Executive summary

# AI maturity in organizations in media, leisure and entertainment

## Is your organization ready to harness the power of AI and unstructured data

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# Introduction

Artificial intelligence and unstructured data is transforming the media, leisure and entertainment sector, unlocking new opportunities for personalized content creation, user engagement and operational efficiency. Due to the nature of the sector, organizations interact with unstructured data such as video, audio, images and social media daily, making it a natural fit for AI applications. However, despite consistent use of unstructured data, many seem to overlook the strategic impact it can have on organizational success.

Findings are based on research conducted by Iron Mountain alongside independent market research specialist Vanson Bourne. Data in this report is based on 200 IT and data decision-makers in the media, leisure and entertainment sector, who have knowledge or involvement in their AI strategy. You can read the global report **here**.

## Three key takeaways:

The media, leisure and entertainment sector have more organizations later in their AI journey than the surveyed average (50% vs a global average of 40%)

Daily interactions with unstructured data mean that the average portion of AI use cases leveraging unstructured data is higher than other sectors (63% vs an average of 60%), with many of the foundational aspects of preparation already in place

In fact, 34% report being highly effective at managing unstructured data at scale, and 33% say they've already made significant progress in preparing high-quality unstructured data for AI use

Despite the widespread use of AI and unstructured data, fewer than average say that unstructured data is extremely important to the success of their AI strategy (42% vs an average of 49%)

# Current AI adoption

The media, leisure and entertainment sector is more advanced in their AI adoption journey when compared to the global average. In fact, half of the organizations within this sector fell into the advanced AI maturity group, while only 17% reported being in the early AI maturity group (see **Figure 1**).

### Comparing media, leisure and entertainment organizations AI maturity to the global average

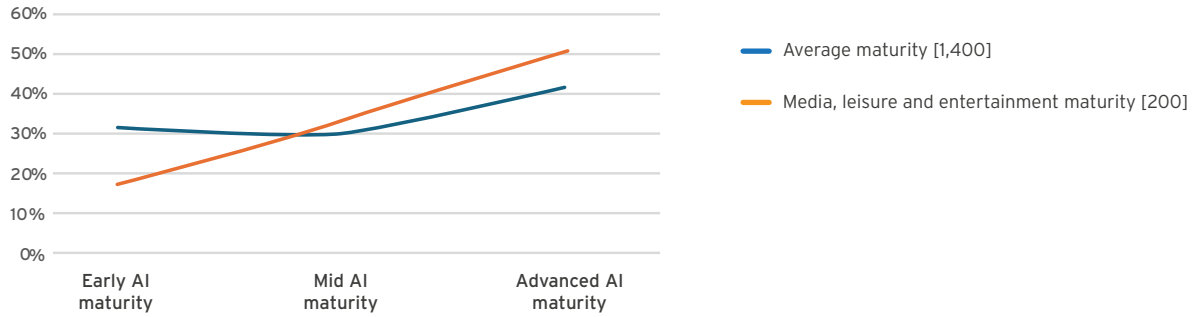



**Figure 1.** AI maturity curve analysis, looking at the global average curve, and the media, entertainment and leisure maturity curve. Base size shown in chart.

These higher AI maturity levels likely stem from being part of a highly competitive and fast-paced sector where personalization, content curation and user engagement are critical to success. Generative AI can play a key role here by enabling organizations to rapidly produce new and engaging content at scale, whether that's personalized product recommendations, dynamic media assets or real-time customer communications. In fact, research from Statista in 2024, reports that almost two-thirds of businesses who use generative AI within their organization can increase the speed of content and media production.

The customer is clearly at the center of the sector and organizations are using AI to their advantage. Our research found that more than the average are using AI for customer service areas (61% vs an average of 53%) or customer-facing products and solutions (57% vs a global average 47%). Many organizations in the sector are choosing to adopt emerging technologies to stay relevant and meet evolving customer expectations; an area where AI can demonstrate clear value.

### How is AI used?

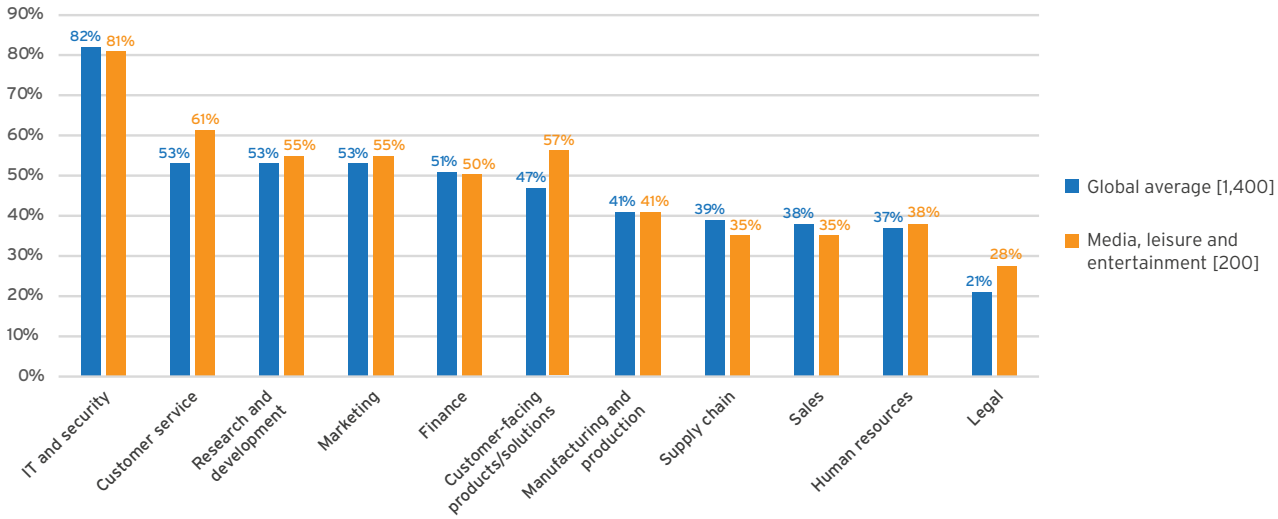



**Figure 2.** In which of the following areas of your organization is AI being used? Showing the global and media, leisure and entertainment data. Base size shown in chart.

In addition to customer-centric areas, AI is more commonly used within legal areas in the media, leisure, and entertainment sectors than in other industries (28% vs. 21% globally). This sector frequently manages complex legal issues such as copyright, licensing, and intellectual property, areas where AI can streamline processes. However, the increased use of AI in legal functions may also stem from a wider organizational confidence in applying AI across multiple domains. This reflects a cycle of trust and familiarity with AI tools: the more they use AI effectively in one area, the more likely they are to explore its potential elsewhere. As legal considerations within the industry grow more complex with global content distribution and emerging digital platforms, AI will remain a strategic asset for maintaining legal precision and operational scalability.

Higher AI adoption also reflects the sector's broader demand for operational efficiency, risk mitigation and scalability, especially when content is rapidly shared, created and monetized across platforms. In line with this, 59% of sector respondents cited cost reduction as a key use case for AI, reinforcing its role as a practical enabler.

Continuing this theme, our research finds that the media, leisure and entertainment sector believe sourcing and preparing relevant and high-quality data for AI training and analysis is the best way to accelerate adoption and increase the value of AI initiatives. This is more than the surveyed average (52% in the sector, 48% globally) and suggests that organizations in the sector understand the foundational role data quality plays in unlocking AI's full potential. Given the heavy reliance on unstructured, content-rich data formats the sector interacts with daily, it's even more important and highlights the mindset that investment in data readiness is essential to driving meaningful and scalable AI outcomes.

When it comes to business outcomes, organizations in this sector are focused on driving revenue growth (49%), employee productivity (48%), improving process efficiency (47%), and enhancing customer acquisition and retention (47%). Interestingly, gaining a competitive advantage is less of a stated priority in this sector (39% vs. a global average of 51%), suggesting a more inward focus on operational effectiveness and customer value over market differentiation (see **Figure 3**).

**How important is AI for the following business outcomes in the next 2 years?**

Showing data for 'very important' only

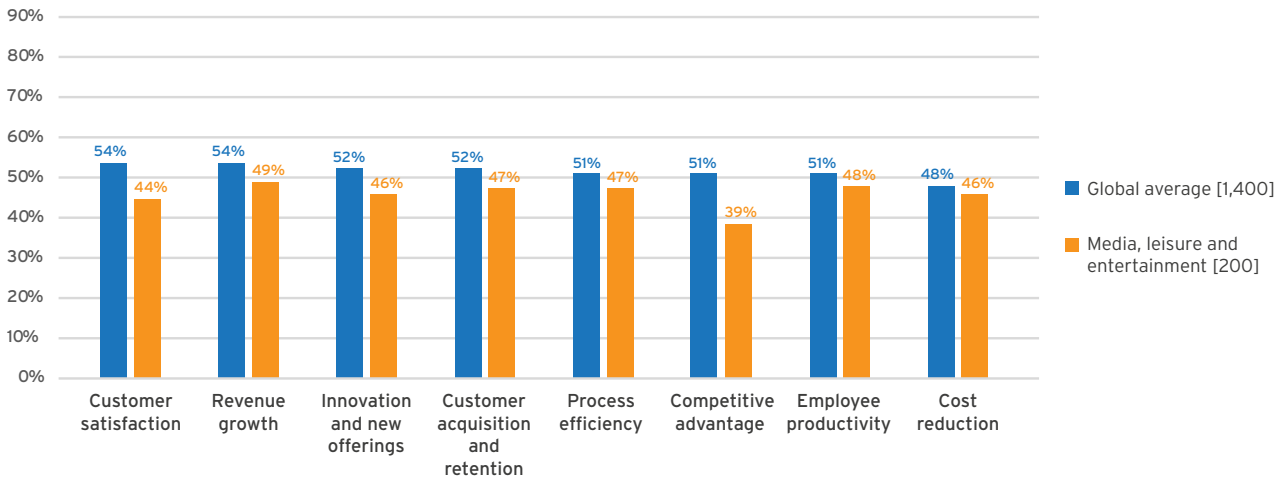


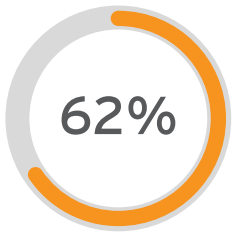

**Figure 3.** How would you rate the importance of AI in helping your organization achieve the following goals over the next 2 years? Base shown in chart.

# Unstructured data is being undervalued within the sector

Unstructured data, such as customer feedback, service emails, social media interactions and images, comes from sources that lack a predefined structure, making it more complex to process and analyze than structured data like spreadsheets or databases. Given that nearly all content and interactions in this sector are unstructured by nature, it's not a surprise that organizations here are using unstructured data more than the total average. In fact, an average of 63% of AI use cases in the sector leverage unstructured data, one of the highest globally (global average: 60%).

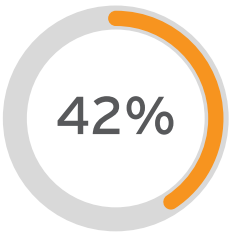
While generative AI plays an important role within content development, organizations in the media, leisure and entertainment sector see AI for human augmentation - a technology that enhances human capabilities - as the most important AI tool for driving success today (17%). Over the next two years, this shift focuses on retrieval augmented generation (RAG) (22%), the combining of data retrieval and content generation, further reinforcing the sector's deep reliance on unstructured data. This trend aligns with strategic outlooks as 62% say that unstructured data is going to be very important to the success of their business over the next two years. The time to invest in these technologies and skills is now, and it seems the media, entertainment and leisure sector are making positive strides.

Yet, despite the widespread use, unstructured data is still less likely to be recognized as a key driver of AI strategy success in the sector (see **Figure 4**).




"Unstructured data is very important to the success of my organisation in the next 2 years"

**Figure 4.** How important do you expect the following data types will be to your organization's success in the next two years? - Unstructured data (text, audio, video, images, social media content, emails, etc.). Base: Media, leisure and entertainment [200].




"Unstructured data is extremely important to the success of our AI strategy"

**Figure 4.** To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? - Unstructured data is extremely important to the success of our AI strategy. Base: Media, leisure and entertainment [200].

This disconnect reflects a gap not in usage, but in strategic visibility in how its value is formally acknowledged or measured. Since AI-related key performance indicators (KPIs) are the most common measure of AI success within the sector (67%), organizations are likely tracking high-level outcomes like engagement or automation without attributing them directly to unstructured data. As a result, the strategic importance of unstructured data may be underappreciated. This presents an opportunity for the sector; by more clearly connecting the use of unstructured data and strategic goals, the sector can maximize its data-driven decision-making and fully realize the value of its AI initiatives.

Positively for the sector, many organizations are already laying strong foundations to support this evolution. More than the global average report being highly effective at managing unstructured data at scale using advanced capabilities (34% vs. 28%), and 33% say they've made significant progress in implementing processes to prepare high-quality unstructured data for AI (vs. 27% globally). In addition, more organizations than average report being consistently effective at making their unstructured data trustworthy (33% vs. 27%) and accessible for AI applications (31% vs. 25%).

These strengths likely stem from the sector's recognition of the need for a unified strategy to operationalize, optimize, and activate both physical assets and digital data. More than half (56%) of organizations in this sector strongly agree this is critical to being AI-ready, compared to 49% globally. This outlook has positioned the media, leisure, and entertainment sector as a leader in unstructured data use, and with continued focus on aligning data with strategic AI outcomes, they are well-placed to build a long-term competitive advantage as AI capabilities mature.

# Conclusion:

**Many organizations in the media, leisure and entertainment sector are advanced in their AI maturity, driven by generative AI, which helps support the constant demand for personalized content and user engagement.**

Additionally, unstructured data is central in how this sector operates and makes AI a natural fit for streamlining and enhancing processes.

Organizations in the sector are not only applying AI widely but are also building strong foundations in data preparation and management. Technologies like human augmentation and RAG are gaining traction, enabling organizations to push the boundaries of automation and content personalization.

Despite these strengths, there remains a disconnect between the sector's widespread use of unstructured data and its recognition as a strategic driver of AI success. Many organizations are focusing on AI outcomes like engagement and automation without directly linking them to the underlying data that powers them. To fully realize the potential of AI and unstructured data, organizations must align unstructured data with broader business AI strategies. By continuing to focus on data governance and making unstructured data trustworthy, the sector will be well positioned to lead in delivering innovative, high-impact and data driven experiences.

## How can Iron Mountain help?

Whether you're at the start of your AI journey or reaching full maturity, Iron Mountain can help you turn your information into insights and further your AI-readiness. Determine what information should be scanned, stored, or defensibly destroyed, by developing a data governance framework. Automate manual processes, enable audit-ready compliance, and make information accessible and useful with Iron Mountain InSight® Digital Experience Platform (DXP). The scalable platform offers comprehensive digital and physical content management, intelligent document processing, workflow automation, and information governance capabilities that seamlessly integrate into your existing environment and support your digital transformation initiatives.

# About the research

Iron Mountain commissioned independent market research specialist Vanson Bourne to conduct this piece of research. The study included surveying 1,400 IT and data decision makers who have knowledge of or responsibility for AI strategy at their organization. Respondents' organizations had to have 250 employees or more across the following countries: US, UK, France, Germany, India and Australia.

Organizations are from several public and private sectors but there was a strong focus in banking and financial services, insurance, healthcare and life sciences, media and entertainment, the public sector (excluding healthcare) and energy. This summary is based on 200 decision-makers in the media, leisure and entertainment sector.

## About Vanson Bourne

Vanson Bourne is an independent specialist in market research for the technology sector. Their reputation for robust and credible research-based analysis is founded upon rigorous research principles and their ability to seek the opinions of senior decision-makers across technical and business functions in all business sectors and all major markets. For more information, visit www.vansonbourne.com.

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