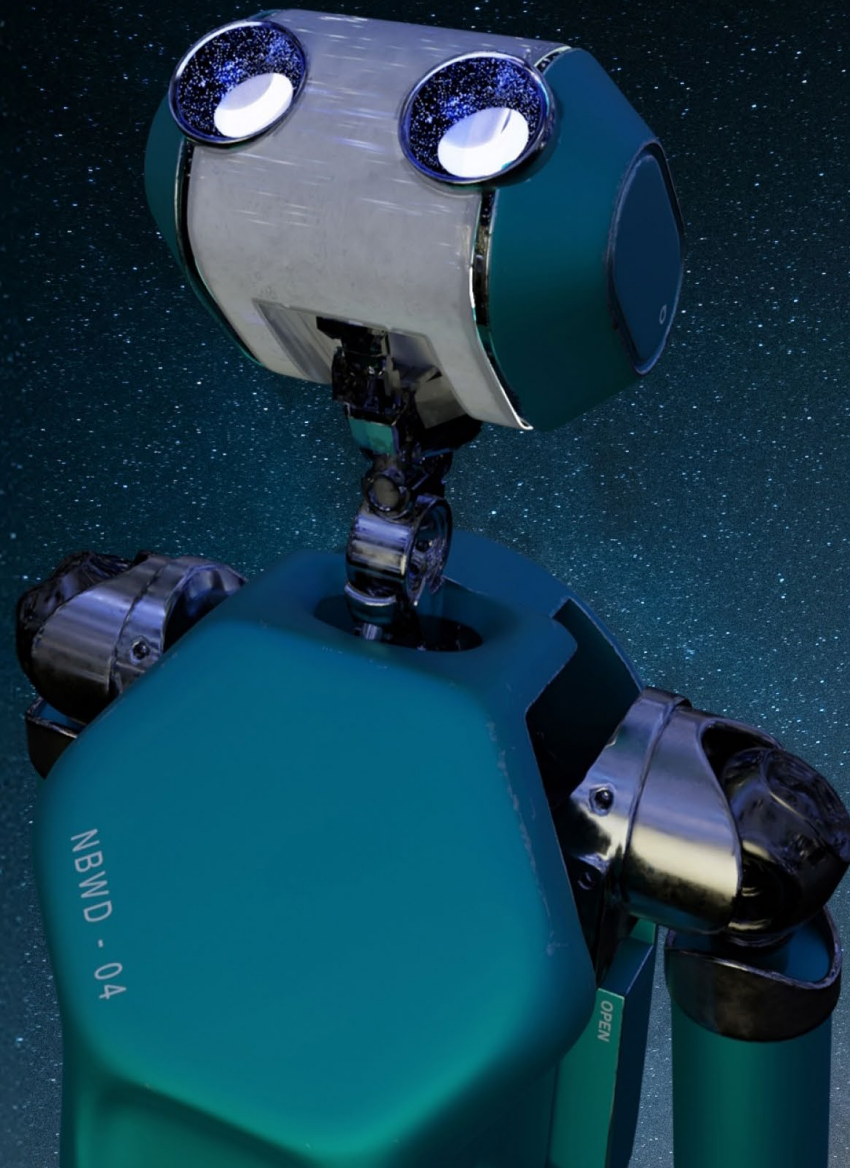**2025 State of Design & Make**

Spotlight on AI in Media & Entertainment

Insights from leaders about digital transformation and the growing role of artificial intelligence across M&E

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About the *Spotlight on AI in Media & Entertainment* report

The *Spotlight on AI in Media & Entertainment* report features media and entertainment (M&E) industry data from the *2025 Autodesk State of Design & Make* survey. For the media and entertainment industry, Autodesk surveyed 1,670 leaders and experts from 23 countries across M&E, including 633 in advertising, publishing, and graphic design; 501 in film and TV; and 536 in gaming.
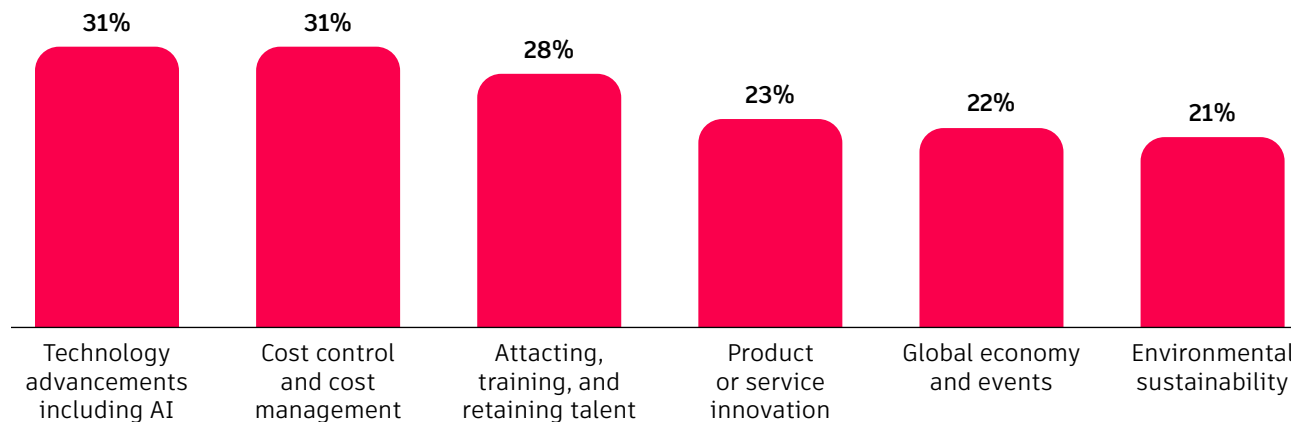
In this report, "digitally mature" companies are defined as those that are approaching the goal or have achieved the goal of their digital transformation journey. "Less digitally mature" companies are defined as those that are in the early stages or right in the middle of their digital transformation journey. "AI leaders" are defined as companies that identify as approaching or having achieved their goal of incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) technology. This is compared to non-leaders who have either not started, are in the early stages, or are in the middle of incorporating AI.

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Introduction

AI has emerged as a transformative force in the media and entertainment industry, fundamentally changing how projects are managed and executed from ideation through post-production. Yet, despite the clear advantages AI offers, adoption is not without its challenges. In fact, 31% of M&E leaders cite technological advancements, including AI, as a top challenge, tied with cost as the most pressing issue facing organizations today.

These challenges, however, seem to be a temporary concern for leaders in M&E as the sentiment toward AI in the future of the industry is overwhelmingly positive. Despite concerns regarding destabilization and skills gaps, more than two-thirds of leaders believe that AI will enhance creativity and make the industry more dynamic. Leaders also expressed confidence in their organizations' AI strategies and showed significant trust in AI technologies to propel the industry forward.

Technology, including AI, is a top challenge for leaders in M&E

31%	31%	28%	23%	22%	21%
Technology advancements including AI	Cost control and cost management	Attacting, training, and retaining talent	Product or service innovation	Global economy and events	Environmental sustainability

Survey question: What are the top three challenges your company or organization faces today? Select up to three. 12 response options.

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79%

of AI leaders feel their company is prepared for change compared to 49% of non-leaders

State of Design & Make: Spotlight on AI in Media & Entertainment **key findings**

Leaders in the M&E industry report they are facing significant headwinds, from increased geo- and macro-economic pressures to a widening labor and skills gap and the rapid advancement of data-enabled technologies like AI. But, amid disruption, leaders are seeing the benefits of digital transformation and AI, and its potential to reshape the way media is created and experienced.

· **Most see AI as destabilizing:** The majority of M&E leaders think AI will destabilize their industry, with digitally mature companies more likely to perceive destabilization.

· **Despite concerns, AI is here to stay:** More than two-thirds of M&E leaders believe AI will enhance and make the industry more creative, and they express confidence in their companies' AI decisions and trust in AI technologies. The majority also believe AI is essential for their business.

· **Leaders are confronting a skills gap:** Nearly two-thirds of organizations report difficulty finding employees with the right technical skills, and most say that lack of skilled talent is a barrier to growth.

· **AI skills will be prioritized in hiring:** Key skills include AI implementation, digital design, software development, data safety, and project management, with priorities varying by subindustry such as gaming, advertising, and film/TV.

· **AI adoption is increasing:** Most M&E leaders consider their organizations very mature when it comes to AI capabilities, and most companies are in the middle of or approaching their AI integration goals.

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One notable theme is the difference in performance and perception at AI-leading organizations compared to their less-advanced counterparts. For example, 79% of AI leaders feel their company is prepared for change compared to 49% at less AI-mature organizations.

This gap underscores a competitive advantage for AI-forward organizations—they feel better equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern media and entertainment landscape and are seeing greater benefits from their increased integration of AI.

"AI is a huge disruptor across industries and can be a great tool. The confluence of cloud and AI is a real driver for innovation. Combined, they're extremely powerful. They can help artists work in broad strokes and move really quickly before moving into production and taking the time to build controllable assets."

ANGUS KNEALE
Co-founder, Preymaker, a cloud-based creative and technology studio

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The growing influence of **AI** in M&E

Through the lens of the general public, artificial intelligence went mainstream when ChatGPT was released in late 2022. But, behind the scenes, animation, VFX, and game studios have been harnessing AI for more than a decade to streamline workflows, enhance creative processes, and free themselves from the constraints of technical limitations.

In fact, 77% of M&E leaders say their use of AI in content creation is mature or very mature, indicating that most organizations have embraced integrating AI technologies into workstreams across the content creation process.

"We combine machine learning and traditional VFX techniques to deliver feature film quality results. Our primary goal was not to be faster or more cost-effective, though it has been great when we can increase productivity and spend more time on the creative. What we set out to do was to create new capabilities for solving creative challenges."

ALEX MEDDICK
Head of Technology, Rising Sun Pictures, a visual effects studio

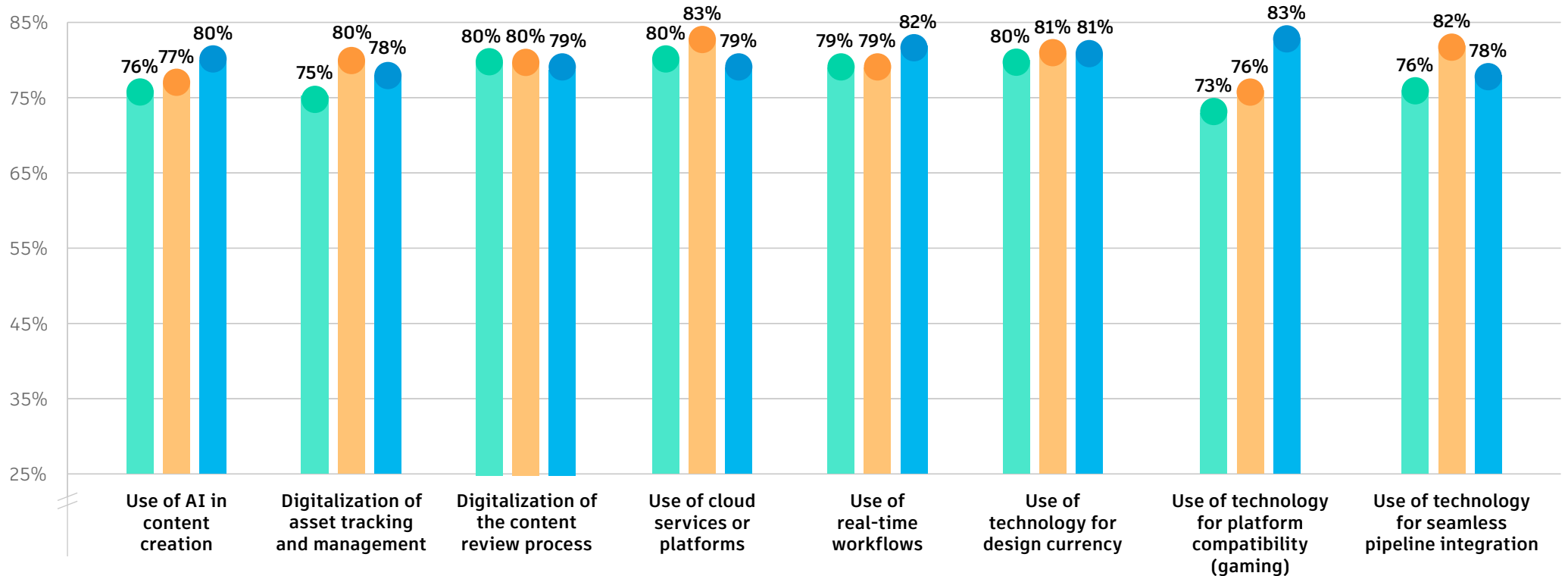AUTODESK

Image courtesy of Preymaker

Solution spotlight

Preymaker, a creative studio, leveraged cloud-based technology and real-time AI tools to revolutionize its content creation processes. By embracing virtual production and collaborative cloud platforms, the studio enhanced operational efficiency, allowing team members to work concurrently on complex visual effects projects and animations, regardless of their physical location. The integration of AI in their workflows facilitated rapid iterations and creative flexibility, reducing time-to-market and production costs. As a result, Preymaker produced high-quality, innovative content while maintaining a nimble and adaptive working environment. This technological adoption underscores Preymaker's commitment to fostering creativity and efficiency, setting a new benchmark in the industry for leveraging AI and cloud solutions in media production.

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M&E organizations feel confident about digital maturity

● Advertising, publishing, and graphic design   ● Film and TV   ● Gaming

Chart showing digital maturity percentages by category:

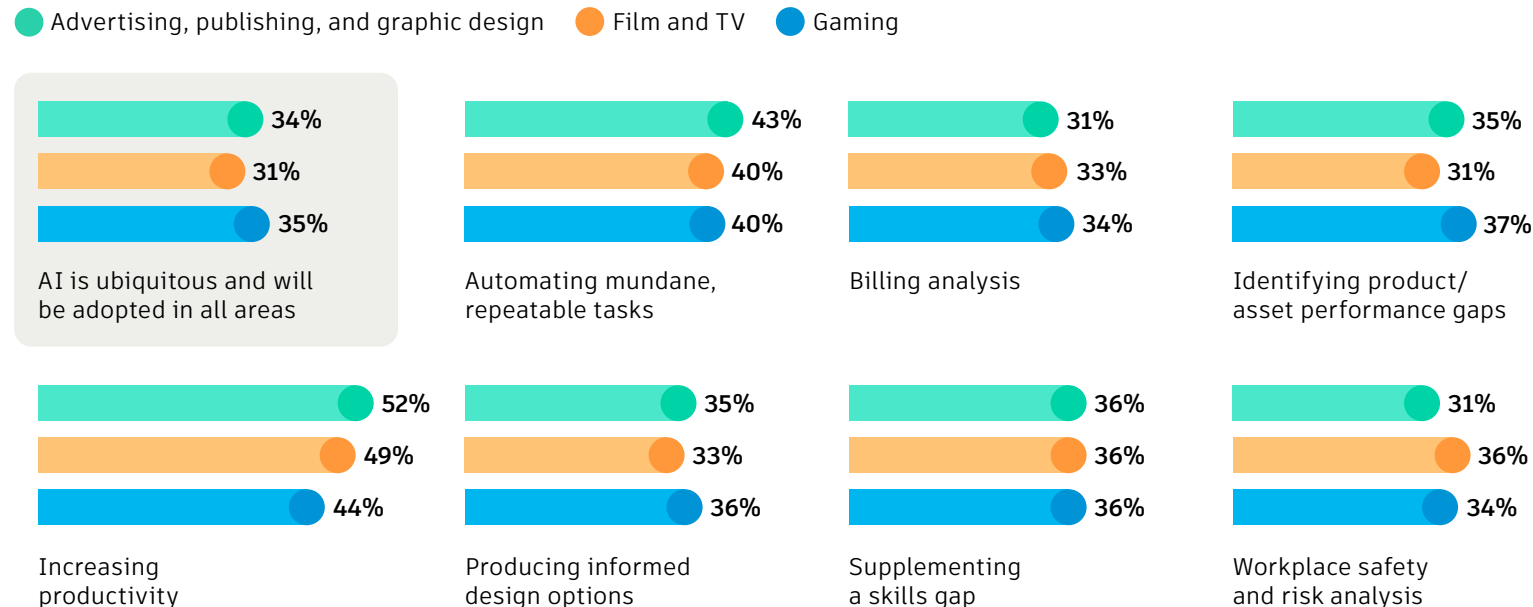| Category	Advertising, publishing, and graphic design	Film and TV	Gaming
Use of AI in content creation	76%	77%	80%
Digitalization of asset tracking and management	75%	80%	78%
Digitalization of the content review process	80%	80%	79%
Use of cloud services or platforms	80%	83%	79%
Use of real-time workflows	79%	79%	82%
Use of technology for design currency	80%	81%	81%
Use of technology for platform compatibility (gaming)	73%	76%	83%
Use of technology for seamless pipeline integration	76%	82%	78%

Survey question: In your company or organization, how mature are the following?
Response options: "we do not do this yet," "minimally mature," "average maturity," "very mature," and "not applicable." Top two = Average maturity or Very mature.

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And with AI now firmly established as a strategic priority, businesses are racing to tap its potential—and they're investing heavily to avoid falling behind. In the past three years alone, 68% of M&E leaders surveyed for the *2025 State of Design & Make* report say their organizations have increased spending on AI and emerging technology. Looking ahead, this trend of increased spending is only expected to rise—72% plan to further increase their investment in AI and emerging technologies during the next three years, with 27% strongly increasing their investments.

As a result of this enthusiasm and larger budgets, AI is making significant inroads across M&E organizations, everywhere from billing to content creation.

AI use cases across M&E organizations

🟢 Advertising, publishing, and graphic design   🟠 Film and TV   🔵 Gaming

	Advertising, publishing, and graphic design	Film and TV	Gaming
AI is ubiquitous and will be adopted in all areas	34%	31%	35%
Automating mundane, repeatable tasks	43%	40%	40%
Billing analysis	31%	33%	34%
Identifying product/ asset performance gaps	35%	31%	37%
Increasing productivity	52%	49%	44%
Producing informed design options	35%	33%	36%
Supplementing a skills gap	36%	36%	36%
Workplace safety and risk analysis	31%	36%	34%

Survey question: What are the use cases for artificial intelligence (AI) in your company or organization? Select all that apply. "Other" and "none of the above" are not shown.

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Not surprisingly, organizations that are leading the pack on digital transformation and AI implementation are also realizing the greatest organizational benefits. Most M&E organizations that see benefits from digital transformation realize 50%+ ROI in the form of increased productivity, innovation, and customer satisfaction, among others.

The AI advantage

"AI leaders" are defined as companies that identify as approaching or having achieved their goal of incorporating AI technology. This is compared to non-leaders who have either not started, are in the early stages, or are in the middle of incorporating AI.

In M&E, AI-leading companies are more likely than their peers to report that they …

+33%
… have experienced "above average" or "exceptional" **performance**

+36%
… have "increased" or "strongly increased" **investment** in the past three years

+31%
… "agree" they **are prepared** for the future

+31%
… have kept up "very well" with **change in the industry**

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Solution spotlight

Corridor Digital, a studio specializing in VFX short films, faced significant challenges in creating virtual characters, which traditionally required extensive manual work in camera and motion tracking, often taking months to complete. To address these challenges, Corridor Digital adopted advanced AI tools to automate the integration of virtual characters into live-action footage. AI streamlines tasks such as camera tracking, motion capture, and lighting adjustments, significantly reduced production time and allowing the team to meet tight deadlines without compromising artistic expression. Corridor Digital's success underscores AI's potential in the media and entertainment industry to enable smaller studios to take on larger projects successfully.

→ **WATCH MORE**
about Corridor Digital

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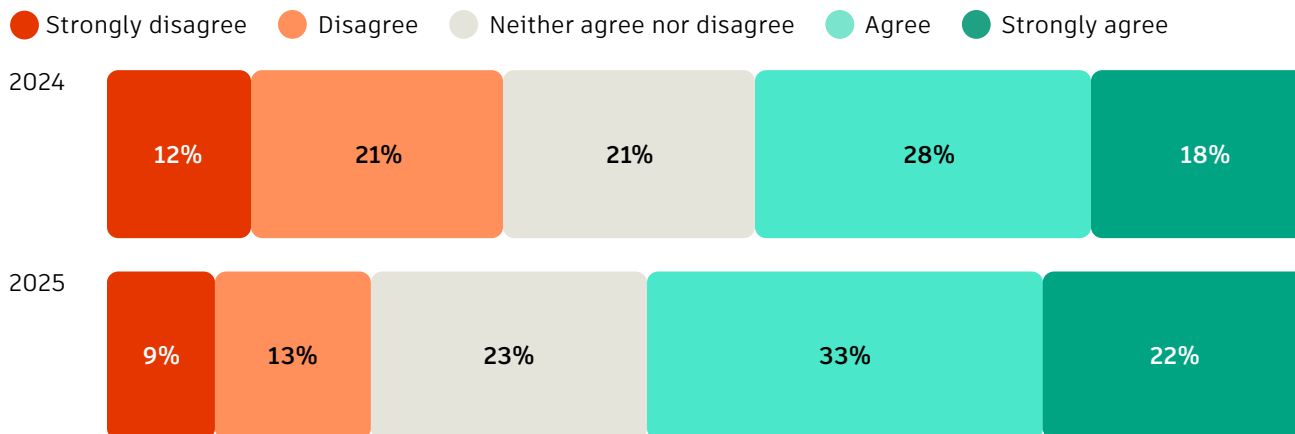
As AI adoption grows, new challenges emerge

As AI's influence continues to grow in M&E, so do its growing pains. Overall trust in AI is down, with 55% of leaders saying AI will destabilize the industry, up from 46% in 2024.

Compounding these challenges, only 48% of M&E leaders report they are nearing or have achieved their AI goals. This represents a 13% decline from last year signaling that, while organizations are confident in the use of their current AI tools, they may be facing challenges when it comes to fully integrating the new tech at every level of the organization.

Intellectual property, creativity, and authenticity are of particular focus in a sector fundamentally reliant on its human creators. The rapid proliferation of AI in recent years raises concerns about the erosion of creativity and authenticity that human-driven content provides, highlighting a tension between technological progress and artistic integrity.

Industry disruption concerns rise across M&E

55% of business leaders agree AI will be destablizing

● Strongly disagree   ● Disagree   ● Neither agree nor disagree   ● Agree   ● Strongly agree

2024

12%	21%	21%	28%	18%

2025

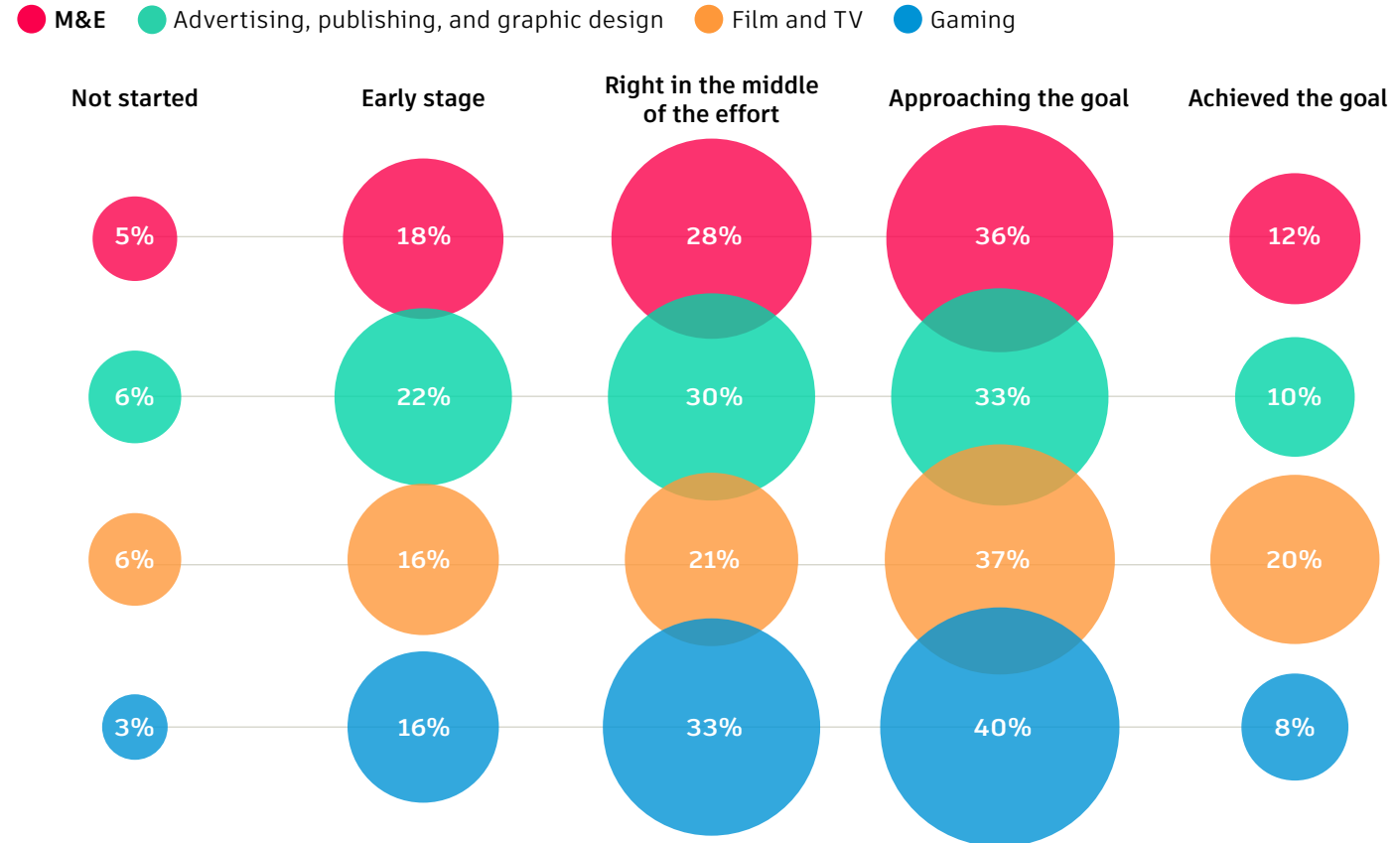| 9%	13%	23%	33%	22%

Survey question: When you think about artificial intelligence (AI) in your industry and company, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following? AI will destabilize my industry. 5-point scale.

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In addition to practical and ethical questions, environmental concerns add another layer of complexity to the AI discourse. Ironically, the data centers necessitated by AI solutions contribute markedly to carbon footprints, amplifying the industry's already significant environmental impact. This underscores the need for sustainable AI practices and innovative solutions to minimize environmental harm. Some M&E organizations are exploring solutions to this problem to offset the impact of data centers, including carbon-offset programs, according to industry interviews conducted for this report.

2025 State of Design & Make data further highlights the impact of AI on the industry landscape. Notably, M&E leaders identify technological advancements including AI as their top challenge—more than their counterparts in AECO and D&M. This points to the unique pressures faced by this sector in integrating AI technology into their workflows and processes.

Film & TV furthest along in AI integration

● **M&E**   ● Advertising, publishing, and graphic design   ● Film and TV   ● Gaming

	Not started	Early stage	Right in the middle of the effort	Approaching the goal	Achieved the goal
M&E	5%	18%	28%	36%	12%
Advertising, publishing, and graphic design	6%	22%	30%	33%	10%
Film and TV	6%	16%	21%	37%	20%
Gaming	3%	16%	33%	40%	8%

Survey question: Where is your company or organization in incorporating artificial intelligence (AI) technology? Values do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

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"A daily challenge for us that we need to solve is how these tools can slot into our workflows to make them beneficial instead of detrimental to the quality standards that we require. On top of that, the legal issues behind licenses, figuring out which ones we can use, what models we can deploy—that's a whole other endeavor on its own. And once we bring those into production, there's an aspect of how do we make these tools available for artists so they can help them with their work rather than sit there as a novelty."

PETER TSONEV
Head of Machine Learning and Technologies, Crafty Apes, a visual effects company

In addition to solving implementation challenges, leaders say the best way to prepare and leverage AI is to be digital and have your internal data well organized. Because with AI, the key to success lies in your data. "So this point of collaboration is one of the most important aspects of using machine learning and VFX, and that's capturing the right data," says Robert Beveridge, machine learning 2D supervisor, Rising Sun Pictures, a visual effects studio. "So the data itself drives the success and determines the quality that we're able to achieve in the end result."

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Despite these challenges, most leaders remain enthusiastic about the future of AI in the M&E landscape. In fact, 61% of M&E leaders surveyed for the *2025 State of Design & Make* report say that AI will be essential across the board in a few years.

And, while leaders in M&E are 25% more likely than their counterparts in D&M and 20% more likely than leaders in AECO to believe AI could disrupt their sector, they are also the most optimistic about the technology. Sixty-nine percent of M&E leaders trust AI, and more than two-thirds believe AI will

enhance both creativity and the M&E industry in general. These seemingly contradictory results suggest that, while they are navigating complex digital transformations, leaders recognize AI's potential to drive innovation and enhance creative processes well into the future of the industry.

One area where leaders are seeing immediate benefits from AI is automation. More than two-thirds (70%) of M&E leaders say that AI will alleviate thankless and repetitive tasks for employees, freeing up more time to focus on creativity.

Despite concerns, majority of M&E leaders positive about AI

71%
AI will enhance my industry

70%
AI will make my industry more creative

71%
I am confident my company will make the right decisions regarding AI

69%
I trust AI technologies for my industry

Survey question: How much do you agree or disagree with the following? [statement] 5-point scale. Top two: agree.

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Solution spotlight

Boxel Studio, a visual effects company, used AI-powered markerless motion capture technology to create intricate creature animations for the CW show's *Superman & Lois* final season. This system helped Boxel execute 134 animation shots in just six weeks by capturing motion data without physical markers and applying it to CG characters, specifically for the action-packed portrayal of the character Doomsday. This innovative approach accelerated the previsualization process and allowed stunt performers greater freedom because they did not need to wear motion capture gear. The use of AI and motion capture significantly optimized Boxel Studio's animation pipeline, enhancing creative storytelling and reducing production time and costs. As a result, Boxel Studio successfully managed complex sequences with improved efficiency, setting new standards in the integration of AI in visual effects production.

→ **READ MORE**
about Boxel Studio
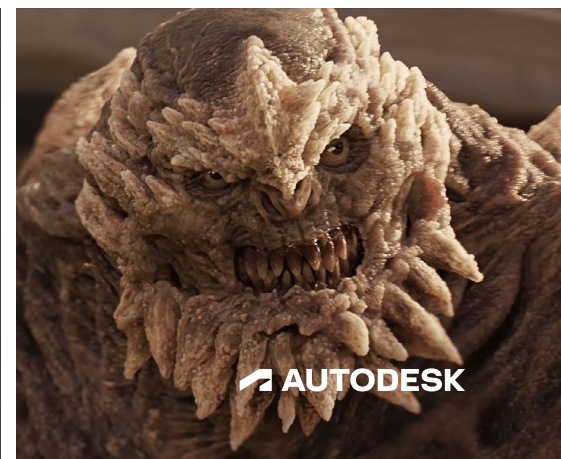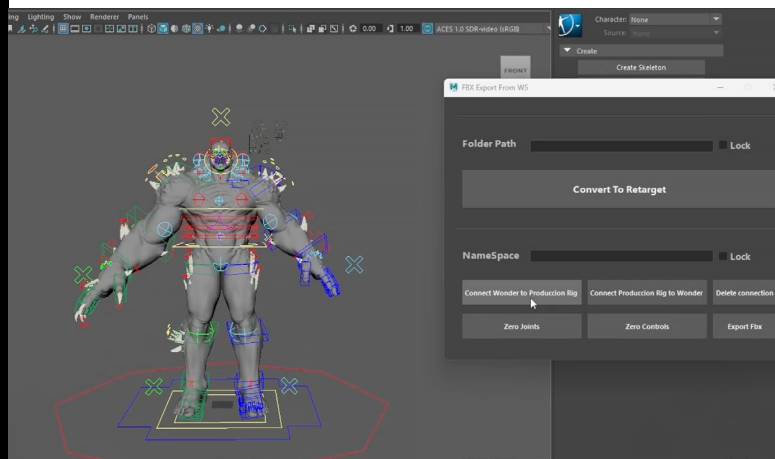
The **future of work** in media and entertainment

Looking at just the past year alone, it's easy to see how fast the field of AI is moving, and this rapid pace of change is something that organizations need to be mindful of— and staff up for. Demand for AI-related skills is rising as business leaders seek to boost productivity, optimize efficiencies, and bolster the bottom line, but employers are struggling to find workers with the right skills.

Talent remains a persistent problem across M&E, with most leaders (56%) saying a lack of skilled workers is hindering growth at their organization. This issue is identified as a top challenge by 28% of leaders, with nearly two-thirds struggling to find necessary skills. This technical skills gap is particularly relevant in an industry that increasingly relies on digital transformation and AI to stay competitive.
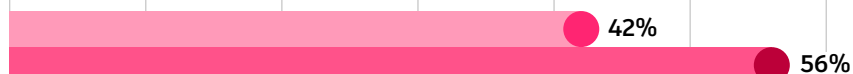
Image courtesy of Corridor Digital

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Image courtesy of Oswin Wan

Nearly two-thirds of M&E organizations are confronting a skills gap
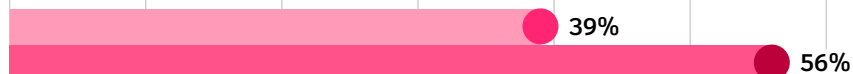
● 2024　● 2025

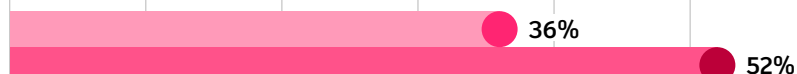**New employees with the right technical skills are difficult to find**
- 42%
- 59%

Lack of access to skilled talent is a barrier to my company's growth
- 42%
- 56%

The workforce is rapidly aging
- 39%
- 56%

My company has had to let employees go because they lack technical skills
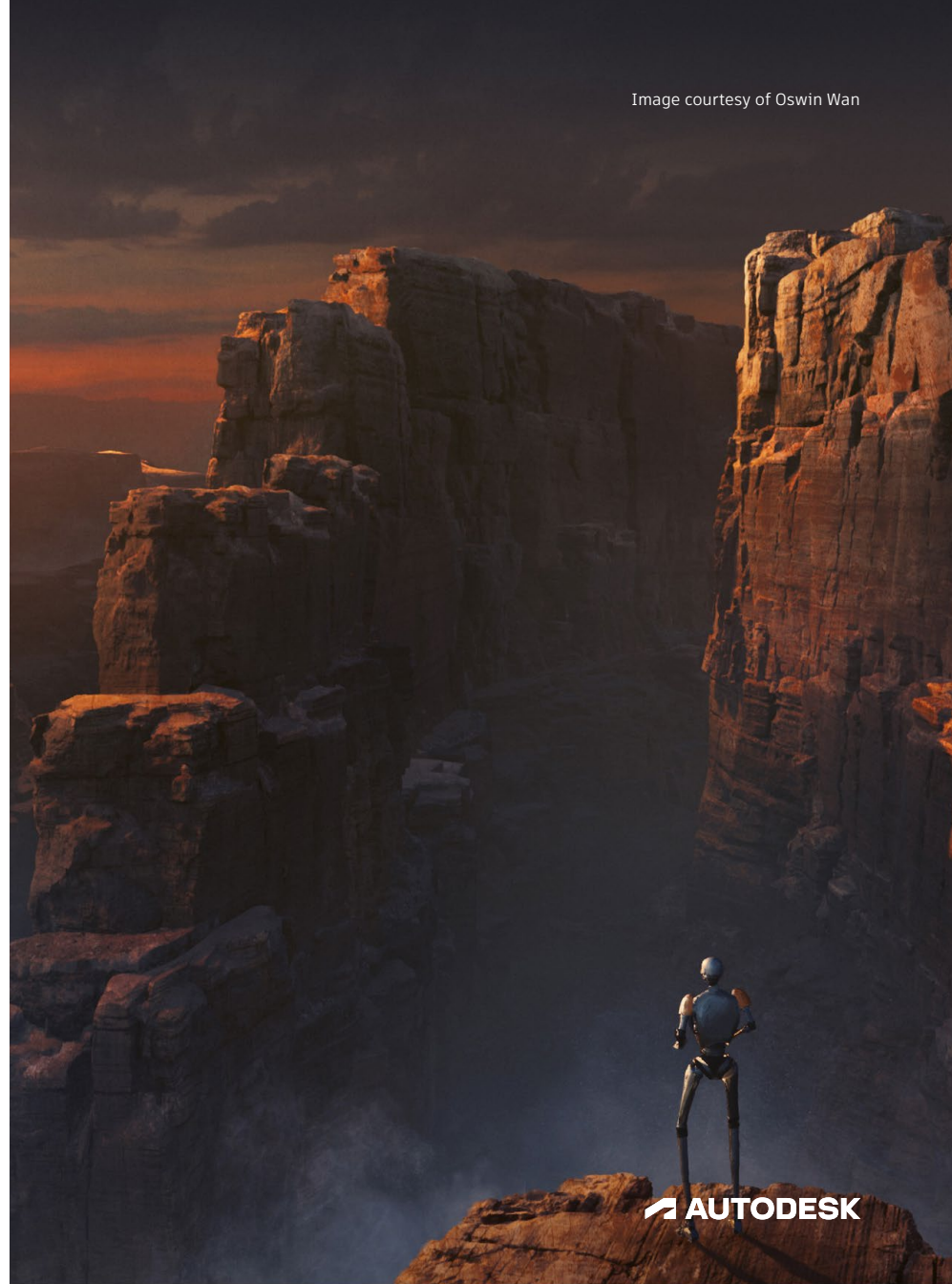- 36%
- 52%

My company is implementing a continuous learning program to mitigate the shortage of skilled workers
- 68%
- 67%

0%　10%　20%　30%　40%　50%　60%　70%

Survey question: How much do you agree or disagree with the following? [statement] 5-point scale. Top two: agree.

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And, while many are eager for the results of this rapid wave of innovation, much of the execution hinges on a workforce adapting to the new skills needed to deliver on the true promise that AI stands to offer. It's no surprise then that AI skills are a priority for future hiring in M&E—42% of leaders say the ability to work with AI will be their top priority when hiring in the next few years.
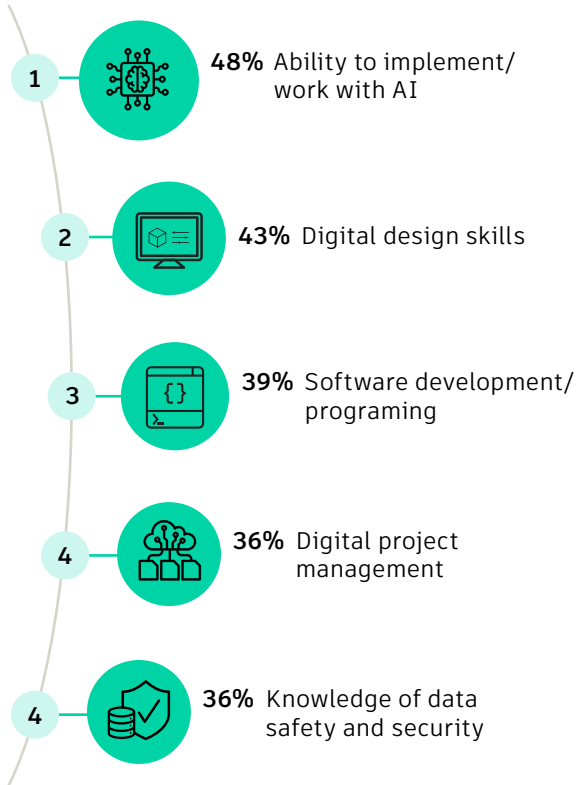
> *"As always, the most important factor in the equation is the people. As such, ensuring everyone feels empowered is and must be a high priority. Better understanding has led to better and more efficient collaboration, which means we can get to the right result faster with fewer challenges."*
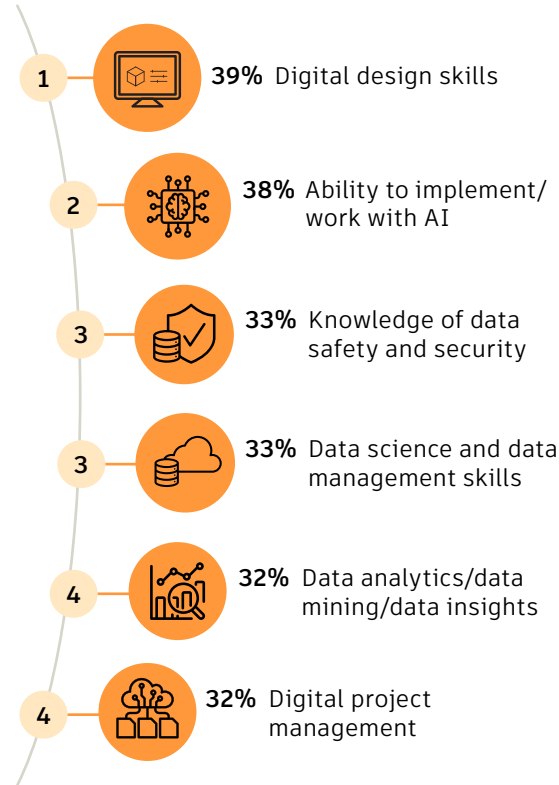>
> **ALEX MEDDICK**
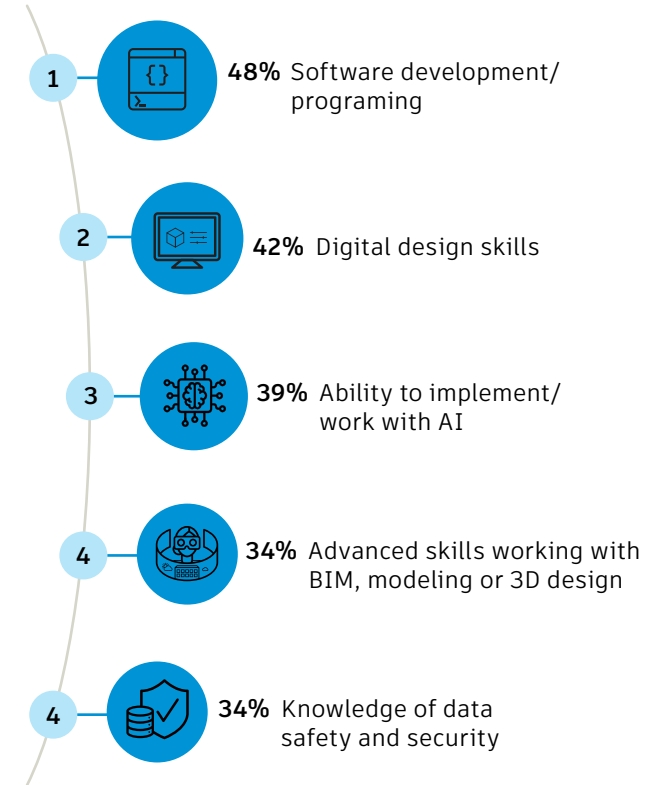> Head of Technology, Rising Sun Pictures, a visual effects studio

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Top technical skills across M&E

In advertising, publishing, and graphic design:

1. **48%** Ability to implement/ work with AI
2. **43%** Digital design skills
3. **39%** Software development/ programing
4. **36%** Digital project management
4. **36%** Knowledge of data safety and security

In film and TV:

1. **39%** Digital design skills
2. **38%** Ability to implement/ work with AI
3. **33%** Knowledge of data safety and security
3. **33%** Data science and data management skills
4. **32%** Data analytics/data mining/data insights
4. **32%** Digital project management

In gaming:

1. **48%** Software development/ programing
2. **42%** Digital design skills
3. **39%** Ability to implement/ work with AI
4. **34%** Advanced skills working with BIM, modeling or 3D design
4. **34%** Knowledge of data safety and security

Survey question: What technical or digital skills do you believe your company or organization will be prioritizing when hiring over the next 3 years? Select all that apply. 12 response options, including "we are not prioritizing technical and digital skills."

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Internally, to fill knowledge and skills gaps, many organizations are investing in upskilling and training programs designed to rapidly onboard new workers and bring their current workforce up to date on new technologies. The *2025 State of Design and Make* report found that 72% of M&E leaders will invest more in digital training, and 67% are implementing continuous learning programs.

AI leaders are far more likely to be increasing investment in digital training (82%) than their less-advanced counterparts (63%), and they are also more likely by a large margin (80% compared to 54%) to implement continuous learning programs at their organizations. Considering tech and AI skills are high in demand, companies making investments in developing their workforce today will likely see outsize benefits in terms of future productivity and innovation increases.

But internal training programs can hold other challenges. *2025 State of Design & Make* data found more than half of M&E leaders (54%) say they do not have the resources to design internal training programs, up 13 points over 2024, indicating that the tight labor market is impacting initiatives across organizations.

Despite the talent gap and escalating need for AI skills across M&E, there is no sentiment suggesting that emerging technologies will supplant humans in the workforce. Humans will, however, need to be prepared for an AI-infused workforce—one that requires a different set of skills than was needed just a few short years ago.

"We trained show-specific teams. What this meant is whenever we had a show-specific task that required AI, we would go in and train a team to execute it. They would learn the software and tools required and they would be later able to educate their teammates on how to use it as well. This training and exposition combo allowed us to very quickly go through shows and expose people to the AI tools that we have and allow artists to learn a lot faster from their teammates and just inspire that collaboration across the board."

PETER TSONEV
Head of Machine Learning and Technologies, Crafty Apes, a visual effects company

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Conclusion

Despite understandable concerns, leaders are optimistic about the future of the industry—especially when it comes to artificial intelligence—and are embracing new ways of working to solve today's challenges with an eye toward future innovations.

Media and entertainment organizations that are betting big on AI are experiencing far greater benefits than organizations that are slower to join the AI-integration race. As new technologies proliferate across the industry, this performance gap can only be expected to grow, providing a clear competitive advantage for AI leaders.

However, technology alone is not enough. As the demand for skilled workers in general—and AI skills specifically—grows, leaders should invest in comprehensive training programs that prepare their workforce for today's technology while continuously upskilling them for the jobs they will need tomorrow.

"What does AI mean for the creative process and visual effects as a whole? It's allowing for a lot more content to be made that previously wasn't possible. It's allowing for stories to be brought to life in new and inventive ways and is providing some graceful solutions to problems that we've previously had."

PETER TSONEV
Head of Machine Learning and Technologies, Crafty Apes, a visual effects company

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About the *State of Design & Make: Spotlight on AI in Media & Entertainment*

The data for the *State of Design & Make: Spotlight on AI in Media & Entertainment* report was compiled from a subset of Autodesk's *2025 State of Design & Make* report, which includes 1,670 respondents from the media and entertainment industry, including professionals from advertising, publishing and graphic design, film and TV, and games.

The report also features qualitative interviews with leaders and experts from across the media and entertainment industry.

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