IBM Newsroom

IBM Study: More Companies Turning to Open-Source AI Tools to Unlock ROI

- *85% of IT decision makers surveyed reported progress in their companies' 2024 AI strategy, with 47% saying they have already achieved positive ROI*
- *Nearly half of surveyed companies are looking to open-source AI to optimize their investments in 2025*

ARMONK, N.Y., Dec. 19, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- New research commissioned by IBM (NYSE:IBM) found that companies surveyed are investing in AI for the long term, with a growing interest in using open-source tools to drive ROI and innovation going forward.

The study of more than 2,400 IT decision makers (ITDMs), conducted by Morning Consult and developed in collaboration with Lopez Research, revealed that 85% of respondents report making progress in executing their 2024 AI strategy, with nearly half (47%) already seeing positive ROI from their AI investments. The data also confirms that using open-source tools for AI solutions may correlate to greater financial viability: 51% of surveyed companies currently utilizing open-source AI tools report seeing positive ROI, as compared to just 41% of those not using open source.

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of all respondents indicate they will increase their AI investments in 2025, while 48% are planning to leverage open-source ecosystems to optimize their AI implementations. For those surveyed companies not currently utilizing open-source, 2 in 5 say they plan to use open source for AI implementation in 2025.

"As organizations begin to implement AI at scale, many are placing greater stock in success metrics such as productivity gains, in part because traditional hard dollar ROI benefits have yet to show up on the balance sheets," said Maribel Lopez of Lopez Research. "Yet, companies continue to rapidly advance their AI strategies, with no sign of slowing down. Companies now recognize the value of defining specific use cases and optimizing AI projects. They are leveraging hybrid cloud strategies and open source to drive AI innovation and deliver financial returns."

Further study findings include:

Enterprises are ramping up AI investment, but with a greater strategic focus

- 89% of surveyed organizations are planning to either increase or maintain their investment in AI in 2025.
  - Of the 62% that plan to increase their investment, nearly two-fifths (39%) of respondents plan to up their spending by 25-50%.
  - Only 5% of respondents plan to decrease their AI spending, and none by more than 50%.
- Surveyed companies are focusing on specific areas for allocating their AI investments, particularly IT operations (the top focus area for 63% percent of respondents), as well as data quality management (46%) and product/services innovation (41%).
- When asked what strategic changes will be made in 2025, surveyed ITDMs identify using managed cloud services (51%), hiring specialized talent (48%) and utilizing open source (48%) among the most common ways they plan to optimize their AI investments.

Open source is becoming crucial to companies' AI strategies

- 6-in-10 ITDMs surveyed report using open-source ecosystems as an AI tool source, and more AI solutions are expected to be based on open source in the coming year (41% in 2025 vs. 37% in 2024).
- More than 80% of respondents report that at least a quarter of their company's AI solutions or platforms are based on open source.
  - As company size increases, so does the likelihood that the majority (over 50%) of AI solutions are based on open source.
- Surveyed companies utilizing open-source ecosystems are more likely to be achieving positive ROI than those that are not (51% vs. 41%).
- In addition, respondents harnessing open-source ecosystems plan to launch more AI pilots in the coming year than those that are not: 38% say they plan to launch 21+ AI pilots in 2025, compared to 26% at companies not using open source for AI tooling.

Organizations report successfully advancing their AI projects, but often through less traditional ROI metrics

- 85% of surveyed ITDMs report making progress in executing their AI strategy, while only 9% report no progress.
- 58% of respondents say their company typically moves from AI pilot to full production in less than a year.
- 31% of surveyed companies say their AI investments are driven more by innovation, compared to 28% that are more ROI driven; 41% indicate that their organization is equally innovation and ROI-driven.
- Faster software development (25%), more rapid innovation (23%), and productivity time savings (22%) ranked as the three most important metrics surveyed ITDMs use to calculate ROI from AI investments. Hard dollar/quantifiable savings was a distant fourth at 15%.
- Nearly half (47%) of surveyed companies say they are achieving positive ROI from their AI projects; 33% say they are breaking even and just 14% say they are recording negative ROI.
  - Among companies not yet achieving positive ROI, less than half (44%) expect to begin seeing dollar savings within the next 1 to 2 years; 92% believe they will turn a positive ROI within 3 years.

To view the full study, visit: https://newsroom.ibm.com/image/IBM_ROI_of_AI_Report-December_2024.pdf

Study Methodology:
Morning Consult conducted a survey from October 30 to November 13, 2024 among a total sample of 2,413 IT Decision Makers

(ITDMS) in the US, Canada, Mexico, Brazil, UK, France, Germany, Spain, India, Singapore, Indonesia, and South Korea. The interviews were conducted online, and the data is unweighted. Respondents are employed at companies with 101 employees or more, serving in director-level or higher roles within a technology role, with decision-making authority over at least one of the following: management of business consultants/consulting services, purchasing for IT products, or purchasing for business consulting services.

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