

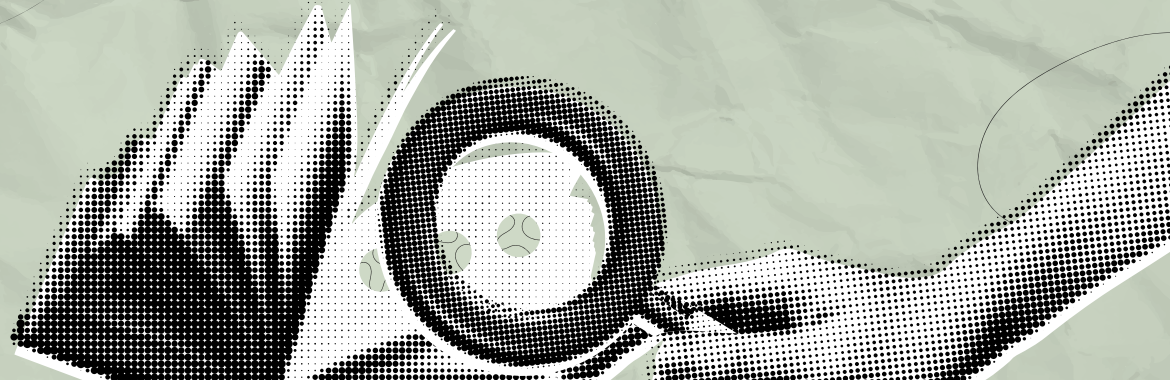
STUDY HIGHLIGHTS: INSIGHTS ON GLOBAL RISKS, AI, AND CORPORATE STRATEGY

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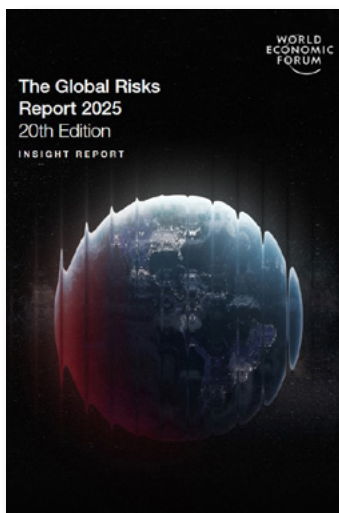
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Understanding the future of corporate communication requires looking beyond its immediate boundaries. The following seven reports provide valuable insights not only from the field of communications, but also from adjacent disciplines such as management, journalism, and technology. Topics range from the transformative impact of AI on business and media to the reinvention of corporate strategy and the evolving challenges of journalism. All reports are based on research and provide food for thought for communication leaders.



Read the full report: Elsner, M., Atkinso, G., & Zahidi, S. (2025). Global Risks Report 2025. World Economic Forum. <https://www.weforum.org/publications/global-risks-report-2025/>

THE GLOBAL RISKS REPORT

Global risks are evolving rapidly, requiring decision-makers to manage both immediate crises and long-term uncertainties. Drawing on the insights of more than 900 experts from academia, business, government, and civil society, the World Economic Forum examines the severity, interconnectedness, and governance of global risks over three timeframes. The results suggest:

- ▶ Geopolitical, environmental, societal, economic, and technological uncertainties are undermining optimism. While 52% of experts see an uncertain short-term future, the 10-year outlook is even more concerning, with 62% predicting increasing turbulence and instability.
- ▶ State-based armed conflict has risen to the top of the list of current risks, reflecting growing national security concerns and worsening humanitarian crises. However, misinformation and disinformation are projected to be the most significant global risk by 2027.
- ▶ Inequality and social polarization are at the heart of the global risk landscape. These risks are expected to intensify over the next decade, with aging populations in countries such as Japan, South Korea, and Germany potentially exacerbating social and political instability.

- Extreme weather events remain the most pressing long-term concern. Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse have also worsened significantly, with younger generations expressing greater concern about environmental challenges than older age groups.
- Although the risks associated with AI and biotechnology remain underestimated in the short term, concern rises sharply in the 10-year risk rankings, with potential threats ranging from AI-driven disruptions to the misuse of gene editing and brain-computer interface technologies.

EUROPEAN COMMUNICATION MONITOR 2024/25

Contradictions, dualities, and paradoxes in corporate decision-making create tensions that force managers and organizations into difficult trade-offs. Based on in-depth interviews with chief communication officers from Europe's 300 largest companies, the report provides unique insights into emerging challenges for corporate communication and presents strategies to manage them:

- Organizational challenges (macro level): Companies must balance stakeholder expectations with corporate interests in an evolving sociopolitical and economic landscape. The study underscores the importance of scenario planning, an infrastructure of listening, and the development of diplomatic communication skills to manage reputational risk.
- Functional challenges (meso level): Communication departments face tensions between efficiency, innovation, and risk management, particularly regarding AI adoption. The report highlights the need for skill development and controlled experimentation to ensure responsible and effective AI integration.
- Personal challenges (micro level): CCOs struggle to balance personal development with the demands of a 24/7 job. As learning mostly occurs informally and self-referential today, the report calls for a more reflective professional discourse, as well as stronger connections between academia and practice to equip future communication leaders.

Read the full report: Zerfass, A., Buhmann, A., Laborde, A., Moreno, A., Romenti, S., & Tench, R. (2024). European Communication Monitor 2024. Managing tensions in corporate communications in the context of geopolitical crises, artificial intelligence, and managerial learning. EUPRERA. <https://www.communicationmonitor.eu/>

THE STATE OF THE CCO-PLUS

The role of chief communication officers (CCOs) is evolving to encompass responsibilities beyond traditional communication functions, signifying a transition towards a more integrated approach to corporate leadership. Drawing on insights from Fortune 1000 and Forbes Global 2000 companies, the *Observatory on Corporate Reputation (OCR)* has published a report which examines the emergence of "CCO-plus" roles, where communications leadership is combined with other strategic functions. The findings highlight:

- More CCOs are featured on company leadership pages, reflecting their increasing strategic role.
- CCOs are taking on additional responsibilities in HR, marketing, social impact/ESG, corporate affairs, brand/branding, public affairs, and investor relations.
- 32 different job functions have been identified alongside communications, indicating ongoing experimentation.
- New demands in skills and leadership for communication roles are reshaping talent management.

Read the full report: Carroll, C. (2025). The State of the CCO-Plus 2024. The Observatory on Corporate Communication. <https://ocnetwork.com/research/cco-pluswatch>



Read the full report: Maslej, N., Fattorini, L., Perrault, R., Parli, V., Reuel, A., Brynjolfs-son, E., Etchemendy, J., Ligett, K., Lyons, T., Manyika, J., Niebles, J., Shoham, Y., Wald, R., & Clark, J. (2024). *The AI Index 2024 Annual Report*. Stanford University. <https://aiindex.stanford.edu/report>

AI INDEX REPORT

Artificial intelligence continues to advance rapidly, shaping industries, economies, and societies around the world. The *AI Index 2024 Report* published by the Stanford Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence tracks key trends in AI development, including technical progress, public perception, and geopolitical dynamics. The report is accompanied by raw data and an interactive tool that allows users to compare AI ecosystems in more than 30 countries. Key takeaways include:

- While AI has surpassed human capabilities in areas such as image classification, visual reasoning, and language understanding, it still struggles with complex challenges such as high-level mathematics, common sense reasoning, and strategic planning.
 - The cost of training frontier AI models has skyrocketed. Estimates show that OpenAI's GPT-4 required \$78 million in computational costs, while Google's Gemini Ultra reached \$191 million.
 - The United States leads the world in AI innovation. In 2023, US-based organizations produced 61 notable AI models, far outpacing the European Union's 21 and China's 15.
 - Responsible AI evaluation lacks standardization. Major developers, including OpenAI, Google, and Anthropic use different metrics to evaluate AI safety and ethics, making it difficult to compare risks and limitations across models.
- AI increases worker productivity, but requires oversight. Studies show that AI enables faster task completion and improved output quality. However, misuse of AI can also lead to performance degradation if not managed carefully.

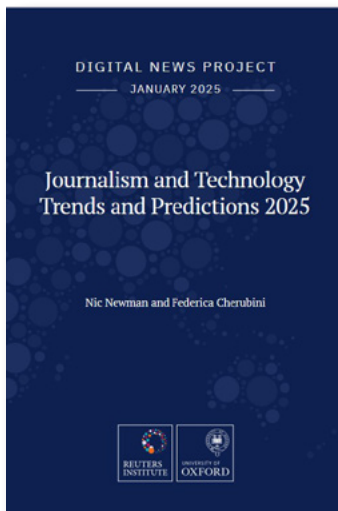
TECH TRENDS

Technology-driven change is accelerating, reshaping industries, and redefining business strategies. *Deloitte's Tech Trends 2025* explores the key forces that will drive digital transformation over the next 18 to 24 months:

- Spatial computing, which merges the physical and digital world, is redefining digital interaction. Organizations are increasingly integrating augmented reality, virtual reality, and 3D modeling to improve decision-making, employee training, and customer engagement.
- AI adoption is moving beyond large language models. Organizations are exploring smaller, more specialized models for efficiency and accuracy. Advances in multimodal AI and AI-based simulations are enabling AI to not only generate insights, but also complete tasks.
- Companies are investing in hardware to meet the growing demand for computing resources. Personal computers embedded with AI chips will increase productivity by enabling offline AI processing, strengthening data privacy, reducing cloud computing costs, and ensuring long-term technological adaptability.
- AI is reshaping IT strategies. Organizations are using generative AI to automate software development, optimize IT operations, and enhance digital transformation. The shift from “human in charge” to “human in the loop” is changing the way technology teams approach engineering, finance, and innovation.

- ▶ Quantum computing presents a cybersecurity challenge. While full-scale quantum computers may be years away, their ability to break encryption requires immediate action because updating encryption practices is a lengthy process.
- ▶ Organizations are embedding AI into their core systems to improve efficiency, automation, and predictive capabilities. But while AI can simplify processes for users, it adds complexity at the architectural level, increasing the need for deep technical expertise.

Read the full report: Raskovich, K., Briggs, B., Bechtel, M., Burns, E., Ravinutala, A. & Buscaino, R. (2024). Tech Trends 2025. Deloitte Insights. <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/tech-trends.html>



Read the full report: Newman, N. & Cherubini, F. (2025). Journalism and Technology Trends and Predictions 2025. The Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. <https://doi.org/10.60625/risj-vte1-x706>

JOURNALISM AND TECHNOLOGY TRENDS AND PREDICTIONS

The news industry faces mounting challenges as technological disruptions reshape the way audiences discover and consume information. Based on insights from 326 digital experts in 51 countries, this *Reuters Institute report* provides a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities for the news industry. Findings include:

- ▶ While many publishers have confidence in their own news organizations, broader confidence in journalism has sharply declined due to political polarization, increased attacks on the press, and media consolidation, all of which threaten editorial independence.
 - ▶ 74% are concerned about a decline in search engine referral traffic, fearing that AI-generated summaries will reduce direct engagement with news sites. In response, many are looking to partner with AI platforms like ChatGPT and Perplexity to ensure visibility and revenue.
 - ▶ While subscriptions (77%) remain the top priority, 36% of commercial publishers expect significant revenue from licensing deals with tech and AI companies. Product innovation is also rising, with many exploring new offerings in gaming and education.
- ▶ News organizations are increasingly adopting AI-powered personalization, including text-to-audio, AI-generated summaries, and multilingual translations. Over half are exploring AI-driven chatbots and search interfaces.
 - ▶ Publisher sentiment toward X/Twitter has worsened, while Google Discover has emerged as a volatile but crucial traffic source. The industry remains divided on its platform dependence overall, with 31% aiming to cut ties and an equal proportion looking to strengthen them.
 - ▶ The industry is divided on whether the influencer and creator economy benefits journalism – 27% view it as a threat, fearing traditional reporting will be marginalized, while 28% see opportunities to adopt new storytelling techniques and audience engagement strategies.

ANNUAL GLOBAL CEO SURVEY

The study, based on insights from 4,701 CEOs in 109 countries, explores how companies are adapting to transformative forces such as AI, sustainability, and shifting industry boundaries. The findings reveal both the potential and the challenges of reinvention in a rapidly evolving economic landscape:

- ▶ A third of CEOs report increased revenue and profitability from AI in the past year, and half expect further gains. While 13% have reduced headcount as a result of AI, 17% have increased headcount as a result of AI investment. Nearly half of CEOs are prioritizing the integration of AI into technology platforms and business processes over the next three years.
- ▶ Data suggests a strong link between sustainability efforts and higher profit margins. One in three CEOs say that climate-friendly initiatives have increased revenue, while two-thirds report either cost savings or no significant financial impact.
- ▶ 40% of CEOs report that their companies have expanded into new industries in the last five years. As industry boundaries blur, leaders must anticipate megatrends - including AI and climate change - and rethink their competitive positioning in evolving business ecosystems.
- ▶ Only 7% of revenue growth over the past five years has come from entirely new businesses, signaling a slow adaptation to market changes. Key barriers include rigid decision-making, limited resource reallocation, and the short tenure of many CEOs, which clashes with long-term transformation needs.
- ▶ Despite geopolitical tensions, nearly 60% of CEOs expect global economic growth to improve over the next year. However, 42% of CEOs believe their company won't be viable in a decade unless it fundamentally reinvents itself. However, confidence levels vary widely. German CEOs are the most pessimistic, citing weak demand and supply shortages, while CEOs in India and Argentina are the most optimistic about their domestic economies.

Read the full report: Moore, C., Boswell, L., Dekel, S., London, S. & Johnson, E. (2025). Reinvention on the edge of tomorrow. PwC's 28th Annual Global CEO Survey. <https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/ceo-survey/2025/28th-ceo-survey.pdf>

AUTHOR



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