



SME IT TRENDS Q3 2024

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# How Are SME IT Professionals Navigating AI?

SME IT Landscape



Security and SMEs



SMEs and Devices



MSPs and SMEs



AI and SMEs



This edition of SME IT Trends focuses on only the AI data from the original report. To see the data on the [SME IT Landscape](#), [Security and SMEs](#), [SMEs and Devices](#), and [MSPs and SMEs](#) sections, download the full report for free.

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## Destination: Understanding AI in SMEs

AI is perhaps one of the fastest evolving technologies in business today. As a small-to-medium enterprise (SME), it can be hard to keep up with these changes and sift through what's buzz and what's real. However, data from a recent JumpCloud survey of over 600 SME IT professionals suggests that SMEs are taking the challenge head-on.

Understanding how other SME IT professionals are approaching AI can help you advocate for its use more effectively. As the data shows, embracing AI can help you streamline operations, improve the admin and user experience, and sharpen your competitive edge.

Every gain comes with a cost, however, and not surprisingly security concerns are on the rise. AI presents as many opportunities for legitimate SMEs to improve their operations as it does for black hat hackers to attack them. Almost half of respondents indicated they had experienced a cyberattack, with 25% of them attributing it to an AI-generated attack. It's a sobering reminder that security is not a destination, but an ongoing journey every SME must keep a focus on.

Read on to learn how your peers think about, adopt, and leverage AI.

**With 90% of SMEs using or planning to use AI, choosing to ignore it would be choosing to fall behind.**

## Key Findings

### **The AI hype dims.**

The AI fever has broken, leaving behind clear-eyed optimism and IT teams cautiously exploring what's promising versus what's just fluff.

### **Getting to grips on AI's potential.**

SMEs largely feel they are moving at the right pace to implement AI, have policies in place for its use, and are less concerned about it replacing them.

### **A tool for good... and for evil?**

Nothing in technology is truly black or white, and AI is no exception. Despite the value it may bring, SMEs are concerned about its long term (and current) effect on cyber attacks.

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# AI and SMEs

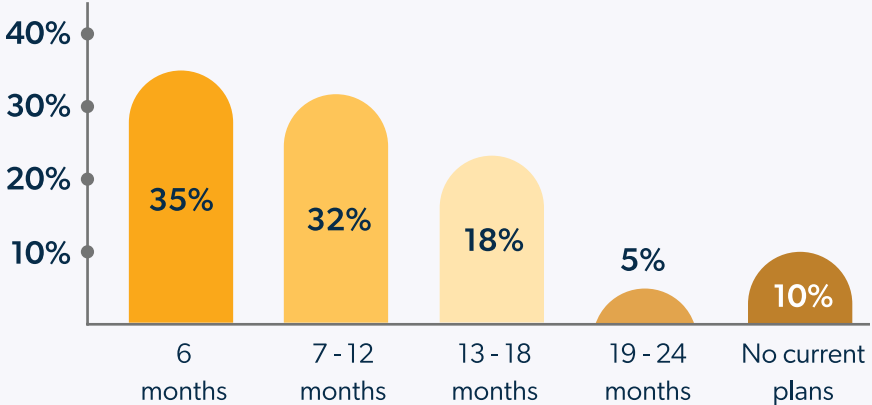


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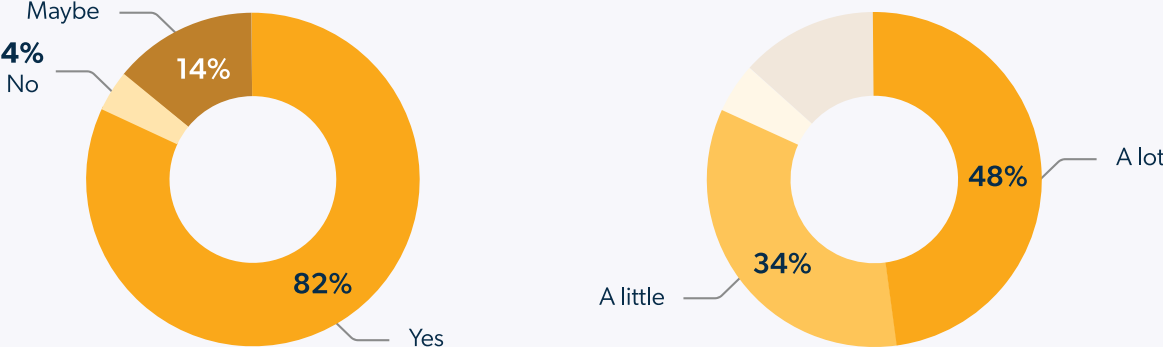
## AI Planning Is Accelerating

As AI continues to evolve and is used in new applications and use cases, SMEs are pursuing a measured approach while retaining fears around its potential impact. Organizations picked up their planning for AI. Only 10% have no plans to implement AI, down from 13% six months ago. Those planning AI initiatives within the next six months increased to 35% from 27% in Q1 2024. Eighty-two percent say their organizations should be investing in AI (48% say a lot), versus 76% in Q1 2024.

**Our organization has plans to implement AI initiatives for IT over the next:**



**Our organization should be investing in AI initiatives for IT.**

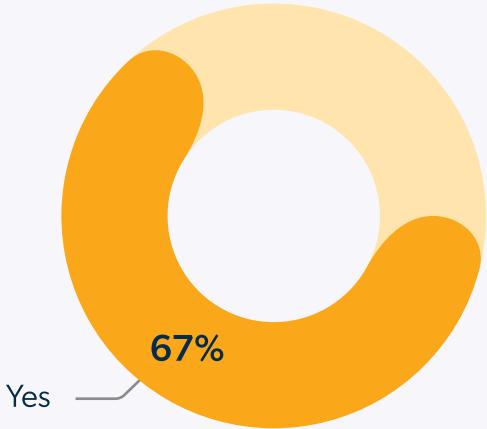


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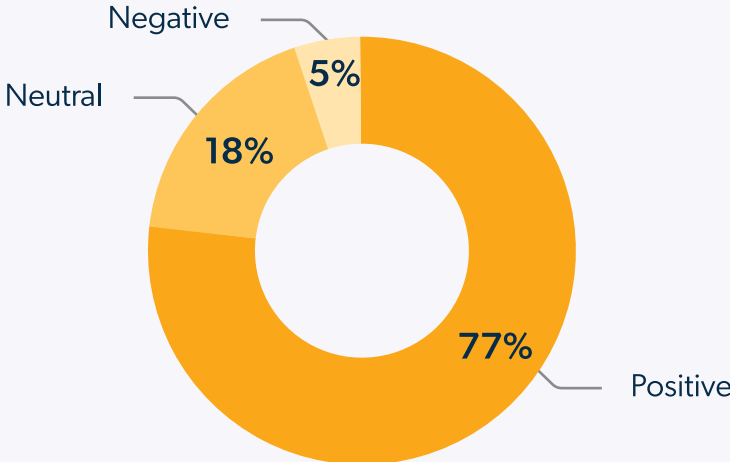
## AI Appetite: A Measured Approach

SMEs are being intentional about AI. Over two-thirds of SMEs have a policy around AI (67%, up from 63% in Q1 2024), and 60% say their organization is moving at exactly the right speed with respect to AI, up from 55% in Q1 2024. Seventy-seven percent see AI as a net positive for their organization.

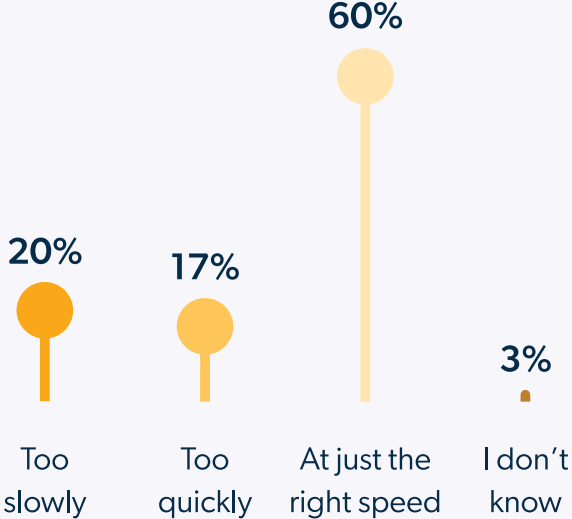
Does your company have a policy around AI?



AI will be a net \_\_\_\_\_ for my organization.



My organization is moving \_\_\_\_\_ around AI.



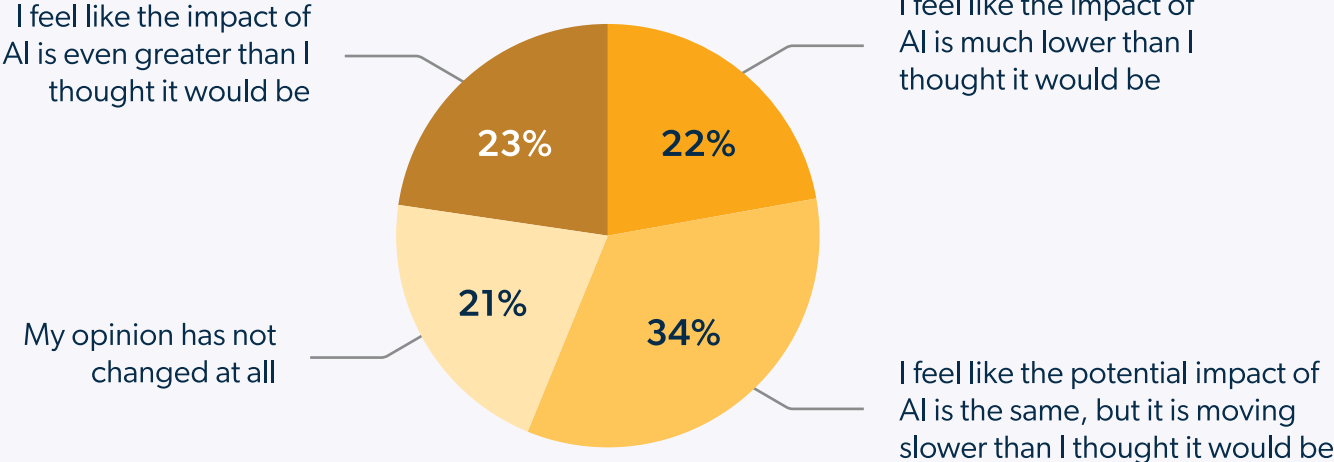
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# Alleviating Fears



As AI takes a stronger hold among SMEs, IT professionals seem a bit less overwhelmed by the prospect of it. 22% of IT professionals said the impact of AI on their day-to-day job is much lower than they thought it would be six months ago.

**How has your general opinion changed over the last 6 months about how AI will impact your day-to-day job (through efficiency enhancements or net-new technologies)?**





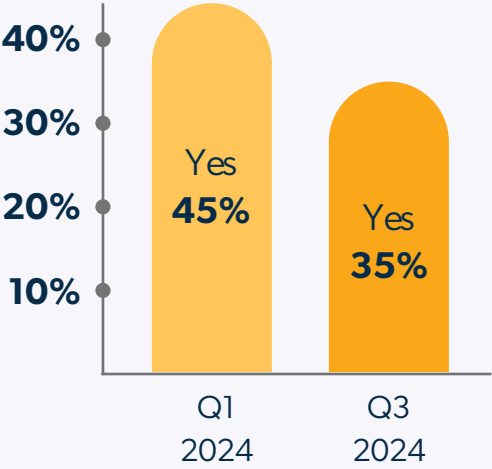
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# Alleviating Fears



Another 34% said the potential impact of AI is the same but it is moving slower than they expected. Just over one-third (35%) are worried about AI's impact on their job, down significantly from the 45% who said the same in Q1 2024.

I am worried about AI's impact on my job.



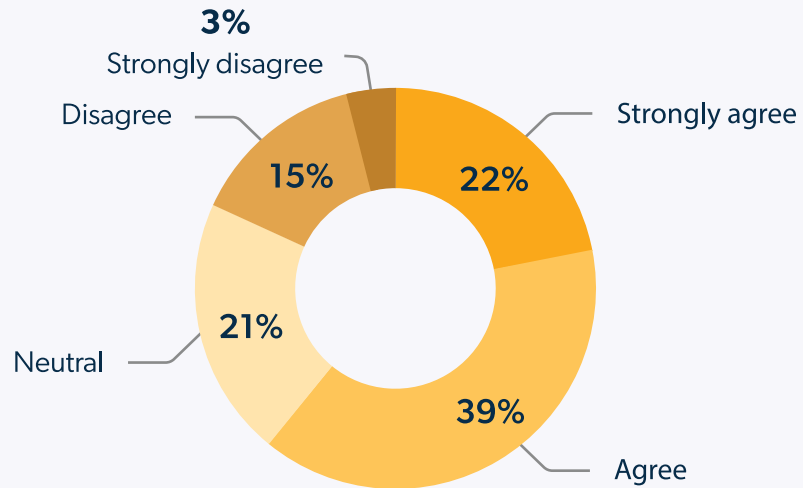
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# Security Concerns Remain

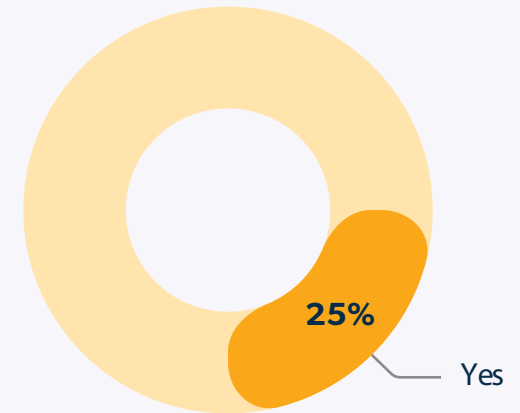


Despite all of AI's benefits, its impact on security continues to cause concern. When asked about the speed of AI, 61% of SME IT professionals agreed that AI is outpacing their organization's ability to protect against threats. And these fears aren't unfounded. In the first half of 2024 alone, 25% of the SMEs we surveyed had already experienced an AI-generated attack.

AI is outpacing my organization's ability to protect against threats.



Has your organization experienced any AI-generated attacks in 2024?



## Next Stop: Deeper Insights

AI has quickly become a formidable player for SMEs. Its rapid adoption poses significant ramifications — both positive and negative. Some concerns continue to plague SME IT teams — most notably, the question of AI and security looms large. But despite these worries, SME IT teams seem generally eager to embrace AI. They see it as a net positive for their organization, and the vast majority of SMEs have plans to implement AI if they haven't already. This increasing positivity and acceptance may stem from the intentional and measured adoption methods SMEs are taking.

Of course, AI isn't the only topic on SME IT professionals' minds this year. In JumpCloud's full 2024 SME IT Trends survey, we asked IT professionals about their takes on pressing issues, including security, their relationships with MSPs, how their companies are budgeting, and more.

To learn more about what SME IT professionals see for their careers, their organizations, and the future of the industry, download the full free report.

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**Methodology:** JumpCloud surveyed 612 IT decision-makers in the U.K. and U.S., including managers, directors, vice presidents, and executives. Each survey respondent represented an organization with 2,500 or fewer employees across a variety of industries. The online survey was conducted by Propeller Insights, from June 4, 2024 to June 7, 2024.



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