with the quantity (**77%**) and the quality (**73%**) of their work. **70%** also find it valuable for brainstorming and ideation, and **61%** for improving their ability to focus on their most important tasks.

### High anticipation for greater AI use in the future

Despite some reservations about current capabilities, researchers have high expectations for the future role of AI in research. On average, **83%** of researchers expect the AI use cases we tested to become widespread in their fields in the next two years. That's a significant increase from just **57%** who felt the same way last year.

Additionally, there's a high degree of willingness to embrace future agentic tools. When asked to imagine a future state where agentic tools can perform specific use cases, **57%** of researchers on average said they'd allow a future agentic AI tool to act autonomously on their behalf. This suggests a majority of researchers are optimistic about AI's potential and its future applications to their work.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### FROM INSIGHTS TO IMPACT

**Publishers and institutions:** As the reality check has set in for researchers, they are approaching current AI tools with greater caution. Helping researchers evaluate and understand the limitations of current tools—especially around accuracy and information security/privacy—will help pave the way to realizing even greater benefits from using AI in the research process.

Researchers who feel they've become less sanguine about AI's current capabilities over the last year are not alone—the overall shift in consensus about AI's capabilities was pronounced in this year's survey. The Wiley AI Framework can help provide a starting point for evaluating which use cases are most ready for current exploration and which might be better monitored for future use, pending further technological improvements.

## Exploring AI use cases

### Mapping use cases to understand trends

To better understand the potential for each of the 44 AI use cases that we tested, we again focused on two key dimensions: interest, and AI versus human performance. Mapping our use cases to four quadrants, we find some key overarching trends:

- **Highly popular current use cases** (where interest and AI's current capabilities are both considered to be strong) tend to relate to preparing manuscripts for publication. This includes the top two most-tried use cases: writing assistance and detecting errors or bias in one's own writing.
- **Highly anticipated use cases** (where interest is high but AI doesn't yet outperform humans) often relate to working with large amounts of information, whether via literature review or data processing, and having AI act as a research assistant (e.g., by handling administrative tasks, writing up documentation, writing funding applications, etc.)
- **Less exciting current use cases** (where interest is lower, but AI is currently viewed as outperforming humans) included just a handful of use cases this year, due to the shift in views of AI's current capabilities. Many of the less interesting use cases from last year are still low interest, they just now fall into the "humans preferred" quadrant.
- **The humans preferred use cases** (where interest is low and AI is currently viewed as lagging behind human abilities) quadrant includes nearly all use cases relating to peer review, a strong indication that researchers continue to want human judgment to remain central to the peer review process.

By mapping these use cases into distinct quadrants, we gain valuable insights into the evolving role of AI in research and publishing. This analysis of use cases by interest and AI versus human performance forms the foundation of the Wiley AI Framework that follows.

# The Wiley AI Framework: our recommendations to the researcher community

Based on the data from the survey, we've created a framework to help researchers explore the potential for AI to serve them in their research. The framework provides a simplified set of recommendations to help the research community think about how they might put AI into action, now, and in the future.



**Act:** Current use cases where AI is already poised to make a difference and interest is high. This year, these fall into just two main categories:

### Manuscript preparation and writing assistance

On average, **74%** of researchers are interested in using AI for these use cases, and **59%** say AI currently outperforms humans. This category includes detecting errors or bias in own writing, writing assistance, formatting manuscript to comply with submission guidelines, and checking own work for unintended plagiarism.

### Working with large amounts of information (monitoring/summarizing)

On average, **70%** of researchers are interested in using AI for these use cases and **56%** say AI currently outperforms humans. This category includes monitoring/summarizing key new publications, reviewing large amounts of published and pre-print studies, creating data visualizations, and building a custom library of information tailored to an area of study.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**Watch:** Near-term opportunities with high interest and growing AI capabilities. These use cases fall into four main categories this year — up from just two categories last year — reflecting researchers' evolving views on what AI tools can currently achieve.

### Working with large amounts of information (processing/analyzing)

On average, **65%** of researchers are interested in using AI for these use cases, but **57%** say humans currently match or outperform AI. (This is a notable shift from last year, when **60%** said AI was already outperforming humans on these tasks.) This includes identifying key themes in existing published literature, identifying gaps in the literature, data collection and processing, and processing unstructured or qualitative data.

### Generating recommendations

On average, **67%** of researchers are interested in using AI for these use cases, but **58%** say humans currently match or outperform AI. This includes literature review to select citations that best support one's work, generating reference recommendations, and selecting a journal to submit to based on the content of the article.

### Making research accessible to a wider audience

On average, **62%** of researchers are interested in using AI for these use cases, but **59%** say that humans currently match or outperform AI. (This is also a notable shift from last year, when **58%** said AI was already outperforming humans on these tasks.) This category includes creating "plain language" summaries of article findings and generating educational content based on the article.

### Offloading essential but less engaging work

On average, **63%** of researchers are interested in using AI for these use cases, but **58%** say humans currently match or outperform AI. This category includes handling administrative tasks, writing up documentation, populating citations, and assistance in writing funding applications.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**Envision:** “Stretch” and ambitious use cases that are not yet feasible or strongly desired, but have the potential to address future needs. These, like last year, fall into three main categories:

### AI-augmented peer review processes

On average, **55%** of researchers are interested in using AI for these use cases, but **60%** say humans currently match or outperform AI on these tasks. This category includes helping peer reviewers adjust tone and clarity of feedback, validate sources and claims, and adapt feedback into standardized format. It also includes increasing speed and ease of peer review, identifying peer reviewers with relevant expertise, peer reviewer recommendation tools, providing step by step guidance to peer reviewers, and automated feedback to reviewers to ensure clarity in reviews.

### Automated content generation for increasing article reach and impact

On average, **51%** of researchers are interested in using AI for these use cases, and **50%** say humans match or outperform AI on these tasks. This category includes creating science communication tools, knowledge management agent to help make information broadly accessible, generating multimedia to broaden sharing of findings/build interest in article, generating video abstracts, and generating audio articles.

### AI to enhance research methods

On average, **51%** of researchers are interested in using AI for these use cases, but **58%** say humans match or outperform AI on these tasks. This category includes optimizing experimental design, advanced simulations that reduce the need for some bench research, and optimizing allocation of shared resources (e.g., lab equipment).

We will continue to track these trends to understand where AI is ready to go, where it needs work, and where human expertise and capability cannot be substituted.

# The role of the publisher

**Most researchers need more help with AI than they're currently getting from their institutions—and publishers can help fill the gap**

Researchers are caught between growing concerns about AI models and lowered expectations about what AI is currently capable of, and their optimism and expectations for the future. They recognize that they need guidance in the present—but few are currently receiving that guidance from their organization or institution. **57%** of researchers say that the lack of guidelines and/or training is a barrier to using AI to the extent they'd like, and just **41%** agree that their organization provides them with the guidelines and best practices they need to use AI successfully in their work.

While individual needs for guidelines vary, most researchers see publishers as key to bridging the guidance gap—**73%** want publishers to provide clear guidelines on which uses of AI are acceptable, and **69%** want publishers to help researchers avoid potential pitfalls and errors in using AI.

Wiley has responded to this clear need by publishing comprehensive **AI guidelines for researchers**, offering the practical guidance and best practices that our community has been asking for.

**Researchers demand disclosure to legitimize the appropriate use of AI—and publishers can set the standard**

As the role of AI in research grows and evolves, so does the conversation around transparency. Researchers recognize the importance of disclosing AI use—on the part of researchers, and of editors and reviewers.

Nearly three-quarters of researchers want peer reviewers and editors to disclose details about the AI they use in the review process, including which tool they used (**72%**), how they used it (**70%**), and which parts of the review were drafted or edited with AI (**72%**).

Expectations around transparency also extend to authors. As peer reviewers (and, by extension, as consumers of research), most researchers say it's highly important for authors to disclose how they used AI in their methods (**77%**), in their drafting and editing (**66%**), and in the creation and editing of their figures where AI use is permitted by journal guidelines (**79%**).

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### FROM INSIGHTS TO IMPACT

**Publishers and institutions:** Researchers are looking to publishers for guidance in using AI, so publishers are positioned to have an important impact, both on removing a barrier to greater AI use and on defining the parameters of acceptable use. Publishers also have a key role to play in defining and driving the adoption of appropriate disclosure of AI use—which researchers agree is essential for both authors and peer reviewers.

**Institutions:** Researchers want guidance around the acceptable use of AI, and are paying attention to institutional policies, but less than half feel their institution is meeting their needs for providing guidelines and best practices. Filling this gap can help institutions pave the way to greater, more impactful AI use in the research process for their researchers.

**Researchers:** Embracing the regular and responsible disclosure of AI use in methods, acknowledgements, and figures will help increase transparency and trust by providing the information that all parties want when reading, peer reviewing, and publishing research.

### METHODOLOGY SNAPSHOT

In 2024, Wiley conducted two in-depth surveys into researchers' views and use of AI throughout the research process, publishing the findings in our first [ExplanAlitions report in February 2025](#). Now, a year after our original surveys, we are back with new insights from a fresh study. The aim of this study is to continue our project of sharing insights with the research community to improve our shared understanding of how researchers are thinking about and implementing AI.

In this survey, conducted from July 31 to August 18, 2025, we track the evolution of researchers' views and use of AI year over year. With responses from 2,430 researchers from around the world, our findings present a global view of what researchers are looking for when it comes to navigating AI, and the role that they would like publishers and institutions to play.

# Detailed findings

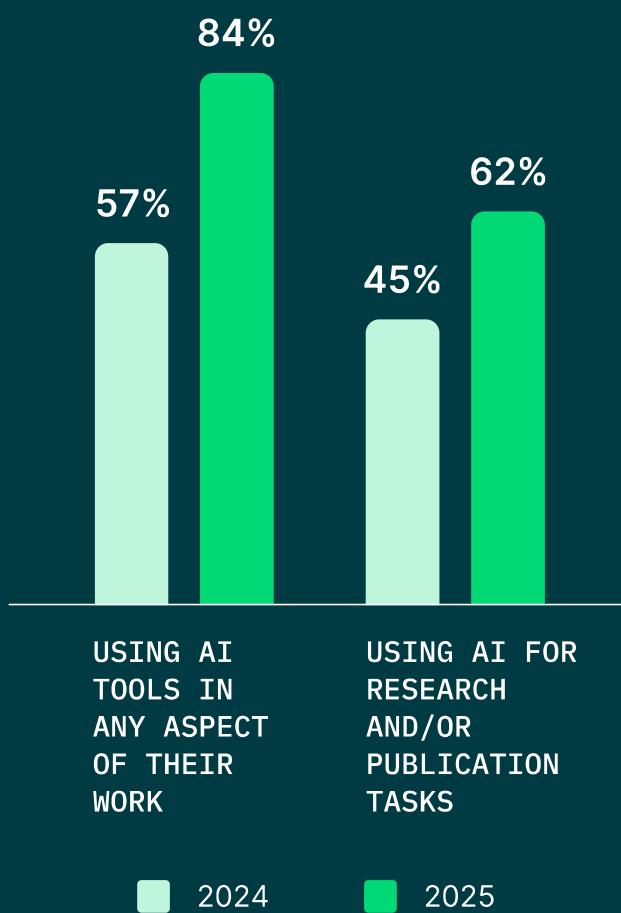
## THE CURRENT STATE OF AI USE AMONG RESEARCHERS

AI use has increased significantly since last year, but most researchers feel they could be doing even more.

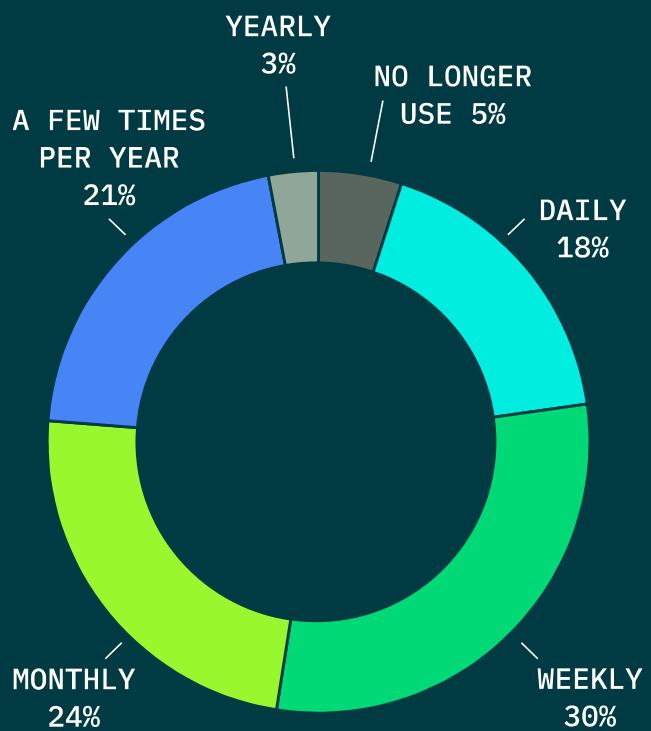
Researchers' use of AI is up significantly year over year.

Since last year, there have been sizable increases in the percentage of researchers using AI, both for their work in general, and for specifically research- and/or publication-related tasks. Not only has usage increased, but it's also stuck—most researchers (72%) are using their AI tools at least monthly, and nearly half (48%) are using them at least weekly. On average, only 5% of researchers have completely discontinued their use of any AI tool.

AI use: 2024 vs. 2025



*Q: How often do you typically use each of these tools?*



Base: 2024 n=1,043–4,946; 2025 n=2,118–2,430

# THE CURRENT STATE OF AI USE AMONG RESEARCHERS

## Who's more likely to be using AI?

More likely to be using AI tools in any aspects of their work:

- Physical sciences researchers (**88%**)
- Researchers in the APAC (Asia and Pacific) region (**96%**), particularly China (**98%**)
- Early career researchers (**92%**)

More likely to be using AI for research and/or publication tasks:

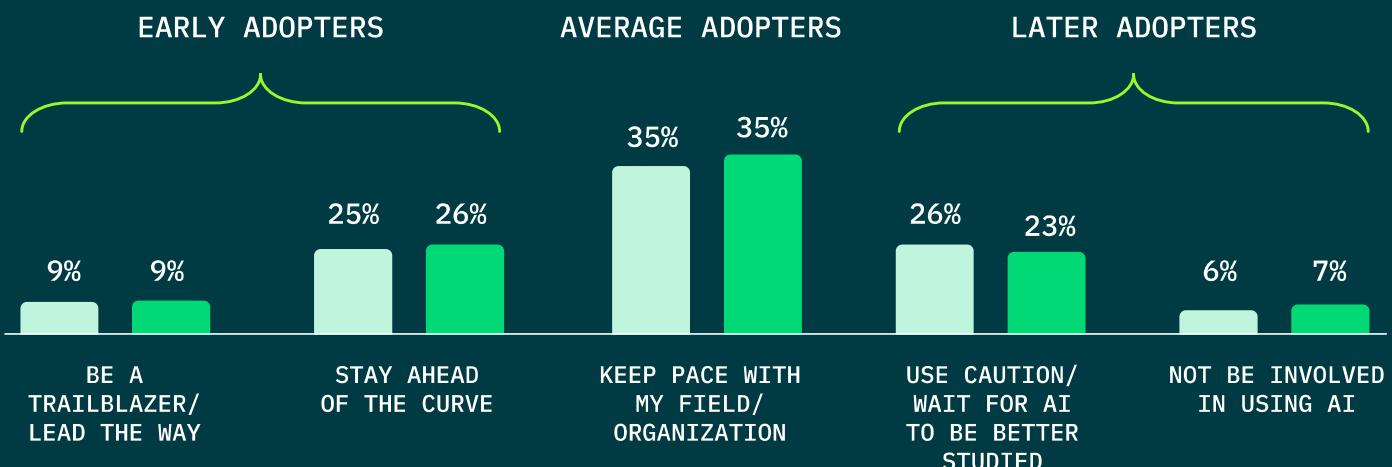
- Researchers in the APAC region (**72%**), particularly China (**75%**)
- Business, economics, and finance researchers (**70%**)
- Physical sciences researchers (**66%**)
- Early career researchers (**70%**)

Compared to researchers' own goals for AI use, most feel they could be doing more.

We asked participants about their goals for adopting AI and found that they're highly consistent year over year.

AI Adoption: I want to...

■ 2024 ■ 2025

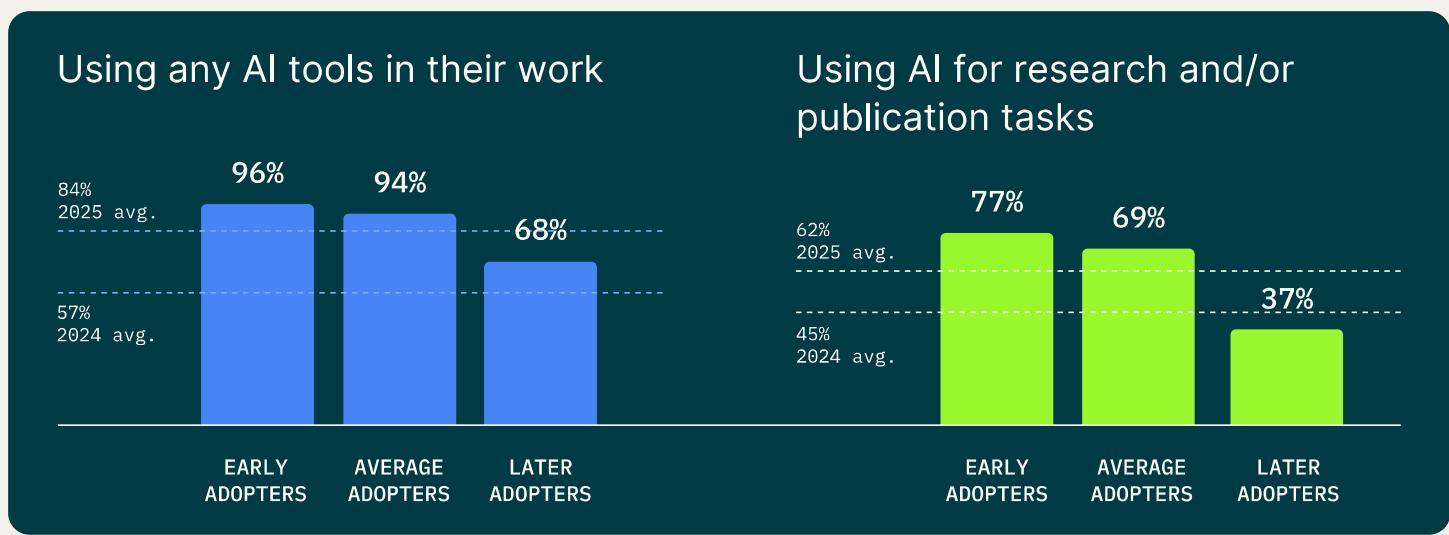


Base: 2024 n=4,946; 2025 n=2,430. Q: Which of the following best describes the part you want to play in the adoption of AI in your work whether at your institution/organization and/or among members of your field of study?

## THE CURRENT STATE OF AI USE AMONG RESEARCHERS

All categories of adopters of AI have made significant gains in AI use since last year. Nearly all early and average adopters have used at least one AI tool in their work. Although only around one-third of later adopters have used AI for research or publication tasks, we still see that most—over two-thirds—have used one or more AI tools in conjunction with their work as a researcher.

While fewer researchers have used AI tools specifically for research or publication, most early and average adopters have done so, as have one-third of later adopters.

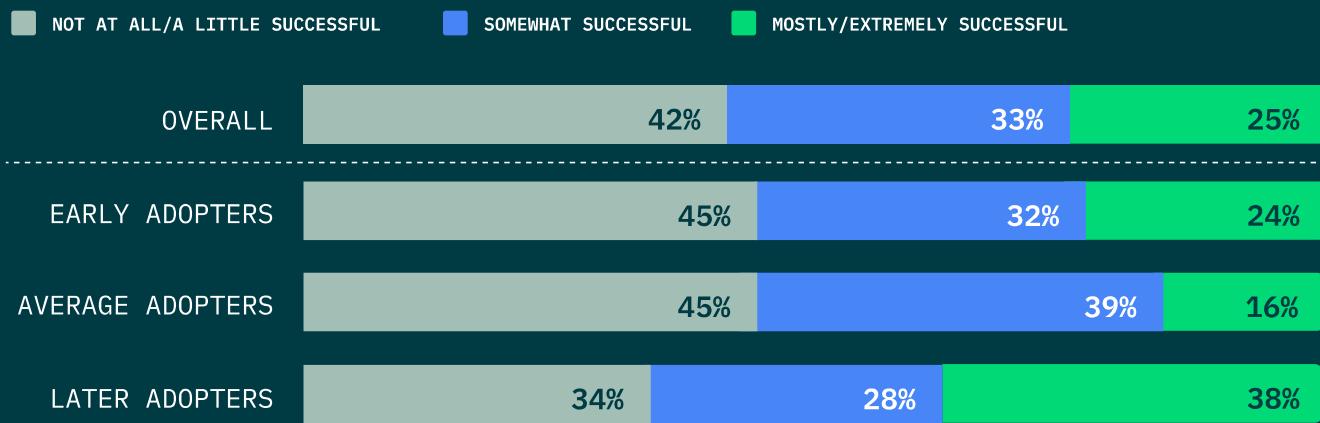


Base: n=695–871

Despite having increased their use of AI significantly since last year, most researchers feel they could be doing even more. This is especially true for researchers who are most actively trying to embrace AI in their work: just **24%** of early adopters and only **16%** of average adopters say they've been mostly or extremely successful in meeting their goals for using AI. This is evidence that there's currently a gap between intention and execution for most researchers.

# THE CURRENT STATE OF AI USE AMONG RESEARCHERS

**Q:** To date, how successful have you been in achieving your goal [for using AI in your work]?



Base: n=695–871, overall n=2,430

Later adopters, whose goals for AI use center around proceeding with caution, are more likely to feel they've been successful in meeting those goals. Other groups with higher concentrations of later adopters—like researchers in the Americas and EMEA (Europe, Middle East, and Africa) regions, later career researchers, and humanities and math/stats researchers—are also more likely to say they're meeting their goals.

In contrast, those groups of researchers with higher concentrations of early adopters are less likely to be satisfied with their success to date—this includes physical sciences researchers, those in APAC, and early career researchers. Access to paid and/or specialized research assistant AI tools does appear to boost progress toward goals: researchers with access to paid tools and those who use one or more specialized research assistant AI tools are more likely to feel “somewhat” successful in meeting their goals for AI use.

## Who's more likely to meet their goals for using AI?

More likely to be “not at all” or “a little” successful in meeting goals for AI use:

- Physical sciences researchers (**47%**)
- Researchers in the APAC region (**61%**), particularly China (**68%**)
- Early career researchers (**51%**)

More likely to be “somewhat” successful in meeting goals for AI use:

- Users of research assistant tools (**40%**)
- Users of paid AI tools (**37%**)
- Researchers in the EMEA region (**37%**)

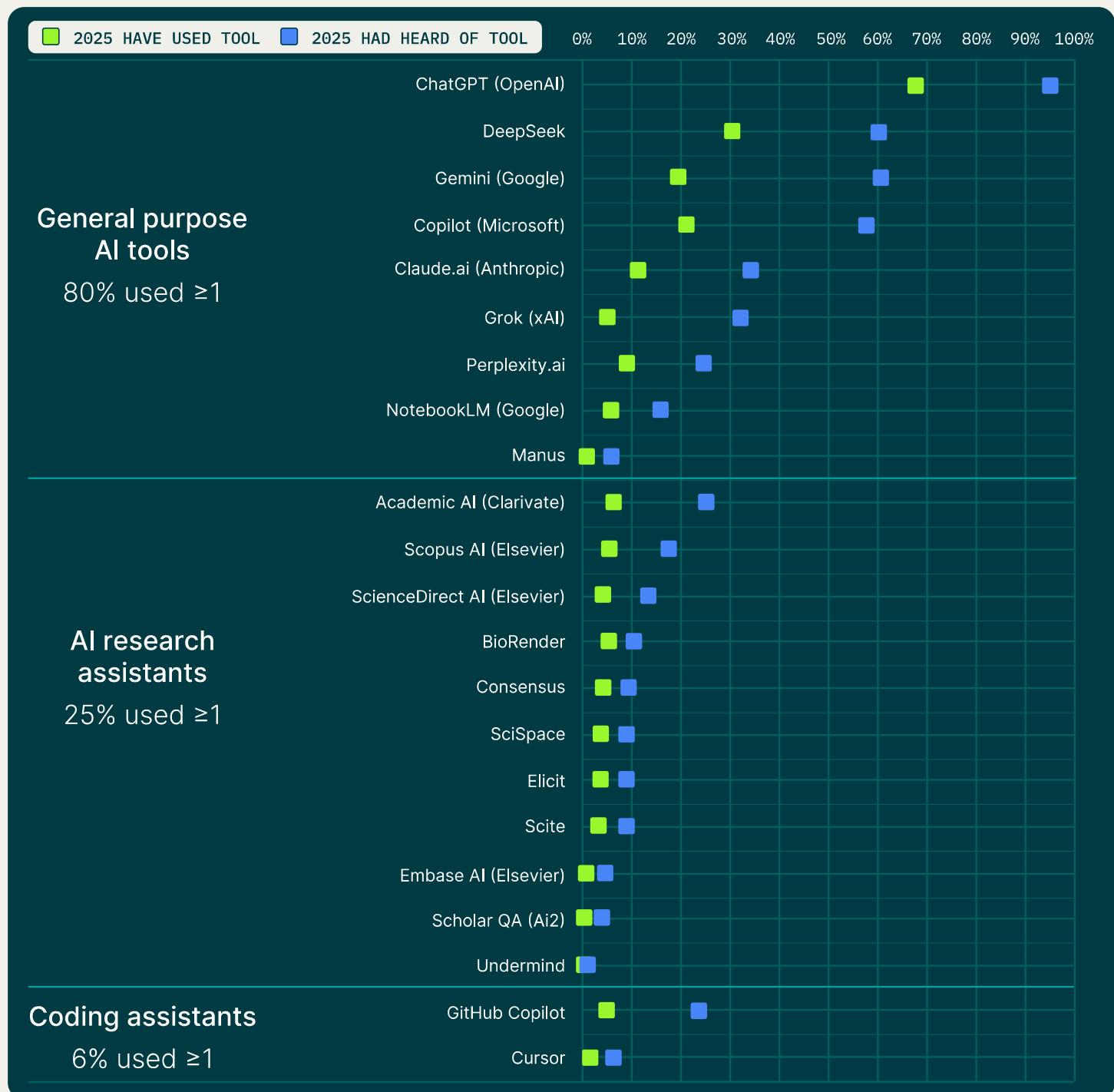
More likely to be “mostly” or “extremely” successful in meeting goals for AI use:

- Humanities (**40%**) and math/stats (**40%**) researchers
- Researchers in the Americas (**38%**) and EMEA (**33%**) regions
- Later career researchers (**35%**)

# THE CURRENT STATE OF AI USE AMONG RESEARCHERS

Researchers turn to ChatGPT and similar tools over those made for science and research—because they're most accessible.

Researchers' AI tool use is much more concentrated among general-purpose AI tools versus tools that are specialized for science and research. Awareness is a big factor in the disparity in usage: on average, only 11% of researchers had heard of each of the research assistant tools in the list below.



Base: n=2,430. Q: Which of the following AI tools have you heard of? Select all that apply; Q: Which of these AI tools have you ever used in conjunction with your work as a researcher? Select all that apply.

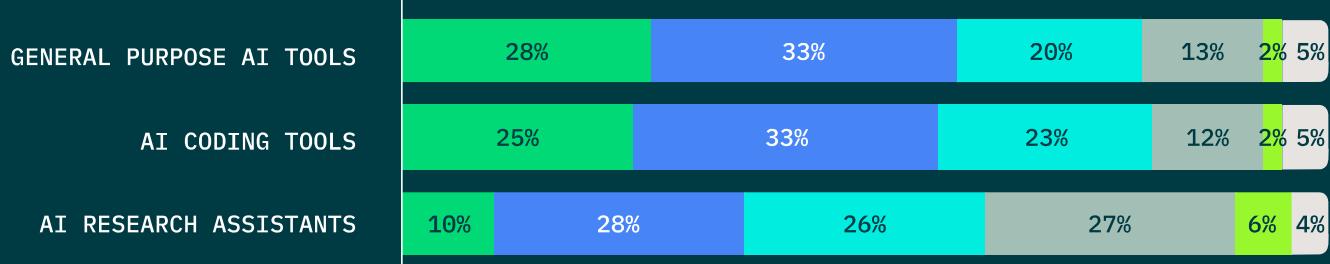
## THE CURRENT STATE OF AI USE AMONG RESEARCHERS

Likely due to their greater accessibility, the tools with the most increased use year over year are general purpose tools: DeepSeek (+31 percentage points, not asked in 2024), ChatGPT (+23 percentage points), Copilot (+11 percentage points), Claude (+10 percentage points), and Gemini (+10 percentage points).

**Overall, researchers' adoption of AI tools has stuck, with most using their tools on at least a monthly basis, on average.** General purpose tools and coding assistants see the most frequent use, with a majority of their users working with them on a daily or weekly basis on average. Very few ( $\leq 5\%$ ) researchers have completely stepped away from an AI tool that they have used.

**Q:** How often do you typically use each of these tools? Use your best estimate.

■ DAILY ■ WEEKLY ■ MONTHLY ■ A FEW TIMES PER YEAR ■ YEARLY ■ NOT APPLICABLE/I NO LONGER USE THIS



Base: General purpose AI tools n=2,017, AI coding tools n=150, AI research assistants n=600

DeepSeek has been rapidly embraced by researchers in China—**86%** of Chinese researchers had heard of it and **78%** have used it for their work.

The tools most likely to have high frequency users (% using daily or weekly) are:

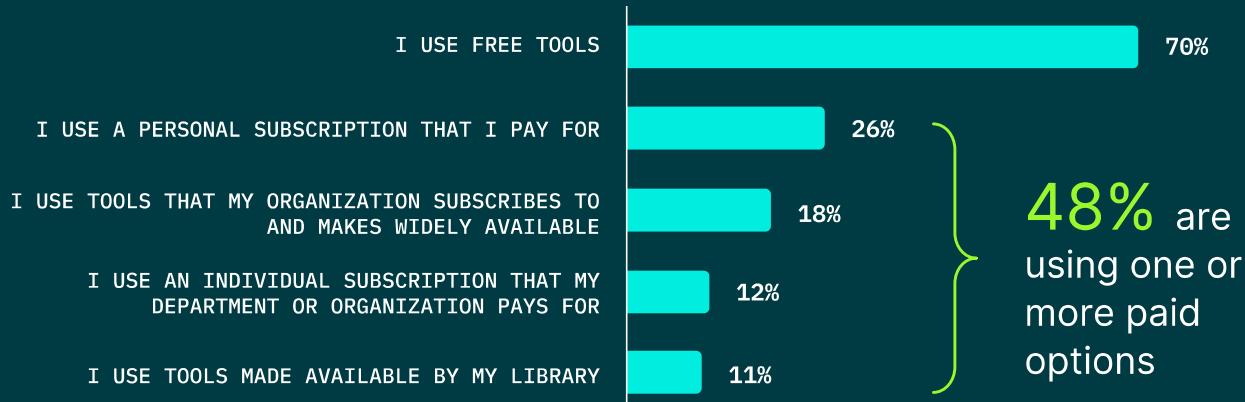
1. DeepSeek (77%)
2. Gemini (69%)
3. ChatGPT (69%)
4. Grok (62%)
5. Copilot (54%)

% using at least weekly, out of tools with at least n=100 users

## THE CURRENT STATE OF AI USE AMONG RESEARCHERS

While awareness is a barrier to wider AI tool use, so is access—it's a common pain point cited by researchers. Just **41%** of researchers agree that their organization provides them with access to the AI models and tools they need to successfully make use of AI in their work. As a result, **7 out of 10** researchers are making use of free AI tools that are available, while just under half (**48%**) are using any paid options.

**Q:** How do you most commonly get access to the AI tools you use? Select all that apply.



Base: n=2,430

The data suggests that many researchers are employing a patchwork of solutions to try to meet their needs and goals for AI use: even among the researchers using some form of paid tool, most (71%) are still also using one or more free tools.

### With increased usage comes increased caution

#### Growing concerns about model shortcomings are a barrier to greater AI use.

While AI use has increased significantly since our 2024 survey, the barriers to greater AI adoption that researchers cited in that study—concerns about the models themselves, and about a lack of guidelines and training—are still widely felt.

**In fact, as firsthand use of AI has grown, so have some core concerns about the AI models themselves—suggesting researchers' experiences have increased their level of caution.** This year, researchers are significantly more concerned about potential inaccuracies and hallucinations (up 13 percentage points from 2024) and information security and privacy (up 11 percentage points). This brings the total percentage of researchers with concerns about AI models to **87%**, meaning nearly 9 in 10 regard these concerns as an obstacle to using AI in their work to the extent that they would like.

In addition to concerns about models, most researchers (57%) still also feel hindered by a lack of guidelines and/or training, a topic we'll explore in more detail later in this report.

#### *Who is more impacted by concerns about AI models?*

##### **More likely to cite concerns about inaccuracies/'hallucinations'**

- Researchers in the humanities (**76%**)
- Researchers in the Americas (**72%**) and EMEA (**69%**) regions
- Later career researchers (**70%**)

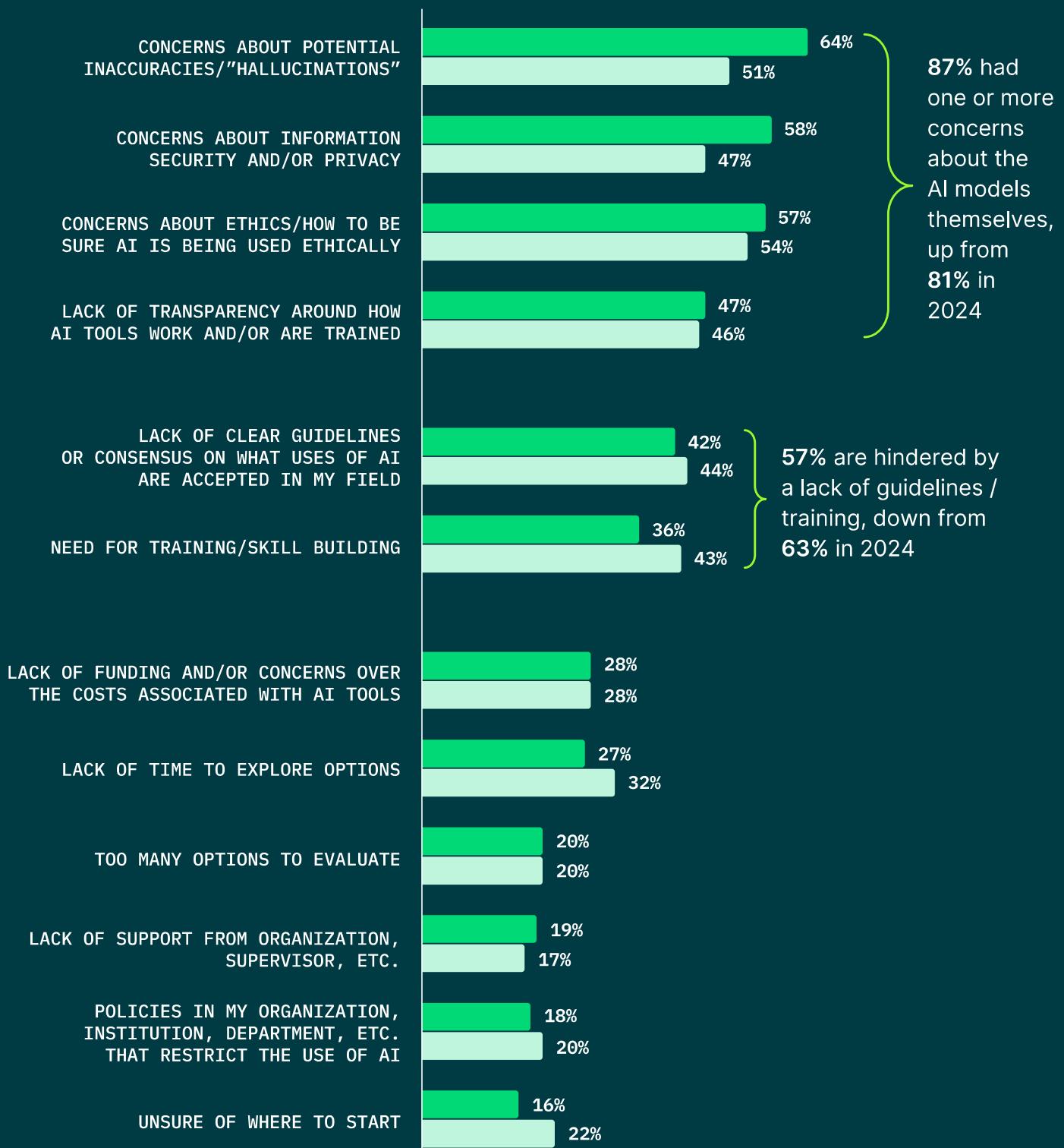
##### **More likely to be concerned about information security and/or privacy**

- Researchers in social sciences (**65%**)
- Mid-career researchers (**61%**)

# THE CURRENT STATE OF AI USE AMONG RESEARCHERS

Q: What, if any, barriers or obstacles are preventing you from using AI in your work to the extent that you would like? Select all that apply.

■ 2025 ■ 2024



Base: 2024 n=4,946; 2025 n=2,430

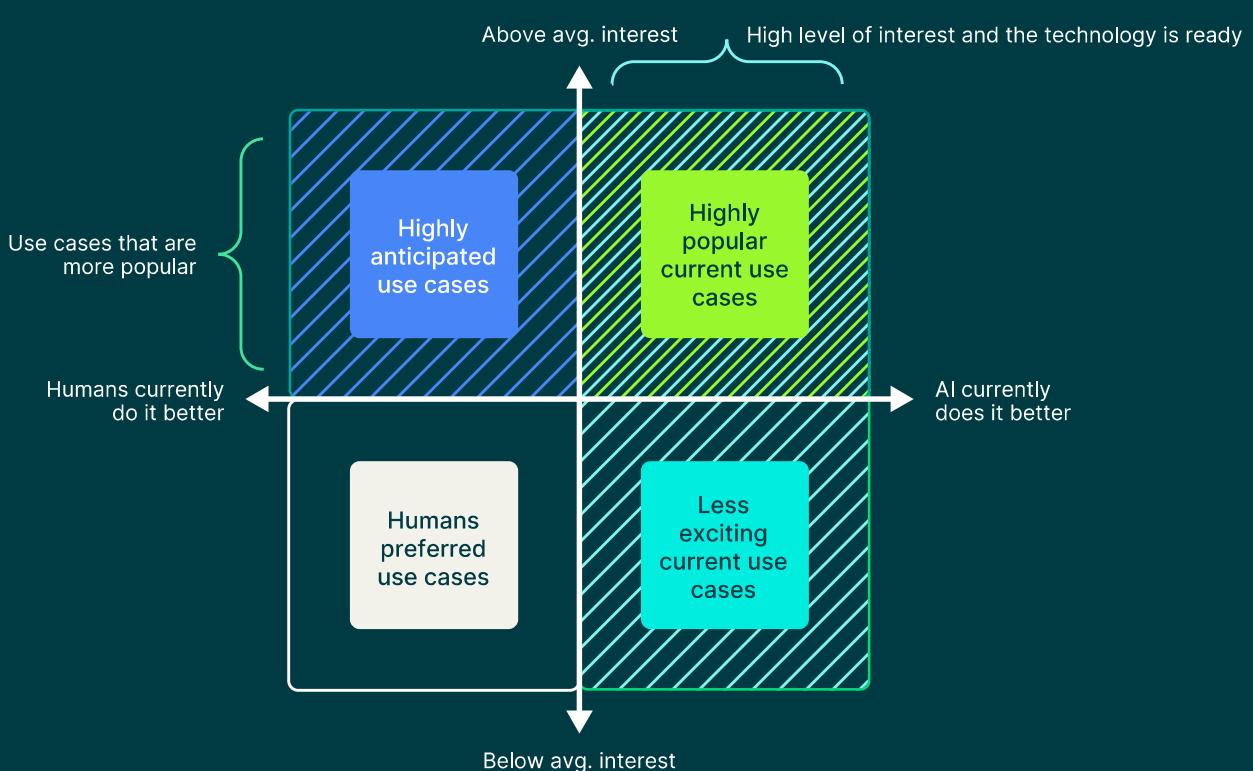
# Mapping the consensus view of AI use cases

To go beyond sentiment and surface trends around AI—and gain some practical insights to guide researchers in taking action—we once again collected input on a large range of potential AI use cases across the research process.

We tested a total of 44 use cases, but each survey participant was asked to respond to only nine randomly selected use cases in total. For each one, we asked researchers:

- to rate their interest in personally using AI for that task in the next two years
- their assessment of whether AI or humans currently performs that task better
- whether or not they've used AI for that task
- how long they think it will be before a majority of researchers in their field will be using AI for that purpose

To better understand and visualize the potential for each of our AI use cases, we again plotted them against two key dimensions: interest, and AI versus human performance. This yields the quadrants shown here, which range from highly popular current use cases (where there is a high level of interest and the technology is ready), to humans preferred use cases (where interest is low and humans outperform AI).



## Phase 1: Determining what to research

Interest in using AI for handling large amounts of information is high or increasing this year, with use cases related to literature review and building custom libraries of information in the top half of the chart. While interest is high, expectations for AI to exceed human abilities are tempered: compared to 2024, interest has increased in monitoring new publications and building a custom library of information, but AI is less strongly viewed as exceeding human ability in these areas.

Interest and confidence in having AI predict trends or future milestones in their fields have sharply declined among researchers since last year. A new addition to the survey this year, developing hypotheses, falls squarely in the “humans preferred” quadrant.



Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557; \* = new to survey in 2025

## Phase 2: Conducting the research

Compared to 2024, many use cases have moved significantly toward the “humans do it better” side of the chart, indicating a shift in consensus that AI tools do not yet outperform humans in many tasks related to conducting the research. Most strikingly, there’s less interest and confidence in using AI for data collection and processing, moving these use cases from the “highly popular” quadrant to the lower border of the “highly anticipated” quadrant. Interest in using AI for data collection and processing decreased by about 10 percentage points, and the percentage of researchers who agree that AI outperforms humans in processing unstructured data declined by 22 percentage points.

In contrast, interest in using AI for writing up documentation and handling administrative tasks has notably increased since 2024.



Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557; \* = new to survey in 2025

## Phase 3: Preparing for publication

Interest in using AI at this stage in the process remains quite high, but again we see a rethinking of AI's current level of capability, with many use cases moving significantly toward the left of the chart versus last year.

While interest is high in using AI to generate reference recommendations and to do a literature review to select citations, researchers are less interested in using AI to actually populate those citations and are less likely to say AI does it better than humans than last year. This suggests personal experience and/or well-publicized cases of fabricated citations mean that most researchers are going to manually check and populate their references at this point in time.

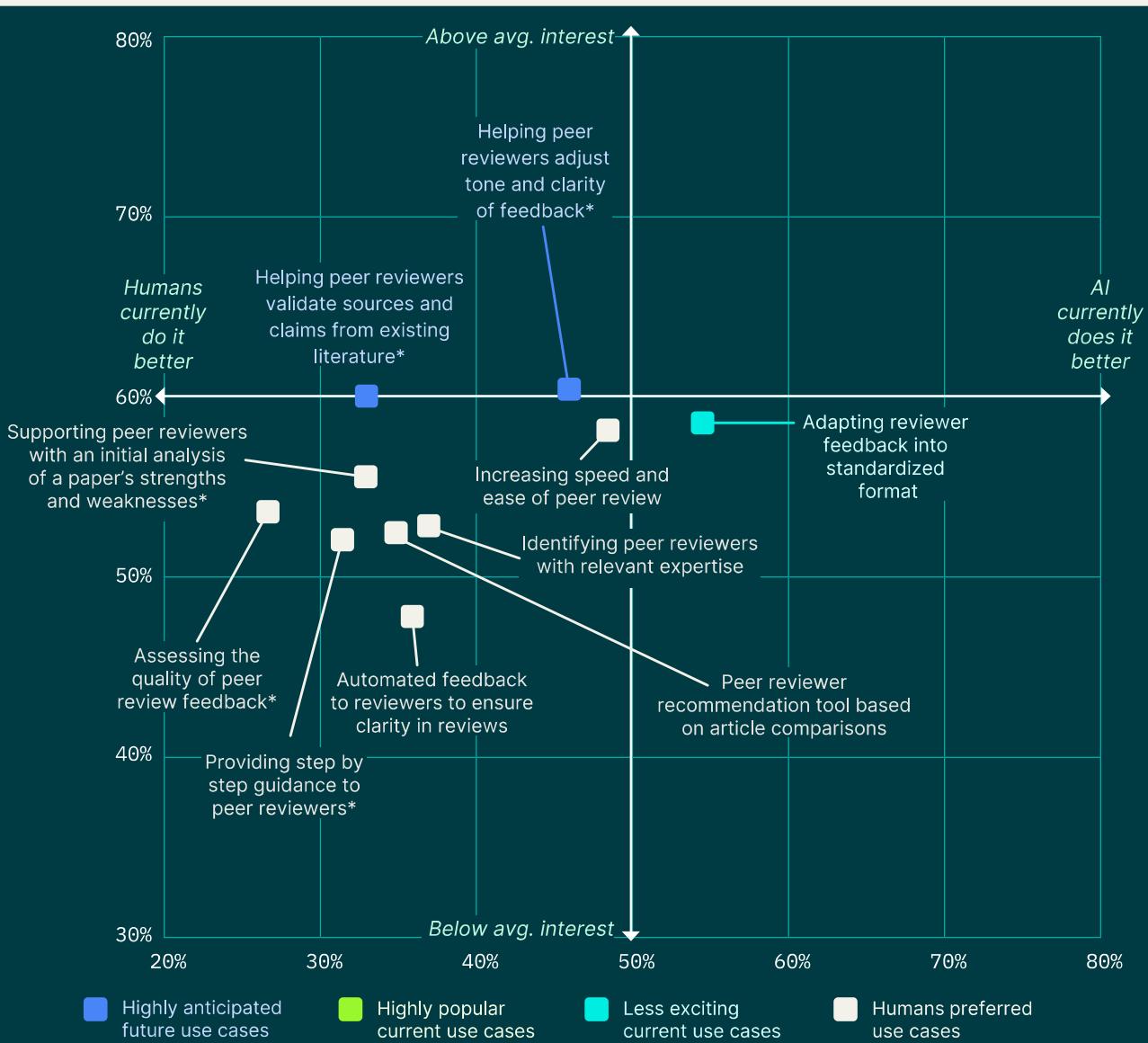


Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557; \* = new to survey in 2025

## Phase 4: Peer review

As in 2024, researchers still overwhelmingly prefer humans over AI for most use cases related to peer review. This includes a few new use cases we added to the survey this year so that we could further explore AI's potential application to this phase of the process.

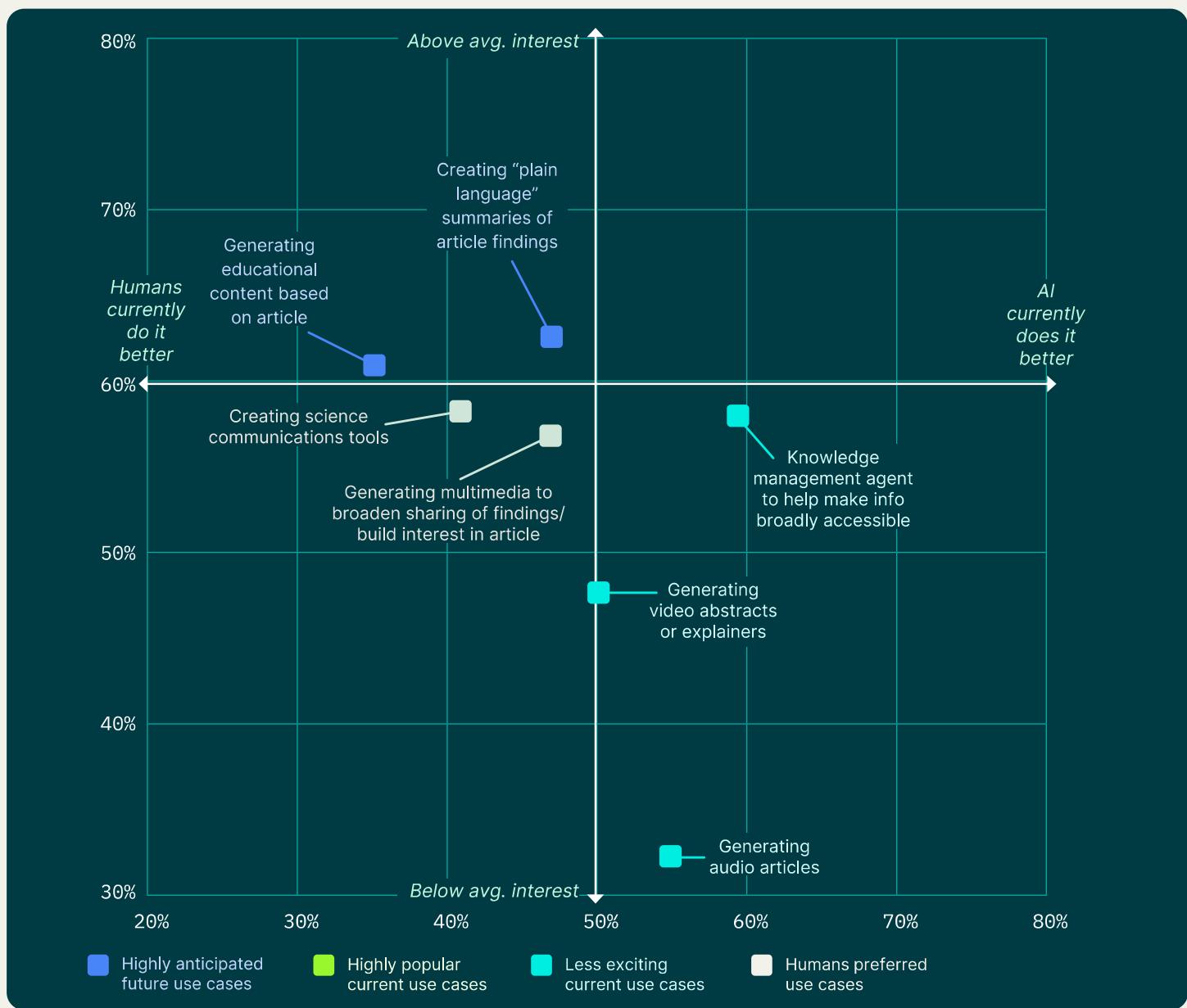
In this phase, researcher interest in using AI only exceeds the average—just barely—in two areas: helping peer reviewers validate sources/claims from existing literature, and helping peer reviewers adjust the tone and clarity of their feedback. This suggests researchers might be more willing to accept AI tools in peer review when there is a specific focus and the goal is to provide support to the reviewer—and where the reviewer has direct control over the AI tool and its input into their review.



Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557; \* = new to survey in 2025

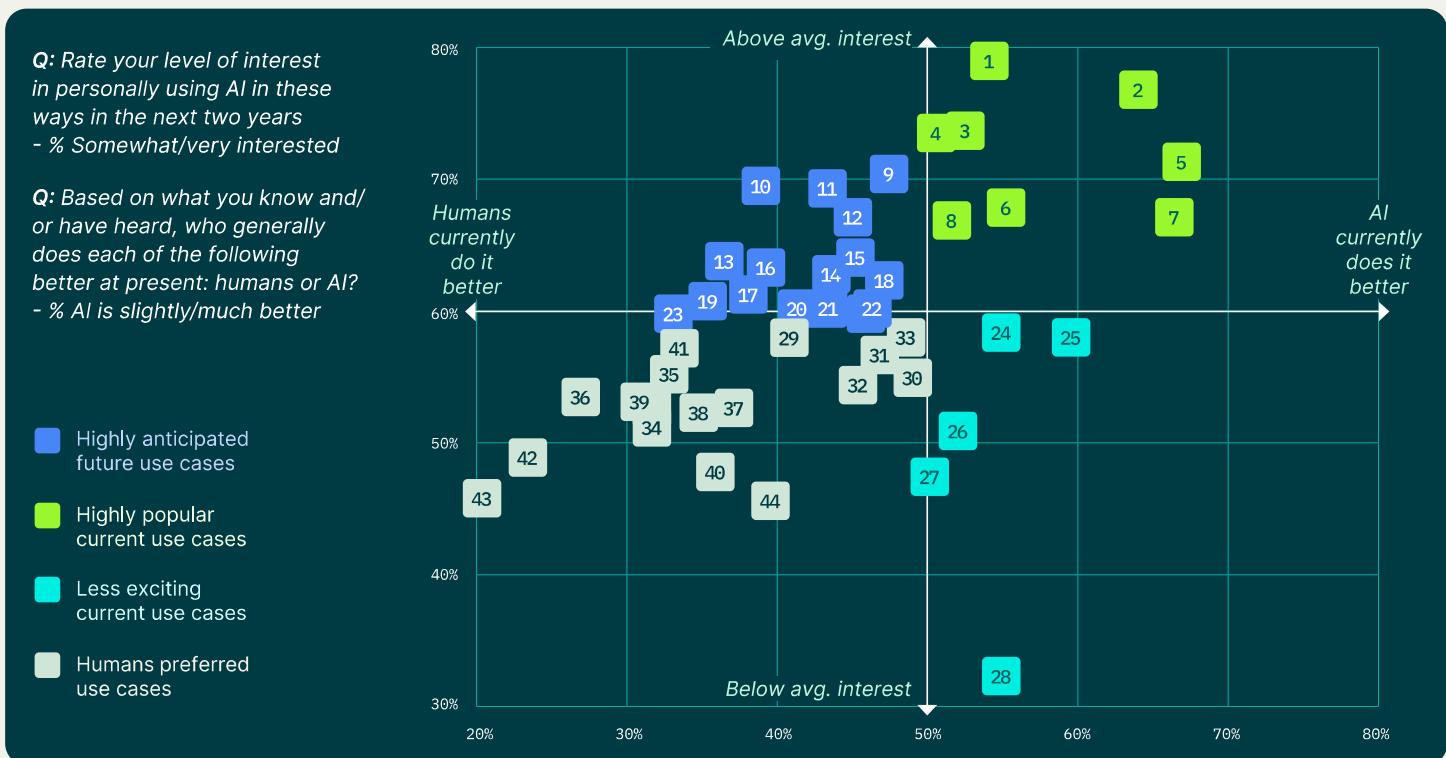
## Phase 5: Sharing and promoting an article

As in 2024, researchers are overall less interested in most of these use cases—while they think AI is currently capable of generating audio or video content, these use cases aren't highly compelling to most researchers. In addition, researchers have reassessed what AI is currently capable of when it comes to creating “plain language” summaries of article findings and generating multimedia to broaden the sharing of findings/build interest in an article, driving both use cases to the “humans do it better” side of the chart.



Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557

# EXPLORING AI USE CASES



Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557

**Highly popular current use cases:** These use cases are largely related to preparing manuscripts for publication.

1. Writing assistance (e.g., copyediting, translation, etc.)
2. Detecting errors or bias in own writing
3. Checking own work for unintended plagiarism
4. Formatting manuscript to comply with submission guidelines
5. Reviewing large amounts of published and pre-print studies
6. Building a custom library of information tailored to your area of study
7. Monitoring/summarizing key new publications in your field of study
8. Creating data visualizations

**Highly anticipated use cases:** Many of these use cases relate to working with large amounts of information (whether via literature review or data processing) and acting as a research assistant.

9. Identifying key themes in existing published literature\*
10. Identifying gaps in the literature
11. Literature review to select citations that best support my work\*
12. Generating reference recommendations
13. Selecting a journal to submit to based on article content
14. Populating citations (e.g., filling in references, ensuring proper formatting)
15. Handling administrative tasks
16. Writing up documentation
17. Assistance in writing funding applications
18. Creating "plain language" summaries of article findings
19. Generating educational content based on article
20. Data collection and processing
21. Processing unstructured or qualitative data
22. Helping peer reviewers adjust tone and clarity of feedback\*
23. Helping peer reviewers validate sources and claims from existing literature\*

**Less exciting current use cases:** Fewer use cases fall here versus last year due to changing views of AI's current capabilities.

24. Adapting reviewer feedback into standardized format
25. Knowledge management agent to help make information broadly accessible
26. Advanced simulations that reduce the need for some bench research
27. Generating video abstracts or "explainers"
28. Generating audio articles

**Humans-preferred use cases:** Most use cases related to peer review fall into this quadrant, as do use cases about design and methods.

29. Creating science communications tools
30. Analyzing images\*
31. Generating multimedia to broaden sharing of findings/ build interest in article
32. Monitoring funding opportunities
33. Increasing speed and ease of peer review
34. Predicting trends/future milestones in field
35. Supporting peer reviewers with an initial analysis of a paper's strengths and weaknesses\*
36. Assessing the quality of peer review feedback\*
37. Identifying peer reviewers with relevant expertise
38. Peer reviewer recommendation tool based on article comparisons
39. Providing step by step guidance to peer reviewers\*
40. Automated feedback to reviewers to ensure clarity in reviews
41. Optimizing experimental design
42. Developing hypotheses\*
43. Developing experimental methods or protocols\*
44. Optimizing allocation of shared resources (e.g., lab equipment)

\* = new in 2025 survey

# Consistency in many top- and bottom-ranked use cases year over year

In terms of the potential uses of AI holding the greatest interest for researchers, 7 out of the top 10 use cases are the same as last year, though the order has changed. Most of these tasks are related to manuscript preparation and keeping up with/reviewing the available literature.

2025 rank	Top 10 use cases by level of interest	2025 %	2024 rank
1	Detecting errors or bias in own writing	79%	1
▲ 2	Writing assistance (e.g., copyediting, translation, etc.)	77%	6
▲ 3	Monitoring/summarizing key new publications in your field of study	74%	8
▼ 4	Formatting manuscript to comply with submission guidelines	74%	3
▲ 5	Reviewing large amounts of published and pre-print studies	71%	10
6	Identifying key themes in existing published literature*	71%	-
▲ 7	Identifying gaps in the literature	69%	11
8	Literature review to select citations that best support my work*	69%	-
▼ 9	Creating data visualizations	68%	5
▼ 10	Checking own work for unintended plagiarism	67%	2

Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557; \* = new in 2025 survey

Interest is backed up by usage—6 of the top 10 most tried use cases to date are also among the top 10 most interesting this year. Writing assistance is again by far the most tried use case, followed by detecting errors and literature review to select citations, both of which have been tried by about half of researchers.

2025 rank	Top 10 use cases by % having used AI for this task	2025 %	2024 rank
1	Writing assistance (e.g., copyediting, translation, etc.)	71%	1
2	Detecting errors or bias in own writing	50%	2
3	Literature review to select citations that best support my work*	48%	-
▲ 4	Creating "plain language" summaries of article findings	41%	6
5	Identifying key themes in existing published literature*	41%	-
▲ 6	Generating reference recommendations	40%	7
▼ 7	Writing up documentation	40%	4
▲ 8	Reviewing large amounts of published and pre-print studies	40%	11
▲ 9	Monitoring/summarizing key new publications in your field of study	37%	16
▼ 10	Data collection and processing	35%	5

■ = also at the top in terms of interest in using AI

Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557; \* = new in 2025 survey

## EXPLORING AI USE CASES

At the other end of the spectrum, the use cases with the lowest levels of interest among researchers tend to relate to peer review, generating content or predictions, and developing methods or hypotheses. Interest in having AI predict trends/future milestones in field has declined significantly since last year.

2025 rank	Bottom 10 use cases by level of interest	2025 %	2024 rank
34	Identifying peer reviewers with relevant expertise	53%	20
▼ 35	Peer reviewer recommendation tool based on article comparisons	52%	30
36	Providing step by step guidance to peer reviewers*	52%	-
▼ 37	Predicting trends/future milestones in field	51%	15
▲ 38	Advanced simulations that reduce the need for some bench research	51%	39
39	Developing hypotheses*	49%	-
▼ 40	Automated feedback to reviewers to ensure clarity in reviews	48%	36
▼ 41	Generating video abstracts or "explainers"	48%	38
42	Developing experimental methods or protocols*	46%	-
▼ 43	Optimizing allocation of shared resources (e.g., lab equipment)	46%	35

Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557; \* = new in 2025 survey

While overall there was a reassessment of AI's current capabilities, there is some consistency to where researchers most think AI can currently exceed human abilities: 6 out of the top 10 use cases where researchers most agree that AI can currently outperform humans are the same as last year. Additionally, 6 out of the top 10 use cases where AI performs best are also in the top 10 in terms of researchers' interest in using AI—together, these are strong signals that these use cases are ripe for exploration with present technology.

2025 rank	Top 10 use cases – AI currently does task better than humans	2025 %	2024 rank
▲ 1	Reviewing large amounts of published and pre-print studies	67%	4
▼ 2	Checking own work for unintended plagiarism	66%	1
▲ 3	Writing assistance (e.g., copyediting, translation, etc.)	64%	14
▲ 4	Knowledge management agent to help make info broadly accessible	59%	5
▲ 5	Creating data visualizations	55%	15
6	Generating audio articles	55%	6
▲ 7	Adapting reviewer feedback into standardized format	55%	25
▼ 8	Detecting errors or bias in own writing	54%	7
▲ 9	Monitoring/summarizing key new publications in your field of study	53%	11
▼ 10	Advanced simulations that reduce the need for some bench research	52%	9

■ = also at the top in terms of interest in using AI

Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557; \* = new in 2025 survey

## EXPLORING AI USE CASES

Researchers' consensus of where AI least outperforms humans includes many tasks related to peer review, several of which also ranked lowest in terms of researchers' interest in using AI. Across both our 2024 and 2025 surveys, most use cases related to peer review are mapped to the "humans preferred" quadrant—a strong indication that researchers continue to want human judgment to remain central to the peer review process.

2025 rank	Bottom 10 use cases – AI currently does task better than humans	2025 %	2024 rank
▼ 35	Generating educational content based on article	35%	34
▼ 36	Peer reviewer recommendation tool based on article comparisons	35%	33
▲ 37	Optimizing experimental design	34%	39
38	Helping peer reviewers validate sources and claims from existing literature*	33%	-
39	Supporting peer reviewers with an initial analysis of a paper's strengths and weaknesses*	33%	-
▼ 40	Predicting trends/future milestones in field	32%	29
41	Providing step by step guidance to peer reviewers*	32%	-
42	Assessing the quality of peer review feedback*	27%	-
43	Developing hypotheses*	23%	-
44	Developing experimental methods or protocols*	20%	-

□ = also in the bottom in terms of interest in using AI

Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557; \* = new in 2025 survey

## Digging deeper into AI for literature review

Many of the use cases where researchers have high interest and expectations for AI are connected to reviewing the literature. These include:

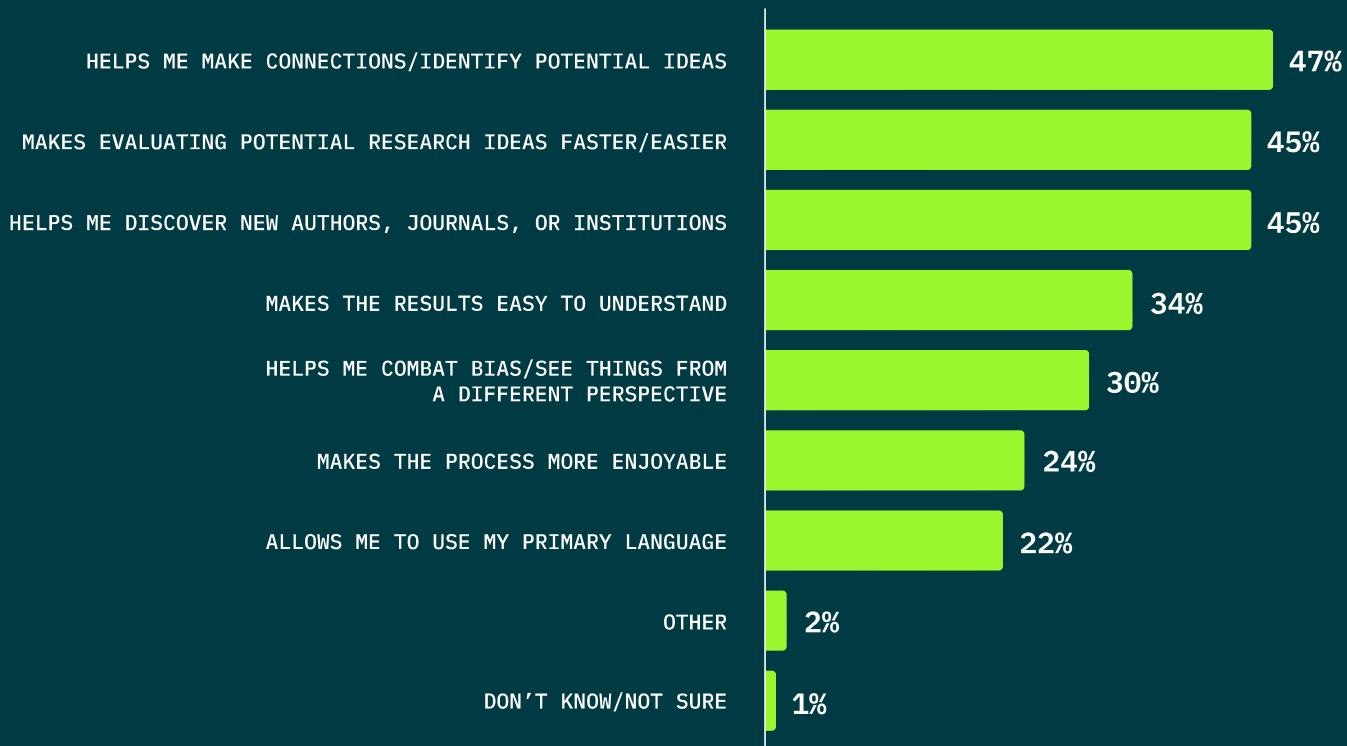
- monitoring/summarizing key new publications in a field of study
- reviewing large amounts of published and preprint studies
- identifying key themes and gaps in published literature
- reviewing the literature to select citations that best support one's work

For many, these high levels of interest and expectation for future use are grounded in present use: 68% of researchers say that they've used AI in literature searches and/or reviews. Some groups are even more likely to have employed AI for this purpose: this includes early adopters of AI (82%), users of paid AI tools (82%), researchers in the APAC region (80%) and in China specifically (83%), and early career researchers (74%).

## EXPLORING AI USE CASES

Working faster is the main benefit of using AI for literature reviews, but close to half of researchers who have tried AI for this purpose also say it helps with comprehensiveness of the review, making connections, evaluating potential research ideas, and discovering content from sources that are new to them (whether authors, journals, or institutions).

**Q: What are the most important benefits of using AI for literature review?**  
Select all that apply.



Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557; \* = new to survey in 2025

Among researchers who use AI for literature searches, three-quarters are approaching the results with caution: 50% say they “always” go to the primary source to verify citations and claims, and another 25% say they take this step “most of the time.”

For the roughly one-third of researchers who have not tried AI for literature reviews, the main barriers to doing so are concerns about:

- potential hallucinations and fabricated citations (62%)
- missing or overlooking important information (57%)
- AI tools not yet being trustworthy enough for this use (51%)
- bias in AI tools impacting the research (49%)

Addressing researcher concerns about accuracy, trust, and comprehensiveness will be key in helping the research community leverage AI for literature review to its fullest potential.

## THE WILEY AI FRAMEWORK

We've updated the Wiley AI Framework to continue to help researchers explore the potential for AI to serve them in their research. The framework provides a simplified set of recommendations to help the research community think about how they might put AI into action, now and in the future.

- **Act:** Current use cases where AI is already poised to make a difference and interest is high
- **Watch:** Near-term opportunities with high interest and growing AI capabilities
- **Envision:** "Stretch" and ambitious use cases that are not yet feasible or strongly desired, but have the potential to address future needs



**Act:** Our recommendation to 'act' applies to use cases where interest is high and the consensus among researchers is that AI is already capable of outperforming humans.

This year, these fall into two main categories:

### Average researcher views

	Interested in using in the next two years	Who does it better?
<b>Manuscript preparation and writing assistance</b> Includes detecting errors or bias in own writing, writing assistance, formatting manuscript to comply with submission guidelines, and checking own work for unintended plagiarism.	74% 2024: 72%	 HUMANS OR AI   59% 2024: 62%
<b>Working with large amounts of information (monitoring/summarizing)</b> Includes monitoring/summarizing key new publications in a field of study, reviewing large amounts of published and pre-print studies, creating data visualizations, and building a custom library of information tailored to an area of study.	70% 2024: 67%	 56% 2024: 60%

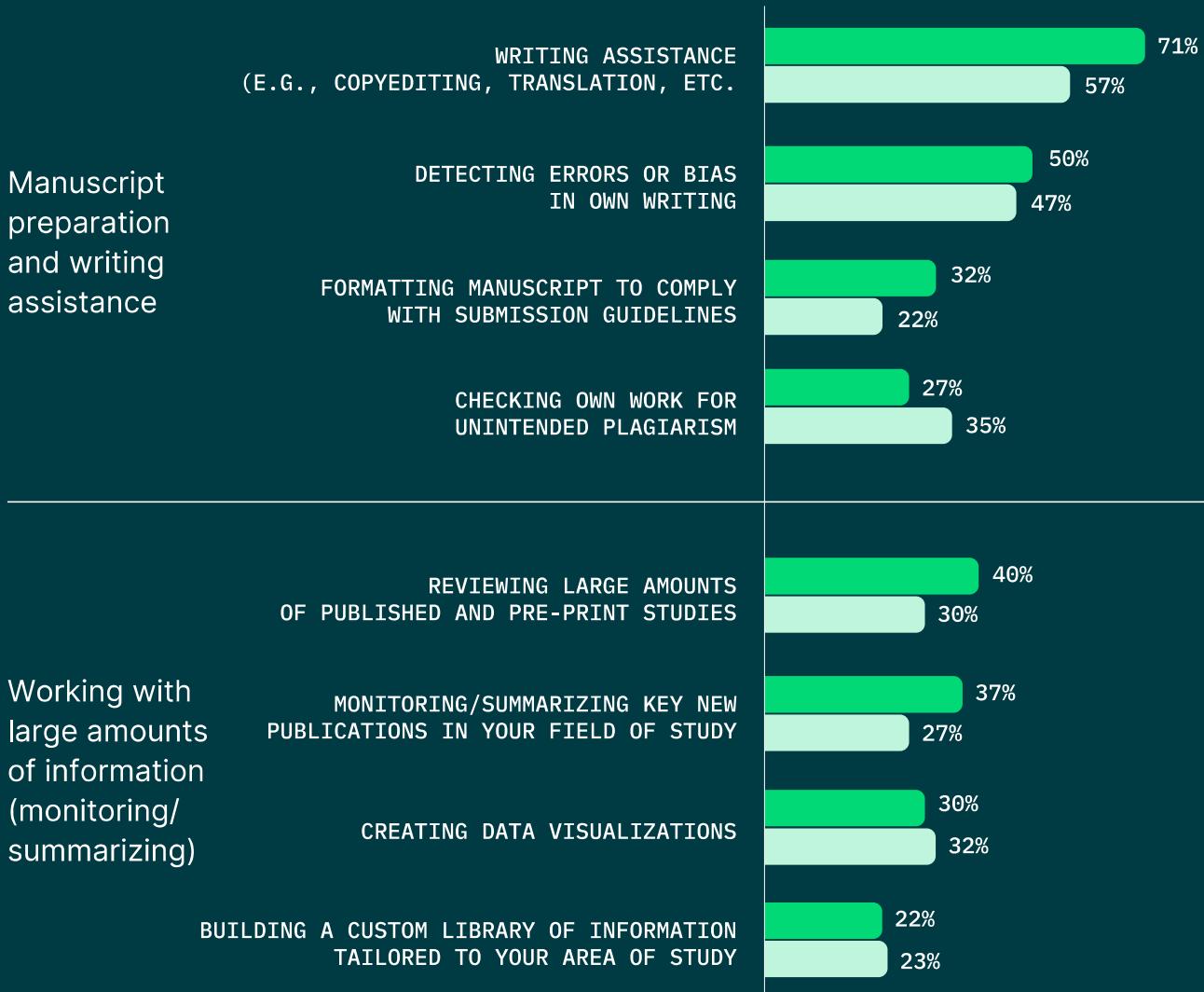
Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557 in 2025; in 2024 they ranged from n=956 to n=1,448

## THE WILEY AI FRAMEWORK

While interest in these use cases has increased slightly over last year, usage has surged across many of them, including writing assistance (up 14 percentage points), manuscript formatting (up 10 percentage points), reviewing large amounts of studies (up 10 percentage points), and monitoring/summarizing key new publications (up 10 percentage points).

### Percentage of researchers who have used or tried AI for “Act” use cases

■ 2025 ■ 2024



Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557 in 2025; in 2024 they ranged from n=956 to n=1,448

Even with these increases in usage, most of these use cases have only been tried by a minority of researchers. Like last year, we conclude that they continue to be prime opportunities and logical places to start for researchers who are interested in expanding their use of AI.



**Watch:** Where interest is high but there's a general agreement that humans still outperform available AI tools, our recommendation to researchers is to 'watch' as the technology continues to develop.

These use cases fall into four main categories this year, an increase from just two categories last year, because of researchers' changed views regarding what is currently feasible with AI tools. Use cases relating to processing/analyzing large amounts of information and making research accessible to a wider audience—which fell under "Act" last year—are reassigned to the "Watch" part of our framework this year. While researchers' interest in these use cases has remained high, the consensus has shifted to the assessment that AI does not yet outperform humans in these areas, putting them in the category of use cases to monitor.

### Average researcher views

	Interested in using in the next two years	Who does it better?
<b>Working with large amounts of information (processing/analyzing)</b> Includes identifying key themes in existing published literature*, identifying gaps in the literature, data collection and processing, and processing unstructured or qualitative data.	65% 2024: 67%	 57%  2024: 60%
<b>Generating recommendations</b> Includes literature review to select citations that best support my work*, generating reference recommendations, and selecting a journal to submit to based on the content of the article.	67% 2024: 64%	 58%  2024: 56%
<b>Making research accessible to a wider audience</b> Includes creating "plain language" summaries of article findings, and generating educational content based on article.	62% 2024: 65%	 59%  2024: 58%
<b>Offloading essential but less engaging work</b> Includes handling administrative tasks, writing up documentation, populating citations, and assistance in writing funding applications.	63% 2024: 58%	 58%  2024: 57%

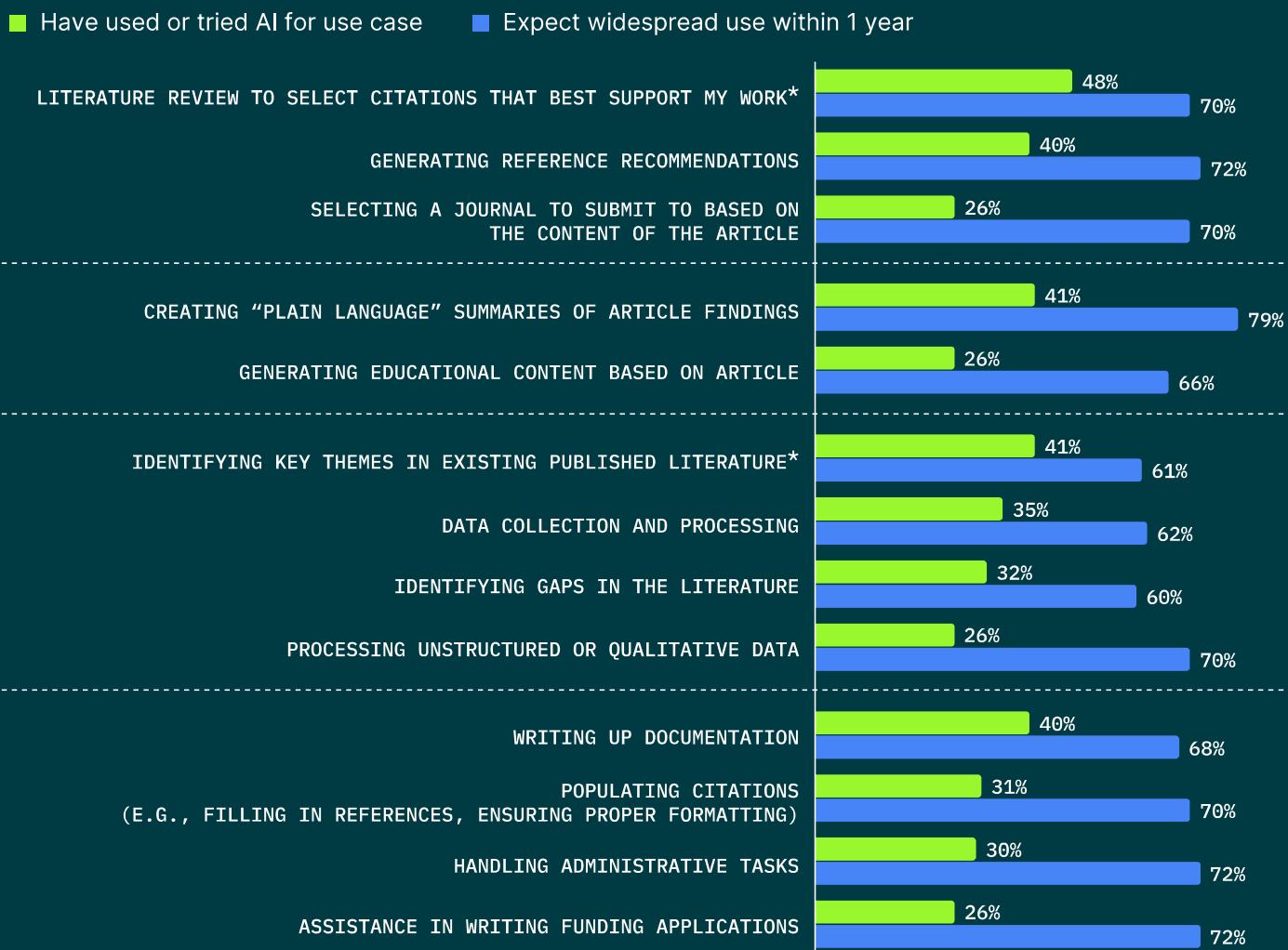
Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557 in 2025; in 2024 they ranged from n=956 to n=1,448  
\*=new use case in 2025 survey

## THE WILEY AI FRAMEWORK

Like last year, researchers are looking forward to using AI to handle less engaging tasks, freeing up their capacity to focus on more meaningful work. They're also looking forward to AI being able to process and analyze large amounts of information and generate reliable recommendations, as well as anticipating using it to help make their research accessible to a wider audience in the future.

When compared with the percentage of researchers who have tried AI in these areas, the following data implies that many expect the use of AI to expand or accelerate considerably for these near-term use cases over the next year.

### Researcher expectations for AI use in the next two years versus usage to date



Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557; \* = new use case in 2025 survey

Around one-third of researchers have used or tried AI for most of the use cases above, meaning a significant minority of researchers are already working with AI for these purposes even if the available tools are not yet capable of outperforming humans in these areas. This suggests that these researchers are finding value in using AI for these functions even though they may also agree that the technology needs further development.



**Envision:** In anticipation of the future, we're recommending the action of "envision" for selected use cases where interest may currently fall a bit below the average (60%) and/or AI capabilities may lag behind those of humans.

The categories of use cases are consistent with last year—they remain on the margins in terms of interest, but we continue to keep these on our radar as they have the potential to address important researcher needs and pain points.

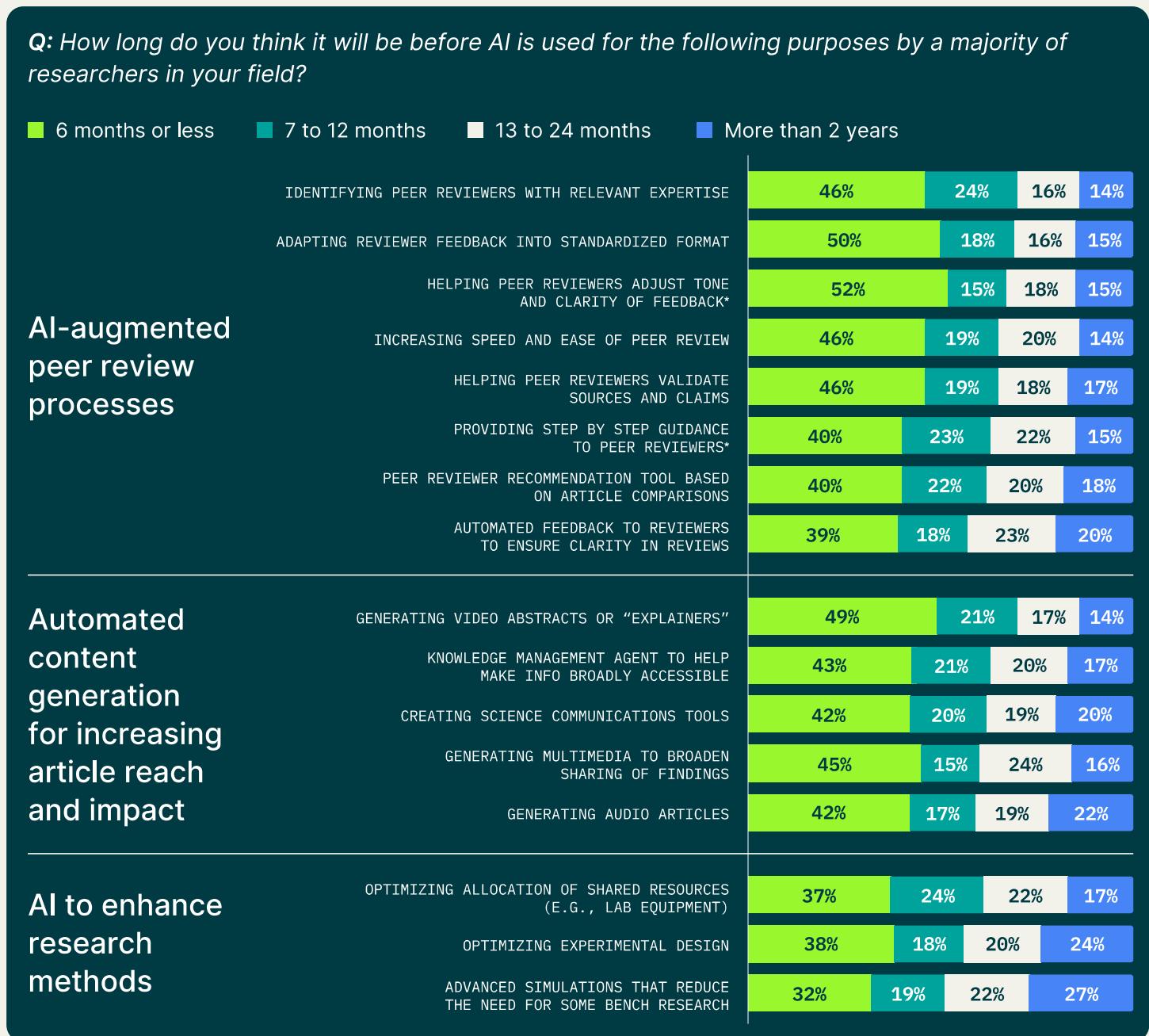
## Average researcher views

	Interested in using in the next two years	Who does it better?
<b>AI-augmented peer review processes</b> Includes helping peer reviewers adjust tone and clarity of feedback*, helping peer reviewers validate sources and claims*, adapting feedback into standardized format, increasing speed and ease of peer review, identifying peer reviewers with relevant expertise, peer reviewer recommendation tools, providing step by step guidance to peer reviewers*, and automated feedback to reviewers to ensure clarity in reviews.	55% 2024: 56%	 HUMANS OR AI 
<b>Automated content generation for increasing article reach and impact</b> Includes creating science communications tools, knowledge management agent to help make information broadly accessible, generating multimedia to broaden sharing of findings/build interest in article, generating video abstracts, and generating audio articles.	51% 2024: 53%	 60%  2024: 59%
<b>AI to enhance research methods</b> Includes optimizing experimental design, advanced simulations that reduce the need for some bench research, and optimizing allocation of shared resources (e.g., lab equipment).	51% 2024: 54%	 50%  2024: 51%

Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557 in 2025; in 2024 they ranged from n=956 to n=1,448  
\*=new use case in 2025 survey

## THE WILEY AI FRAMEWORK

While the use cases in “Envision” score lower both in interest and the ability of AI to outperform humans on tasks, most researchers nonetheless think that AI will be used for these purposes by a majority in their field within the next 12 months. This speaks to widespread expectations that AI use and acceptance will continue to increase dramatically over the near term, and that researchers think this also applies to use cases that appear to be on the fringes of acceptance right now.



Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557; \* = new use case in 2025 survey

We will continue to track these trends to understand where AI is ready to go, where it needs work, and where human expertise and capability cannot be substituted.

## SHIFTING VIEWS OF AI CAPABILITIES

Researchers are markedly less likely than last year to think AI can currently outperform humans on a wide range of tasks.

Overall, interest in using AI remains steady with last year: on average, **60%** of researchers express interest in personally using AI for the use cases we tested within the next two years, the same as in 2024.

However, compared to last year, there are significantly more use cases on the left side of our map—indicating a sizeable shift in consensus. More researchers are taking the view that AI is not yet able to outperform humans on as many tasks as previously thought.

This suggests that researchers have undergone somewhat of a reality check, with increased firsthand use of AI leading to an overall reassessment of AI's current capabilities.

### Use case distribution: 2024 vs. 2025



The use cases with the greatest decline in AI's perceived ability to outperform humans show that this reassessment of AI capabilities spans various parts of the research process, including tasks related to data collection and processing, predicting trends, manuscript preparation, and populating citations.

## SHIFTING VIEWS OF AI CAPABILITIES

### Use cases with greatest decline in researchers saying AI can do it better than humans

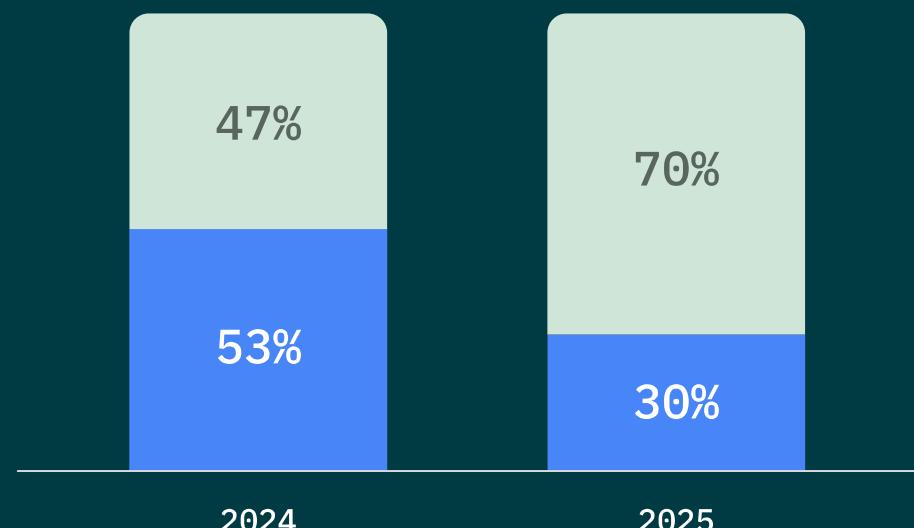
Processing unstructured or qualitative data	-22%
Optimizing allocation of shared resources (e.g., lab equipment)	-14%
Predicting trends/future milestones in field	-13%
Checking own work for unintended plagiarism	-13%
Populating citations (e.g., filling in references, ensuring proper formatting)	-12%
Data collection and processing	-11%
Selecting a journal to submit to based on the content of the article	-9%
Generating multimedia to broaden sharing of findings/ build interest in article	-7%
Advanced simulations that reduce the need for some bench research	-7%
Formatting manuscript to comply with submission guidelines	-7%

Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557

Here's another way of measuring the extent of this reality check: in **2024**, researchers thought AI was already outperforming humans for 53% of the use cases we tested. This year, they think that's true for less than one-third of use cases.

■ Majority says AI currently outperforms humans ■ Majority says humans currently match or outperform AI

Breakdown of  
AI use cases by  
consensus view



Base: 2024 n=4,946; 2025 n=2,430

## SHIFTING VIEWS OF AI CAPABILITIES

While overall expectations have been lowered, there are some significant differences among different parts of the research community. Some groups are more sanguine about AI's current capabilities: those who are more likely than the overall average to think AI is currently outperforming humans include early adopters of AI (they think AI currently exceeds human capabilities in **59%** of use cases), researchers in the healthcare (**57%**) and corporate (**50%**) sectors, researchers in the APAC region (**45%**), and researchers whose field of study falls under medicine (**48%**) or computer science (**43%**).

On the other side of the equation are groups with notably lower expectations than the overall average. These include later adopters of AI (they think AI currently exceeds human capabilities in just **5%** of use cases), researchers in the life sciences (**16%**) and humanities (**23%**), early career researchers (**23%**), and researchers in the Americas (**23%**) and EMEA (**23%**) regions.

**Overall, the major year-over-year shift in consensus about AI's current capabilities suggests that researchers' views have undergone a course correction after a period of peak hype—a normal part of the life cycle for major technological advancements.** This shift in views aligns with global business trends as well, as Gartner noted in their July 2025 update on the [Hype Cycle for Artificial Intelligence](#):

*"This year, GenAI enters the Trough of Disillusionment<sup>1</sup> as organizations gain understanding of its potential and limits. AI leaders continue to face challenges when it comes to proving GenAI's value to the business."*

As researchers make increasing use of AI, they too are coming to a better understanding of its present limits and future potential.

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<sup>1</sup>Defined as the phase of a technology's life cycle where "interest wanes as experiments and implementations fail to deliver." Source: <https://www.gartner.com/en/research/methodologies/gartner-hype-cycle>

# Insights from the corporate sector

Researchers in the corporate sector emerge as confident AI users with fewer barriers to successful implementation of AI in their work. They benefit from greater access to AI technology, with **58%** reporting that their organization provides access to the AI tools they need versus just **40%** across all sectors. They are also less hindered by a lack of guidelines and training, with just **44%** citing this as an obstacle to greater AI use, compared to **57%** of the overall population.

With greater access and confidence in their use of AI, corporate researchers are also more likely to see AI technology as highly capable in the present: they consider AI to be presently outperforming humans for half of all use cases, while across all sectors the consensus is that AI only outperforms humans about **30%** of the time. It's no surprise, therefore, that they also have higher expectations for AI use to become widespread in their field within the next two years (**86%** versus **83%** overall).

Taken together, these findings suggest that higher levels of access and organizational support around AI can help researchers move beyond cautious experimentation toward the productive integration of AI into their work.

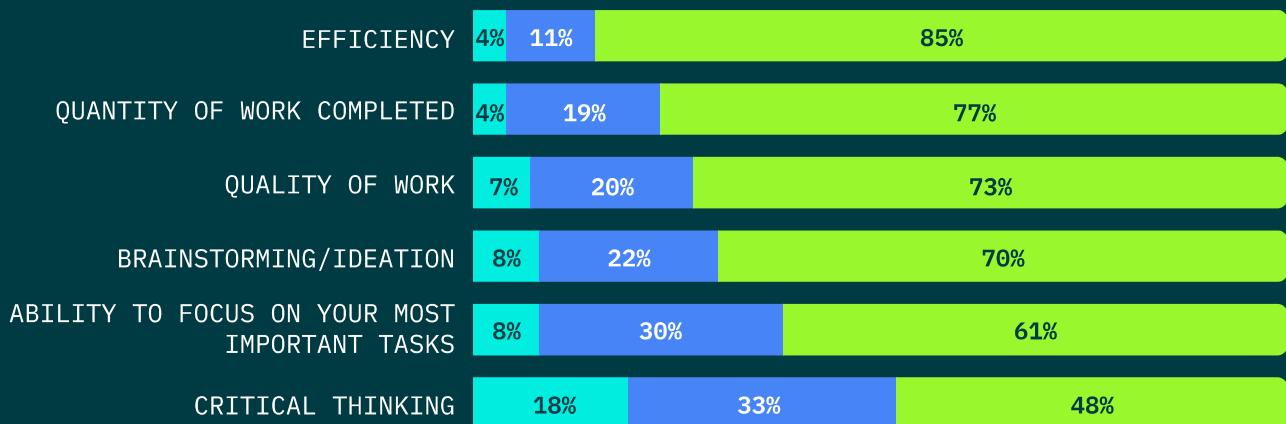
# Connecting present reality with future potential

**Despite revised expectations, AI is succeeding in helping researchers in the present.**

While researchers have revised their expectations of what AI can currently do, it doesn't mean that their use of AI so far has been unsuccessful. In fact, the data shows just the opposite: an overwhelming majority of researchers who have used AI for any aspect of their work say that it's helped their efficiency, the quantity and quality of their work, and their brainstorming and ideation. Critical thinking was the only area where fewer than half of researchers considered AI to have helped—but even then, researchers were more likely to be neutral about AI's impact than they were to think of it as a hindrance.

**Q: Based on your experiences to date, what impact — if any — does using AI have on the following aspects of your work as a researcher?**

■ STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT HINDERS     ■ NEITHER HINDERS NOR HELPS     ■ STRONGLY/SOMEWHAT HELPS



Base: Researchers who have used any AI n=2,059

**When there is greater access to AI tools, researchers are more likely to agree that AI has been helpful across various aspects of their work:** researchers using one or more paid AI tools were significantly more likely than those only using free tools to say that AI somewhat or strongly helped them in **all** of the above areas, from efficiency to critical thinking. Additionally, when researchers agree that their institution provides access to the tools and resources that they need to be successful in using AI, they are also significantly more likely to agree that AI helps in all areas than they were to think of it as a hindrance.

# SHIFTING VIEWS OF AI CAPABILITIES

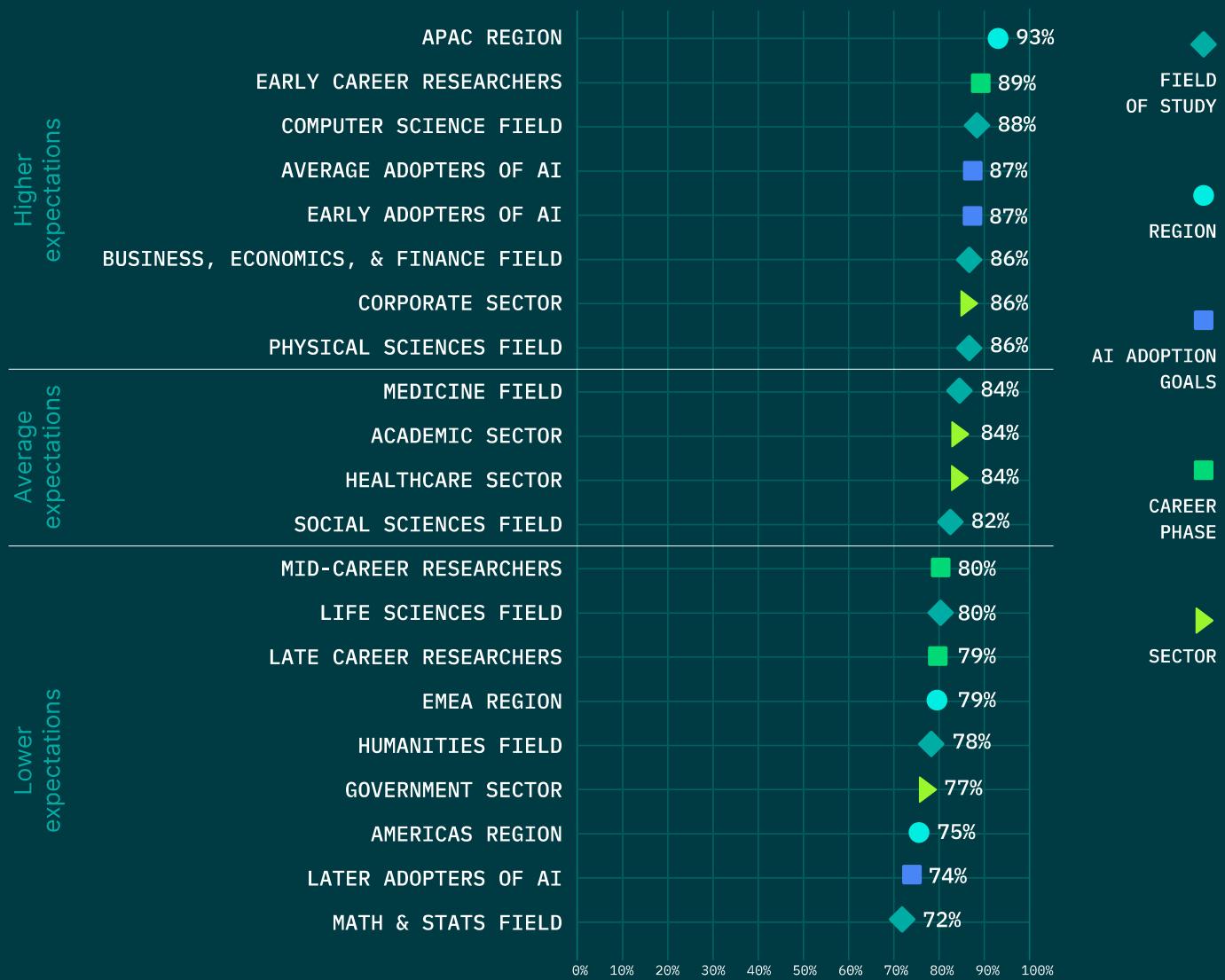
Researchers show optimism about what AI can do for them in the future

In addition to feeling that AI is helping in many areas in the present, researchers have high expectations for the use of AI in research in the future. This manifests in two main ways:

1

We've seen a big uptick in researcher expectations for widespread, imminent AI use. On average, 83% of researchers expect the AI use cases we tested to become widespread in their fields in the next two years. That's a significant increase from just 57% who felt the same way in 2024. Even among groups of researchers where a more cautious approach to AI prevails, three-quarters expect use cases to be common in their field within the next two years.

Average % expecting AI for use cases to be widespread within 2 years



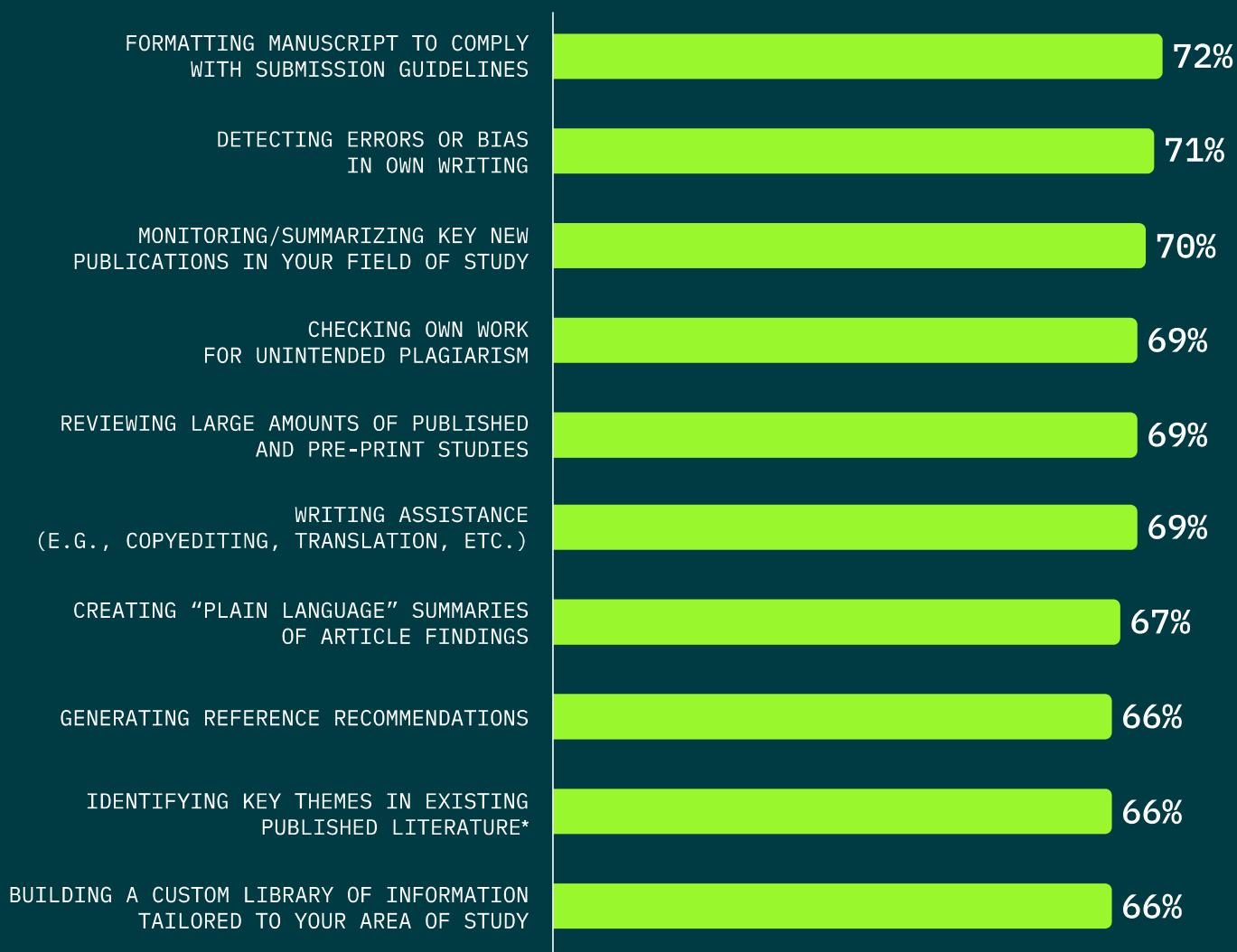
Base: Field of study n=62–793; region n=493–1,295; AI adoption goals n=695–871; career phase n=646–1,053; sector n=109–1,789

# 2

Optimism for what AI will be able to do in the future is expressed by a willingness to embrace future agentic tools. When we asked researchers to imagine future agentic AI, an average of 57% say they would be somewhat or very likely to consider allowing AI to act autonomously on their behalf.

The use cases where researchers are most optimistic and likely to allow an AI agent to act on their behalf tend to revolve around manuscript preparation and monitoring/reviewing large amounts of studies. Many of these are also among the use cases that are most interesting to researchers, implying that researchers are eager to embrace specialized tools that can meet their needs in these areas—if they are aware of them and able to secure access.

### Top 10 use cases by likelihood to allow agentic AI to act on researchers' behalf



Base: Response counts for each use case range from n=341 to n=557; \* = new to survey in 2025

## THE ROLE OF THE PUBLISHER

**A lack of guidance and training remains a barrier to greater AI adoption among researchers.**

Caught between growing concerns about AI models, lowered expectations about what AI is currently capable of, and their optimism and expectations for the future, researchers recognize that they need guidance in the present.

A lack of guidance and training is cited by **57%** of researchers as a barrier to using AI to the extent that they would like, and less than half of researchers (**41%**) currently agree that their organization or institution provides them with the guidelines and best practices they need to successfully use AI in their work.

***Who's less likely to have the support they need in terms of guidelines and training?***

**More likely to say a lack of guidelines/training is a barrier to using AI to the extent that they would like:**

- Researchers in medicine (**64%**) and social sciences (**68%**)
- Mid-career (**59%**) and later career (**61%**) researchers
- Average adopters of AI (**64%**)
- Researchers in the Americas (**63%**) region

**Less likely to agree that their organization provides the guidelines/best practices they need to be successful:**

- Mid-career (**39%**) and later-career (**37%**) researchers
- Later adopters of AI (**33%**)
- Researchers in the Americas (**32%**) and EMEA (**37%**) regions
- Those who disagree that their organization provides access to the tools they need (**17%**)

Some researcher groups stand out as being less likely to feel in need of guidelines or training. This includes researchers in the corporate sector (just **44%** say a lack of guidelines/training is a barrier to greater AI use, versus **57%** overall), as well as researchers in computer science (**39%**), early career researchers (**53%**), researchers in APAC (**52%**), and researchers in China (**47%**).

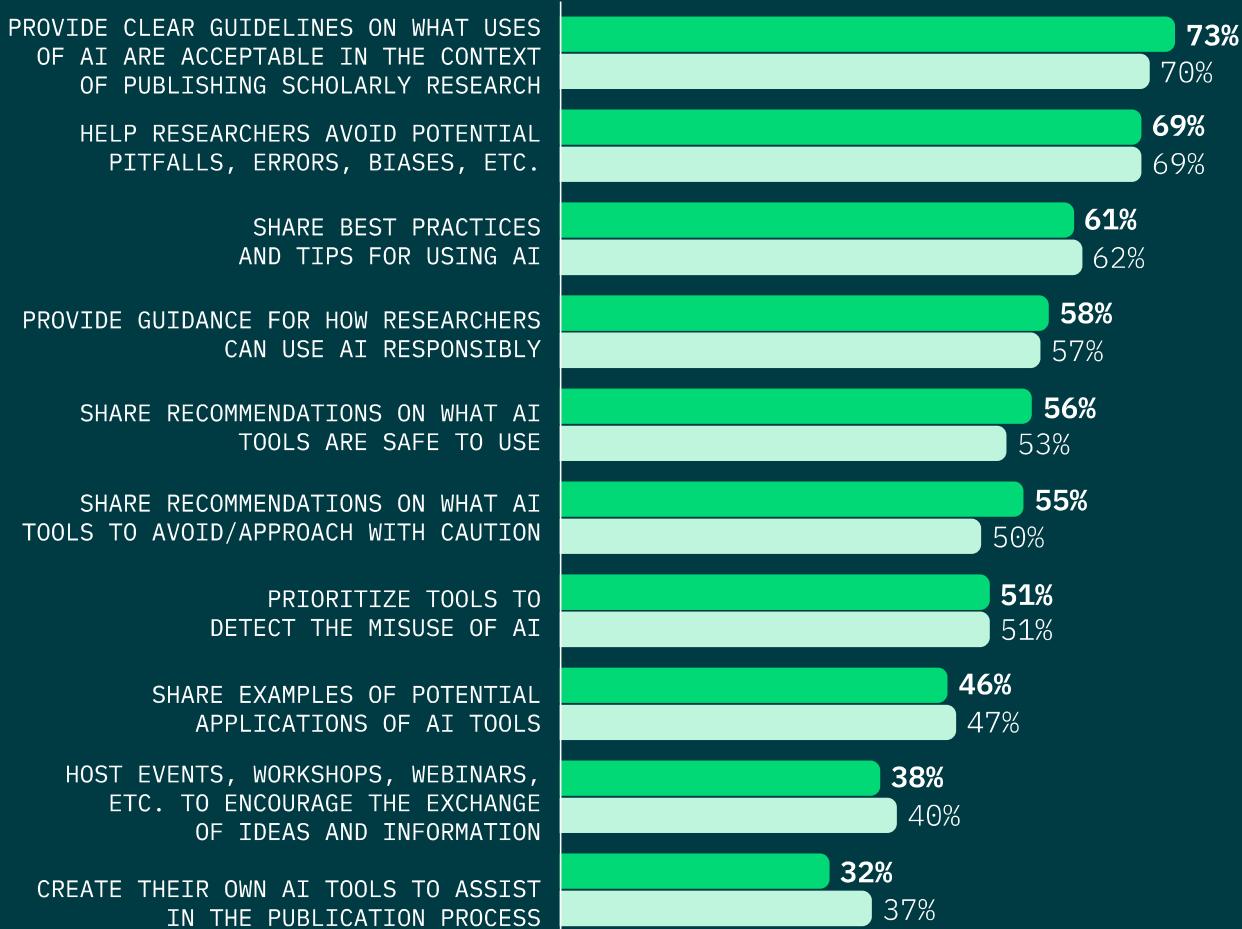
## THE ROLE OF THE PUBLISHER

Regardless of their personal level of need for guidelines, most researchers view publishers as having a key role to play in filling the gap in available guidance.

Close to three-quarters of researchers call for scholarly publishers to provide clear guidelines about which uses of AI are acceptable and to help researchers avoid potential pitfalls and errors. Overall, what researchers want from publishers is highly consistent with last year, with only slightly more looking to publishers to also share recommendations on which AI tools to avoid.

**Q:** As AI use becomes more common in research, which of the following are important roles/functions for scholarly publishers to play? Select all that apply.

■ 2025 ■ 2024

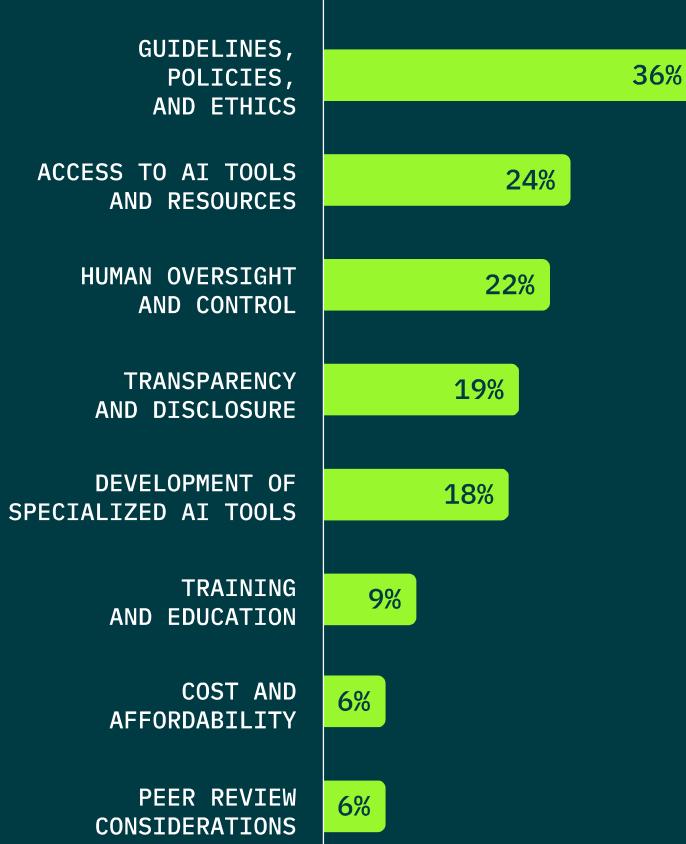


Base: 2024 n=4,946; 2025 n=2,430

When we asked researchers to tell us in their own words how publishers could best support them in using AI, they most often commented that publishers could help them by providing guidelines and policies (36%), providing access to tools and resources (24%), maintaining human oversight (22%), and promoting transparency and disclosure around AI use (19%).

# THE ROLE OF THE PUBLISHER

**Q:** What is the most important thing publishers should do to support you in making use of AI in your work in the future? Verbatim themes



"Be clear about what is and is not acceptable and then back it up with some sort of accountability for authors who misuse AI. Clearly defining what is "using" AI that needs to be declared or documented in a manuscript. The spectrum of AI use is broad and some uses feel very relevant to be declared while others seem little different than using a search engine."

"Enhance the capacity of AI tools to collect information, organize it into knowledge, and use it wisely. Provide a list of preferred AI tools (preferably free). Give a sketch of permissible limits for ethical AI use. Train researchers in AI tool use."

"Make sure disclosure is becoming part of the publishing culture. We cannot ignore AI use, but we need a better culture of transparency and attribution"

"Provide free access to the recommended/acceptable AI tools and guidance re. appropriate/acceptable use."

Base: n=954 verbatim responses; thematic analysis and categorization performed by Claude Opus 4.1

## Researchers want specific and transparent disclosure of AI use—and publishers can facilitate

Researchers recognize the importance of disclosing AI use—both on the part of the researcher and on the parts of editors and reviewers.

As authors of research, around three-quarters of researchers want peer reviewers and editors to disclose details of the AI they used in reviewing their manuscripts. This includes which tool they used (72% want this to be disclosed), a detailed description of which parts of the review were drafted by AI (72%), and a general description of how they used AI (70%). Over half (57%) would also like to see the wording of the prompts/instructions that the reviewer or editor provided to the AI.

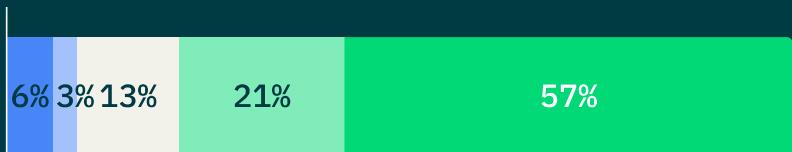
As peer reviewers of the work of others, a majority of researchers feel it's very important for other authors to provide detailed disclosures about how they use AI in their work, especially in figure descriptions and in their methods section. Acknowledging AI support for text drafting and editing is also at least somewhat important to most researchers.

## THE ROLE OF THE PUBLISHER

**Q:** When you are peer reviewing a manuscript for another author, how important is it for the author to disclose details about the following?

■ VERY UNIMPORTANT ■ SOMEWHAT UNIMPORTANT ■ NEUTRAL ■ SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT ■ VERY IMPORTANT

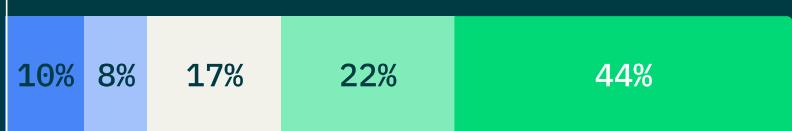
IN FIGURE DESCRIPTIONS, ANY AI PHOTO EDITING OR IMAGE GENERATION (WHEN PERMITTED BY JOURNAL GUIDELINES)



IN THE METHODS SECTION, ANY AI SUPPORT FOR ENABLING THE RESEARCH, INCLUDING DATA ANALYSIS, CODING, AND LITERATURE REVIEW, ETC.



IN THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, ANY AI SUPPORT FOR TEXT DRAFTING AND EDITING



Base: n=717

Researchers who are more likely to say disclosing AI use in the methods section is very important include: mid-career researchers (59%), later adopters of AI (62%), researchers in the Americas (60%) region, and researchers who are not currently using AI (78%).

Clear guidance will help researchers who want to appropriately disclose their own AI use, as well as see consistent disclosures of AI use in the work of others. By providing this guidance, publishers have an opportunity to promote greater transparency and consistency around legitimate uses of AI in the research process.

Recognizing that the majority of researchers lack the organizational support they're searching for, and seek guidance on appropriate disclosure of AI use, Wiley's [AI guidelines for researchers](#) aim to bridge this gap. These guidelines provide the clear frameworks and practical guidance that researchers across disciplines and career stages need to confidently and responsibly integrate AI into their work.

## CONCLUSION

While AI adoption among researchers has dramatically increased in just one year, our survey reveals that increased experience has bred greater caution about AI's limitations. However, researchers remain optimistic about the future potential of AI tools and urgently need institutional support and publisher guidance to bridge the gap between current capabilities and transformative research outcomes. Publishers and institutions must step up to provide the specialized tools, training, and disclosure frameworks that researchers are actively seeking to responsibly harness AI's power in scholarly work.

### Implications for publishers and institutions

- Integrating scholarly content into the general-purpose AI tools researchers are currently using will help increase the reach of that content while also helping increase the impact and effectiveness of AI tools for greater numbers of researchers.
- As the reality check has set in for researchers, they are approaching current AI tools with greater caution. Helping researchers evaluate and understand the limitations of current tools—especially around accuracy and information security/privacy—will help pave the way to realizing even greater benefits from using AI in the research process.
- **Publishers:** Researchers are looking to publishers for guidance in using AI, so publishers are poised to have an important impact on both removing a barrier to greater AI use and on defining the parameters of acceptable use. Publishers also have a key role to play in defining and driving the adoption of appropriate disclosure of AI use—which researchers agree is essential for authors and for peer reviewers.
- **Institutions:** Researchers want guidance around the acceptable use of AI, and are paying attention to institutional policies, but less than half feel their institution is meeting their needs for guidelines and best practices. Filling this gap can help institutions pave the way to greater, more impactful AI use in the research process for their researchers.

### Implications for researchers:

- The desire to be doing even more with AI is reflected in the mix of free and paid solutions that many researchers are patching together to try to meet their needs. As the use of AI in the research process gains wider acceptance, destigmatizing and standardizing disclosure about AI tools and methods employed in research may take some of the guesswork out of figuring out which tool is best for the job in a particular field.
- Researchers who feel they've become less sanguine about AI's current capabilities over the last year are not alone—the overall shift in consensus about AI's capabilities was pronounced in this year's survey. The Wiley AI Framework can help provide a starting point for evaluating which use cases are most ready for current exploration and which might be better monitored for future use pending further technological improvements.
- Embracing the regular and responsible disclosure of AI use in methods, acknowledgements, and figures will help increase transparency and trust by providing the information that all parties want when reading, peer reviewing, and publishing research.

## WHAT'S NEXT?

This year's study reveals a research community at a critical juncture. AI adoption has accelerated dramatically, yet researchers are navigating this transformation with limited institutional support and a clearer-eyed view of AI's current capabilities and limitations.

For Wiley, this creates both responsibility and opportunity. As researchers move beyond experimentation toward systematic integration of AI into their workflows, they need more than general enthusiasm—they need specific, actionable guidance rooted in the realities of scholarly publishing.

**We're committed to meeting researchers where they are.** That means developing clear policies that distinguish between AI uses that enhance research integrity and those that compromise it. It means creating practical resources that help researchers evaluate tools, understand risks, and make informed choices. And it means fostering transparent dialogue about how AI is being used throughout the publication process—by authors, reviewers, and publishers themselves.

**We're also committed to being honest about what we don't yet know.** The landscape is evolving rapidly, and some questions don't have decisive answers. Where uncertainty exists, we'll say so clearly, while working alongside the research community to develop evidence-based approaches as our collective understanding deepens.

### Looking ahead, we see several priorities:

**Advancing practical guidance.** Researchers have told us they want concrete direction on acceptable AI use and help to avoid pitfalls. Our recently published [AI guidelines for researchers](#) represent a significant step in this direction, and we're developing additional comprehensive frameworks and educational resources to address these needs, building on the insights from this study and ongoing dialogue with the research community.

### Championing transparency and disclosure.

As our findings show, researchers want to know when and how AI has been used—both in the work they're reviewing and in the peer review process itself. We're working to establish disclosure standards that promote trust without creating unnecessary barriers to legitimate AI use.

**Advocating for researchers in the AI ecosystem.** The relationship between AI developers, content providers, and the research community raises complex questions about intellectual property, attribution, and fair compensation. We're engaging actively in these conversations to ensure that researcher interests are represented and protected.

**Continuing to learn and adapt.** We're committed to tracking how researcher needs, capabilities, and concerns evolve—and adjusting our own approaches accordingly.

The transformation underway in research is profound, but it's not unprecedented. Throughout our history, Wiley has helped researchers navigate major technological shifts, from the digitization of scholarly publishing to the rise of open access. What remains constant is our conviction that technology should serve human inquiry, not replace it.

The researchers who participated in this study have shown us that the community is ready to engage thoughtfully with AI—not as uncritical adopters or reflexive skeptics, but as discerning professionals who recognize both opportunities and constraints. That's exactly the kind of balanced perspective that will shape AI into a tool of value for scientific research.

We're excited to continue this journey alongside you, learning together as we work to ensure that AI fulfills its potential to accelerate discovery while preserving the integrity, creativity, and human judgment that remain at the heart of great science.

## APPENDIX: DETAILED METHODOLOGY

This year's ExplanAltions report covers a single, in-depth survey conducted from July 31 to August 18, 2025. Survey participants were recruited through three primary channels:

- **Wiley's global database of researcher contacts (n=1,133):** We sent email invitations to a random selection of contacts from our overall database of researchers.
- **ResearchGate (n=390):** We partnered with ResearchGate to send an email invitation to participate to 80,000 randomly selected researchers from their database, representing a variety of disciplines in the United States, European Union, United Kingdom, India, and China.
- **Wiley's social media channels in China (n=907):** To reach more early-career researchers in China, we also posted an invitation to participate on our social media channels in China, including WeChat and Weibo. In total, we received 977 responses from researchers in China across all three recruitment channels.

The survey was conducted in English and Simplified Chinese. For each complete survey response from Wiley's database and from ResearchGate, Wiley donated funds to plant four trees through One Tree Planted, a global charity supporting reforestation and biodiversity initiatives, resulting in over 6,000 trees planted. For participants sourced via our social media channels in China, survey respondents were instead able to choose to participate in a random drawing to win a Wiley-branded insulated mug.

In total we received 2,430 responses from researchers around the globe. As the success of the deployment of the survey via social media in China resulted in a disproportionately high number of responses for the APAC region, we weighted survey data to match the regional distribution of our 2024 AI Use Cases Deep Dive study to facilitate direct year-over-year comparisons. We used the regional breakdown of our 2024 study as our guide because it is broadly representative of the overall global population of researchers who engage with Wiley in any capacity, with APAC (Asia and Pacific) at 37% of 2024 responses, EMEA (Europe, the Middle East, and Africa) at 39% of 2024 responses, and the Americas at 24% of 2024 responses. Base sizes included in this report are unweighted. Our results should be seen as indicative rather than representative of global or regional researcher populations.

### ***Participant demographics***

Throughout this report, we look at differences between different participant subgroups. Statistically significant differences for region, sector, career phase, and discipline are reported if they meet or exceed a 95% confidence level.

- **Regions:** Survey participants were asked to indicate the country or region in which they are located. Responses to the survey were spread across the Americas (n=494), EMEA (Europe, the Middle East, and Africa; n=641), and APAC (Asia and Pacific, n=1,295).
- **Career phase:** Survey participants were asked to select the range that represents their years of professional experience. Based on their responses, they were classified as early career researchers (0–7 years of experience, n=1,053), mid-career researchers (8–19 years of experience, n=646), and later career researchers (20+ years of experience, n=730).

## APPENDIX: DETAILED METHODOLOGY

- **Sector:** Survey participants were asked to identify what best describes the sector in which they work: academic, corporate, government, healthcare, or other. Most participants work in academia (n=1,789). The next largest sector is healthcare (n=233), followed by other (n=128), corporate (n=122), and government (n=109).
- **Disciplines:** Survey participants were asked to select the option that best reflected their area of expertise or field of study. Responses were rolled up into eight top-level disciplines for further analysis:
  - Medicine (n=453)
  - Physical sciences (n=793)
  - Social sciences (n=359)
  - Life sciences (n=334)
  - Business, economics, and finance (n=157)
  - Humanities (n=134)
  - Computer science (n=84)
  - Mathematics and statistics (n=62)



ExplanAltions 2025