

The State of Autonomous IT Operations

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1,200 leaders and technical specialists explore the current state and journey toward autonomous IT operations

Companies around the world recognize AI as a powerful driver of competitive advantage and strategic innovation. Now organizations are looking to the next frontier: autonomous IT operations, where AI and automation can play a greater role in how IT is managed, optimized and transformed. The destination is clear, but the path to get there is less certain. As AI ambitions accelerate, the research reveals significant gaps between where organizations want to go and how ready they are to get there.

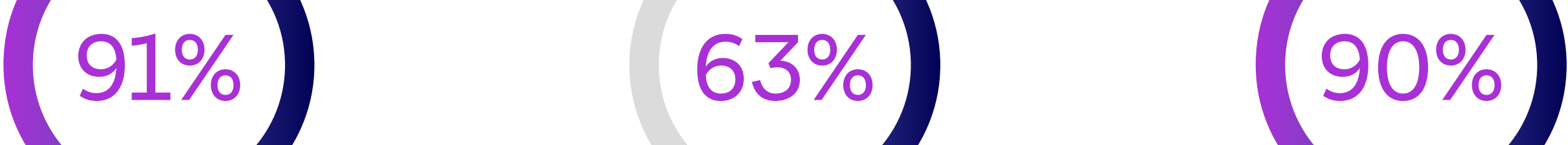
AI Transitions from Experimentation to the IT Operating Model

AI is becoming embedded in IT operations, with growing strategic importance, investment and practical value.

100% Say agentic AI is important to their future IT strategy.



76% Rate it as critical or very important to their IT strategy in the next 12–24 months.



91%

Say AI has met or exceeded ROI goals.

63%

Report an increase in AI spend.

90%

Are on a path to human-supervised or highly autonomous IT within two years.

Top objectives driving investment in AI for IT operations.
Percentage rating each objective critical or very important.

86%

Increase in efficiency / productivity.

82%

Support business growth / innovation.

82%

Reduce operational costs.

The Race to Autonomous IT Operations Has Begun

The ambition for autonomous IT is clear, but organizations are not yet fully equipped to turn that ambition into operational reality.

69%

Favor human-supervised AI and automation.

19%

Only 19% of IT operations are automated today.

3 years

On average to achieve fully autonomous IT operations.

Autonomous Ambition is Far Ahead of Readiness

Autonomous IT ambitions depend on visibility, data quality, autonomy and integration but readiness remains limited.

79% Unified Visibility Gap

96%

Say multi-domain visibility is important for AI-driven IT operations.

17%

But only 17% have fully unified visibility across networks, applications, endpoints, and cloud.

Data Quality Deficit

21%

Only 21% are confident their data is of sufficient quality for AI diagnostics.

23%

And just 23% rate their data granularity as excellent.

Autonomous Ambition Gap

3 years

Organizations believe it will take 3 years on average to achieve fully autonomous IT operations.

41%

But only 41% say their IT environment is fully prepared for AI-driven operations today.



Tool complexity creates further friction

91%

Agree tool consolidation reduces friction for AI.

87%

Say tool sprawl has increased integration requirements.

90%

Say a unified platform simplifies problem identification and resolution.

Visibility, Governance and Trust is the New Requirement

As organizations expand their use of AI, they are becoming more alert to the risks and governance challenges that come with this new phase of technology adoption.

Confidence in current oversight remains limited

42%

Say they are extremely confident in their organization's governance and oversight of AI usage.

38%

Lack sufficient monitoring of AI governance and compliance activities.

Trust is a key barrier to autonomous IT operations

77%

Are hesitant to allow AI to make operational decisions without human approval.

24%

Only 24% extensively trust AI recommendations with limited human review.

Organizations also recognize new blind spots in how AI is managed

51%

Lack sufficient visibility of AI agent performance and reliability.

49%

Lack sufficient oversight of employee AI adoption and usage.

New IT domain to manage

92%

Agree that AI observability and governance will become a critical new IT domain.

81%

Say monitoring AI application and agent performance is critical or very important as AI use expands.

The next phase isn't simply more AI. It is AI that enterprises can understand, trust and govern.

Recommendations to Succeed with Autonomous IT Operations

- Establish trusted, AI-ready data so AI agents can make accurate decisions.
- Consolidate the technology stack to help AI agents access data and workflows easily.
- Unify cross-domain observability so AI can take effective action.
- Prepare the business for autonomy by building technical expertise and addressing organizational resistance.
- Continuously monitor and govern agentic AI to keep autonomous operations controlled and accountable.

Riverbed – Delivering Practical AI Solutions for Autonomous IT Operations

Riverbed is helping organizations advance toward zero-disruption autonomous IT operations. Powered by full-fidelity data, unified observability, and AI-driven intelligence, Riverbed enables organizations to proactively prevent, identify, and resolve IT issues before they impact users or business performance.

The Riverbed Platform provides open, AI-powered observability with full-fidelity data and contextual intelligence across your IT landscape. Combining AIOps, Observability, and Acceleration solutions, Riverbed helps organizations improve digital experiences, simplify operations, and accelerate their journey to autonomous IT operations.

Are you ready for autonomous IT operations? Learn more and take the next step with Riverbed.

Gain additional insights from the Riverbed 2026 Global Survey for Autonomous IT Operations by viewing the full report.

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