

A new standard for AI adoption

The AI Company Data Initiative is a new tool, grounded in UNESCO's recommendations on ethics. **Katie Fowler** explains how it can help IROs map, benchmark, and report their use of these technologies.

As artificial intelligence rapidly transforms the global business landscape, transparent and responsible AI adoption has never been more urgent.

Unchecked corporate AI adoption poses material risk – from the reputational damage if a tool goes wrong, to workforce impacts as technology demands upskilling or redeployment.

The AI Company Data Initiative (AICDI) is a new tool designed to help businesses map, benchmark, and report their use of AI technologies, developed by the Thomson Reuters Foundation, in partnership with UNESCO. The new initiative supports companies and investors to harness the potential of AI while mitigating its risks to people, society, and the environment.

Opportunities, but also material risk

The pace of AI adoption is reshaping the private sector. 94% of C-suite leaders surveyed by Thomson Reuters in 2024 expected AI to significantly impact their strategies. While AI offers unprecedented opportunities for efficiency and innovation, the rapid uptake also presents new legal, ethical, environmental, and social risks.

Regulation is also fast catching up. The EU's draft AI Act, for example, threatens fines up to 7% of global revenue for high-risk AI misuse. Regulatory changes require companies to understand and report their use of AI, with significant penalties for non-compliance. In this context, transparency is no longer optional; it is essential for maintaining competitiveness and stakeholder trust.

Despite AI's growing influence, there remains a striking lack of data on how companies are using, rather than developing, these technologies. This transparency gap poses systemic risks for businesses and investors, particularly as AI adoption expands beyond the tech sector and into critical supply chains, including those in the Global South. The AICDI aims to help bridge that gap.



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What is the AI Company Data Initiative (AICDI)?

The AICDI is a free, voluntary survey grounded in UNESCO's 'Recommendation on the Ethics of AI', the first worldwide standard. Developed with input from leading AI experts and companies, the initiative enables companies to map and benchmark their AI use across products, operations, and services.

The survey covers a comprehensive range of topics, including:

- AI strategy and governance;
- procurement and deployment of AI systems;

- legal accountability and regulatory compliance;
- data privacy, security, and bias mitigation;
- human oversight and governance;
- environmental impact assessment;
- workforce implications, including upskilling and reskilling; and
- diversity and inclusion in AI practices.

Designed for organisations at any stage of their AI journey, the survey requires no technical expertise to complete.

Benefits for companies and investors

For IR professionals, the AICDI offers an invaluable opportunity to demonstrate leadership in responsible AI adoption to investors and other stakeholders. Auditing their adoption through the survey allows organisations to benchmark their progress, close data gaps, map risks, and prepare for incoming regulation – all while positioning themselves as frontrunners on transparency.

While understanding of the risks of widespread AI adoption is growing, many investors report challenges in accessing issuer data on AI use. Data from AICDI will be shared with the Thomson Reuters Foundation's investor signatory network, a coalition of leading institutional, private equity and venture capital investors pushing companies to become pioneers in responsible AI.

For investors, the AICDI dataset will provide insights into how companies are using AI, sector trends, and the scale of AI adoption overall. These insights can be used to future-proof portfolios and foster engagement on responsible AI.

Get involved

The survey response window opened on 7 July. We encourage companies and investors to be among the first to participate. See www.aicdi.trust.org or contact aicdi@thomsonreuters.com ■