

Cognizant Research Finds Rising Security Investment Alone Isn't Enough in the AI Era

97% increased cybersecurity budgets, but even best-in-class performance in individual security areas leaves significant exposure

New findings from Cognizant's [2026](#) Cybersecurity Pulse Poll show that enterprises are increasing security investment but remain exposed to AI-related security incidents. While security fundamentals remain critical, the research suggests that strong performance in any one area is not enough on its own.

The poll, which surveyed 201 senior cybersecurity leaders at U.S. enterprises, found that:

- 97% increased their cybersecurity budgets over the past year, with 43% increasing them by more than 15%.
- 86% say AI has accelerated the rate of new vulnerabilities being identified.
- 83% experienced an AI-related security incident in the past 24 months.
- 82% paused an AI deployment over security concerns in the past year.

"AI has raised the baseline for enterprise security. The fundamentals still matter, but organizations can no longer rely on strengthening individual areas in isolation," said Vishal Salvi, SVP & Global Head of Cybersecurity at Cognizant. "The next step is connecting visibility, detection, remediation and governance so security operates as one system and can keep pace with how quickly AI is changing the risk environment."

Security fundamentals are associated with lower incident rates, but no single area is enough on its own. Even organizations with best-in-class execution in an individual area, including visibility, detection, remediation, guardrails or a security harness, report incident rates ranging from 67% to 78%, compared with 83% across the overall sample.

The research also found a disconnect between the risks security leaders are focused on and where exposure is occurring. Prompt injection and context poisoning are among the risks leaders flag least often, at 38% and 26%, respectively, yet organizations that flag these risks report the highest AI-related incident rates, at 93% and 92%. At the same time, only 38% of enterprises report complete visibility into the AI in their environments.

For enterprise security leaders, the findings point to a more connected approach. That means linking discovery, prioritization, remediation and governance into one operating rhythm, while treating security improvement and modernization as one backlog.

About Cognizant

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