Infographic
Riverbed Global Survey 2025

The Future of IT Operations in the AI Era

riverbed

A high-level view from 1,200 business leaders and technical specialists exploring the present and future of AIOps.

AI is reshaping IT operations – from automating the most complex tasks to powering split-second decisions and elevating digital experiences across every layer of the enterprise. AIOps is at the center of this shift, helping organizations cut through operational complexity, spot issues before they escalate, and boost performance end-to-end. Confidence in AIOps is growing fast – but readiness gaps, poor quality data, and tool sprawl still stand in the way. In this study, Riverbed explores where organizations are today, where they're headed, and what it will take to break down the barriers to realizing AI's full potential in IT operations.

Confidence in AI Readiness is Outpacing Reality

Enthusiasm for AIOps is high, but most organizations are still early in their journey toward AI maturity.

59%
Of organizations express confidence in their AI strategy – a 7-point increase year-over-year.

87%
Say ROI from AIOps has met or exceeded expectations.

53%
Of leaders say AIOps has outperformed original goals vs. 42% of technical specialists.

Yet only 12% of AI initiatives have reached full deployment, with 62% still in pilot or development stages.

Readiness Gaps Between Leaders and Specialists Slow Progress

While optimism is growing, actual preparedness is lagging.

36%
Only 36% of organizations consider themselves ready to operationalize AI currently, down from 37% last year.

However, there's a clear disconnect between strategy and execution:

42% vs. **25%**
42% of business leaders say they are prepared vs. just 25% of technical specialists.

Looking ahead:

86%
Of respondents expect to be AI-ready by 2028 – signaling growing momentum, but underscoring the need for stronger alignment between business and IT.

Data Quality Issues are Stalling AI Success

AI success depends on high-quality, trusted data – but many organizations aren't there yet.

46%
Only 46% are fully confident in their data quality.

34%
Just 34% of respondents rate their data as "excellent" for relevance and suitability.

88%
88% agree that improving data quality is critical to AI success.

Business leaders tend to rate data quality more favorably than technical specialists, revealing a perception gap that could hinder effective implementation.

Eliminating Tool Sprawl is a Top Priority

As AI adoption increases, organizations are streamlining their toolsets to reduce complexity and improve integration.

On average, organizations currently use **13 observability** tools from **9 different vendors**

96%
Of organizations are consolidating tools and vendors.

93%
Of organizations are considering new vendors as they consolidate tools.

57%
Of business leaders say consolidation is already underway (vs. 40% of technical specialists).

Top Organizational Drivers to consolidate include:

47%
Improving IT productivity.

47%
Enhancing integration.

43%
Aligning with organizational strategy.

The Importance of a Unified Platform

55%
Of technical specialists believe a unified platform is very important to success (vs. 62% of business leaders).

93%
Of organizations believe a unified platform would make it easier to identify and resolve operational issues.

Unified Communications: High Usage, Mixed Satisfaction

Unified communications (UC) tools are central to daily operations – but performance gaps are evident.

42%
Of both business and technical users spend on average 42% of their week using UC tools.

65%
Say these tools are "very important" to operations.

46%
Yet only 46% (and just 38% of technical specialists) are "very satisfied" with their current performance.

Support burden is high:

15% of tickets
UC-related issues account for 15% of all IT tickets.

43 minutes
UC tickets take an average of 43 minutes to resolve.

1 in 5 tickets
1 in 5 UC tickets take over an hour to resolve.

Performance issues are common with UC:

Top challenges:

48%
Limited visibility

43%
Dropped calls/ inconsistent connectivity

37%
High support needs

OpenTelemetry is Now a Strategic Requirement

OpenTelemetry (OTel) is emerging as a foundational standard for observability and AI-enablement.

88%
Of organizations have implemented or begun implementing OTel.

Strategic value is high:

95%
Say cross-domain OTel correlation is critical to observability.

49% vs. **36%**
49% of leaders view OTel as "very important" vs. 36% of technical specialists.

98%
Agree OTel helps reduce vendor lock-in and increases flexibility.

Top three use cases for OTel:

46%
Enhance security

46%
Feed generative AI models

43%
Root cause analysis

AI Demands a High-Performance Network

As data volumes surge, robust networking becomes essential to AI performance:

91% Say that moving and sharing AI data is critical or very important to their strategy

Top 3 considerations of effective data movement:

95% Cost efficiency

94% Security and compliance

94% Network performance and reliability

Success factors reflect this focus:

78% Of all respondents (81% of business leaders) say network performance and security are essential to AI strategy

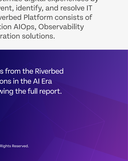
75% Plan to establish a dedicated AI data repository strategy by 2028

By 2028, shifts in storage strategy are expected:

Recommendations for AIOps Success

To accelerate AI readiness and realize meaningful outcomes, organizations should:

- Align business and IT on AI readiness, talent, and timelines
- Consolidate tools to eliminate silos and reduce operational drag
- Prioritize unified observability and eliminate blind spots
- Standardize on OpenTelemetry to enable scalable AI observability
- Enhance network infrastructure to support AI data movement
- Invest in data quality and governance



Riverbed – Delivering Practical AI to Optimize Digital Experiences and IT Operations

Riverbed is helping organizations globally improve user experiences and IT operations. With extensive experience in data collection and AI and machine learning, Riverbed's AI is safe, secure and accurate, and supports AIOps and digital experience efforts.

The Riverbed Platform provides open full-stack observability with full-fidelity data, enabling customers to optimize digital experiences by using AI to prevent, identify, and resolve IT issues. The Riverbed Platform consists of next-generation AIOps, Observability and Acceleration solutions.

Gain further insights from the Riverbed Future of IT Operations in the AI Era Survey 2025 by viewing the full report.

Read more

riverbed