AI-Digital Maturity Index: 2025 Insights

IHE Editorial Webcast

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AI & Digital Maturity Index

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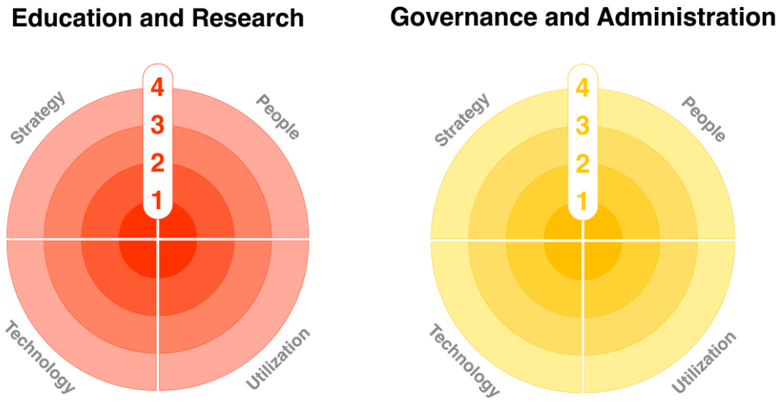
The AI & Digital Maturity Index (AI-DMI), developed by Times Higher Education (THE), is a comprehensive benchmarking framework designed to assess universities' readiness in AI, digital, and data capabilities.

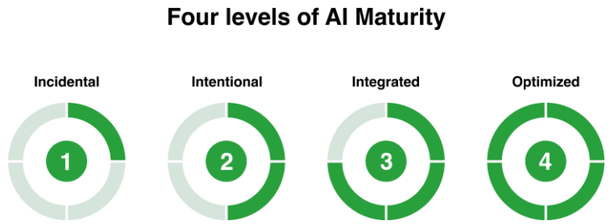
The framework measures readiness across **two core areas—Education and Research** and **Governance and Administration**—and along **four key dimensions**: **Strategy, People, Utilization, and Technology –** to arrive at four levels of AI-Digital Maturity.

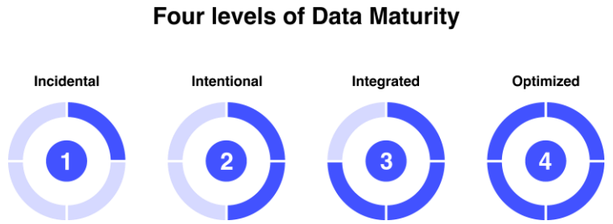
The index combines objective measures with subjective perspectives to provide a holistic view of institutional maturity.

- AI and data readiness
- Institutional strategies, priorities and adoption challenges
- Digital competence and leadership
- Technology infrastructure and digital services

Based on this framework, we developed the AI-DMI survey. In 2025, we have 4600+ responses from 1200 universities globally.







U.S. AI–Digital Maturity Index Overview

272 responses from **206 U.S. institutions**

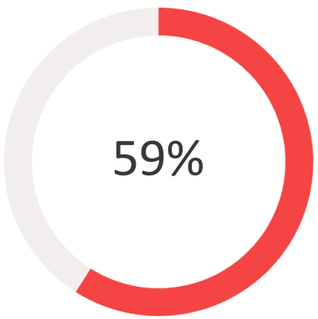
Institution Types

- 60% Public
- 38% Private not-for-profit
- 2% Private for-profit

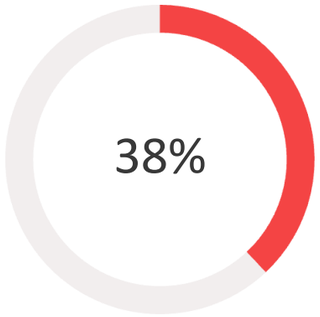
Research Classification

- 51% R1/R2 (high research)
- 12% Moderate research
- 36% Teaching-focused

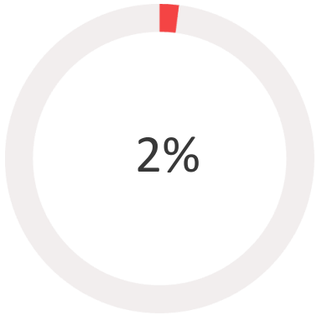
272 responses from **206 US institutions**



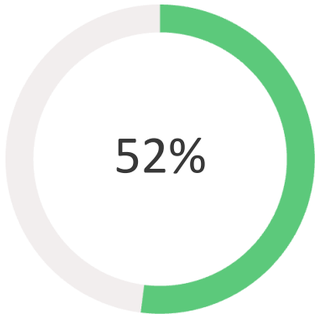
Public Institutions



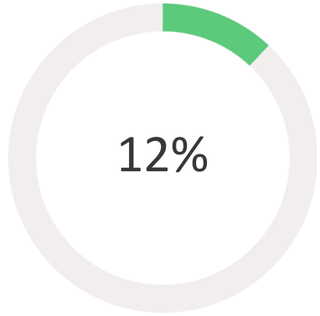
Private-not-for-profit



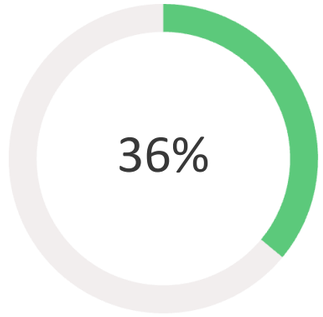
Private-for-profit



R1/R2 (High Research)



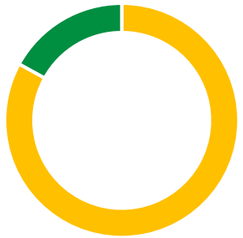
Moderate Research



Teaching-focused

Respondent Roles

- 83% Administrators
- 17% Faculty



Administrators Academics

In addition to the survey data, our team also conducted a **focus group with 12 faculty members** at *Digital Universities U.S.* in May 2026, and **interviews with 8 CTOs/CIOs** from a range of institutional types.

Key Finding

Strong Digital Foundation, But AI Readiness Lags

U.S. institutions demonstrate strong digital and data readiness, scoring above global averages on strategy, people, technology, and utilization. However, AI readiness lags, and one reason behind the lag is the **uneven technology adoption and infrastructure access.**

The AI Readiness Divide

By Institution Type

14%

R1/R2 at the lowest Readiness

Despite leading overall, gaps remain

17%

Moderate Research

In lowest readiness tier

38%

Community Colleges

In the lowest level of readiness

By Geography

Urban

80%

Access

Greater access to enterprise AI and 5G connectivity

Rural/Suburban

64-72%

Access

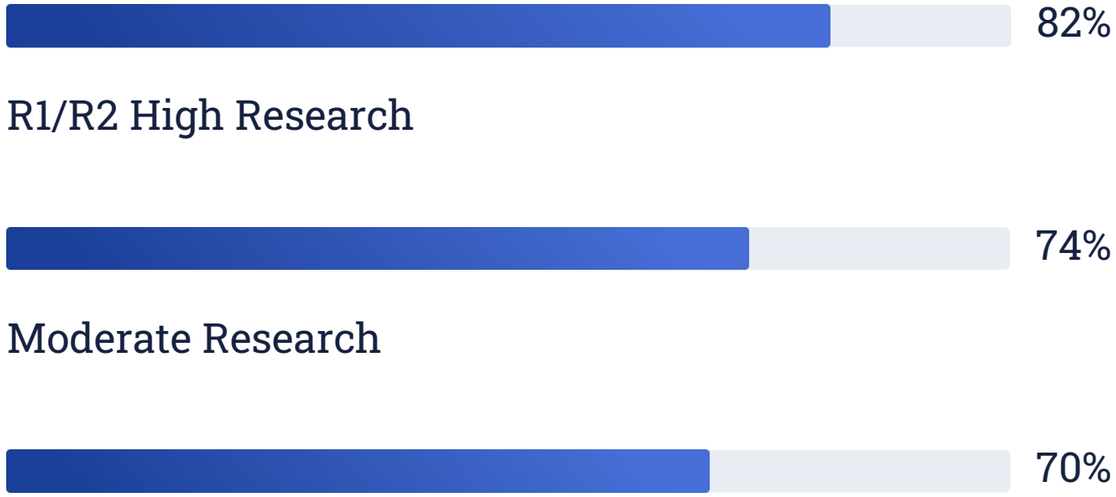
Lower access to enterprise AI and 5G connectivity.

AI Adoption Gap

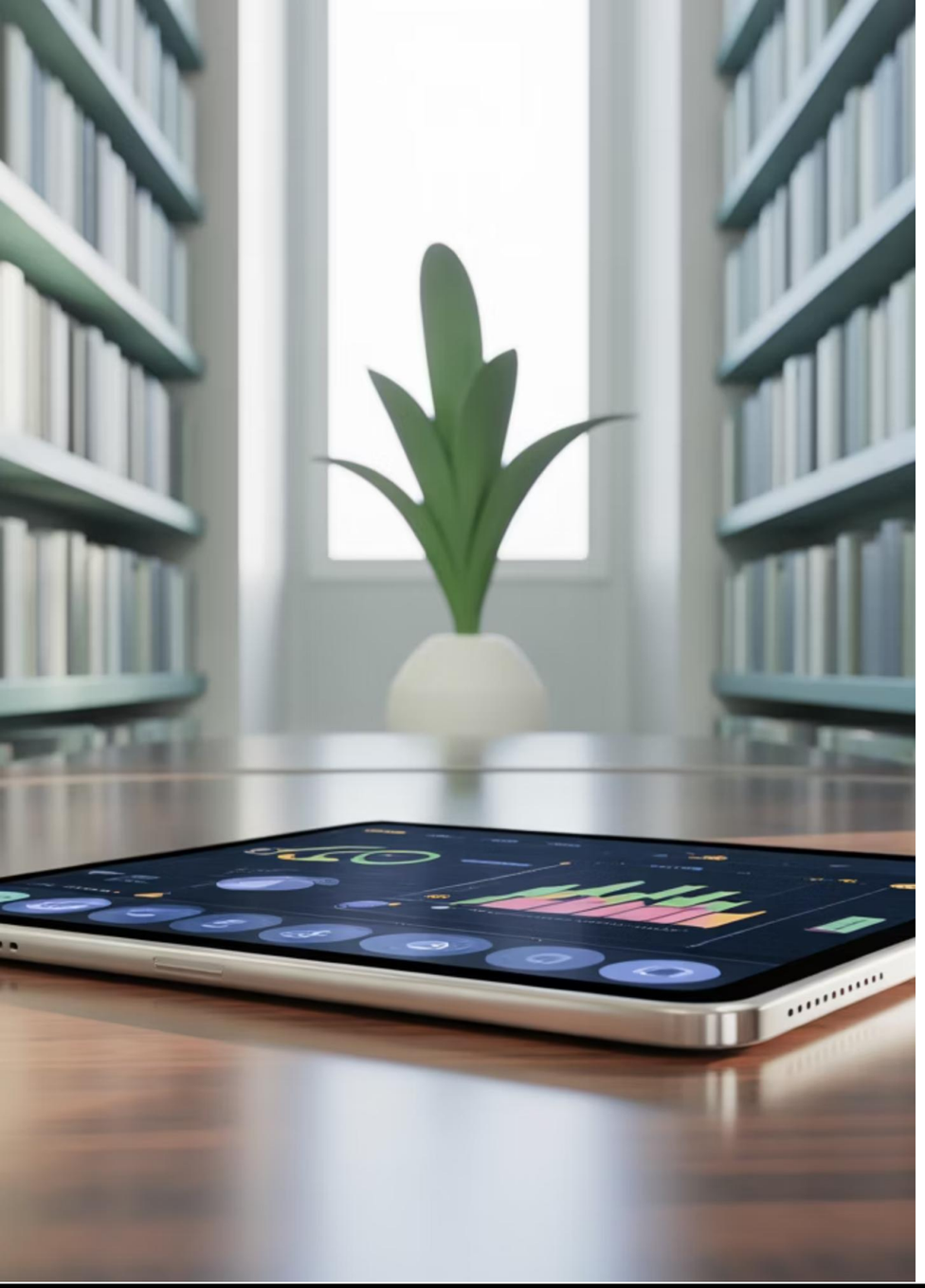
Overall High Adoption of AI tools, but gap exists between and within institutional types

- 86% access to AI subscriptions/individual tools I 78% use enterprise-level AI

Enterprise AI



Individual AI Tools (Subscriptions to ChatGPT, Germini)



Education Technology Adoption Trends in the US

US universities are highly digitalized, with strong adoption of learning management systems (LMS) and video conferencing platforms.

However, adoption of emerging AI tools—such as virtual tutors, chatbots, adaptive learning, and immersive VR/AR technologies—remains limited.

~91%

High Adoption

LMS platforms, video conferencing

~43%

Emerging Technologies

Learning analytics, automated grading systems

~22%

Early Stage

Virtual Tutors/AI Chatbots, Adaptive Learning, VR/AR/MR Technologies

Governance and administration tool adoption trends in the U.S.

U.S. universities show strong digital adoption, with widespread use of cloud services and core administrative and academic systems. Enterprise AI tools are increasingly prevalent in university administration, while 5G mobile network and edge computing adoption remains limited.

~91%

Very high adoption

Reliable Wifi Access, Student systems (e.g., Student Information Systems, retention/early warning tools), Individual AI Tools

~76%

High adoption

Administrative systems, Academic and research systems, Campus operations systems, Cloud services, Enterprise AI Tools

55%

Emerging technologies

5G mobile network

Edge Computing

Those that have 5G networks, edge computing nodes or hybrid cloud architectures are better positioned for the next generation of AI-driven teaching, research and campus operations (e.g., adaptive real-time analytics, AR/VR labs, IoT sensors in smart campus, distributed AI workloads.

Further Unevenness in the Underlying 5G & Edge infrastructure

	R1/R2 High Research	Moderate Research	Teaching Focused
5G	74%	81%	70%
Edge	60%	52%	44%

AI-Driven Learning Depends on Next-Gen Infrastructure

- Major LMS providers (Blackboard, Canvas) have embedded AI features — conversational tools, authentic assessment, intelligent translation, and adaptive design.
- Research prototypes use generative AI to personalize and adapt learning in real time.
- Future systems will be more seamless, immersive, mobile, and conversational — not just text-based. It will be user rather than content driven.
- These require **low-latency, high-bandwidth infrastructure** — 5G and edge computing — beyond what current Wi-Fi can deliver.
- Without these, institutions risk falling behind in deploying the next generation of AI-enhanced learning.

Recognizing the Divide and Different Institutional Needs

AI–Digitally Mature Institutions

- 5G- and edge-enabled campuses
- AI-integrated learning environments
- Immersive, personalized student experiences

> While we're satisfied with our current network infrastructure, we continue to invest to ensure our capacity grows with demand. What matters now is understanding which technologies truly move the needle on student success and retention.
>
> *— CIO, from an AI-Digital Mature Institution*

Less AI–Digitally Mature Institutions

- Connectivity and bandwidth challenges
- Limited access to AI tools and next-generation networks (Wi-Fi/5G)
- Focused on enabling basic access and digital equity — ensuring students can engage with AI-powered LMS platforms

> It's great to see students and even some faculty starting to ask about AI and wanting to use it. That kind of curiosity can really help push leadership to step up and build proper, campus-wide support
>
> *— CIO, from a less AI-Digitally Mature Institution*

Future-proofing campuses isn’t just about being more **innovative** but also being **inclusive**, ensuring that every learner benefits from AI-driven innovation.

Thank you!

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