The advent of AI agents in ITSM: Perception and future impact

The ManageEngine Advent of AI Agents in ITSM survey was run in the first half of April 2025. This artificial intelligence (AI)-focused report includes the collated survey results and correlations based on 300 survey respondents, all of whom are IT professionals based in the UK in roles that have connections to an IT service management (ITSM) tool or platform. For more detailed respondent demographics, please refer to Appendix 1.

Management summary

The ManageEngine Advent of AI Agents in ITSM survey shows how far IT organizations have already come with AI adoption, not only in terms of introducing AI-based capabilities but also understanding the need for governance frameworks. The survey also echoed the connectivity found in other "AI in ITSM" surveys, that respondents from organizations that have already adopted AI features and capabilities are more likely to trust AI agents and their use.

In statistical terms, these points are reflected in the following three key insights:

1. AI adoption is already prevalent, with 82% of respondents stating that their organization had already implemented AI features and capabilities within their ITSM practices.

2. Organizations are open to the introduction of AI agents in ITSM, with 93% of survey respondents stating that their organization would be open to it.

3. AI governance, data security, and privacy concerns (at 45% of respondents) is the top concern regarding the introduction of AI in ITSM.

The survey highlights are included in the following section, with correlations in the main contained in the "Detailed survey findings" section.

Survey highlights

- 82% of respondents stated that their organization had already implemented AI features and capabilities within their ITSM practices. Organizations with more employees were least likely to have adopted AI features and capabilities.

- The top three AI use cases in ITSM were Process optimization (48% of the 246 respondents with live AI capabilities), Risk advisory (46%), and Knowledge discovery(42%). However, this differed by organizational size and between private and public sector organizations.

- 93% of survey respondents stated that their organization would be open to AI agent use in ITSM.

- The top three use cases for AI agents were deemed to be Process mining and workflow generation (50%), Script generation for process automation and customization (50%), and Drafting and documenting post-incident reviews (49%). The two content creation options were in the top three for all organization sizes, albeit in different positions.

- While 93% of survey respondents stated that their organizations were open to using AI agents, only 8% had no concerns about their implementation.

- The top three worries about AI agent use were AI governance, data security, and privacy concerns (45%), Reliability of AI agents (39%), and Implementation complexity (34%). These differed little by organizational size. However, public sector organizations had Reliability of AI agents as their primary worry.

- Only 32% of respondents wanted AI agents to perform service operations autonomously. 49% wanted AI agents to perform service operations with human approval, and another 18% wanted AI agents to be limited to only offering context and recommending actions. There was very little difference in these results between private sector and public sector organizations. There was a difference across industries, though.

- Respondents from organizations that have already adopted AI features and capabilities were more likely to trust AI agents and their use.

- 59% of respondents thought that AI agents would replace humans in the IT workforce. This opinion was similar across organizations of different sizes.

- 62% of respondents believed introducing AI agents for ITSM would change their organization's hiring plan (including the number of technicians to be hired in the future). Only 12% thought not, with another 26% stating it's too early to know. The level of respondents' opinions was similar across organizations of different sizes. However, public sector organizations were less likely to think AI agents would impact IT hiring plans.

Detailed survey findings

The ManageEngine Advent of AI Agents in ITSM survey asked 300 respondents ten questions related to their knowledge, experience, and opinions on using AI agents in ITSM; specifically those now embedded within ITSM tools or platforms.

AI adoption levels in ITSM

A massive 82% of respondents stated that their organization had already implemented AI features and capabilities within their ITSM practices. In comparison, only 17% said they hadn't.

Q1. Have you implemented any AI features and capabilities across your ITSM practices?

Response	Percentage
Yes	82%
No	17%
I don't know	1%

N = 300

Oddly, the survey data shows that organizations with more employees were least likely to have adopted AI features and capabilities. This correlation was backed by another showing that larger organizations were less open to AI agent use. It's, therefore, unsurprising that organizations with revenues greater than £250m were far more likely not to have adopted AI features and capabilities yet.

Private-sector organizations were marginally more likely to have adopted AI features and capabilities than public-sector organizations. This differential was also reflected in their openness to adopting AI agents.

The sector or industry view of AI adoption was very interesting, with different industries in either the pro- or "anti"-AI camp. For example, Architecture, Engineering and building, Arts and culture, and Travel and transport were all low-adoption-level industries. At the same time, Finance, Healthcare, and IT and telecoms were all high-adoption-level industries.

As to where AI capabilities were being used to improve IT operations and ITSM capabilities, the survey found the top three use cases to be:

- Process optimization (48% of the 246 respondents with live AI capabilities)
- Risk advisory (46%)
- Knowledge discovery(42%).

Interestingly, the AI capability often seen as the "poster child" for ITSM AI use cases – virtual agents for end-users and virtual assistants for IT staff – was only in joint fourth place (along with problem prediction) at 39%.

Q2. You selected yes earlier, please select the AI features that you are using currently?

Response	Percentage
Process optimization	48%
Risk advisory	46%
Knowledge discovery	42%
Problem prediction	39%
Conversational virtual assistant	39%
Intelligent categorization	37%
Content generation for notifications and email responses	36%
Intelligent assignment and escalation	34%

N = 246

However, the top three AI features currently in use differed by organizational size as follows:

- 100 - 249 employees – Risk advisory, Knowledge discovery, and Conversational virtual assistant
- 250 - 500 employees – Risk advisory, Process optimization, and Intelligent categorization (all joint top)
- More than 500 employees – Process optimization, Problem prediction, and Knowledge discovery.

The relative weightings of the organizational size (see Appendix 1) clearly affect the consolidated survey question findings.

There were also differences between private sector and public sector organizations, with the top three areas as follows:

- Private sector – Risk advisory, Process optimization, and Incident categorization and Conversational virtual assistant (joint third)
- Public sector – Knowledge discovery, Process optimization, and Problem prediction.

Interestingly, both private and public sector organizations had Process optimization in second place, but the differences were enough to place it first overall.

Using AI agents in ITSM

The ManageEngine Advent of AI Agents in ITSM survey asked respondents specifically about the use of AI agents in ITSM. Nearly all respondents (99%) were familiar with AI agents, with only 1% not.

Q3. Are you familiar, if at all, with the concept of AI agents?

Response	Percentage
Familiar (net)	99%
Very familiar – I know this very well	64%
Somewhat familiar – I know a few things about this	35%
Not very familiar - I have only heard of this	1%
Not familiar at all – I have never heard of this	0%
Not familiar (net)	1%

N = 300

Of all the role types, C-suite respondents were most likely to be "very familiar" with the concept of AI agents and, oddly, not to be open to their use (although this was only eight respondents). While unsurprisingly, knowledge of AI agents and openness to their use was higher in organizations that have already adopted AI features and capabilities.

For the next survey question, the following definition was offered to help with respondent response accuracy:

"An AI agent is an intelligent model that can detect user intent from a ticket, email, or through conversations and autonomously gather contextual data, make decisions, and perform tasks. AI agents can be deployed for service desk tasks such as incident management or service request fulfilment."

With this context, the top three use cases for AI agents were deemed to be:

- Process mining and workflow generation (50%)
- Script generation for process automation and customization (50%)
- Drafting and documenting post-incident reviews (49%).

While still at 38%, the relatively lowly positioning of "L1 incident troubleshooting and resolution" was unexpected. This was likely caused by the demographics of the survey respondents.

Q4. Given this context, what type of activities, in your opinion, is an AI agent best suited for instead of a human IT service desk technician?

Response	Percentage
Process mining and workflow generation	50%
Script generation for process automation and customization	50%
Drafting and documenting post-incident reviews	49%
Complex workflows like major incident response	44%
Service delivery processes, like employee onboarding	42%
L1 incident troubleshooting and resolution	38%
Change planning and risk assessment	37%
Unsure	1%
Other, please specify	0%

N = 300

The top three areas an AI agent is best suited for, instead of a human IT service desk technician, also differed by organizational size as follows:

- 100 - 249 employees – Complex workflows, Service delivery process, and Drafting and documenting post-incident reviews and

Script generation for process automation and customization (joint third)

- 250 - 500 employees – Drafting and documenting post-incident reviews and Script generation for process automation and customization (joint first) and Process mining
- More than 500 employees – Process mining and Drafting and documenting post-incident reviews and Script generation for process automation and customization (joint second).

This time, though, the two content creation options were in the top three for all organization sizes, albeit in different positions.

There were also differences between private sector and public sector organizations, with the top three areas as follows:

- Private sector – Process mining and Drafting and documenting post-incident reviews and Script generation for process automation and customization (joint second)
- Public sector – Script generation for process automation and customization and Process mining and Complex workflows like major incident response (joint second).

Survey respondents were also very bullish about AI agent adoption, with 93% stating that their organization would be open to AI agent use in ITSM. Only 4% indicated their organization wasn't open to AI agent use.

These figures were unsurprising given the already high level of AI use in ITSM reported earlier. This previous success likely builds trust in the adoption of additional AI capabilities.

Q5. Would your organization be open to adopting AI agents for service management?

Response	Percentage
Yes	93%
No	4%
Not sure	3%

N = 300

While 93% of survey respondents stated that their organizations were open to using AI agents, only 8% had no concerns about their implementation. Instead, the survey found the top three (respondent) worries to be:

- AI governance, data security, and privacy concerns (45%)
- Reliability of AI agents (39%)
- Implementation complexity (34%).

The top concern matches other AI-in-ITSM-related surveys conducted in 2025. For example, the ITSM.tools poll for the most wanted ITSM content in 2025 had governance (including AI governance) in the top place. [1]

Q6. Do you have any worries, if at all, about deploying AI agents for your everyday IT service management operations?

Response	Percentage
AI governance, data security, and privacy concerns	45%
Reliability of AI agents	39%
Implementation complexity	34%
Unproven technology	33%
Unclear ROI	29%
Lack of talent	27%
Shortage of compute resources	24%
Unconvinced leadership	21%
I don't have any apprehensions	8%
Others	1%

N = 300

The top three worries about using AI agents differed little by organizational size:

- 100 - 249 employees — AI governance, data security, and privacy concerns, Reliability of AI agents, and Implementation complexity (which matched the aggregated results)
- 250 - 500 employees — AI governance, data security, and privacy concerns, Reliability of AI agents, and Implementation complexity and Unproven technology in joint third (which again matched the aggregated results)
- More than 500 employees — AI governance, data security, and privacy concerns, Reliability of AI agents, and Unproven technology (which matched the aggregated results first two and fourth places).

However, there were differences between private sector and public sector organizations, with the top three areas as follows:

- Private sector – AI governance, data security, and privacy concerns and Reliability of AI agents and Unproven technology in joint second (which matched the aggregated results first two and fourth places)
- Public sector – Reliability of AI agents, AI governance, data security, and privacy concerns, and Implementation complexity and Unclear ROI (joint third).

The public sector results, with Reliability of AI agents in first place and Unclear ROI in joint third place, were likely indicative of different approaches to AI between private and public sector organizations. The fact that the survey sample included twice as many private sector as public sector organizations will also have influenced the differences.

The second of these top concerns was reflected in the responses to a survey question about the permissions provided to AI agents. Only 32% of respondents wanted AI agents to perform service operations autonomously. While 49% wanted AI agents to perform service operations with human approval, and another 18% wanted AI agents to be limited to only offering context and recommending actions.

These results reflect respondents' differing levels of trust in AI capabilities. Digging deeper into the survey data, respondents from organizations that have already adopted AI features and capabilities were more likely to trust AI agents and their use.

Q7. What kind of ITSM and related system permissions do you prefer AI agents should have?

Response	Percentage
Perform service operations with human approval	49%
Perform service operations autonomously	32%
Only offer context and recommend actions	18%
N/A / unsure / none	1%

N = 300

Interestingly, there was very little difference in these results between private sector and public sector organizations. There was a difference across industries, though. For example, legal firms were very cautious about how AI agents should operate.

The impact of AI agents on IT service desks

The survey's final three questions examined how adopting AI agents would impact IT service desks.

The respondents felt that AI agents were more likely to work with IT technicians than to replace them: 38% of respondents thought IT technicians would supervise the AI agents, and 30% thought AI agent use would free IT technicians up to focus on more complex tasks. Only 18% thought that AI agents would replace IT technicians, with the final 13% believing that there would be no significant change in the role of IT technicians.

While this question offers some interesting insights into how respondents think about AI agents affecting IT technician roles, there is

considerable overlap in the response options. For example, the choice of "IT technicians will focus on more complex tasks" doesn't mean that the respondent doesn't think that "IT technicians will be replaced by AI agents." This is the most likely explanation of why the results for question 9. were so different.

Q8. How do you think the role of IT technicians will primarily change with the introduction of AI agents?

Response	Percentage
IT technicians will serve as supervisors for AI-driven processes	38%
IT technicians will focus on more complex tasks	30%
IT technicians will be replaced by AI agents	18%
There will be no significant change in the role of IT technicians	13%

N = 300

Unsurprisingly, respondents from organizations without AI features and capabilities already deployed were more likely to think that the role of IT technicians would not significantly change.

While question 8 showed only 18% of respondents predicting AI agents replacing IT technicians, a more focused and narrower question found that a sizeable 59% of respondents thought that AI agents would replace humans in the IT workforce.

This data point is probably a better reflection of AI agents on the IT workforce. While IT technicians will have AI-management roles and will be freed up for more complex work, the efficiency benefits of AI agents will also likely result in the need for fewer IT technicians.

Q9. Do you think that AI agents will replace humans in the IT workforce?

Response	Percentage
Yes	59%
No	37%
Don't know	3%

N = 300

The level of respondents' opinions was pretty similar across organizations of different sizes. However, the respondent's role makes a difference. C-suite respondents were likelier to think that AI agents would replace humans in the workforce. In contrast, IT directors thought they wouldn't. Work proximity was likely at play here.

While they might not be as advanced in terms of AI adoption, organizations with more than £250m in revenue were more likely to think that AI agents will replace humans in the IT workforce. The same was true for industries. For example, the respondents in Architecture, Engineering & Building, Arts & Culture, and Travel and transport organizations were all more likely to think that AI agents will replace humans in the IT workforce despite being most adverse to AI adoption. Although a possible explanation is that the two are linked, with AI avoided because of the potential for job losses.

This view of AI agents replacing humans in the IT workforce was replicated in the final survey question, with 62% of respondents believing that introducing AI agents for ITSM would change their organization's hiring plan (including the number of technicians to be hired in the future). Only 12% thought not, with another 26% stating it's too early to know.

The efficiencies brought about by AI agents are likely to affect staffing volumes and costs despite the changing roles of IT technicians. It's something your organization should be planning for so that any change can be brought about organically.

Q10. Will the introduction of AI agents for ITSM operations change your organization's hiring plan, including the number of technicians to be hired for your team in the future?

Response	Percentage
Yes	59%
No	37%
Don't know	3%

N = 300

The level of respondents' opinions was pretty similar across organizations of different sizes. However, public sector organizations were less likely to think AI agents would impact IT hiring plans. With public sector organizations increasingly under pressure to reduce costs, it's unlikely that they will be immune to the efficiency and cost benefits of AI agents.

Finally, the respondents who thought that AI agents would replace IT technicians unsurprisingly believed that introducing AI agents for ITSM operations would change their organization's hiring plans.

Summary and next steps

The ManageEngine Advent of AI Agents in ITSM survey found that many organizations have already implemented AI features and capabilities within their ITSM practices. However, as with something like ITIL adoption, the scope of adoption could be minimal, but they have still implemented AI features and capabilities. Process optimization (48% of the 246 respondents with live AI capabilities) was the most adopted AI use case.

93% of survey respondents stated that their organization would be open to AI agent use in ITSM, with the top use cases being Process mining and workflow generation (50%) and content creation (Script generation for process automation and customization (50%) and Drafting and documenting post-incident reviews (49%))

The highest-ranking worry about AI agent adoption was AI governance, data security, and privacy concerns (45%). This differed little by organizational size. However, public sector organizations had Reliability of AI agents as their primary worry.

Respondents from organizations that have already adopted AI features and capabilities were more likely to trust AI agents and their use. But there were still trust issues. For example, only 32% of respondents wanted AI agents to perform service operations autonomously. 49% wanted AI agents to perform service operations with human approval, and another 18% wanted AI agents to be limited to only offering context and recommending actions.

62% of respondents believed introducing AI agents for ITSM would change their organization's hiring plan (including the number of technicians to be hired in the future). Only 12% thought not, with another 26% stating it's too early to know.

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Appendix 1 – Respondent Demographics

The demographic breakdown of the 300 survey respondents is detailed below:

Job title – Which of the following best describes your job title and position?

Job title	Percentage
Business owner	5%
C-suite	41%
VP of IT	3%
Director of IT	20%
IT manager	42%
IT service delivery manager	3%
IT infrastructure manager	3%
Other	0%

Sector – In which one of the following industry sectors does your company operate in?

Sector	Percentage
Architecture, Engineering & Building	7%
Arts & Culture	7%
Education	7%
Finance	10%
Healthcare	10%
HR	1%

IT & Telecoms	17%
Legal	1%
Manufacturing & Utilities	9%
Retail, Catering & Leisure	8%
Sales, Media & Marketing	7%
Travel & Transport	8%
Other	8%

Public vs. Private Sector – Which of the following industry sectors best describes the type of company you work in?

Sector type	Percentage
Private sector	67%
Public sector	33%

Headcount – What is the size of the company you currently work for?

Revenue	Percentage
100 - 249 employees	20%
250 - 500 employees	28%
More than 500 employees	52%

Revenue – Approximately what is your company's average annual turnover?

Revenue	Percentage
10 Million - 50 Million	17%
50.01 Million - 100 Million	14%
100.01 Million - 250 Million	17%
250.1 Million - 500 Million	25%
Over 500 Million	27%

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