

Understanding older generations' adoption of AI



The better the question.
The bigger the ripple.
The better the world works.



Shape the future
with confidence

With support by



OpenAI

Content

Executive summary

- 01** Why AI upskilling matters for older adults
- 02** What older adults know, and don't yet know
- 03** How older adults are incorporating AI in daily life
- 04** How older adults perceive its risks and benefits
- 05** What's next?

Acknowledgments
and references



Executive summary

As artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly shapes daily life, ensuring older generations are not left behind is a critical inclusion challenge. This report explores how people aged 60–85 engage with and experience AI, drawing on a global survey of 2,515 respondents across 16 countries, plus expert interviews and focus groups in Japan and India.

Findings show older adults are generally less familiar and confident with AI yet remain curious and willing to learn. Only 24% reported being quite or very familiar with AI, while just 15% had no interest in further engagement. Usage varies depending on context. For example, in the Middle East, Africa, India region, 41% stated they were quite or very familiar with AI; whereas only 12% of North Americans state the same. Similarly, a gender gap emerged: 31% of women had never used AI in comparison to 20% of men.

Experiences of AI are largely positive: around 60% of respondents were either somewhat or very positive about the likely impact of AI on themselves, especially in learning, health, travel, and creative applications. Users are aware that AI outputs can be inaccurate, though understanding of subtler risks like bias is limited.

The report concludes that older adults are optimistic about AI but need targeted support to engage safely and confidently. Policymakers, educators, businesses, and community organizations must provide accessible, age-appropriate AI literacy and inclusive design to prevent digital exclusion and support wellbeing, autonomy, and participation in later life.

01

Why AI upskilling matters for older adults



01

Why AI upskilling matters for older adults

As artificial intelligence (AI) reshapes nearly every facet of modern life, society's adaptation to these changes is becoming a question not only of technological progress but also of inclusion. One demographic remains under-discussed: older generations.

New research commissioned by [EY Ripples](#) examines how people from 60 to 85 years old engage with AI. With the share of the global population over the age of 65 having doubled between 1974 and 2024 (United Nations Population Fund 2026), failing to ensure digital inclusion could marginalize this group, affecting their autonomy, social participation, and quality of life. Conversely, creating AI that meets their needs is a major opportunity for businesses and government.

Recent data from the United Kingdom –indicative of global trends–show that a significant number of older generations lack basic digital skills: more than a third cannot complete fundamental tasks such as setting up Wi-Fi or managing passwords; others simply do not use the internet at all (Age UK 2024). This highlights a stark “digital divide” that could deepen in the age of AI.

This report explores older generations' awareness and understanding of AI, including barriers to engagement. It also considers how improving AI literacy among older generations could unlock significant benefits, and how failure to do so may deepen inequalities at a time when society and services increasingly assume digital competence.

Methodology

The foundational element of the report is the output from an online survey that explores older generations' attitudes and use of AI. From 29 October 2025 to 13 November 2025, the survey collected 2,515 responses drawn evenly from 16 countries across five regions: Middle East, Africa and India (MEAI); Asia-Pacific; Europe; Latin America; and North America. The age of respondents ranged from 60 to 85 years old. The survey was complemented by interviews with select experts and two focus groups in Japan and India with people aged between 60 and 85.

This survey built upon several existing AI literacy frameworks previously tested by [EY among Gen Z](#) (EY 2024), which have a focus on generative AI, the largest category of AI currently used in the workplace (EY 2023). Generative AI refers to AI tools that use algorithms and machine learning techniques to analyze patterns in data to generate new outputs. AI was used in translating open-ended responses from non-English languages into English and thematically grouping open-text responses; it was not used in any quantitative analysis.

One note: This survey was undertaken entirely online, highlighting the important issue of digital inclusion, as clearly only those with internet access and basic computer savviness could participate. Ensuring digital inclusion for all will be a fundamental part of delivering an AI just transition.

02

What older adults know, and don't yet know



02

What older adults know, and don't yet know

The EY AI Sentiment Index (EY 2026) shows older generations have a lower level of comfort with AI compared to younger generations: baby boomers and the silent generation have a score of 55 and 45 out of 100 respectively, whereas Gen Z and Millennials score higher at 69 and 73 respectively, and Gen X scores 64.

“

I want AI to help me live a healthy, wealthy and wise life. I want razor sharp intelligence.

Focus group respondent,
India

Among the respondents for this new study, only 24% indicated they were *quite* or *very familiar* with AI, with 69% choosing a *little* or *somewhat* familiar. Familiarity changes depending on location. Those in the Middle East, Africa and India (MEAI) region expressed the highest familiarity, with 41% stating they were *quite* or *very familiar* with AI; whereas only 12% of North Americans state the same.

A range of factors are likely to explain this variation. For example, unlike the United States or Canada, the UAE ranks among the world's top countries for e-government development (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2024), which may have impacted the overall digital literacy of older generations.

Older people's understanding about AI varies by context. They show high awareness of where AI is clearly involved - 93% correctly identified it in customer chatbots - but lower awareness where it is not, with 43% incorrectly believing it is used in formulas in spreadsheets (Figure 1).

One explanation is that people tend to anchor their understanding of AI to highly publicized tools, which makes it easier to recognize AI involving visible automation or interaction, such as chatbots. By contrast, familiar and less dynamic tools like formulas in spreadsheets are often misclassified due to automation bias where intelligence is overattributed to automated systems.

“

I am getting annoyed by companies' customer services obviously using AI to reply to a question or complaint. Such replies are obviously AI generated as they are long and contain no useful information.

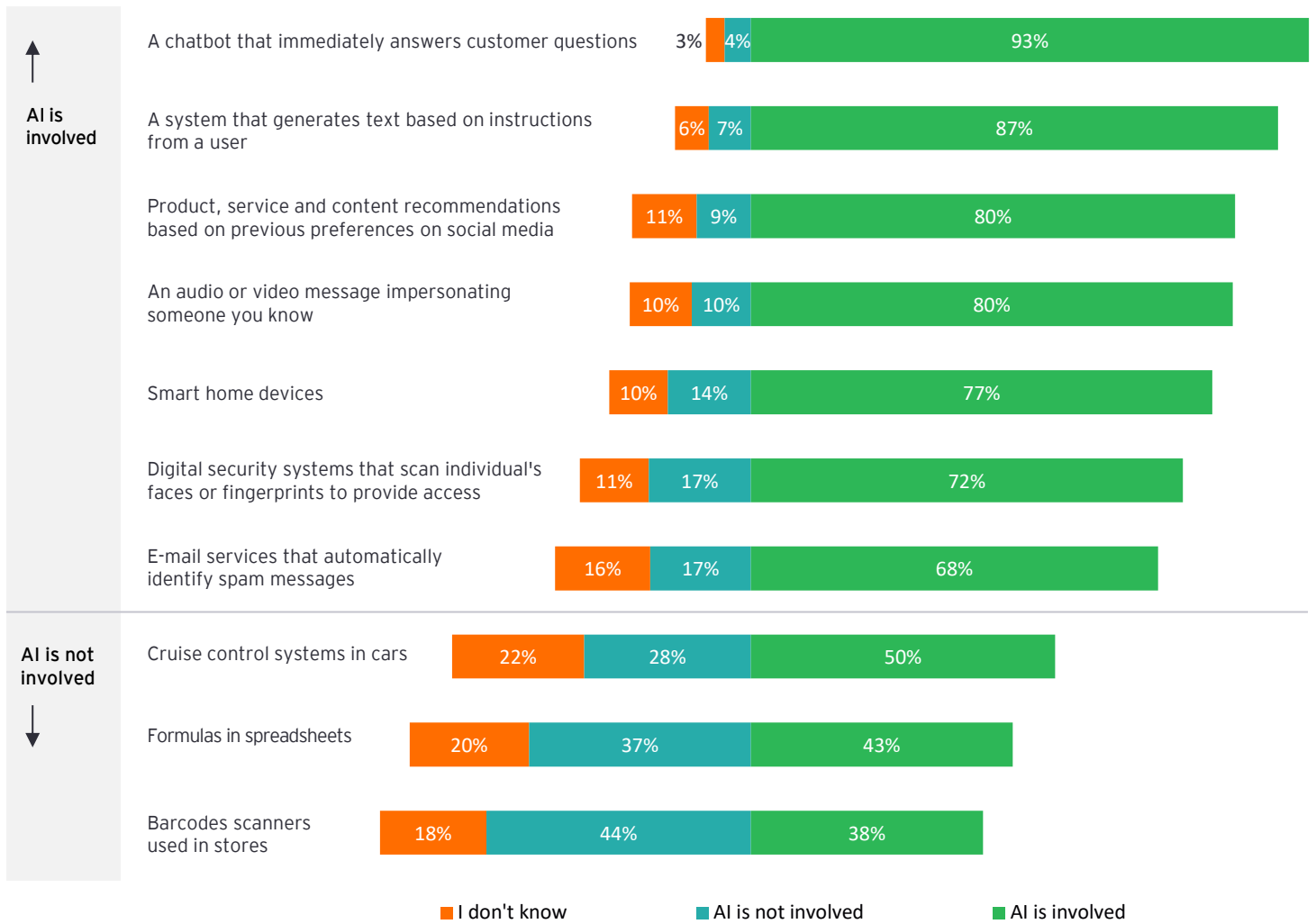
Survey respondent,
aged 76



The EY AI Sentiment Index is a composite score of their comfort with AI.

Figure 1: Older generations can correctly identify common uses of AI in day-to-day products and services but show some signs of automation bias.

Which of the following commonly involve AI?



N = 2515

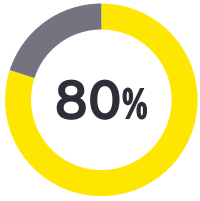
AI literacy among older generations

Moving beyond self-reported perceptions, inspired by The ALLit Framework (OECD 2025), our report tested aspects of AI literacy among older generations, including their ability to evaluate AI using knowledge of its limitations and risks.

Encouragingly, 80% of respondents answered the question “Not everything produced by AI has been checked to make sure it is true,” correctly suggesting a healthy and widespread caution regarding AI outputs.

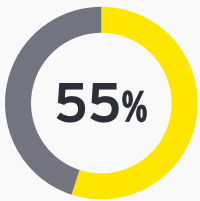
But digging further, answers become less reassuring; for example, only 41% answered the question “AI systems can reflect biases in society when trained on data that contains them” correctly, suggesting less knowledge about more discrete limitations of AI (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Significant numbers of people in older generations appear to be unaware of common risks and limitations of generative AI systems, creating risks for them and others.
Please select the statements that are true from the list below.



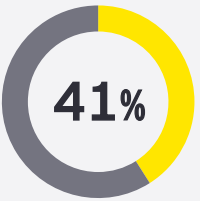
Of respondents correctly said that not

"Everything produced by AI has been checked to make sure it is true"

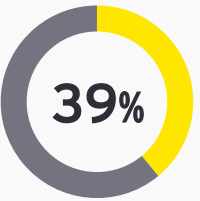


Of respondents correctly said that

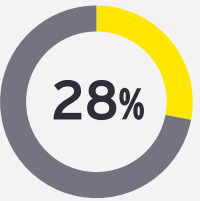
"Generative AI systems can convincingly imitate the voice and likeness of an individual"



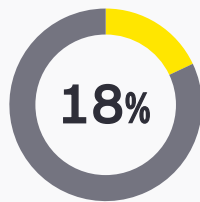
"AI systems can reflect biases in society when trained on data that contains them"



"Two AI systems using the same data would produce different results if created by different people"



"Generative AI systems that are trained on real data sometimes make up facts"



"It's possible to bypass rules programmed into generative AI that restrict the content it can create"

03

How older adults are incorporating AI in daily life



03

How older adults are incorporating AI in daily life

A broad range of AI usage emerged, with 40% of respondents either having never used AI or only once or twice. Similarly, 14% use AI once or twice per month, 22% once or twice per week, 14% multiple times per week and 7% almost every day.

There were also notable differences in usage among different groups: For example, those who are still employed used AI three times more than those who are retired, suggesting older people who left the workforce prior to the advent of widespread AI are likely a priority in terms of support. Other [research](#) by EY found that as much as 88% of employees now use AI at work, illustrating that professional contexts are a significant gateway to engaging with AI (EY 2025).

“

When you are searching for something it's convenient, you can ask with the mic or the voice. Sometimes it gives me the wrong answer but it's rather convenient. I use it quite regularly in everyday life as a tool.

Focus group respondent,
Japan

A gender gap also emerged: 31% of women had never used AI in comparison to 20% of men (Figure 3). This mirrors similar findings about a global gender gap in generative AI usage (Otis et al. 2025). Social and economic factors may explain this variation, such as women being underrepresented in STEM careers, implying less confidence with technology, and that women's jobs are already more exposed to AI disruption than men (ILO 2025).

It is worth noting that 27% of male respondents were still in full-time employment compared to 18% of women; as we have already seen, being in employment increases AI use, and this may be a contributing factor to the gender gap.

“

In California, research shows there's something like a 40 percentage point gap between men under 50 and women over 50 in their attitudes toward thinking AI is beneficial. You don't see that gap in almost any other dimension. And then you add class and race into those numbers and the gap gets wider.

Gina Neff

Executive Director of the Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy at the University of Cambridge

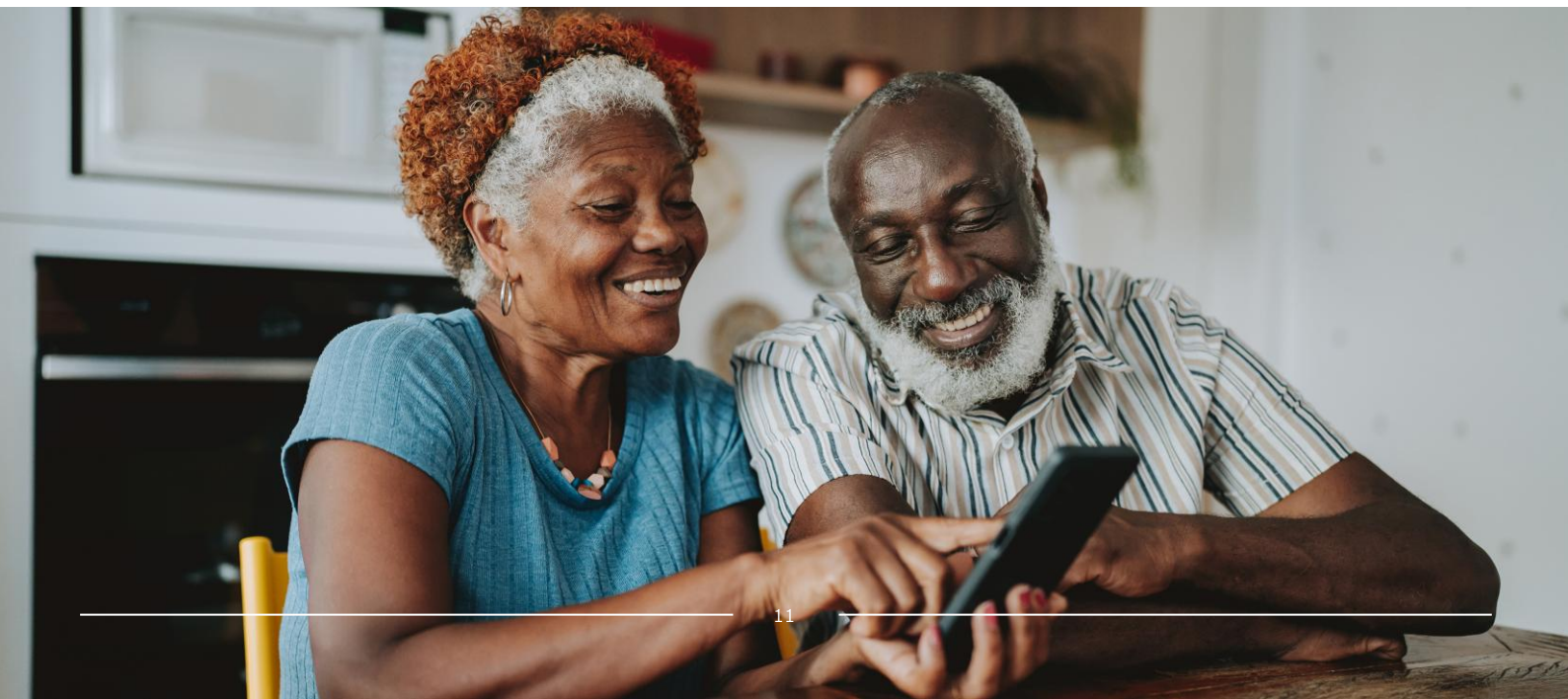
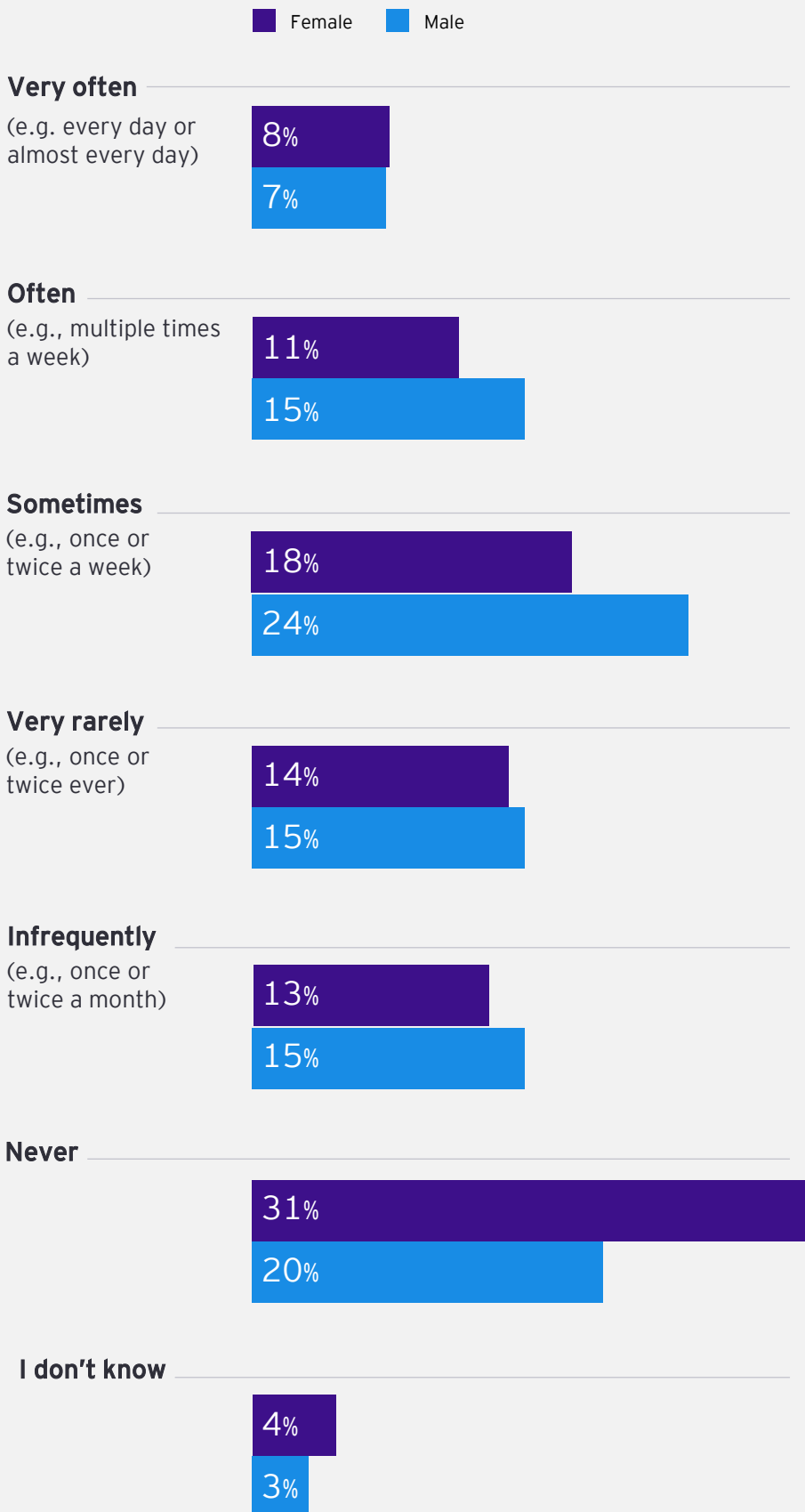


Figure 3: Older women are much less likely to have tried AI tools than their male counterparts.
How frequently do you use generative AI tools? Select one



There are similar rates of usage across age groups for men and women in the “very often” or “often” categories. However, **there is a gender gap that diverges from there.**

Men use AI once or twice a week at a far greater frequency than women. Women who never use AI do so at higher rates than men across all age groups with both Baby Boomers and Silent Generations.

N = 2515

Older generations learn about AI from a variety of sources. Most (73%) learn from online sources (including social media) and a further 32% by using AI itself. Children, friends and neighbors, and grandchildren are also a source of information (20%, 13%, and 6% respectively). This suggests that personal motivation and initiative play a key role in how older generations build their understanding of AI; by contrast, government-sponsored programs rank near the bottom at just 3%.

Older generations use AI for a wide variety of reasons. Among those that had used it, the top use was learning (79% of respondents), followed by health and travel (63% and 58%, respectively). Respondents reported positive experiences with most uses, top of which were work (84% positive), learning (83%) and creativity (80%). Negative experiences were rare (around 1 or 2%).

“

Society still believes that older adults are not interested in technology when that is no longer true. Seniors are increasingly integrating technology into their lives in ways that serve their unique wants and needs. When it comes to AI, older adults are curious and want to learn more, not unlike younger demographics.

Alex Glazebrook,
VP of Program Operations, Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) from AARP

OATS from AARP

Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) from AARP is a non-profit organization that helps older generations with a variety of digital training, including AI. Senior Planet is the flagship program of OATS with a mission to empower people aged 60-plus to use technology to improve their lives across three key “impact areas”: health, social connection, and financial resilience.

Through both in-person centers and online offerings, Senior Planet provides a mix of services including multi-week courses, standalone lectures and workshops, guest speakers, group events, and multimedia resources. Overall, Senior Planet aims to combat digital exclusion, reduce social isolation, support lifelong learning and healthy aging, and help older generations remain connected, active and empowered in a rapidly changing world.

OATS recently published an [AI for Older Adults Guide](#), developed with input from Microsoft and OpenAI, outlining the benefits and risks of AI and how it can address the distinctive health-related, financial, and lifestyle needs of people age 50+.

“

Many older adults are eager to understand and use AI in ways that genuinely support their lives. Our collaboration with OATS reflects a shared commitment to meeting people where they are—helping them explore the benefits of AI, recognize potential risks, and make informed choices that support their financial security, health, and everyday decision-making.

Lisa Reppell,
Senior Program Manager, Information Literacy, Microsoft



04

How older adults perceive its risks and benefits



04

How older adults perceive its risks and benefits

Older generations demonstrate optimism about AI. Around 60% of respondents were either somewhat or very positive about the likely impact of AI on themselves and their loved ones.

Negative feelings tend to become more pronounced in the broader picture: only 11% expressed negativity in the context of themselves, but that rises progressively to 21% in the context of the world (Figure 4).

These feelings are broadly in line with the EY AI Sentiment Index (EY 2026).

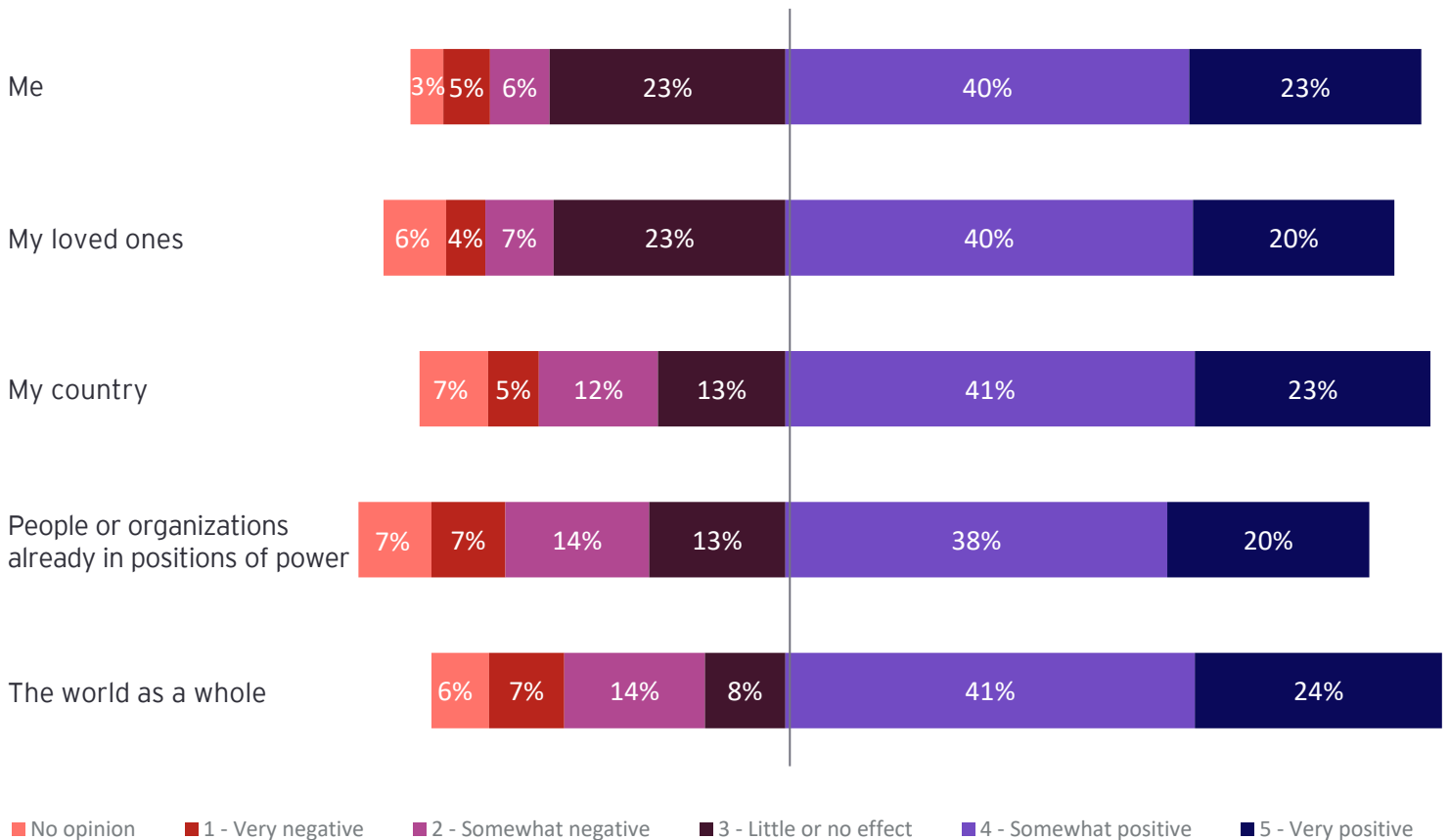


I worry that people are becoming so reliant on AI and computers that they are losing life and interpersonal skills.

Survey respondent aged 72

Figure 4: Older generations are consistently positive about the likely impacts of AI in the future; on themselves and on the world as a whole.

In the coming years, how much of a positive or negative effect do you expect AI will have for each of these groups? Select one



N = 2515

For older generations, the most significant barrier to adopting AI are concerns about their personal data, cited by 41% while a further 34% said they don't know which AI tools to use (Figure 5). At the same time, there is a desire to learn about and use AI, so how is that wish best served?

The main choice for support comes in the form of easy-to-use resources or guides, chosen by 44% of respondents. A further 32% would like to access online training courses provided by AI providers.

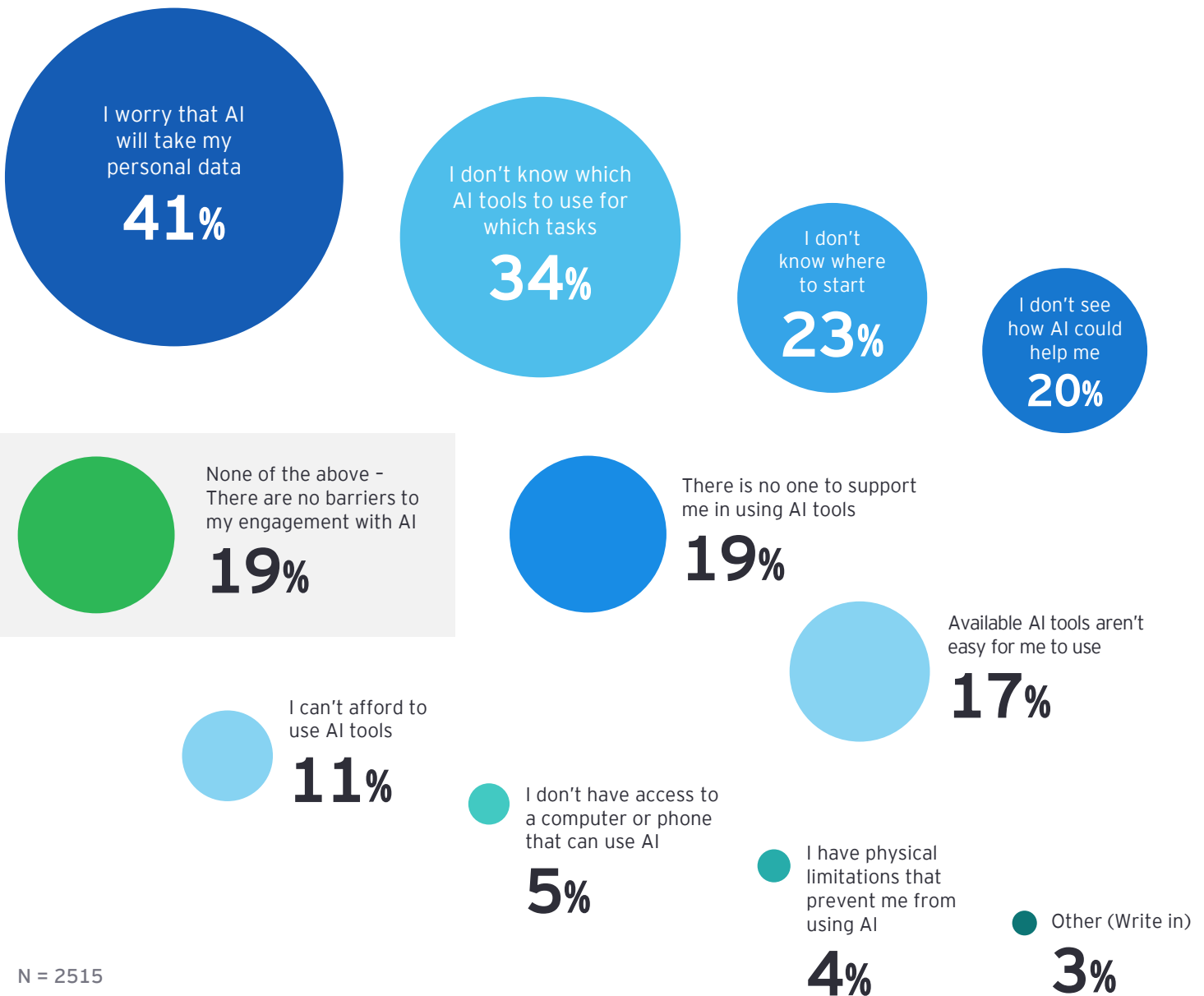
Only 15% expressed no interest in learning about AI, which demonstrates a remarkable willingness to engage for generations that are typically not top of mind (Figure 6).



Older people experienced the change from an analogue to a digital world, so that experience helps them with AI — they are accustomed to change.

Takashi Maeno,
Professor Emeritus, Keio University

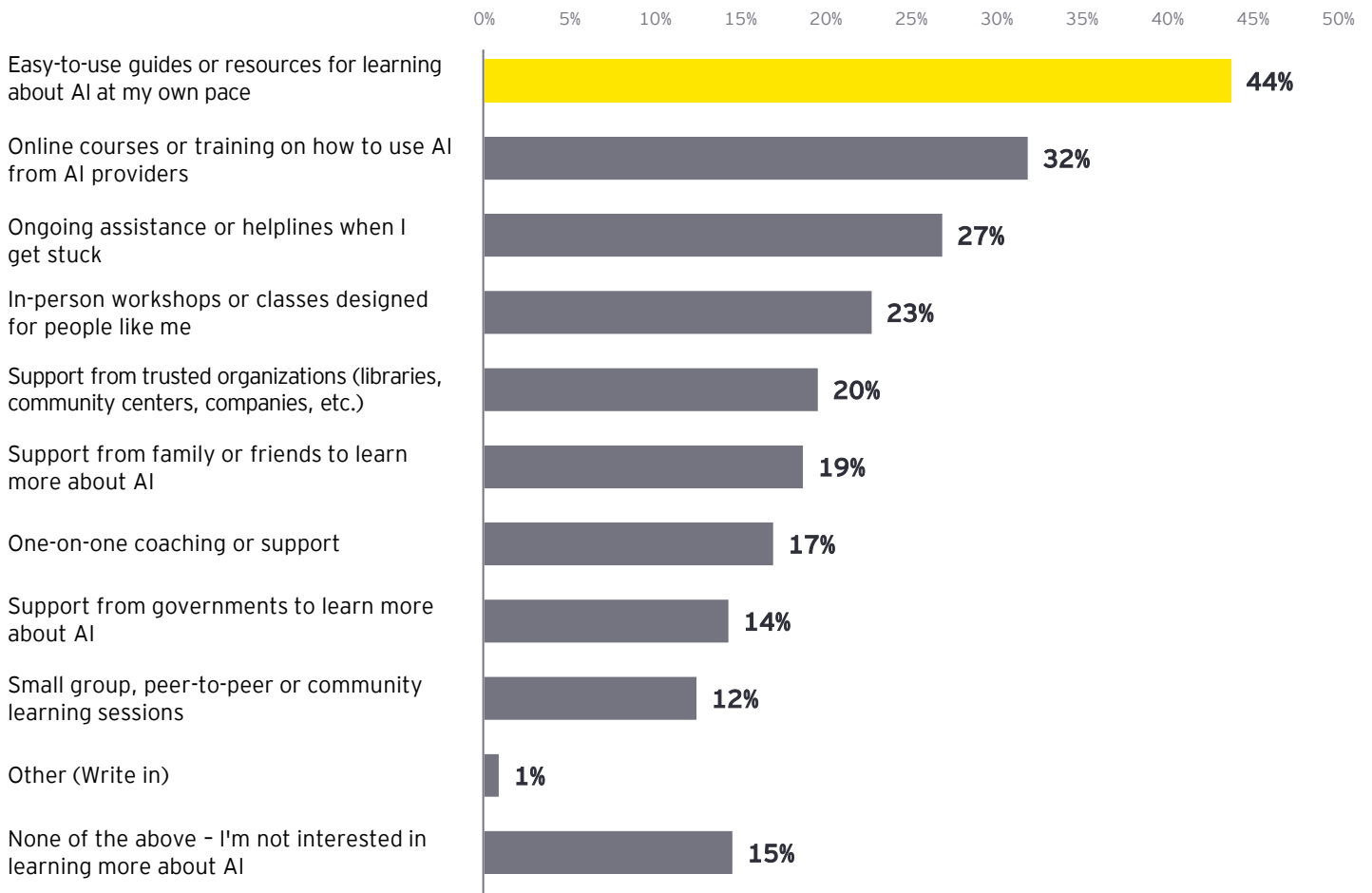
Figure 5: Concerns about data privacy top cited barriers to further engagement with AI for older generations. The top barrier for further adoption amongst older generations is that AI will take their personal data.
What are the main barriers you face in engaging with AI? Select one



N = 2515

Figure 6: Self-guided learning is the most popular choice among older generations to support their further learning about AI.

How would you prefer to be supported in engaging with AI?



N = 2515

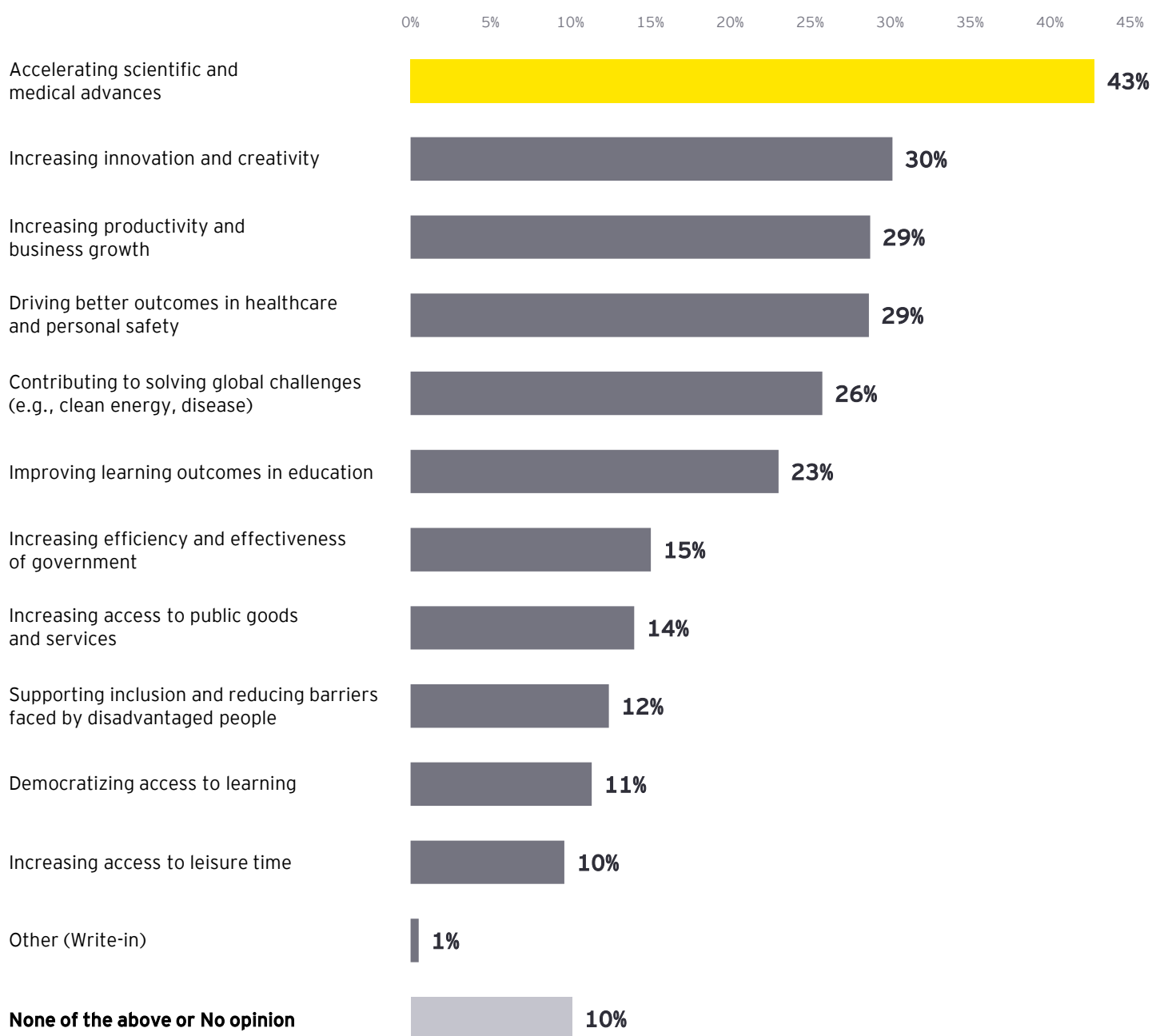


Providing older generations with stronger AI literacy and practical skills will enable them to engage with these technologies more confidently and meaningfully. With appropriate support, they are more likely to recognize and benefit from AI's anticipated contributions, such as accelerating scientific and medical advances (Figure 7).

At the same time, improved understanding can help them more thoughtfully navigate areas where caution is warranted, including the use of AI in informing government policy decisions (Figure 8).

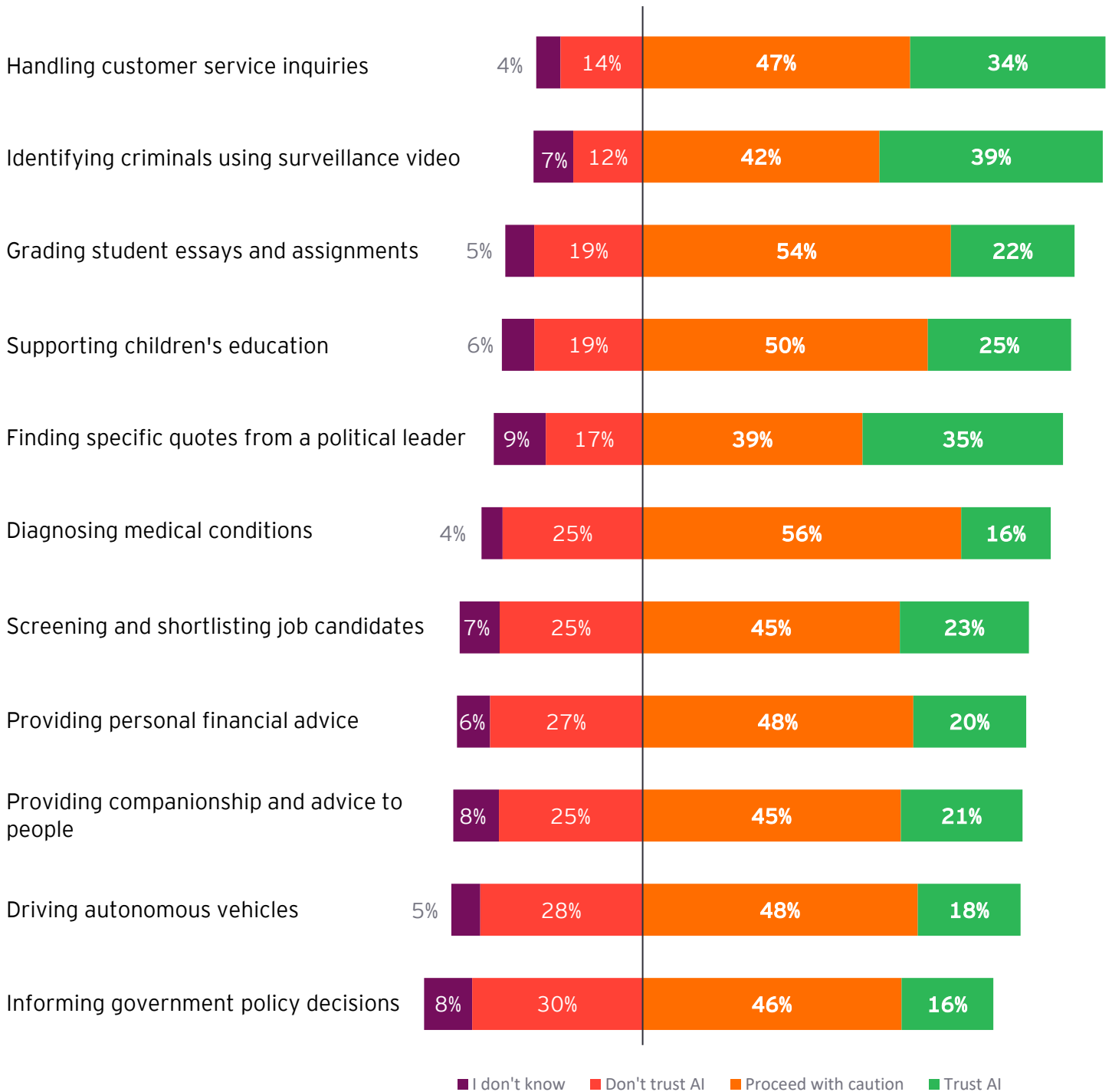
Figure 7: AI applications in science and medicine were the most commonly cited benefit of AI that older generations are excited about.

Of these commonly cited benefits of AI, which are you most excited by?



N = 2515

Figure 8: Caution is the most commonly recommended approach across a range of applications of AI. Trust is surprisingly low for common applications, and surprisingly high for other more controversial use cases. **To what extent do you trust AI to be safe and effective in each of these scenarios?** Select one



N = 2515
Some percentages reach 101% due to rounding.

05

What's next?



What's next?

As societies accelerate toward AI, the question is no longer whether older generations will encounter it but how prepared they will be to use it confidently, safely and meaningfully. The findings presented in this report point to a clear mandate for coordinated action across society.

For educators and policymakers:

Design and fund practical, age-appropriate AI literacy programs that are embedded in trusted local settings such as libraries, adult education centers, and healthcare or community services. Prioritize clear guidance on everyday AI use, data protection, and recognizing risks, and ensure programs reach those who are retired, digitally excluded, or less confident with technology.

For businesses:

Invest in designing and testing AI-enabled products with older users, focusing on simplicity, accessibility, and transparency around data use. Provide clear onboarding, human support options, and plain language explanations so that older customers can use AI services confidently and develop long term trust in your brand.

For older generations themselves:

Actively seek out trusted, beginner-friendly resources to build confidence with AI tools that support learning, health, and daily life, starting with low risk, practical uses. Engage with community-based or peer-supported learning opportunities and ask questions about how AI systems work and how personal data is used, rather than avoiding AI altogether.

The path forward is clear. Society can choose to deliver an AI just transition for older generations, ensuring they have the skills, access and confidence to thrive. Alternatively, failing to act risks entrenching digital exclusion and squandering the opportunities that AI can bring.

The moment to commit to inclusive AI adoption is now, and the responsibility is shared by all.



Acknowledgments

Thanks to the following experts and leaders for contributing their insights to the survey and report:



Alex Glazebrook,

VP of Program Operations, Older Adults Technology Services (OATS) from AARP



Gina Neff,

Executive Director of the Minderoo Centre for Technology and Democracy at the University of Cambridge



Takashi Maeno,

Emeritus, Keio University

Research collaborator



References

1. Age UK, (2024), More Than 1 In 3 Over 65s (4.7 Million) Lack the Basic Skills to Use the Internet Successfully, <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/latest-press/articles/2024/more-than-1-in-3-over-65s-4.7-million-lack-the-basic-skills-to-use-the-internet-successfully>.
2. EY, (2023), How Organizations Can Stop Skyrocketing AI Use from Fueling Anxiety, https://www.ey.com/en_us/consulting/businesses-can-stop-rising-ai-use-from-fueling-anxiety.
3. EY, (2024), How Can We Upskill Gen Z As Fast As We Train AI?, https://www.ey.com/en_gl/about-us/corporate-responsibility/how-can-we-upskill-gen-z-as-fast-as-we-train-ai.
4. EY, (2026), As AI moves from advice to authority, who defines its limits?, https://www.ey.com/en_gl/insights/ai/as-ai-moves-from-advice-to-authority-who-defines-its-limits.
5. EY, (2025), Can AI Advance Toward Value if Workforce Tensions Linger?, https://www.ey.com/en_gl/insights/workforce/work-reimagined-survey.
6. ILO, (2025), Generative AI and Jobs: A Refined Global Index of Occupational Exposure, <https://www.ilo.org/publications/generative-ai-and-jobs-refined-global-index-occupational-exposure>.
7. OECD, (2025), The AILit Framework, <https://ailiteracyframework.org>.
8. Otis et al., (2025), Global Evidence on Gender Gaps and Generative AI, Harvard Business School Working Paper 25-023, https://www.hbs.edu/ris/Publication%20Files/25023_52957d6c-0378-4796-99fa-aab684b3b2f8.pdf.
9. United Nations Population Fund, (2026), Ageing, <https://www.unfpa.org/ageing>.
10. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, (2024), United Nations E-Government Survey 2024, <https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/books/9789211067286>.

EY | Building a better working world

EY is building a better working world by creating new value for clients, people, society and the planet, while building trust in capital markets.

Enabled by data, AI and advanced technology, EY teams help clients shape the future with confidence and develop answers for the most pressing issues of today and tomorrow.

EY teams work across a full spectrum of services in assurance, consulting, tax, strategy and transactions. Fueled by sector insights, a globally connected, multi-disciplinary network and diverse ecosystem partners, EY teams can provide services in more than 150 countries and territories.

All in to shape the future with confidence.

EY refers to the global organization, and may refer to one or more, of the member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited, each of which is a separate legal entity. Ernst & Young Global Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, does not provide services to clients. Information about how EY collects and uses personal data and a description of the rights individuals have under data protection legislation are available via ey.com/privacy. EY member firms do not practice law where prohibited by local laws. For more information about our organization, please visit ey.com.

The views of the third parties set out in this publication are not necessarily the views of the global EY organization or its member firms. Moreover, they should be seen in the context of the time they were made.

© 2026
All Rights Reserved.

EYG no. 001663-26Gb1

This material has been prepared for general informational purposes only and is not intended to be relied upon as tax, legal or other professional advice. Please refer to your advisors for specific advice.

ey.com