AI Impact on Cyber Risk Landscape:

CEO and CISO Views on Risk, Reward, and Readiness

AXIS

Specialty Solutions, Elevated

A Letter from Vince Tizzio

Among the dominant themes across Boardroom and C-Suite conversations worldwide is the opportunity – and disruptive impact – that AI is bringing to all aspects of business.

The fervor surrounding AI as a transformative force is undeniable – as is the reality that AI is quickly propelling us toward an entirely new risk landscape. From the Chief Executive Officer to the Chief Information Security Officer, many executives are adapting to AI transformation in real time while making operational decisions that could impact their firms for years to come.

Against this backdrop, we are experiencing a "preparedness paradox" where AI is transforming corporate defense strategies, exposing differing perspectives among CEOs and CISOs.

Our hope is that this research, which offers a rare dual lens into executive decision-making, will inform the broader business community about building cyber resilience that keeps pace with technological change, while bridging divides that may exist among CEOs, CISOs, and other C-Suite leaders.

A commonality among paradoxes is that while they appear contradictory on the surface, they often contain a deeper truth: It will be crucial for C-Suite executives to work in concert to grow organizational resilience while enabling their organizations to tap into the enormous promise of AI.

Vince Tizzio
President and CEO, AXIS

Contents

Comparing Viewpoints Among CEOs, CISOs

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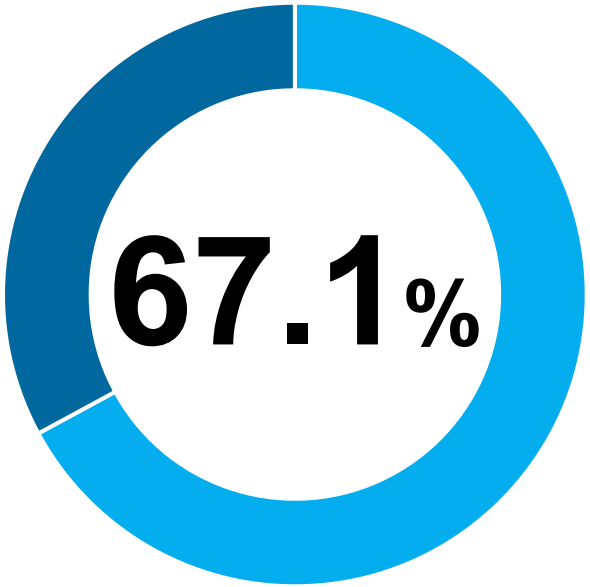
While CEOs often champion AI as a **catalyst for innovation and efficiency**, CISOs tend to see it as a **new frontier of risk** and oversight.

Comparing Viewpoints Among CEOs, CISOs

A modest trust gap exists in how CEOs and CISOs view AI tools and their impact on cybersecurity



of **CEOs:** trusting AI tools to help make cybersecurity decisions versus **58.6%** of **CISOs**

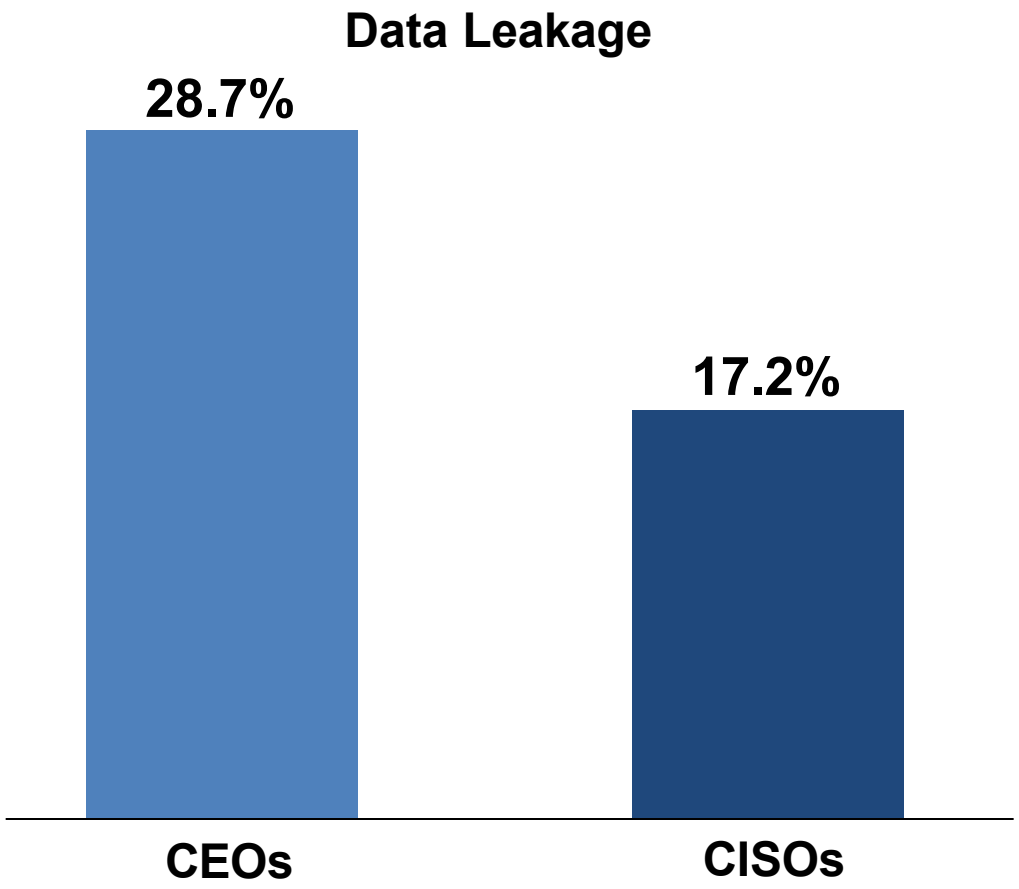
By a margin of **19.5%** to **29.7%, fewer CEOs than CISOs** indicated they did not trust that AI **would strengthen** their company's cyber defenses

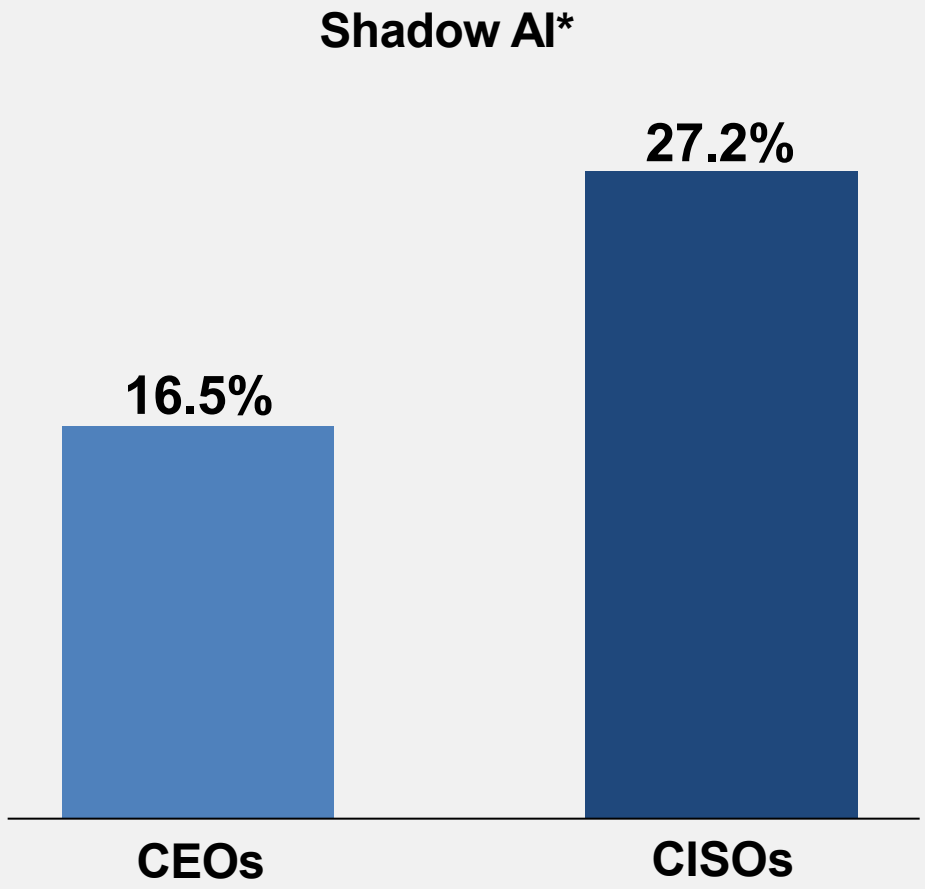
Q15. To what extent, if at all, do you personally trust AI tools to help make cybersecurity decisions?

Q5. How confident or not confident are you that AI will strengthen your organization's cyber defenses over the next 3 years?

Comparing Viewpoints Among CEOs, CISOs

Data Leakage & Shadow AI: Comparing CEO and CISO Views





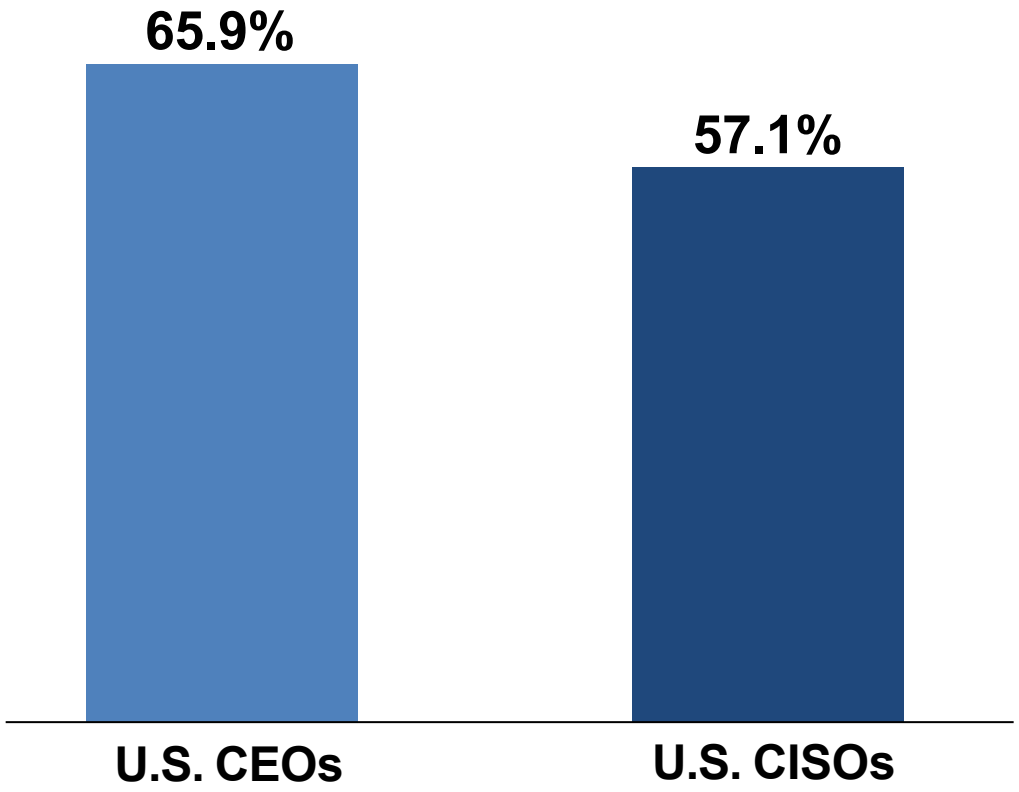
Q1. What do you see as the greatest risk posed by AI to your organization's cybersecurity, if anything?

** Shadow AI is the unsanctioned use of AI tools by employees without IT/security safeguards or approval*

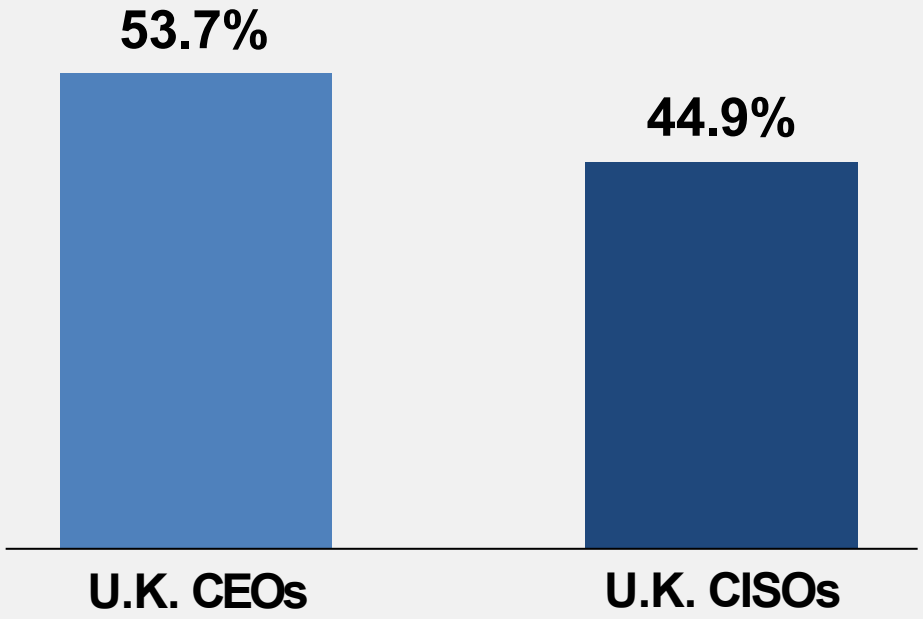
Comparing Viewpoints Among CEOs, CISOs

AI Threat Risk and Readiness: U.S. CEOs Tend to Be More Confident

Believe their company would respond to an AI-driven threat faster than their peers



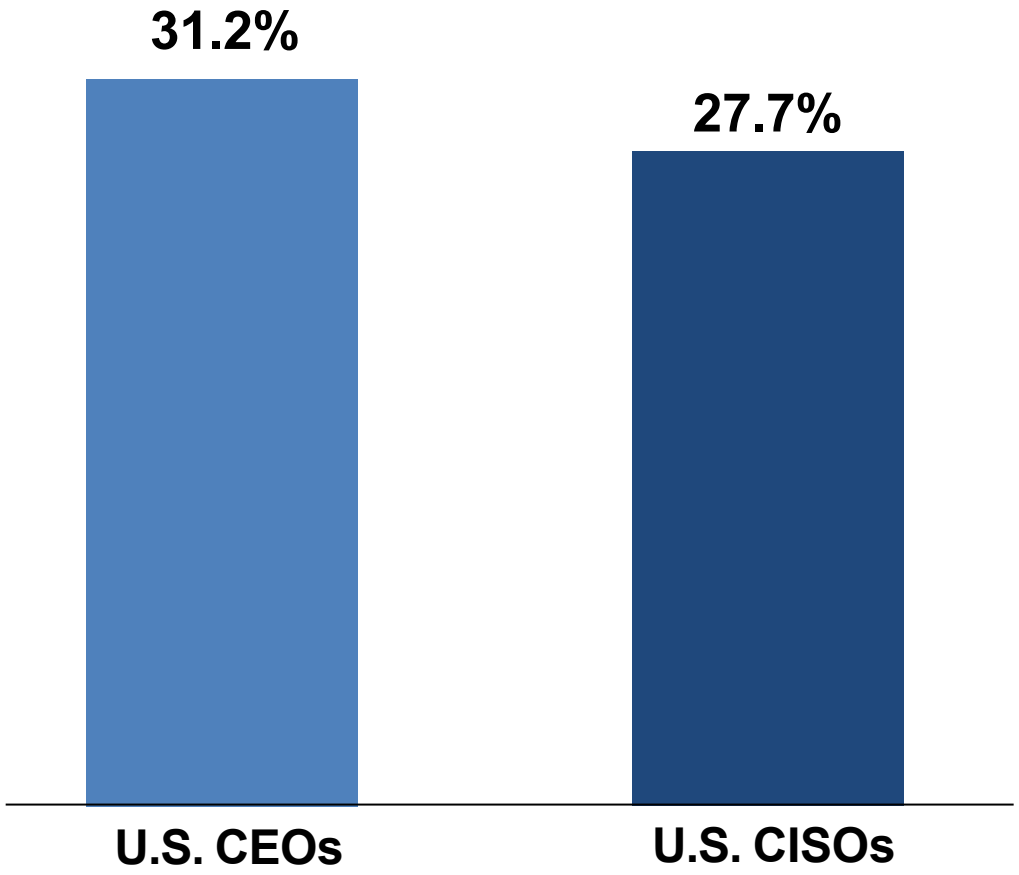
Believe their company would respond to an AI-driven threat on par with their peers

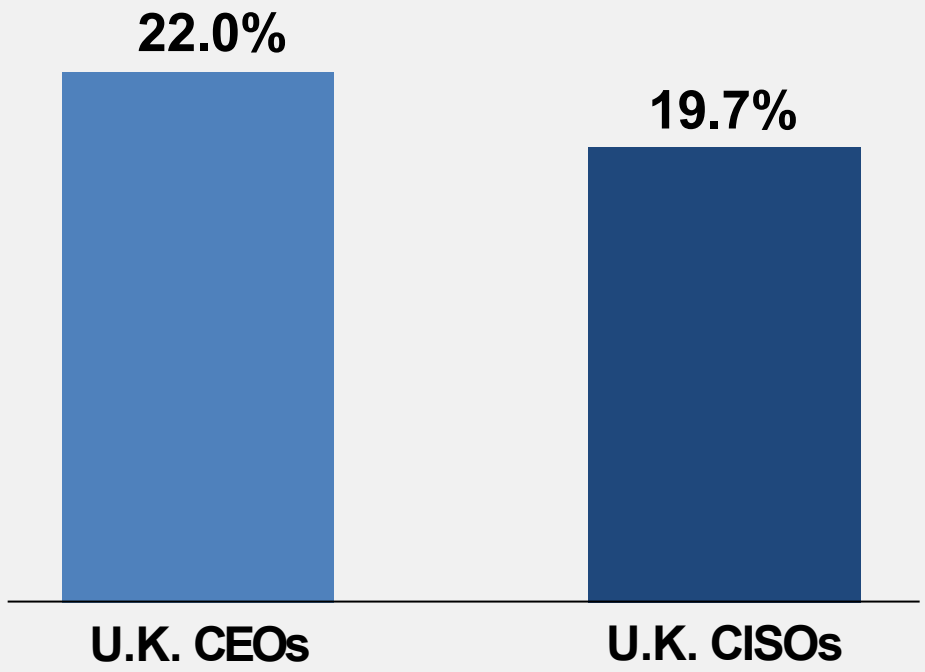


Q6. Compared to peers in your region, how would you rate your organization's readiness for risks related to your use of AI tools?

Comparing Viewpoints Among CEOs, CISOs

CEOs Slightly More Concerned Than CISOs About AI-Driven Attacks





Q8. What do you see as the greatest emerging cyber threat for your organization over the next 12 months, if anything?

Transatlantic Trust Gap

Transatlantic Trust Gap

AI is generally viewed as an opportunity across both the U.S. and U.K., **though levels of its uptake and prudence vary**.

There exists a **confidence and trust gap** across regions, as U.K. respondents express more caution about AI adoption than their U.S. counterparts.

Transatlantic Trust Gap

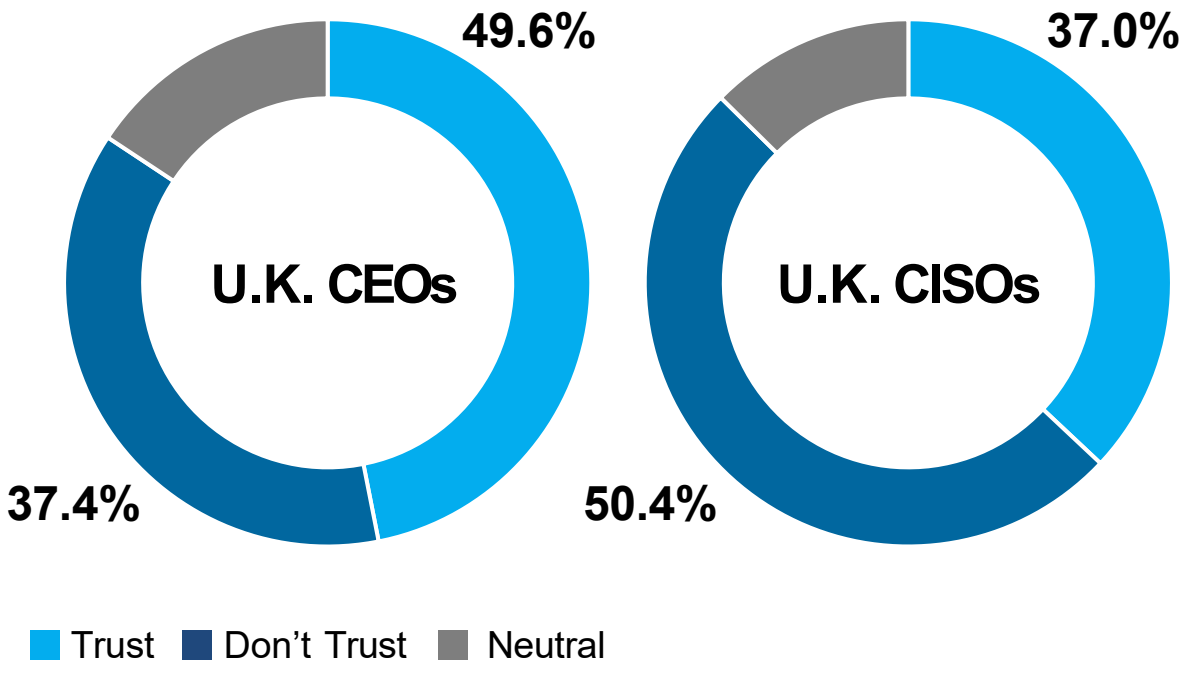
U.S. Respondents are All In On AI

	U.S.	U.K.
CEOs said they **were confident** AI would better their company's safeguards	**88.4%**	**55.3%**
CEOs said they **were not confident** AI would better their company's safeguards	**8.0%**	**32.5%**

Q5. How confident or not confident are you that AI will strengthen your organization's cyber defenses over the next 3 years?

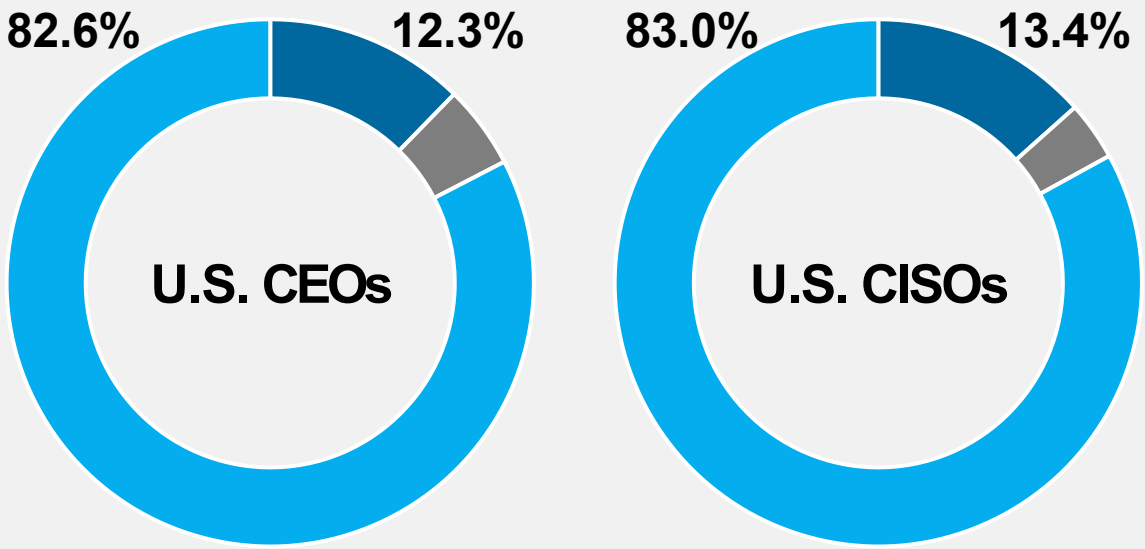
Transatlantic Trust Gap

Distrust in AI Tools was Relatively Common in the U.K.



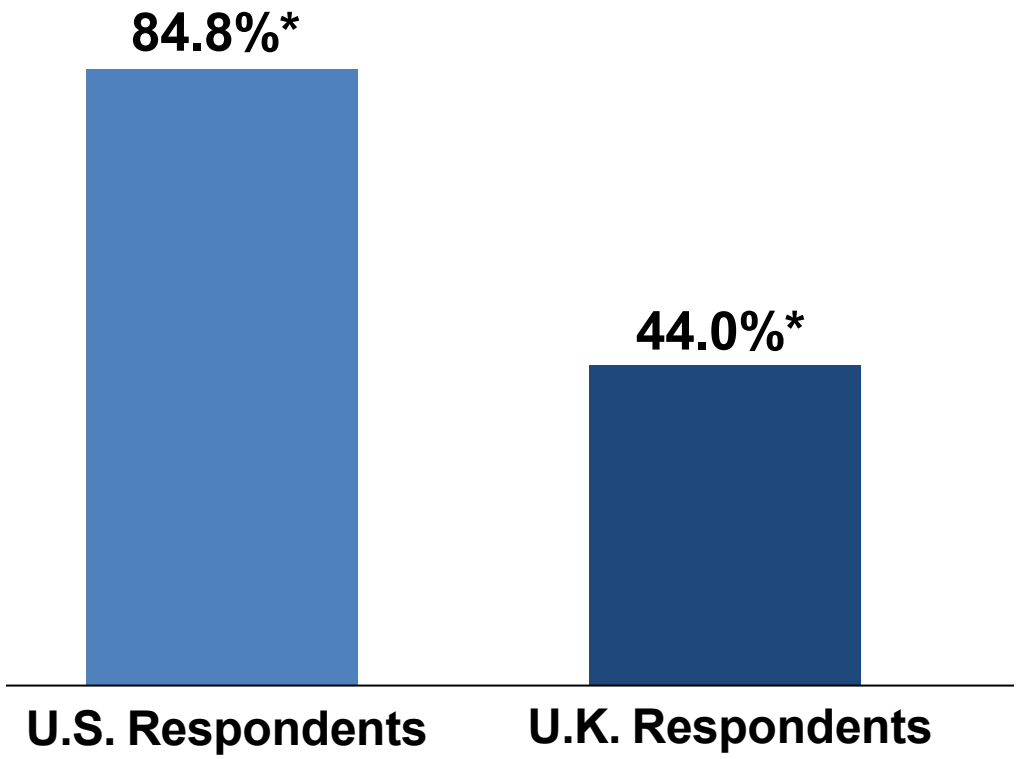
Q15. To what extent, if at all, do you personally trust AI tools to help make cybersecurity decisions?

American Respondents Feel Differently



Transatlantic Trust Gap

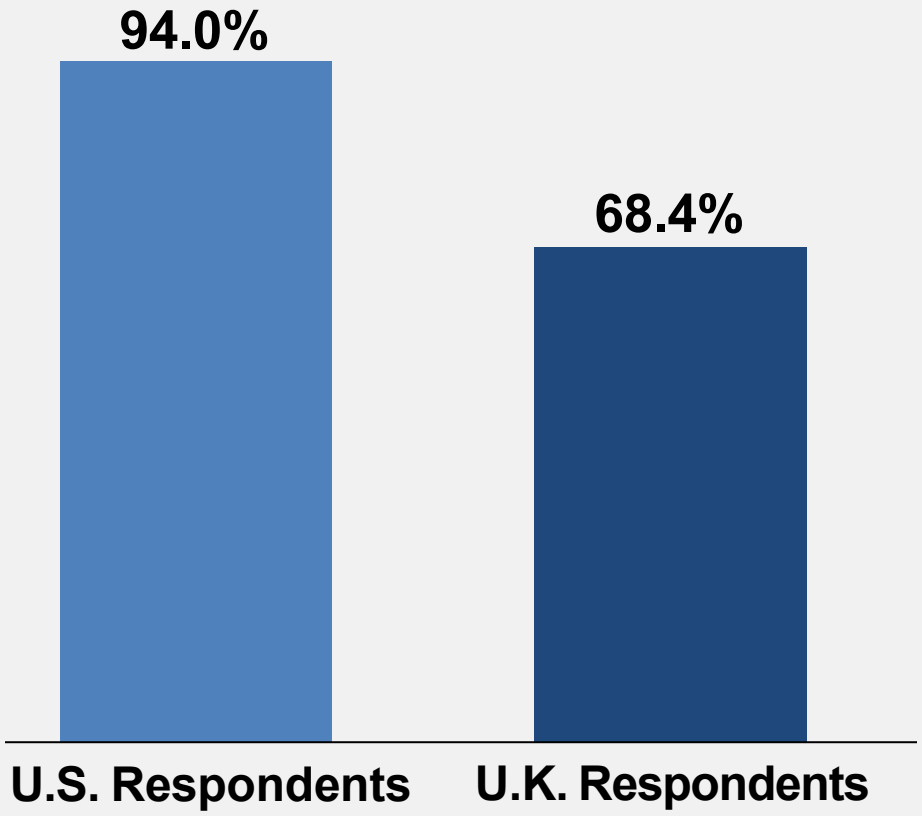
U.S. Leaders Feel More Ready for AI Threats, U.K. Leaders are Less Certain



Q7. On a scale of 1-5, how prepared, if at all, do you believe your organization is to defend against AI-driven cyber threats?

*Indicated they were 'somewhat prepared' (4) or 'very prepared' (5).

U.S. Leaders are More Likely to Carry Cyber Insurance



Q16. Does your organization have cyber insurance in place?

Transatlantic Trust Gap

Americans' Conviction in AI Cybersecurity ROI Contrasts with U.K.

	U.S.	U.K.
CEOs	93.5%	69.1%
CISOs	87.5%	74.0%

Q18a. Do you believe AI delivers on return on investment for cybersecurity?

Heightened Vigilance Amid AI-Driven Cyber Threats

Heightened Vigilance Amid AI-Driven Cyber Threats

Executives across both regions identify **AI-driven attacks as the top emerging cyber threat**, outranking identity theft and supply-chain compromise.

Still, U.S. executives feel more prepared than those in the U.K., underscoring a **divide in defensive readiness.**

What keeps leaders up at night isn't just the attack itself, but the **reputational** and **customer fallout** it could unleash.

Heightened Vigilance Amid AI-Driven Cyber Threats

Respondents Across Both Regions Viewed AI-driven Attacks as the Top Emerging Cyber Threat

Top three emerging cyber threats

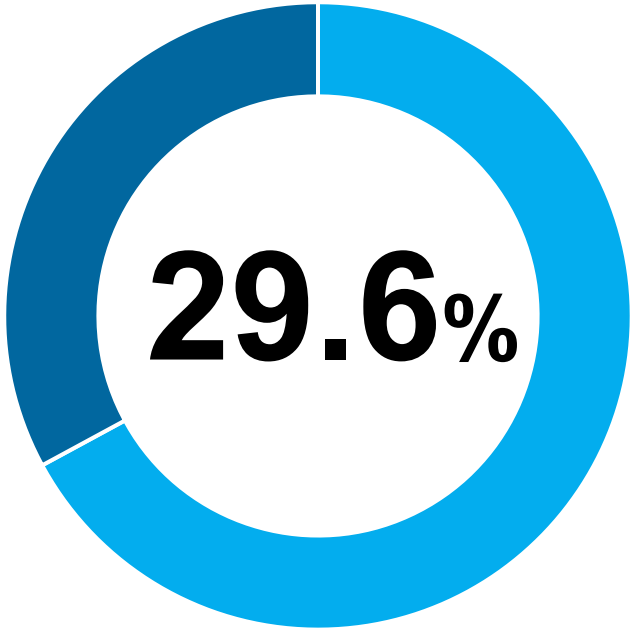
	Avg.
AI-driven attacks	25.2%
Identity theft/credential abuse	18.0%
Supply chain compromise	16.6%

Q8. What do you see as the greatest emerging cyber threat for your organization over the next 12 months, if anything?

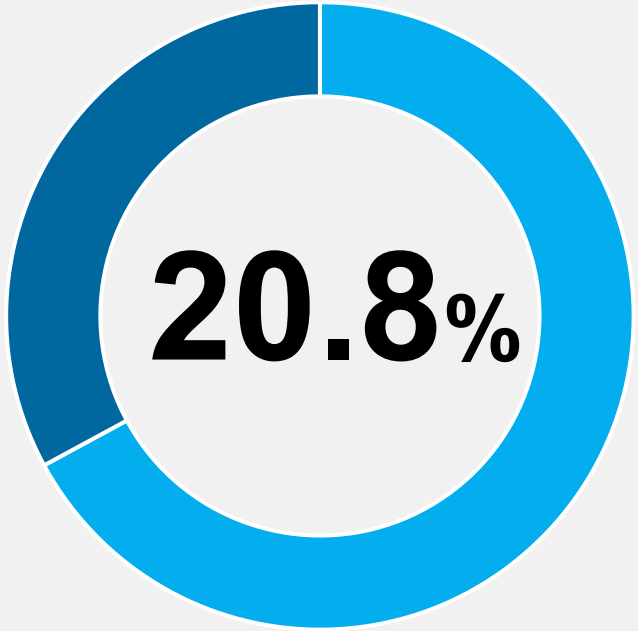
Heightened Vigilance Amid AI-Driven Cyber Threats

Respondents Across Both Regions Viewed AI-driven Attacks as the Top Emerging Cyber Threat

Concern among U.S. Executives



Concern among U.K. Executives



Q8. What do you see as the greatest emerging cyber threat for your organization over the next 12 months, if anything?

Heightened Vigilance Amid AI-Driven Cyber Threats

Respondents Ranked Their Greatest AI-Related Risks Ranking as Follows:

	Avg.	U.K.	U.S.
Data Leakage: Unauthorized exposure of sensitive information outside its intended environment	**23.2%**	17.2%	**29.2%**
Shadow AI: Unsanctioned use of AI tools by employees without IT/security safeguards or approval	21.6%	21.2%	22.0%
Model Manipulation: Deliberate tampering with an AI model to alter its behavior or outputs	19.0%	**23.2%**	14.8%
Deepfake/Social Engineering: Fake/AI-generated content used to deceive audiences and/or trick people into revealing information/taking harmful actions	17.6%	20.4%	14.8%
Regulatory Noncompliance: Failure to meet legal or industry rules governing data, security, or AI use	17.4%	17.2%	17.6%

Q1. What do you see as the greatest risk posed by AI to your organization's cybersecurity, if anything?

Heightened Vigilance Amid AI-Driven Cyber Threats

Were an Attack to Occur, Respondents are Bracing for Repercussions

	Avg.	U.K.	U.S.
Fear from reputational damage	39.4%	42.8%	36.0%
Fear of customer attrition	38.8%	38.0%	39.6%

Q11. If your organization suffered a major AI-driven cyber incident tomorrow, which impact would concern you most, if any for cybersecurity? (Select up to 3)

AI Productivity Gains are Reshaping Resource Allocations

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With AI viewed by C-Suite leaders as both an efficiency driver and investment priority, **organizations plan to rebalance their people, technology and budgets.**

Most respondents were so optimistic about AI's productivity gains that they indicated plans to reduce their cybersecurity staff as these tools take hold.

AI Productivity Gains are Reshaping Resource Allocations

AI Perceived to Allow Firms to Do More with Less Staff

75.2%

of respondents are likely to reduce cybersecurity headcount

3.2%

of U.S. respondents said they were unlikely to cut cybersecurity headcount, whereas

10.4%

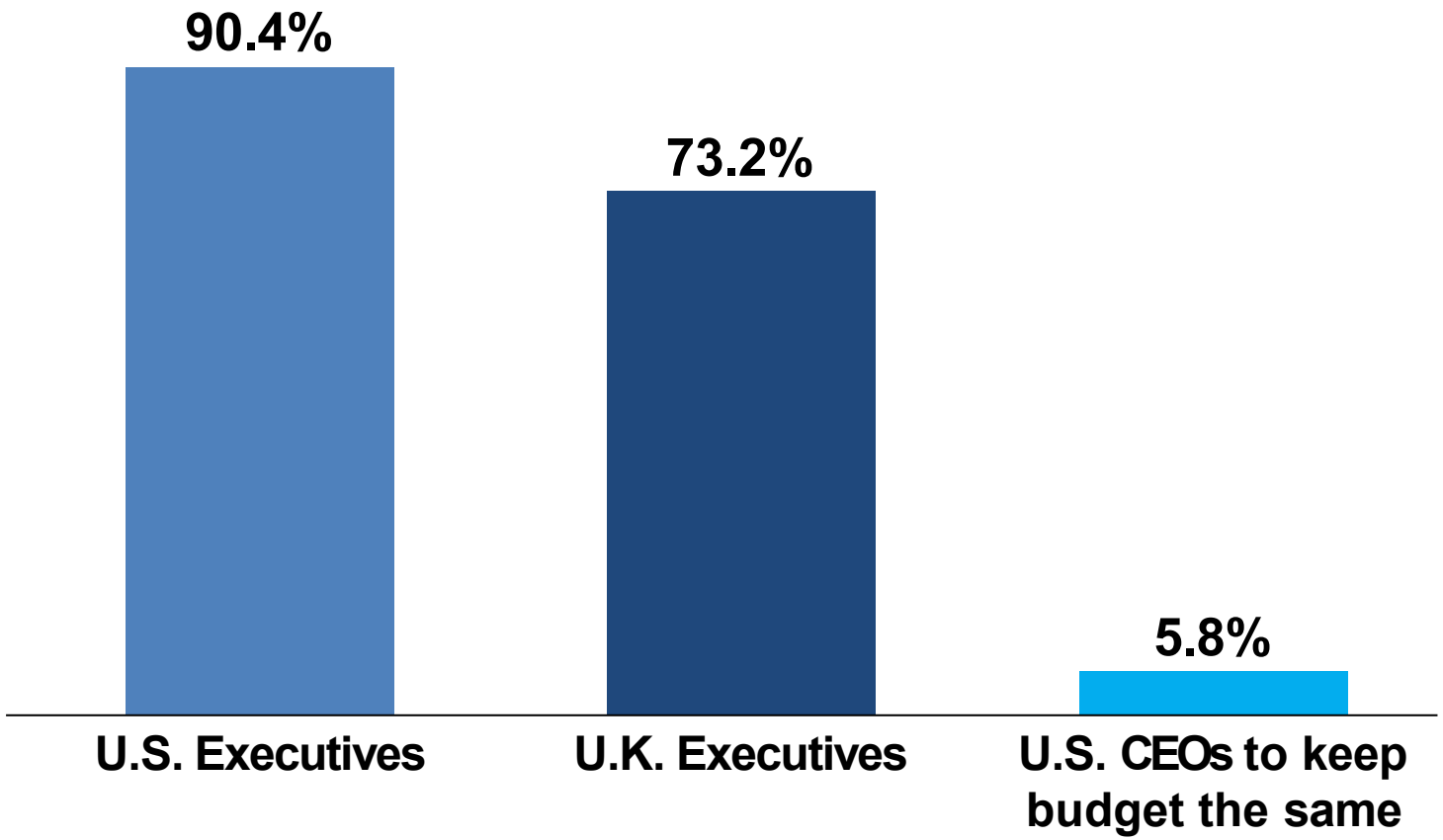
of U.K. respondents who said the same thing

Q4. How likely or unlikely is it that you may reduce cybersecurity headcount as a result of greater productivity through investment in AI cybersecurity tools?

AI Productivity Gains are Reshaping Resource Allocations

Cybersecurity Budgets to Bulge

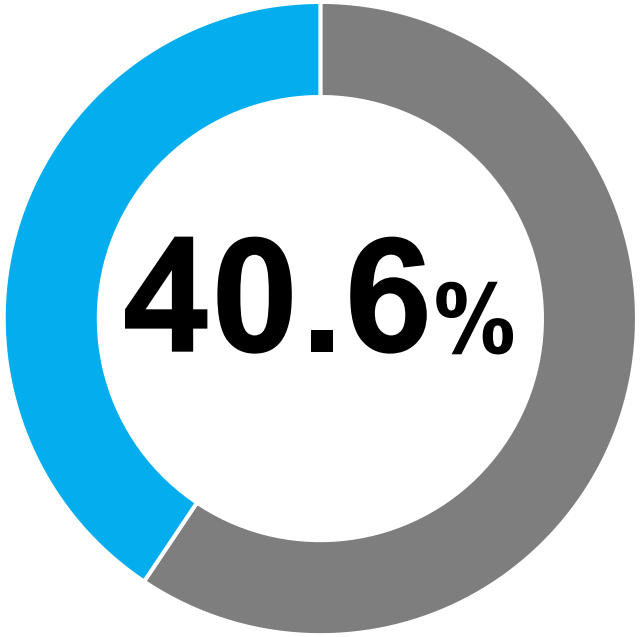
- **90.4%** of U.S. executives said they expected their cybersecurity budgets to increase compared to **73.2%** of U.K. ones
- Less than **6%** of U.S. CEOs said they'd keep their cybersecurity budgets the same



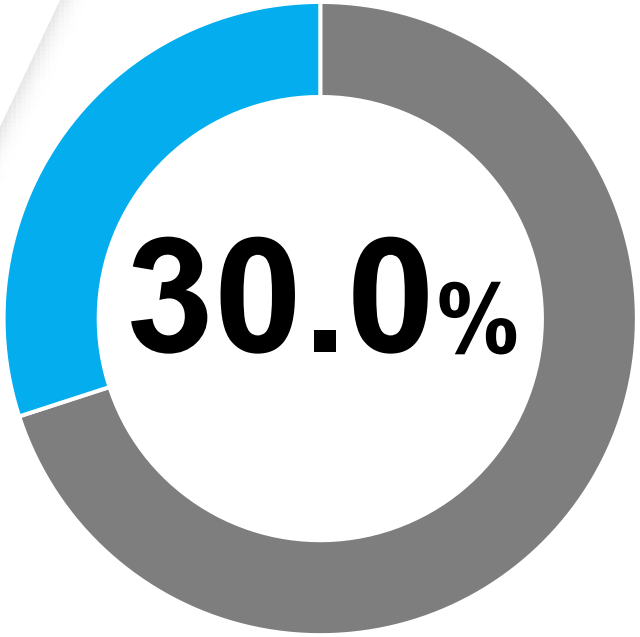
Q19. Over the next 12 months, how, if at all, do you expect your organization's cybersecurity budget to change?

AI Productivity Gains are Reshaping Resource Allocations

Cybersecurity Budgets are a Priority



of U.S. CEOs said they'd increase cybersecurity budgets significantly

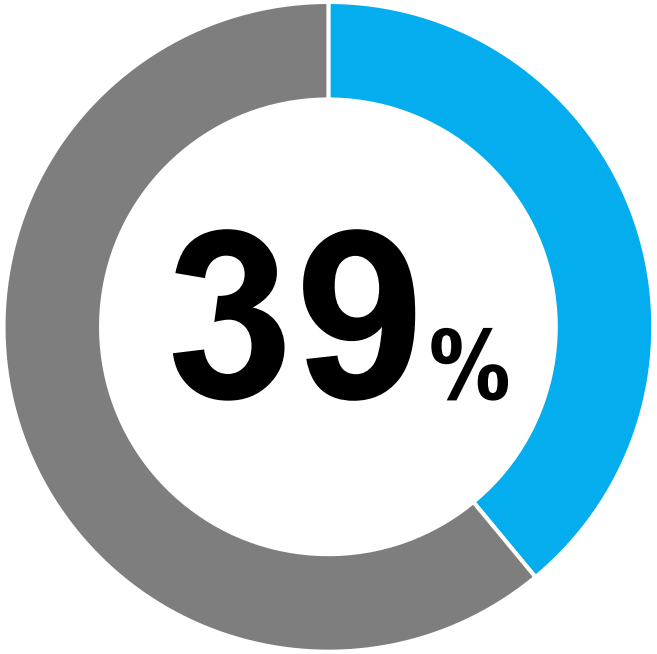


of U.K. CEOs said their cybersecurity budgets will increase significantly

Q19. Over the next 12 months, how, if at all, do you expect your organization's cybersecurity budget to change?

AI Productivity Gains are Reshaping Resource Allocations

Cybersecurity Budgets are Shifting Toward AI Solutions



The plurality of respondents now **allocate between 26-50%** of their cybersecurity budget to AI tools and solutions

Q20. What proportion of your cybersecurity budget is currently allocated to tools and solutions incorporating AI?

The finding was consistent across regions

U.K.	U.S.
38.8%	39.2%

Bridging Cyber Confidence and Readiness

Bridging Cyber Confidence and Readiness

Respondents across both regions indicated comfort in their ability to contain a cyberattack tomorrow. But AI-related cyber threats are a different story.

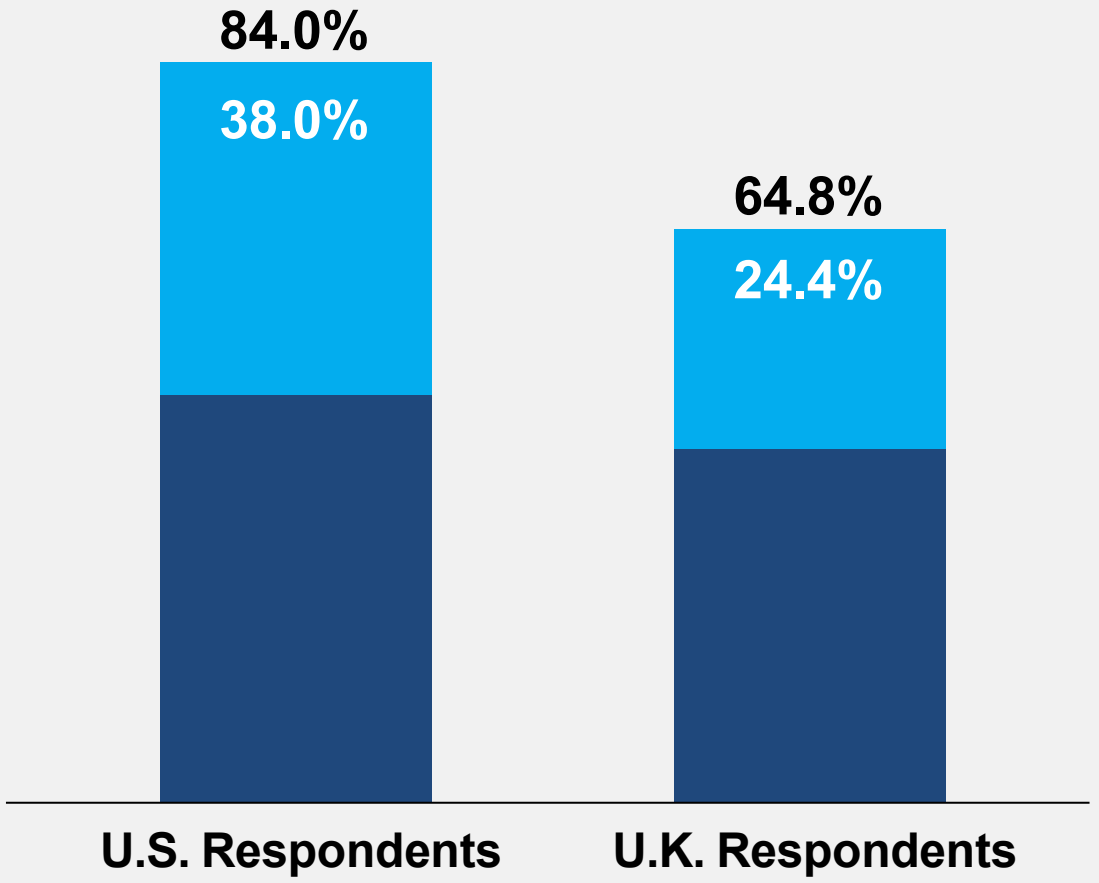
The preparedness gap is especially pronounced in the U.K., where fewer than half of respondents in the region said their organization could defend itself against AI-driven cyber threats.

The data points to a pivotal moment: as AI transforms both offense and defense, leaders have a **narrow window to translate confidence** into competence and ensure their defenses evolve as quickly as the threats.

Bridging Cyber Confidence and Readiness

Greater Confidence in America

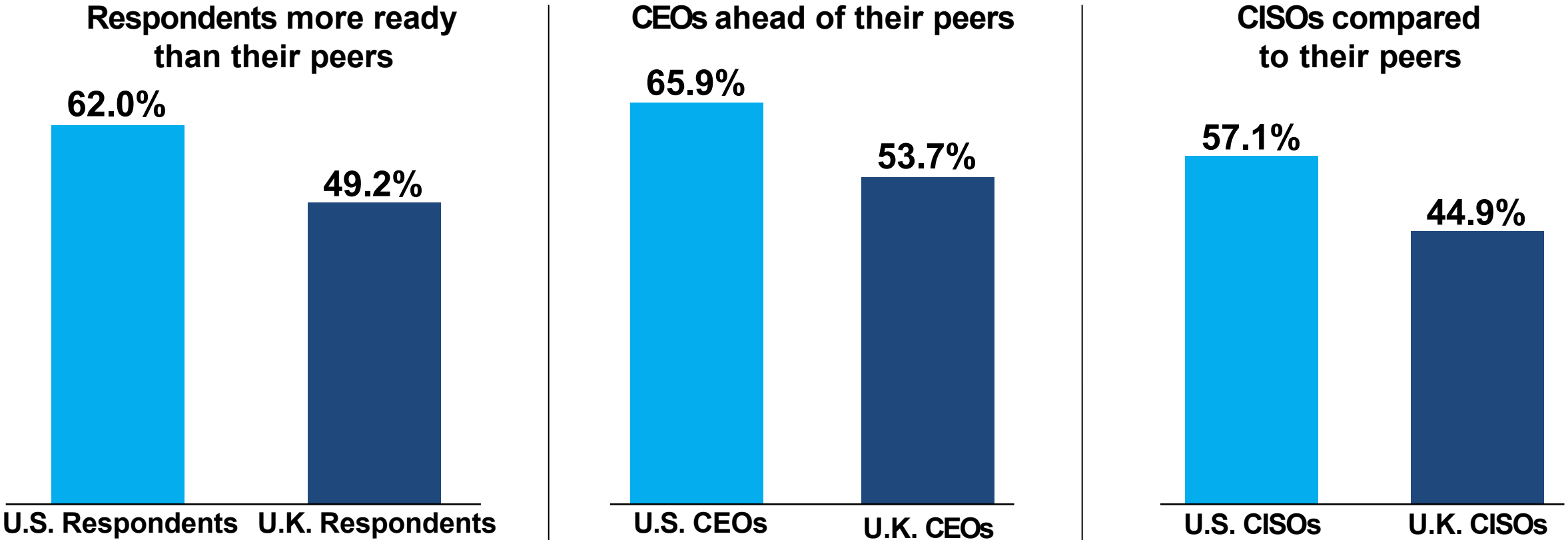
- **84%** of U.S. respondents said they'd be faster than their peers at containing a cyberattack tomorrow while **38%** said '**much faster**'
- **64.8%** of U.K. respondents said they would be faster than their peers. **24.4%** of U.K. executives indicated they'd be '**much faster**'



Q10. If your organization were to experience a major cyberattack tomorrow (such as ransomware or a data breach), how do you think your ability to contain it would compare to that of your industry peers?

Bridging Cyber Confidence and Readiness

Across Roles and Regions, U.S. CEOs Have Greatest Confidence in Their AI Readiness Tools



Q6. Compared to peers in your region, how would you rate your organization's readiness for risks related to your use of AI tools?

Bridging Cyber Confidence and Readiness

U.S. Leaders Feel More Prepared for Cyberattacks

	U.S. Prepared	U.K. Prepared
CEOs	94.9%	70.7%
CISOs	92.9%	81.9%

Q9. If your organization experienced a significant cyberattack tomorrow, how prepared or not prepared is your organization to contain it?

Bridging Cyber Confidence and Readiness

Leaders Feel Prepared for Cyberattacks, But Not for AI-driven Ones

	U.S. Not Prepared*	U.K. Not Prepared*
CEOs	10.1%	35.8%

Q7. On a scale of 1-5, how prepared, if at all, do you believe your organization is to defend against AI-driven cyber threats?

*Indicated they were 'not at all prepared' (1) or 'not that prepared' (2).

AXIS View

Our survey findings indicate that we are experiencing a **‘preparedness paradox’,** where AI is transforming corporate defense strategies, while also exposing differing perspectives among CEOs and CISOs.

It will be crucial for C-Suite executives to work in concert to grow organizational resilience while enabling their organizations to tap into the enormous promise of AI.

Methodology

Data Gathering

- Findings were derived from a 23-question survey among **500 CEOs and CISOs** across the United Kingdom and United States
- In the U.S., the respondent pool consisted of **138 CEOs and 112 CISOs**, while in the U.K. it comprised **123 CEOs and 127 CISOs**
- Respondents represented companies with at least **250 employees**
- Fielding for this study was conducted by an independent company from October 22–29, 2025

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