

Press release

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Deloitte study reveals gaps in awareness and adoption of generative AI in Belgium

- **Despite high awareness, one in three respondents has yet to use it.**
- **AI adoption highest in Brussels and among middle and upper management**
- **Notable differences in awareness and adoption between men and women**

Brussels, Belgium – 22 October

While nearly two in three Belgian employees are aware of generative AI, one in three still hasn't used the technology. That is the conclusion of a study conducted by IPSOS for Deloitte amongst 2,714 Belgian respondents aged 16-75. Surprisingly, AI adoption in Belgium is highest in Brussels, with Flanders and Wallonia lagging behind. AI adoption is strongly influenced by trust, with women showing lower trust levels than men across a range of use cases. Job security concerns also persist, with employees across various sectors fearing that AI will replace their jobs but with men fearing significantly more for their job than women. Despite this, over three-quarters of generative AI users believe it will make their work easier and more enjoyable, highlighting a paradox of both optimism and concern.

Use of Generative AI in Belgium in a nutshell

Three out of five Belgians (61%) are aware of generative AI tools and over one in three (36%) has never actually used them. The use of AI in Belgium is growing across both personal and professional settings: One in four who use AI tools for personal purposes (25%) employ them on a weekly basis. Almost one in three AI users (30%) rely on these tools weekly for work-related tasks. ChatGPT is the most recognized AI tool in Belgium with over half of generative AI users (55%) referencing the tool. Other generative AI tools commonly used by Belgian AI users are Snapchat My AI (16% of AI users in Belgium) and Microsoft Copilot (15% of AI users in Belgium).

Brussels leads adoption of AI in Belgium

The study does show a clear difference between how men and women use generative AI. Nearly one out two men who are aware of AI (46%) have used it for personal activities, compared to only one in three women who are aware of AI (36%).

And more notable differences can be found in how the different regions view and adopt generative AI. Brussels leads in AI adoption in Belgium with higher awareness and usage rates compared to Flanders and Wallonia. Flanders lags behind in general use of AI, with almost two out of five (38%) aware but not using AI. Yet, respondents in Flanders show greater optimism about the AI revolution. In Wallonia, one out of three employees (37%) are aware but don't use AI, and in Brussels only one in four employees (27%).

Trust in AI – the Brussels Paradox

When it comes to the trust that Belgians have in generative AI, there is a clear Brussels paradox to be seen: adoption of generative AI is highest in Brussels, yet trust in the accuracy of AI is at its lowest. Less than half of respondents in Brussels (44%) believe AI delivers accurate results compared to one in two in Wallonia (49%) and Flanders (51%).

When it comes to trusting AI, the study shows a clear gap between men and women:

- Two in five (42%) of those aware of AI trust it for determining social welfare eligibility but when broken down nearly half of men (45%) trust this compared to over one in three women (37%).
- Two in five (39%) trust AI in for financial assessments like loans or mortgages with almost half of men (44%) trusting it versus about one in three women (32%).
- Nearly 2 out of 5 of Belgians (38%) trust AI to assist with medical diagnoses. But only a quarter of women (28%) share this trust, compared to almost half of men (46%).

Belgians eager to use generative AI at work

The use of generative AI provides many advantages in the workplace. It is then no surprise that two out of five Belgians (40%) report that their company is encouraging the use of generative AI. Here we also see some notable differences between the regions: almost half of employers in Brussels (47%), over 2 out of five (42%) employers in Wallonia, just over out in three employers in Flanders (36%). Nearly one out of three (29%) states that their employer doesn't have a policy about the use of generative AI in the workplace. 6% says there is a discouragement or prohibition of use of generative AI in their company, while nearly one in five (18%) state that their company allows it but does not actively encourage its use.

What is remarkable in the workplace is that both senior and middle management use generative AI more often than non-management employees. Two-thirds of senior management (64%) use it at least weekly, compared to half of middle management (51%) and only two in five (38%) non-management employees.

"It is important that companies continue to work on the adoption of generative AI among their employees to support their specific business processes but also in the more transversal functions," said Patrick De Vylder, Managing Partner Delivery Transformation and Innovation at Deloitte Belgium. *"This study clearly shows that there are some surprising gaps in AI adoption in Belgium. And while it is clear that Belgian employees are eager to use generative AI within their daily work, it is essential that companies support them through clear policies, directions and training."*

"The study findings highlight that generative AI can play a significant role in enriching work experiences and improving efficiency. Nevertheless, Belgian companies need to take steps to further boost AI trust and adoption. With the right support and training, AI can evolve from a technological innovation to a true partner in work. If we want to strengthen Belgium's position and labor productivity, it is crucial to act now and get ready for the 'Man with machine' era," says Rolf Driesen, CEO of Deloitte Belgium.

The Belgian workforce is ready to embrace generative AI: over three quarters of employees (77%) who use AI for work purposes believe it will make their jobs easier in the next two years. Nearly three quarters (72%) believe AI will make their jobs more enjoyable and make them more motivated. The adoption of generative AI is of course paired with how confident employees feel with using it. Nearly four out of five men who have used AI (78%) feel confident in using it. This again in contrast with just over three out of five women (63%). When it comes to who respondents feel is responsible for upskilling them to use generative AI, Belgians mainly see this as a task for their employer (39%), or at their own initiative (38%). 22% believes this is a responsibility of the different generative AI providers.

"To help accelerate and support the further adoption of generative AI in Belgium, we have launched the Belgian branch of the Deloitte AI Institute. This platform provides Belgian companies with unparalleled access to the latest AI expertise, insights and competencies. Our Deloitte Trustworthy AI™ framework assists companies to design, build and then deploy ethical and secure AI solutions at scale based on 6 dimensions. We believe in the power of applied technology and believe it should be experienced rather than just talked about. This is why we are launching Nexus, an experience center where companies can experience AI solutions from Deloitte and our ecosystem, applied to specific functions or sectors," adds Patrick De Vylder.

Concerns about job loss

The advancement and adoption of generative AI does incite fear of being made redundant. Two in five men (41%) are concerned that AI will replace their jobs. The concern among women is lower, with only one in three (32%) sharing this concern. The potential impact of generative AI on job security differs in different industries. Over half (55%) of employees in the energy, resources, and industrial sectors believe AI could fully replace their jobs in the next two years. This is significantly higher than with respondents working in other industries.

About the research

Conducted by IPSOS for Deloitte in July 2024. Base: All adults aged 16-75 in Belgium with a total of 2714 respondents. All results have been weighted to allow for correct representation of the Belgian population.

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