

## **AI Crosses a Behavioural Threshold: WIN World AI Index 2026** **Shows Global Shift from Experimentation to Dependence**

The Worldwide Independent Network of Market Research (WIN) has released the second edition of the WIN World AI Index for 2026, revealing a world that has crossed a behavioural threshold. In just one year, AI has shifted from something people were trying to something they are now depending on. Drawing on nearly 40,000 respondents across 44 countries, the Index shows AI becoming a routine part of global life, a deepening reliance reshaping both confidence and concern, particularly within data research and insights.

Global AI adoption has not only risen to 74%, up from 62% last year, but we observe an important increase in usage frequency. Thirty-nine percent of people now intentionally use AI “often” or “every day,” a 24-point jump that marks a shift from experimentation to habit. In many countries, AI has quietly become a background utility or an on-demand coach; something people consult multiple times a day to search, think, plan, analyse, and create. As adoption and usage accelerate, concerns slightly deepen around misinformation, particularly in the western world, together with fear of job loss and data breaches remaining prominent worries for many.

### **A New Global Map and Four Segments of AI Adoption Emerges**

Although the Index is not designed as a competition, it is striking that India remains the world’s most AI-engaged nation at 97%, but Ecuador has surged to 96%, overtaking China (92%). One of the year’s most striking shifts as AI usage is getting more accessible and democratised. Pakistan (33%) and Ivory Coast (34%) remain the lowest usage markets, underscoring widening global disparities. The overall Index reflects a certain reshuffling of the top 15 performers. While India (+1) and China (-1) are tied at 75.8 points, Paraguay (+5), Morocco (+3), and Indonesia (+6) now complete the top five. Their rise signals how AI adoption is broadening worldwide, driven by rapid improvements in access, capability, and everyday cultural familiarity with AI-driven tools.

To better understand this shifting landscape, the 2026 report categorizes the 44 surveyed nations into four distinct AI maturity profiles driven by specific user personas:

- **AI Leaders:** Dominated by emerging markets like India, China, Paraguay, and Mexico, these populations are both high users and high believers. A staggering 69% of users in these countries are fully engaged "AI Champions".
- **Rising Performers:** Markets like South Korea, Hong Kong, and Greece recognize AI's functional value but haven't fully committed emotionally. They are in a transition phase, balancing enthusiastic "Champions" (39%) with hesitant "Pragmatic Users" (35%).
- **Cautious Adopters:** Predominantly developed Western markets like the US, UK, Germany, and Japan. Despite having the infrastructure and awareness, they have a

"functional but concerned" mindset. Their growth is restrained by a massive base of Pragmatic Users (41%) and the highest global share of active "Resistors" (19%).

- Early Stage: Markets like Ivory Coast (34% usage) and Pakistan (33%) remain the lowest-usage markets, underscoring widening global disparities as they battle barriers of basic access and awareness. Nearly half of their populations are "Disengaged" (32%) or simply "Dreamers" (22%) who haven't started using the tools yet.

### **AI Becomes a Cross-Context Utility across both Home and Office Life**

It's noticeable that fewer people use AI every day at Work (10%) than for personal usage (12%). Company security policies and concerns about misuse may help explain this gap. At work, professionals now use AI most for research and data analysis (38%), and 28% rely on it for workflow automation with core functions shaping decision-making and productivity. At home, AI is woven into daily routines. Entertainment (39%), schoolwork (32%), and content creation (31%) now dominate personal use.

### **Trust Rises across All Ages, Comfort Falls and Misinformation Takes Centre Stage**

Across all the 7 dimensions measured, APAC countries are showing the most fully integrated adoption and the most balanced AI ecosystem. European countries, on the other hand show the lowest score on 6 out of 7 indicators, taken over only by the Americas in terms of lowest Comfort score.

Despite surging usage, public sentiment has grown more conflicted. Trust in AI's capabilities has improved slightly, but comfort has declined, falling from 45.0 to 42.5. The world is becoming more confident in what AI can do but less certain about what its growing influence means. Misinformation has emerged as the top global concern. Europe records the highest alarm at 77%, followed by the Americas at 73%, as AI-generated content becomes harder to distinguish from reality. Fears of job loss and data breaches remain relatively high and consistent across regions. Europe remains the most cautious region; while 74% have tried AI, only 35% use it frequently. Still, Europeans hold the highest level of concern regarding misinformation.

The generational gap is widening as the younger generation embrace the new technology with the largest age difference measured at 24.3pts in the United Kingdom, followed by Vietnam and Venezuela. To illustrate this gap, only 7% of the 65+ are intentionally using AI on a weekly basis, compared to 42% of the 18-24yo group. The next generation is actively driving adoption globally.

'As AI becomes woven into everyday behaviour, the challenge now is less about adoption and more about adaptation.' Says Richard Colwell, President of WIN. 'The pace of change is

accelerating, and societies will need to evolve just as quickly to ensure trust, transparency, and responsible use keep up.’

**Conclusion: A World Moving From AI Curiosity to AI Competence**

The 2026 WIN World AI Index captures a pivotal moment: AI has moved beyond experimentation and into the realm of behavioural infrastructure. More people have adopted it, people are using it more often, for more tasks, and in more parts of their lives than ever before. But this deepening reliance is accompanied by a new kind of unease - not about whether AI works, but about what its growing influence means for truth, trust, and society.

The question for 2026 is no longer whether people will use AI. They already are. The question now is how societies will adapt to a world where AI is both indispensable and increasingly scrutinised.

**To find out more, please see the full report [HERE](#)**

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	Country	Company Name	Methodology	Sample	Coverage	Fieldwork Dates
1	Argentina	Voices Research & Consultancy	CAWI	1007	NATIONAL	2-15 January 2026
2	Australia	Luma Research	CAWI	549	NATIONAL	29-30 January 2026
3	Brazil	Market Analysis Brazil	CAWI	1000	INTERNET POP	9-16 January 2026
4	Canada	LEGER	CAWI	1000	NATIONAL	12-25 December 2025
5	Chile	Activa Research	CAWI	1095	NATIONAL	8-13 January 2026

6	China	WisdomAsia	Online Panel	1000	URBAN	14-19 January 2026
7	Colombia	Centro Nacional de Consultoría	CATI	500	NATIONAL	6-12 February 2026
8	Côte d'Ivoire	EMC	CATI	502	NATIONAL	24-30 January 2026
9	Croatia	Institute for market and media research, Mediana Fides	CAWI	591	NATIONAL	8-12 January 2026
10	Denmark	Opinion Denmark A/S	CAWI	1007	NATIONAL	13-21 January 2026
11	Ecuador	Centro de Estudios Y Datos - CEDATOS	CAPI	1104	NATIONAL	28-31 January 2026
12	Finland	Taloustutkimus Oy	Online Panel	1093	NATIONAL	31 Dec 2025 – 7 Jan 2026
13	France	OpinionWay	Online Panel	1007	NATIONAL	16-19 January 2026
14	Georgia	GORBI Eurasia LTD	F2F	2050	NATIONAL	31 Jan – 13 Feb 2026
15	Germany	Produkt+Markt	CAWI	1000	NATIONAL	19 Dec 2025 – 6 Jan 2026
16	Greece	Alternative Research Solutions	CAWI	502	NATIONAL	3 Dec 2025 – 12 Jan 2026
17	Hong Kong	Consumer Search Group (CSG)	Online Panel	500	TERRITORY WIDE	9-15 January 2026
18	India	DataPrompt International Pvt. Ltd.	Online	1000	NATIONAL	29 Dec 2025 - 21 Jan 2026
19	Indonesia	DEKA	Online	987	INTERNET POP	16-31 January 2026
20	Republic of Ireland	RED C Research & Marketing Ltd	CAWI	1013	NATIONAL	8-13 January 2026
21	Italy	SWG S.p.a	CAWI	1002	NATIONAL	7-12 January 2026
22	Japan	Nippon Research Center, LTD.	CAWI	1100	NATIONAL	22-27 January 2026

23	Malaysia	Central Force International	CAWI	1001	INTERNET POP	27 Nov 2025 – 3 Dec 2025
24	Mexico	Brand Investigation S.A.de C.V	Online	1000	NATIONAL	7-12 January 2026
25	Morocco	Integrate Consulting	Online	500	NATIONAL	8-9 January 2026
26	The Netherlands	Motivaction International B.V.	CAWI	1005	NATIONAL	6-20 January 2026
27	Norway	Opinion AS	CAWI	1029	NATIONAL	13-19 January 2026
28	Pakistan	Gallup Pakistan	CATI	1000	NATIONAL	6 Dec 2025 -14

						Jan 2026
<b>29</b>	Paraguay	ICA Consultoría Estratégica	CATI	501	NATIONAL	2 Dec 2025- 29 Jan 2026
<b>30</b>	Peru	Datum Internacional	P2P	1202	NATIONAL	16-10 January 2026
<b>31</b>	Philippines	The Philippine Survey and Research Center (PSRC)	PAPI	1000	NATIONAL	9-26 January 2026
<b>32</b>	Poland	Mareco Polska	CAWI	530	NATIONAL	8-14 December 2025
<b>33</b>	Serbia	Institute for market and media research, Mediana Adria	CAWI	522	NATIONAL	8-15 January 2026
<b>34</b>	Slovak Republic	Go4insight	CAWI	1000	NATIONAL	16-26 January 2026
<b>35</b>	Slovenia	Institute for market and media research, Mediana	CAWI	1018	NATIONAL	8-9 January 2026
<b>36</b>	South Korea	Gallup Korea	CAWI	1200	NATIONAL	21-28 January 2026
<b>37</b>	Spain	Instituto DYM	CAWI	1000	NATIONAL	15-18 January 2026
<b>38</b>	Sweden	Demoskop AB	CAWI	1012	NATIONAL/ INTERNET POP	19 Dec 2025 – 23 Jan 2026
<b>39</b>	Thailand	INFOSEARCH LIMITED	F2F	500	NATIONAL	16 Dec 2025 – 15 Jan 2026
<b>40</b>	Turkey	BAREM Research	CATI	725	TR Urban	30 Jan – 4 Feb 2026
<b>41</b>	United Kingdom	ORB International	Online	1194	NATIONAL	12-22 Dec 2025
<b>42</b>	USA	LEGER	CAWI	1000	NATIONAL	12-25 December 2025
<b>43</b>	Venezuela	Centro Nacional de Consultoría	CATI	302	NATIONAL	1-5 February 2026
<b>44</b>	Vietnam	DXL Research & Consulting	F2F	900	URBAN	12-28 Dec 2025