

2021 AI INVESTMENT TRENDS

HOW BUYERS ARE
PRIORITIZING
ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE

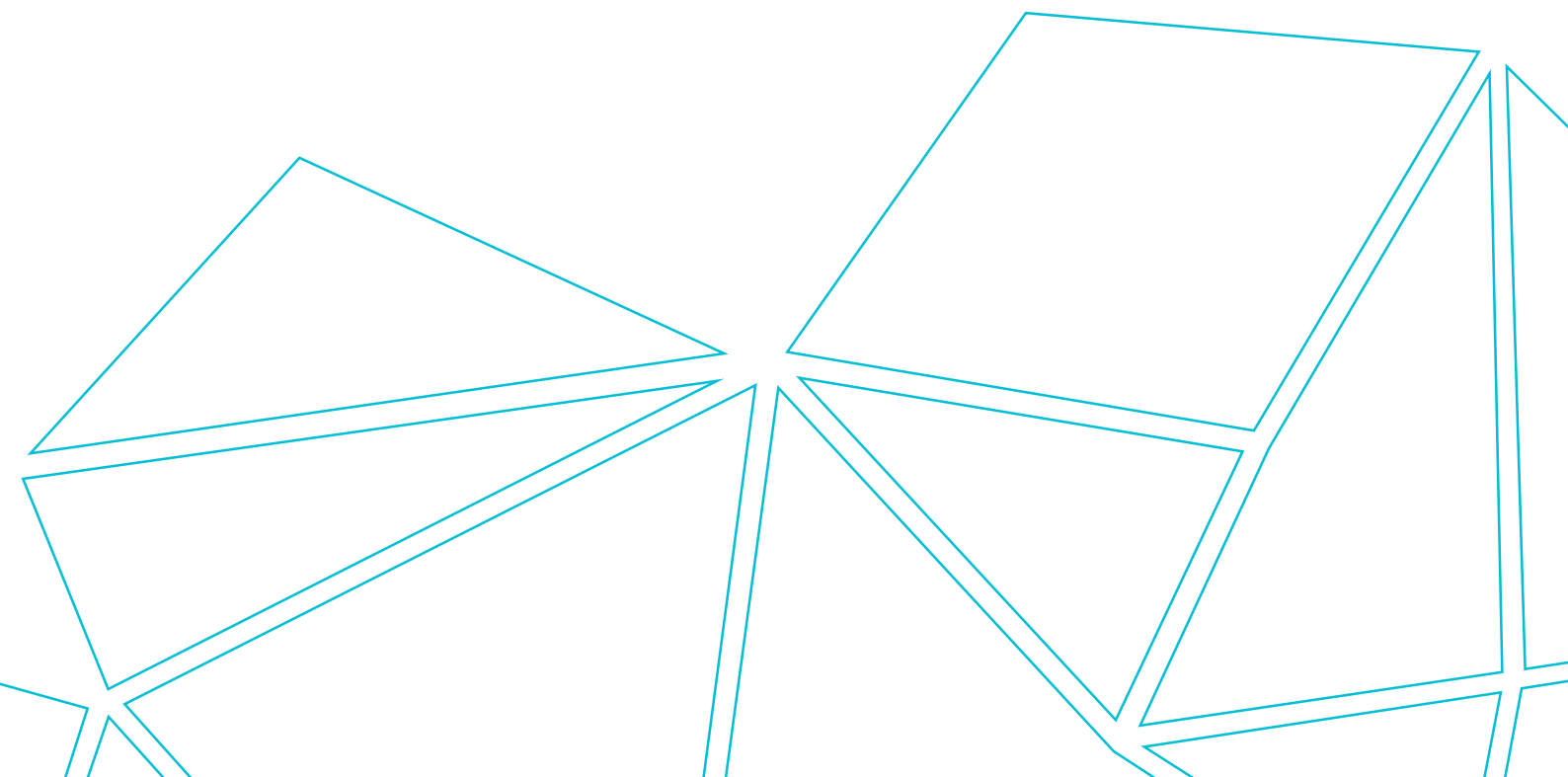


Artificial Intelligence has the power to become one of the fulcrums of the future. If we're honest, it's probably already there.

If you're one of the more than 100 million Amazon Alexa owners, for example, you're engaging with a conversational AI each time you ask about the weather or movie times. Whenever you use mobile deposit to transfer a check into your bank account, that's AI and machine learning working in tandem—deciphering and converting handwriting into text. Already, we are using smart technologies in our daily lives. The list of potential uses is endless and our imaginations aren't slowing down.

According to a report titled [The State of AI](#) from authors Nathan Benaich and Ian Hogarth, AI is being applied across the world of business, used in the regulation of technology, and is considered to be part of a new arms race politically, as autonomous weapons have already been deployed on the battlefield. While all of this is truly awesome (in the original definition of the word), there's a question that many AI companies are asking: When will everyday businesses and professionals use AI software to enhance their work?

Fortunately, this is something that NetLine has greater visibility into.



The Challenge

According to a market analysis report from [Grand View Research](#), global artificial intelligence market size in 2020 was valued at \$62.35 billion (USD). Over the next seven years, it's expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 40.2%, reaching \$997.77 billion by 2028. Clearly, there is a large (and growing) market for AI software.

However, not much is known or discussed about the maturity of the AI software market beyond its current buyers, especially the big names like Apple, Amazon, and major car manufacturers.

- Better understand the AI software market beyond its current buyers, especially the big names like Apple, Amazon, and major car manufacturers.
- What kind of obstacles stand in the way of AI software solutions providers further permeating the market?

The Goal

- Identify and understand how leading IT decision makers use or intend to use AI software and whether they intend to increase their investment any further within the next 12 months and beyond.
- Such observations should exclusively be captured via first-party interactions with IT buyers as they voluntarily registered and consumed related content.

How This Data Was Captured

By tapping into dramatic scale beyond the limitations of their own content, our customer leveraged NetLine's [Intent Discovery](#) product to secure first-party sourced intent-rich data squarely aimed at accelerating sales outcomes. Empowered by NetLine's entire universe of content, the client put to good use all 12,000+ assets, billions of data points, and the 35,925,120 different ways of filtering buyers actively performing research.

Unlike traditional intent data, Buyer-Level intent Discovery helps you better understand the challenges, priorities, and purchase timeline of your ideal targets. Nothing is hidden behind obfuscated datasets and/or black box proprietary scores.

Perhaps most importantly, Intent Discovery acts as an always-on monitor of all B2B content consumption behavior as professionals are actively researching content specific to their challenges. Monitoring activity is then mined on a real-time basis, and intercepted once a buyer has met or exceeded each element required to define intent—capturing custom, intent-rich, customer-specific insights directly from the prospect.

The Questions

To answer the questions, we engaged nearly 2,000 senior level IT decision makers to assess their desire to invest in AI software and what their priorities are with this technology.

Here's a sampling of some of the insights we uncovered from their responses.

1. What are your top AI Software priorities you are allocating resources towards?

Automating Routine Tasks	28.79%
Managing Risk, Fraud & Cybersecurity Threats	27.63%
Helping People Make Better Decisions	19.01%
Operationalize AI	8.83%
Gather Forward-Looking Intelligence	7.21%
Automating Customer Operations	5.75%
Responsible & Ethical AI	2.77%

The top priorities of decision-making professionals featured a tight race at the top, with Automating Routine Tasks (28.79%) and Managing risk, fraud and cybersecurity threats (27.63%) drawing the most votes.

Conversely, only 2.7% of all respondents prioritized the responsible and ethical use of AI—meaning that nearly two-thirds (61.9%) of all responding industries didn't even consider this option a priority. Considering what is possible with AI in the wrong hands, the apparent lack of concern in regards to ethics is staggering.

Some of the other notable insights include the following:

- Automating routine tasks & Managing risk, fraud and cybersecurity threats each accounted for nearly 28% of all responses, respectively.
- The Healthcare/Medical industry was 124.4% more likely to say Automating Routine Tasks with AI was more important to their profession compared to the Telecommunications field.

- 14.57% of Finance industry respondents said that Operationalizing AI was the top priority they had with any AI software, the largest percentage of any industry for this priority.
- While only 7.21% of all respondents said that gathering forward-looking intelligence was their top priority, professionals in the Automotive (20.37%), Media (33.33%), Manufacturing (12.5%), and Retail and Consumer Goods (11.64%) were keen to leverage AI to help them plan ahead.

Only 2.7% of all respondents prioritized the responsible and ethical use of AI.

Perhaps the best way to summarize the needs of B2B professionals regarding AI software comes down to handling the mundane and the complex. While this is an overly simplistic way of describing these findings, it's quite true.

If AI software can knock out the mundane tasks professionals spend a large portion of their time (which it can), then there's a market. If AI software can support sniffing out the scoundrels who pose a significant threat to your business (yes to that, too), then there's a market.

Of course, if it were that easy, we'd already see a wider-permeation of the market. What other challenges face this market?

2. What are your top challenges in managing and using AI Software?

Difficulties with Data Management	46.29%
Lack of Transparency as Algorithms Learn and Become More Complex	26.48%
DATA Set Management	12.86%
Leveraging Chat Bot Analytics	8.72%
DATA Archiving	5.65%

For this question, there was one clear frustration that emerged from the responses we recorded: Data Management. 46.39% of all respondents cited Difficulties with Data Management as their greatest challenge when it comes to managing and using AI Software.

In fact, this challenge was so much more top-of-mind relative to the other challenges that respondents were more likely to say that Difficulties with Data Management was their top challenge compared to:

- Data Archiving (719.64%)
- Lack of Transparency [as algorithms learn and become more complex] (368.75%)
- Leveraging Chat Bot Analytics (54.46%)

46.39% cited **Difficulties with Data Management** as their top challenge in managing and using AI Software.

Let's review the rest of the findings:

- While the concerns regarding Data Management polled as the greatest challenge for this question, respondents from four industries (Construction, Insurance, Real Estate, and Transportation and Logistics) did not believe it to be their top challenge at all.
- However, among those industries that did believe it to be a challenge for their organization, Telecommunications had the smallest share with 16.67%
- Automotive professionals were 57.14% more likely to cite the Lack of transparency as algorithms learn and become more complex as their top challenge compared to their peers in the Corporate Services industry

At a macro-level, (beyond the overwhelming answers to data protections and security and the high costs associated with the public cloud) there doesn't seem to be any hardline connection of one's industry's perceived need to protect their data at all costs vs. the need to keep cost in mind.

And now for the moment you've been patiently waiting for: When will you and/or your business be looking to spend on AI? This is the true multi-million dollar question.

3. What's the timeframe for additional investment for AI Software



Regardless of the other answers we'll see from any prospects, the truth is in the pudding when it comes to where your budget resides.

Let's find out where the market truly is:

- 31.92% of all respondents have an AI related investment event occurring within the next 12 months.
- 5.85% of respondents said they were looking to make an additional investment within the next 3 months, meaning that respondents were 1034.45% more likely to say they were more inclined to wait Over 1 year to invest compared to Under 3 months.
- 88.19% of all respondents said that they were not looking to make any additional investments in AI within the next 6 months.
- 38% of all industries (Aerospace/Aviation, Automotive, Computers and Technology, Education, Finance, Government, Healthcare/Medical, and Retail and Consumer Goods) had answers that spanned across the timeline.
- Respondents were 213% more likely to say that any additional AI investment would come after 2022 (beyond 12 months).

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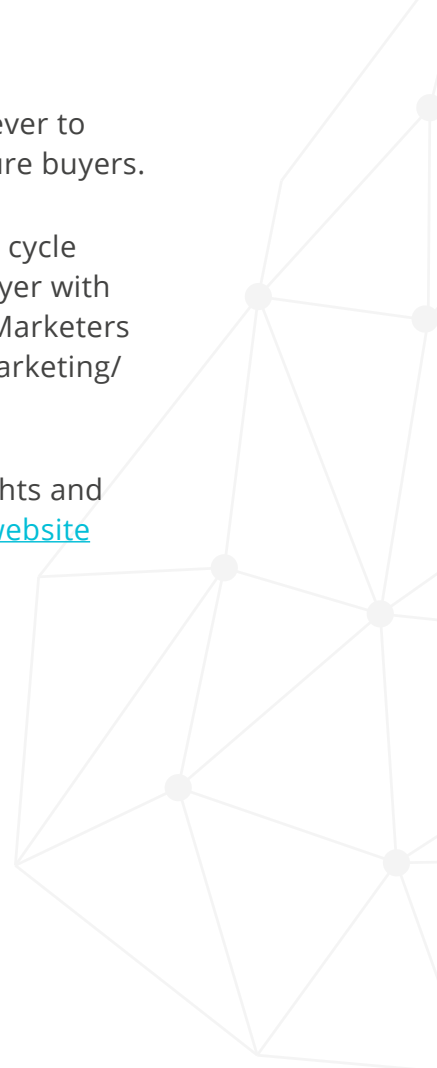
Overall, it's quite clear that the majority of the market is simply not prepared in the present to move forward investing any further into AI software. With how strange 2020 was with the way 2021 has unfolded, it's not terribly surprising that professionals are looking to defer until 2022 at the earliest. However, knowing that nearly 6% of a \$62 billion market is ready to make a move is still a terrific insight to takeaway from this Intent Discovery Trends Report.

How Your Business Can Better Understand the Intent of Your Audience

In today's hyper competitive vendor market, it is more important than ever to understand real-time pain points and in-market tendencies of your future buyers.

NetLine's Intent Discovery product helps businesses accelerate its sales cycle by capturing first-party intent data by intercepting and engaging the buyer with customized validation questions. With this one-of-a-kind product, B2B Marketers can gain first-party insights for immediate activation and seamless remarketing/sales acceleration.

For more information on how you can move beyond account-level insights and start your buyer-level intent discovery journey, contact us, or [visit our website](#)



About NetLine

NetLine Corporation empowers B2B Marketers with the reach, technology, and expertise required to drive scalable lead generation results and accelerate the sales funnel. Operating the #1 B2B buyer engagement platform, NetLine provides content-centric lead generation and buyer engagement insights through the largest B2B network on the web. Via its exclusive AudienceTarget™ content recommendation logic, NetLine amasses 1st party content consumption activities of 125 million professionals downloading more than 700 thousand buyer-specific pieces of content each month. Superior quality, on demand access, and interactive campaign reports deliver measurable ROI, enabling marketers to achieve lead generation success. Founded in 1994, NetLine is privately held and headquartered in Los Gatos, California. Successful B2B Marketers Start with NetLine.