Compliance Week

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH konaAI a Covasant company

2026 SURVEY REPORT

AI & *Compliance* Survey

Adoption is high. Governance and controls lag. How 193 compliance, ethics, risk, and audit leaders are deploying artificial intelligence — and where the gaps are growing.

COMPLIANCE WEEK · KONAAI

Published April 2026

INSIDE THE REPORT

A field in *transition*.

More than 83 percent of respondents to this year's Compliance Week and konaAI survey report using artificial intelligence. Only about 25 percent say their organizations have implemented a strong governance framework. This report unpacks the gap.

INTRODUCTION

Compliance is adopting AI tools, but *governance and controls lag*.

Adrianne Appel
Contributing writer · Compliance Week

More than 83 percent of respondents to a new Compliance Week and konaAI survey report using artificial intelligence (AI) but only about 25 percent say their organizations have implemented a strong governance framework.

The survey of 193 compliance, ethics, risk, and audit leaders found that 90 percent of organizations using AI have deployed generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT and Claude. About 52 percent are using agentic AI for performing tasks, 51 percent are using large language models, and 42 percent are using predictive analytics or machine learning tools.

The lack of governance is likely a lag in putting such tools in place, said Vincent Walden, CEO of konaAI.

"It's relatively new, just two-and-a-half years old," Walden said of Generative AI. Compliance departments are drawn to AI's capabilities because of its ability to automate the many manual and tedious processes required in compliance, like due diligence.

Businesses are using AI to handle many of these more labor-intensive compliance tasks because of the efficiencies that AI can bring, Walden said.

Survey respondents, about 30 percent who reported working in financial services, represent a range of organization sizes and industries. Slightly more than half of the leaders noted that their companies were smaller, with fewer than 5,000 employees. About 27 percent of the organizations had 5,000 to 50,000 employees, and about 18 percent had 50,001 to 100,000 employees.

These leaders expressed in the survey results that the efficiencies created by AI tools were intriguing in several key compliance areas.

For example, nearly 40 percent said their companies have deployed AI for risk assessment and monitoring, and about 61 percent said they planned to expand AI into that use soon.

METHODOLOGY AT A GLANCE

193
Compliance, ethics, risk, and audit leaders surveyed

~30%
Of respondents work in financial services

>50%
Represent companies with fewer than 5,000 employees

SECTION 01

Key *Takeaways*.

Six headline findings from 193 compliance, ethics, risk, and audit leaders on how artificial intelligence is — and isn't — reshaping the function.

01 Adoption is high — governance is not

More than 83 percent of respondents report using AI, but only about 25 percent say their organizations have implemented a strong governance framework.

02 Generative AI leads the stack

90 percent of organizations using AI have deployed generative tools such as ChatGPT and Claude. 52 percent use agentic AI, 51 percent use large language models, and 42 percent use predictive analytics or machine learning.

03 Risk assessment is the leading compliance use case

Nearly 40 percent of companies have deployed AI for risk assessment and monitoring, and about 61 percent plan to expand AI into that use soon.

04 Efficiency is the clearest win

About 84 percent of leaders said AI has made their departments more efficient, 54 percent said it has improved analytics and monitoring, 49 percent said decision-making is better and faster, and 41 percent reported cost savings.

05 Data quality is the #1 blocker

Nearly 66 percent of leaders reported data quality or data access issues, 54 percent cited a lack of AI expertise, 47 percent flagged training issues, and 46 percent reported data privacy and security problems.

06 Most compliance teams are new to AI

About 30 percent of compliance teams are not using AI yet. Nearly 27 percent have been using it for less than six months, 24 percent for six to 12 months, 15 percent for one to two years, and only five percent for more than two years.

SECTION 02

Widespread use, *uneven oversight*.

More than 83 percent of respondents report using AI, but only about 25 percent say their organizations have implemented a strong governance framework.

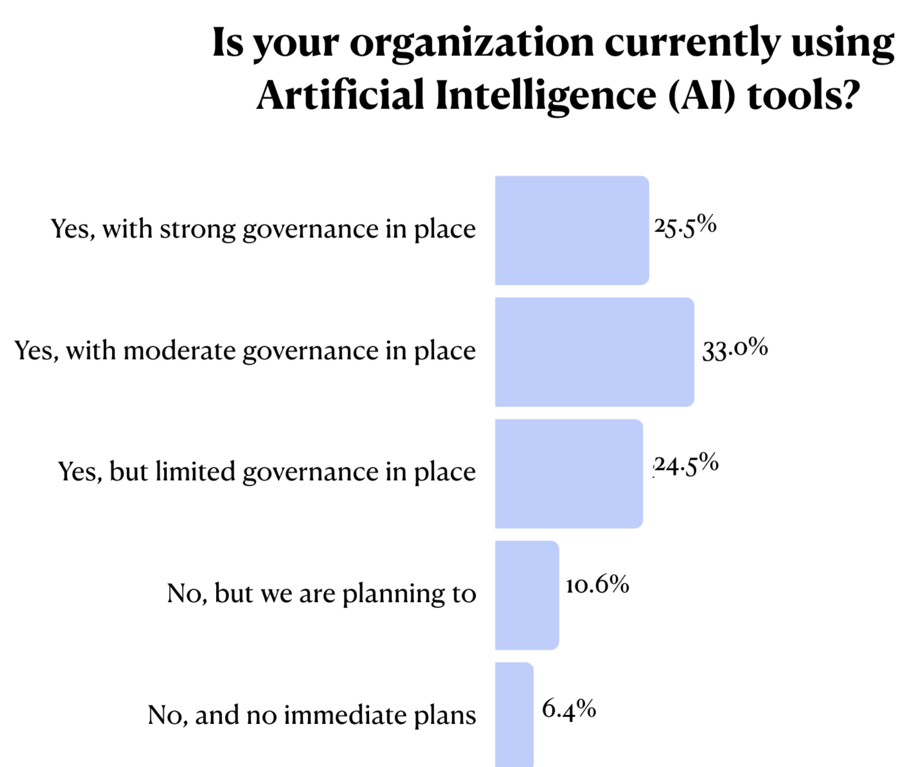
The lack of governance is likely a lag in putting such tools in place, said Vincent Walden, CEO of konaAI. "It's relatively new, just two-and-a-half years old," Walden said of Generative AI.

Compliance departments are drawn to AI's capabilities because of its ability to automate the many manual and tedious processes required in compliance, like due diligence.

The governance gap

- **25.5%** — Yes, with strong governance in place
- **33.0%** — Yes, with moderate governance in place
- **24.5%** — Yes, but limited governance in place
- **10.6%** — No, but we are planning to
- **6.4%** — No, and no immediate plans

FIGURE 01 · IS YOUR ORGANIZATION CURRENTLY USING AI TOOLS?



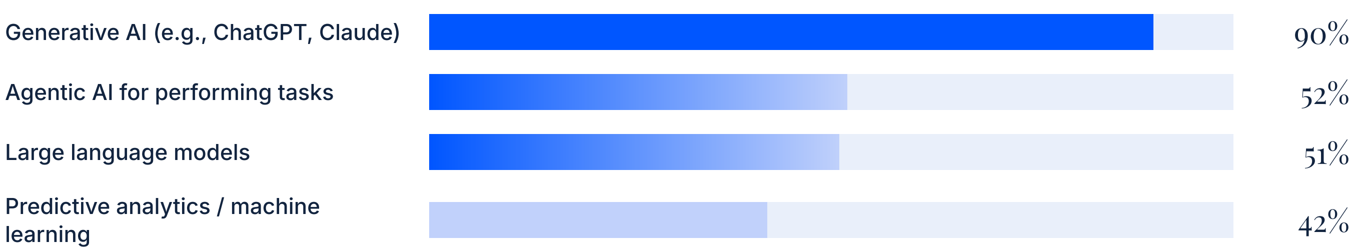
Source: Compliance Week / konaAI AI & Compliance Survey, n=193.

> *It's an exciting time to be disrupted with AI.*
>
> — VINCENT WALDEN, CEO, KONAAI

THE AI STACK IN COMPLIANCE

What tools organizations are *actually deploying*.

Of the organizations using AI, 90 percent have deployed generative AI tools, such as ChatGPT and Claude. About 52 percent are using agentic AI for performing tasks, 51 percent are using large language models, and 42 percent are using predictive analytics or machine learning tools.



Agentic AI: the next game changer

Agentic AI, a tool that can not only automate tasks but make decisions, could become a game changer in compliance. Business processes that are repetitive and that involve multiple people are ripe for agentic automation, Walden said.

Case in point: konaAI has had success — and fun — personifying AI agents. One, named Eva, specializes in DOJ investigations and enforcements. If a whistleblower reports a suspected bribery scheme involving particular employees and officials, Eva can quickly determine that two of the employees were previously warned about inappropriate behavior. She can be asked to write a work plan based on the information, Walden said.

SECTION 03

03

Where AI is being *deployed*.

Risk assessment leads today. Tariffs and regulatory reporting are the fastest-growing intended uses. Training and communications are where teams are pulling back.

~40%

of companies have deployed AI for risk assessment and monitoring. Roughly 61 percent plan to expand AI into that use soon.

USE CASES

Compliance's *highest-impact* AI use cases.

Leaders expressed in the survey results that the efficiencies created by AI tools were intriguing in several key compliance areas.

~40%
Have deployed AI for risk assessment and monitoring

~61%
Plan to expand AI into risk assessment soon

~80%
Plan to use AI in tariffs (vs. ~20% today)

~67%
Expect to use AI for regulatory reporting (vs. ~33% today)

External pressures, including the economy and politics, are also drivers in how AI is being adopted, Walden said. "As political agendas change, new priorities emerge and compliance changes with it," he said. The regulatory climate and politics are big factors.

"You have to be adaptable," he added.

The survey results certainly indicated this: Nearly 80 percent of organizations plan to use AI in the area of tariffs, compared to only about 20 percent that use AI in that way today.

Similarly, about one-third of organizations tap AI for regulatory reporting, and nearly 67 percent expect to use AI in the area of regulations in the near future.

While organizations are likely to have adopted AI, their compliance teams may not yet be using it, the survey found. And of those teams using AI, most are new converts.

FIGURE 02 · THE AI & COMPLIANCE SURVEY AT A GLANCE

TENURE WITH AI

Most compliance teams are *new converts*.

About 30 percent of compliance teams are not using AI yet to help accomplish ethics and compliance tasks.

Nearly 27 percent have been using AI for less than six months, while just 24 percent of compliance teams have been using AI for six to 12 months, 15 percent for one to two years, and only five percent of compliance teams have been using AI for more than two years.

It's a good idea to get on board with AI, Walden said.

> *It's just a matter of time before your CEO or CFO asks you what the heck you are doing by continuing to expend valuable labor on tedious tasks, instead of turning to AI.*
>
> — VINCENT WALDEN, CEO, KONAAI

FIGURE 03 · IS YOUR ORGANIZATION USING AI TOOLS TO COMPLETE ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE TASKS? IF SO, FOR HOW LONG?

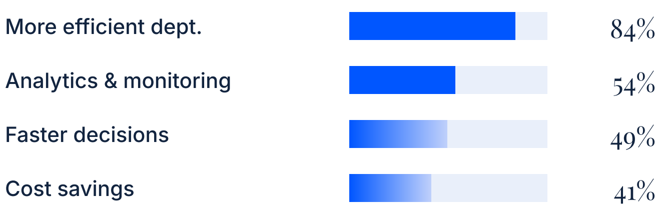
Source: Compliance Week / konaAI AI & Compliance Survey, n=193.

SECTIONS 04 & 05

The *efficiency* dividend — and the *friction* that remains.

SECTION 04 · BENEFITS

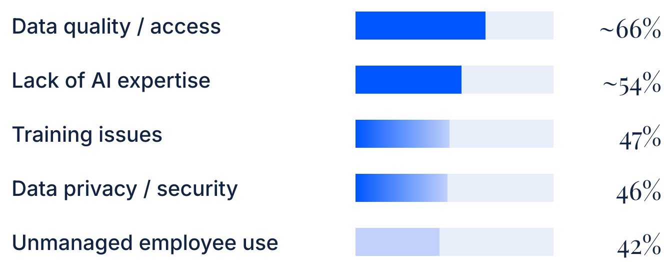
Organizations using AI in compliance report huge benefits. About 84 percent of leaders said AI has made their departments more efficient, 54 percent said AI has improved analytics and monitoring, 49 percent said decision-making is better and faster, and 41 percent said AI has brought cost savings.



Agentic AI, a tool that can not only automate tasks but make decisions, could become a game changer in compliance. Business processes that are repetitive and that involve multiple people are ripe for agentic automation, Walden said.

SECTION 05 · CHALLENGES

The leaders also reported on the challenges of using AI. Nearly 66 percent reported data quality or data access issues, 47 percent had training issues, 46 percent had data privacy and security problems, and 42 percent experienced unmanaged AI use by employees.



Getting help with AI risks and problems can itself be a struggle: about 54 percent of leaders said a major problem was a lack of AI expertise.

The pattern

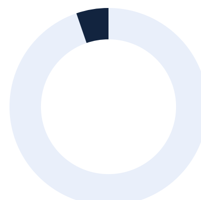
Adoption is outpacing institutionalization — and the absence of internal expertise is itself a barrier to closing the gap. When two-thirds of leaders cite data quality as their first hurdle, modernization has to start with data infrastructure, not model selection. AI can only be as defensible as the data it stands on.

TECH BUDGETS

AI is a *meaningful* share of compliance tech spend.

Many compliance teams are spending a significant chunk of their tech budgets on AI-related projects and use cases. About 41 percent of teams plan to spend up to 25 percent of their budgets on AI. About 19 percent of teams will spend 25 percent to 50 percent on AI, and about eight percent expect to spend more than 50 percent of their tech budgets on AI. About 13 percent of survey respondents said their teams do not have a tech budget at all.

41%
Plan to spend up to 25% of tech budget on AI



19%
Will spend 25–50% of tech budget on AI

8%
Expect to spend more than 50% on AI

13%
Teams do not have a tech budget at all

WHERE TEAMS ARE PULLING BACK

Some jobs *still belong to humans*.

Some teams plan to cut back on their use of AI in areas where they currently use it, including training — nearly 58 percent of organizations use AI for training, and just 42 percent plan to use it for that purpose in the near future.

Companies also expect to cut back on AI for data analysis and for communications. Nearly 60 percent use it for data analysis now, but just 41 percent plan to use AI for data analysis in the future. About 63 percent of the organizations use AI now for communications, but only 37 percent plan to do so in the future.

Those results speak to the fact that AI isn't a good fit for all work endeavors, particularly those that require significant trust, like training and communications, Walden said. Trust is borne out of authenticity, inspiration, and being relatable, he said.

A training video featuring the CEO or a training session with a compliance or other professional "is a heck of a lot more inspirational, relatable and authentic," Walden said.

About one-third of the companies custom-built their AI tools, and 43 percent are using third-party compliance platforms with AI features, the survey found.

COMPANION FEATURE · BY OSCAR GONZALEZ

Compliance teams struggling with *AI implementation* and trust issues.

Oscar Gonzalez
Managing Editor, Editorial Projects and Analytics · Compliance Week

As companies push employees to use Artificial Intelligence tools to boost efficiency, many organizations are encountering challenges in implementing the technology. According to a new Compliance Week and konaAI survey, the most common obstacles respondents encountered when using AI tools were practical and operational issues tied to existing compliance infrastructure.

Of the 193 compliance, ethics, risk, and audit leaders surveyed, problems with data quality or data access were cited as a challenge in AI tool implementation by 66 percent of respondents. Next was lack of expertise, at almost 54 percent, and then poor integration with current systems (49 percent). The results suggest that compliance professionals' challenges with AI tools span the entire process, from initial implementation through the quality and reliability of AI outputs.

Ensuring data quality was the top challenge for respondents, a result which likely plays a part in an underlying lack of trust that some compliance professionals have with AI tools. Less than half of those responding (42 percent) trusted the outputs they saw from AI tools, while 48 percent were neutral to them, according to the survey.

Mohan Krishna, konaAI's Executive Director, Head of Product Innovation, said this result reflects a need for explainability and assurance.

> *Compliance teams see AI as inevitable and necessary, but they are constrained by governance risk, data quality, regulatory uncertainty, and skills gap. This is creating a strong demand for enterprise-grade, agentic AI solutions that confidently assist in transaction monitoring, flagging meaningful risks for human review, evaluating contracts, and measurably improving the business, not just generic, publicly available tools like OpenAI to answer questions.*
>
> — MOHAN KRISHNA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HEAD OF PRODUCT INNOVATION, KONAAI

TRUST IN AI TOOL OUTPUTS

Trust outputs	42%
Neutral	48%

The primary risks of AI in compliance are not about whether organizations should use these tools, the survey found, but whether they are prepared to use them well. Implementation of AI tools, from both the employee and technology perspectives within a company, was also a challenge for compliance professionals. Training needs for AI tools (47 percent) and unknown or unmanaged use by employees (42 percent) were other pain points they cited.

Nearly 16 percent of respondents also flagged that employee resistance to the AI tools was an issue. Couple these challenges with the poor integration of current technology, and it becomes clear the difficulties many organizations face in using AI on platforms never designed to support it — especially for employees with minimal training on the technology. As adoption continues to grow, the survey suggested that investments in data governance, integration, training, and clear policies may matter more than the choice of AI technology itself.

CONTINUED · BY OSCAR GONZALEZ

Policy, regulation, and the *top-down push*.

Another major theme among the most common challenges for AI tool implementation centered on compliance and regulatory concerns. These included a lack of or inconsistent AI-related policies (29 percent), ethical or bias concerns (27 percent), regulatory uncertainty (27 percent), and a lack of transparency or explainability (25 percent).

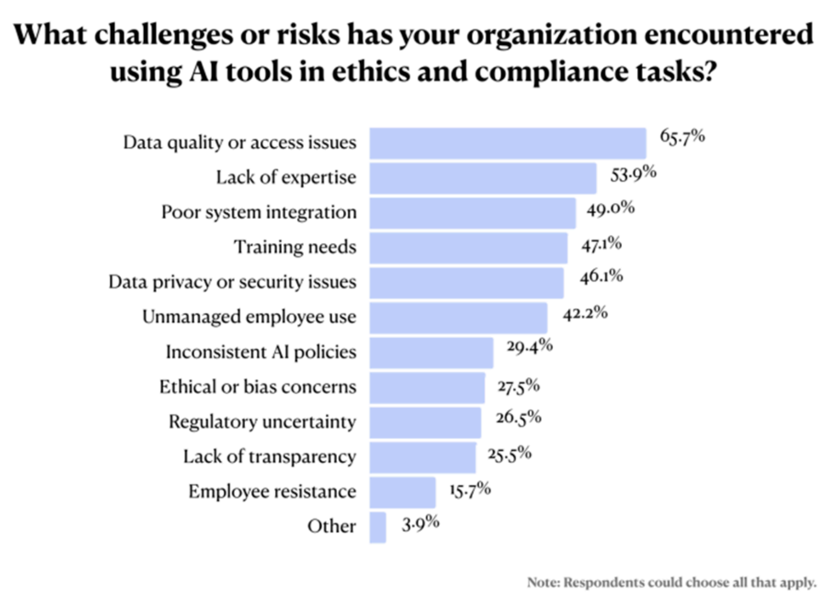
Compliance professionals are struggling to understand the policy guardrails for AI use that are central to their function, particularly when those policies are limited, unclear, or, in the case of federal U.S. regulators, non-existent. (A few states, like California and Colorado, have approved AI use regulations; many other states are considering legislation).

With so many issues involving AI-tools, it's clear compliance professionals are playing catch-up on new technology that is being pushed on them. The source of that push, according to the survey, comes from the executive level.

> *Executive leadership (48 percent) and boards (15 percent) are the primary adoption drivers of AI initiatives according to the survey, not necessarily the grassroots compliance team. This indeed indicates top-down pressure to modernize compliance or risk getting left behind in the company.*
>
> — MOHAN KRISHNA, KONAAI

The survey findings show a growing gap between the speed at which AI is being adopted and the readiness of compliance professionals who are tasked with overseeing its implementation. AI's expansion in compliance may continue at a rapid pace, but so will the introduction of risk.

FIGURE 04 · WHAT CHALLENGES OR RISKS HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION ENCOUNTERED USING AI TOOLS IN ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE TASKS?



Respondents could choose all that apply. Source: Compliance Week / konaAI AI & Compliance Survey, n=193.

Story by Oscar Gonzalez, Managing Editor, Editorial Projects and Analytics, Compliance Week (January 26, 2026).

SECTION 06

What's *next* for AI in compliance.

> *As political agendas change, new priorities emerge and compliance changes with it. You have to be adaptable.*
>
> — VINCENT WALDEN, CEO, KONAAI

The survey paints a picture of a function moving decisively into AI — but doing so faster than the guardrails around it. Adoption is widespread. Governance is uneven. The tools are powerful. The expertise is thin.

The teams that will lead over the next cycle are the ones that treat AI not as a point solution but as an operating model — underpinned by clean data, explicit controls, and clear lines between where machines assist and where humans decide.

Agentic AI, in particular, sits on the horizon as both opportunity and test case. Repetitive, multi-person workflows are where the automation dividend compounds. They are also where governance must be most precise.

The unchanging constant: trust, built from authenticity and judgment, remains a human domain. The best programs will lean into AI where it multiplies analyst capacity — and leave space where it doesn't belong.

83%
Report using AI today

~25%
Have strong governance in place

30%
Of compliance teams aren't yet using AI

Based on reporting by Adrianne Appel for Compliance Week. Survey fielded 2025–2026. n=193 compliance, ethics, risk, and audit leaders.

konaAI
a Covasant company

Smarter compliance, *measurable risk reduction*.

At konaAI, their mission is to empower compliance, audit, and risk-management professionals to measurably reduce global fraud, corruption, and enterprise risk.

They deliver on this mission through their research-driven, proprietary, and flexible library of analytic risk signals, delivered via an easy-to-use, highly scalable, and cost-effective software platform.

Research-driven signals

A proprietary library of analytic risk signals built on continuous research across fraud, corruption, and enterprise risk.

Flexible & scalable

A platform designed to adapt to your controls environment — not the other way around — and to grow with your program.

Built for compliance teams

Easy-to-use, cost-effective software that gives compliance, audit, and risk professionals measurable impact from day one.

Learn more about konaAI konaai.com

PUBLISHED BY COMPLIANCE WEEK · IN PARTNERSHIP WITH KONAAI