

ManageEngine 

IT at work: 2022 and beyond

UK & Ireland





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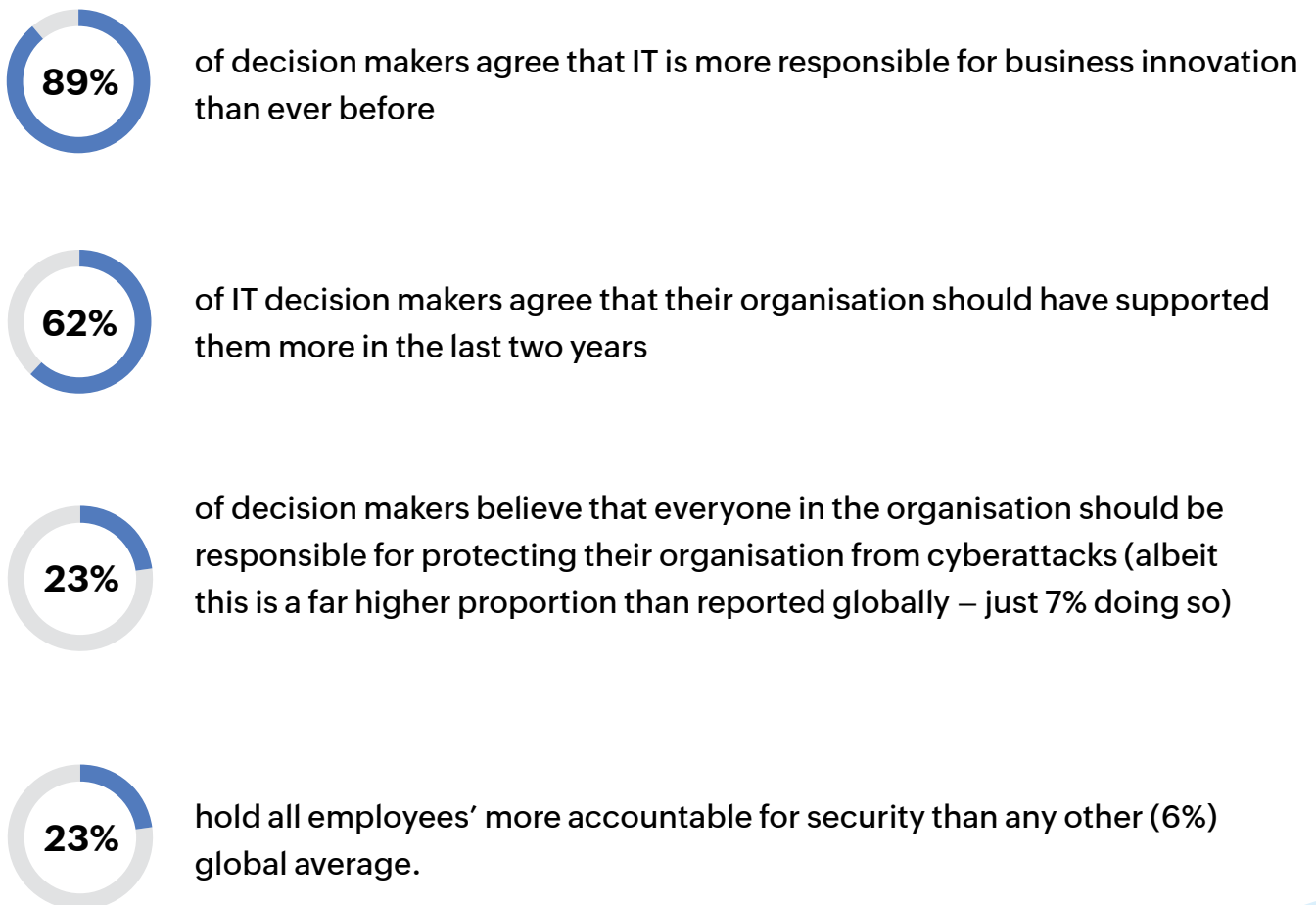
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Introduction

The IT department's role is wide-reaching, varied and pivotal to their organisation's success – either centrally, or in support of other departments within the organisation. Artificial intelligence and machine learning is already used extensively across the business, but more training may be required for its use to be maximised outside of the IT department. IT's role, therefore, is set to be even greater in the next five years. But with such a pivotal role, organisations must be careful not to push their IT talent away.

This report examines the status, future and risks of IT and technology use, in large and enterprise-sized organisations in the UK and Ireland.

Key findings



SECTION 1

The strategic role of IT

When considering the role of IT within organisations, how deep or wide can this run? Controlling access to data may be expected to feature somewhere within its remit, and indeed, perhaps unsurprisingly according to surveyed business decision makers (BDMs), it does.

However, while it may be expected that controlling data access typically lands at IT's door, decision makers indicate that IT's role is much more wide-reaching and diverse than this. For example, results highlight that IT plays an active and varied role in making decisions spanning across the various areas of the business, from strategy through to customer services. At an overall level, their department is most likely to be looked to for approval and advice in these decisions. Although it is anticipated that security is the most likely area for IT to have an approval role in, the fact that it is fewer than two thirds reporting this potentially highlights a gap around security governance in a notable minority of UK & Ireland organisations.

Expectations to protect the organisation against cyberattacks also feature as part of IT's role. One in five (20%) decision makers report that third-party security specialists are responsible for protecting the organisation from cyberattacks, suggesting that internal IT departments are most likely to be looked to for protection. Indeed, IT and security teams are most likely to be reported as being responsible for protecting the organisation against cyberattacks (44%); yet there is an indication that, as a group, this responsibility is more likely to collectively fall on the C-suite's shoulders, with Chief Security Officer (34%), Chief IT Officer (31%) or Chief Technology Officer (27%) also looked to for protection. What is most surprising is that fewer than a quarter of decision makers (23%) expect everyone in the organisation to play a role in protecting their organisation against cyberattacks. Notably however, this is still a far larger proportion than reported globally (just 7%), showing that in the UK & Ireland at least, there is moderate recognition of the role that the entire organisation plays in protecting itself against cyberattacks. Of this 23%, the majority (91%) believe that all employees should be concerned about protecting their personal data.

Responsibility for protecting their organisation from cyberattacks

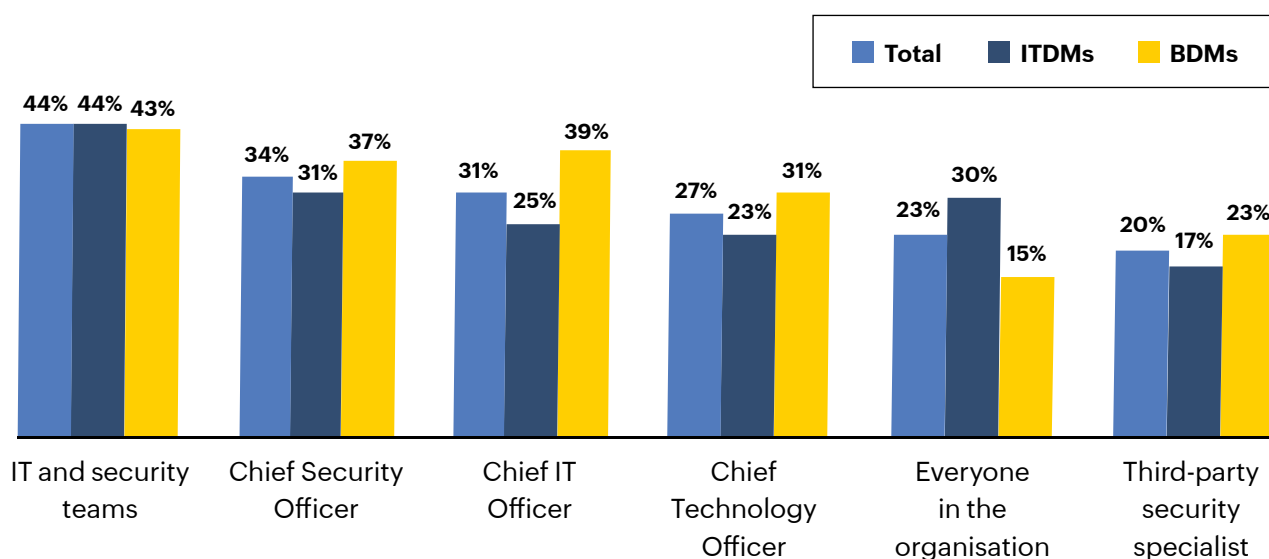


Figure 1: Whose responsibility should it be to protect your organisation from cyberattacks? [Base sizes in chart], shown to all respondents, split by respondent role, omitting some answer options

However, despite IT’s involvement in decision-making and the expectation for their department to prevent cyberattacks, only around one in five BDMs (21%) consider IT to have complete authority in preventing decisions based on security and technical concerns (although 74% have complete or considerable authority).

Alongside their other roles, IT professionals are also increasingly expected to be innovators, with the vast majority (89%) of respondents agreeing that IT is more responsible for business innovation than ever before. Nearly eight in ten (79%) agree that IT could drive innovation if they had a stronger leadership position, while nearly six in ten (59%) agree IT’s role is actually to assist the innovator. This perhaps suggests that their role has traditionally been one of assistance, but now their responsibility for innovation has grown. So far, it is clear that IT’s role arguably traverses both horizontally and vertically within organisations, Collaboration is one key to success

Despite this potential disconnect, collaboration between IT teams and other departments is reported by the vast majority (82%) to have increased over the last two years. But while globally, just over half (51%) of both ITDMs and BDMs report that collaboration has increased significantly in this time, in the UK & Ireland this figure is just 36%. This demonstrates that while collaboration in this region is increasing, the rate of increase is steady rather than spectacular.

A potential reason for the need and increase in collaboration and variety of decision-making authority across the business, may be being driven by the level of decentralisation within organisations' IT structures.

- According to nearly half of ITDMs (48%), their organisations have already successfully decentralised their IT structures, with a further fifth (20%) of ITDMs' organisations' currently attempting to do so. This is somewhat lower compared to the global figures (64% and 30%, respectively) showing that decentralisation, while preferred by the majority in the UK & Ireland, is not regarded positively or as widespread as it is elsewhere in the world.
- Decentralisation is not without its challenges however, with almost all (98%) reporting there are challenges of doing this; the most likely being maintaining IT security levels (47%), maintaining regulatory structure (41%), maintaining reliability of ongoing support (41%)
- Despite the challenges faced, the perceived benefits are widely recognised amongst ITDMs and BDMs as nearly nine in ten (89%) believe there are benefits to decentralising their IT function.
- The majority of decision makers believe that if their organisation decentralises its IT function, there will be increased scope of innovation (55%) and the importance of IT's role in the business will become more recognised/ acknowledged (51%), as a result.

Indeed, perhaps decentralisation enables the increasing expectation of IT to be innovators, as highlighted earlier.

Ultimately, it's apparent that IT's role is extensive, with involvement in data control access, decision-making across various areas of the organisation, collaboration, innovation, cyber security and implementing particular strategies. Therefore, it's perhaps unsurprising that the vast majority of decision makers (87%) agree their IT department's success is directly correlated with their organisation's overall success; this sentiment shared by both ITDMs (88%) and BDMs (86%).

SECTION 2

Tech skills and training

The strategic role played by IT is critical to the success of businesses. But how are IT and other key functions performing when it comes to their use of technology and talent within the organisation?

IT are set to have a greater role in organisations in the next five years. This is despite the fact that nearly eight in ten (79%) claim non-IT employees in their organisation are more knowledgeable about IT than they were before 2020. Furthermore, nearly one in five (19%) ITDMs feel they are “Not consulted at all” or “Consulted inadequately” about a flexible working model, showing that IT is being bypassed on key issues in some organisations.

Nearly all (94%) BDMs say that their organisation has invested in AI/ML, and are doing so for more than one use case, on average. Automation is unsurprisingly the most highly reported area (60%), but only slightly fewer (53%) report using AI to prevent cyberattacks.

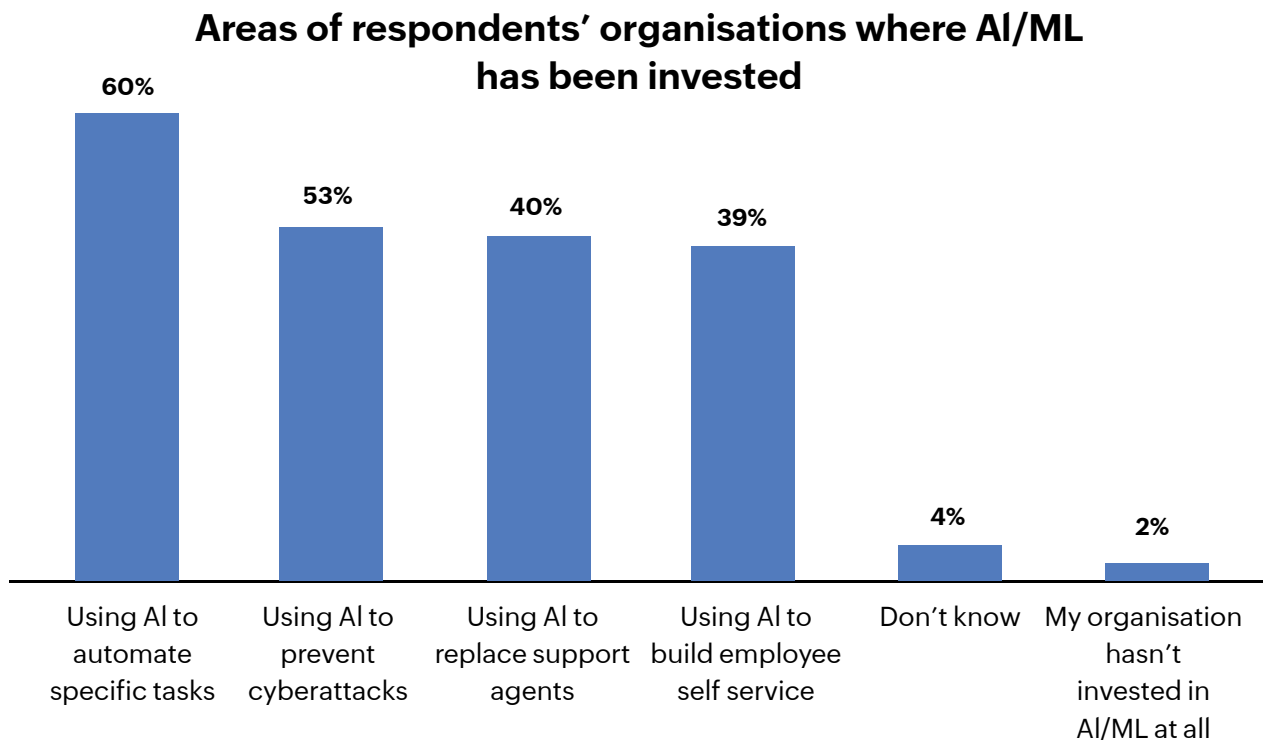


Figure 2: In what specific areas, has your organisation invested in AI/ML? [137], shown to BDMs, omitting some answer options

Furthermore, 80% of respondents agree that “AI and ML technologies will play a significant role in strengthening our IT security framework in the near future”. Of concern however is the fact that 63% agree that “employees in my organisation are trained and efficient at leveraging AI and ML technologies” – while this number is relatively high, it is somewhat lower than the global average (78%), showing that the UK & Ireland may be behind the world in maximising the use of AI and ML in IT security.

This shows that AI/ML is increasingly being used for critical business tasks. On average, respondents report that four departments are using AI/ML in their organisation, showing that AI/ML is being extensively deployed.

Why are technologies being used so freely outside of IT? Nearly all (95%) BDMs say that their department has autonomy when it comes to making technology decisions. This autonomy relates to not just purchases (of devices – 57%, and of apps/software – 53%), but to hiring tech talent (47%) as well.

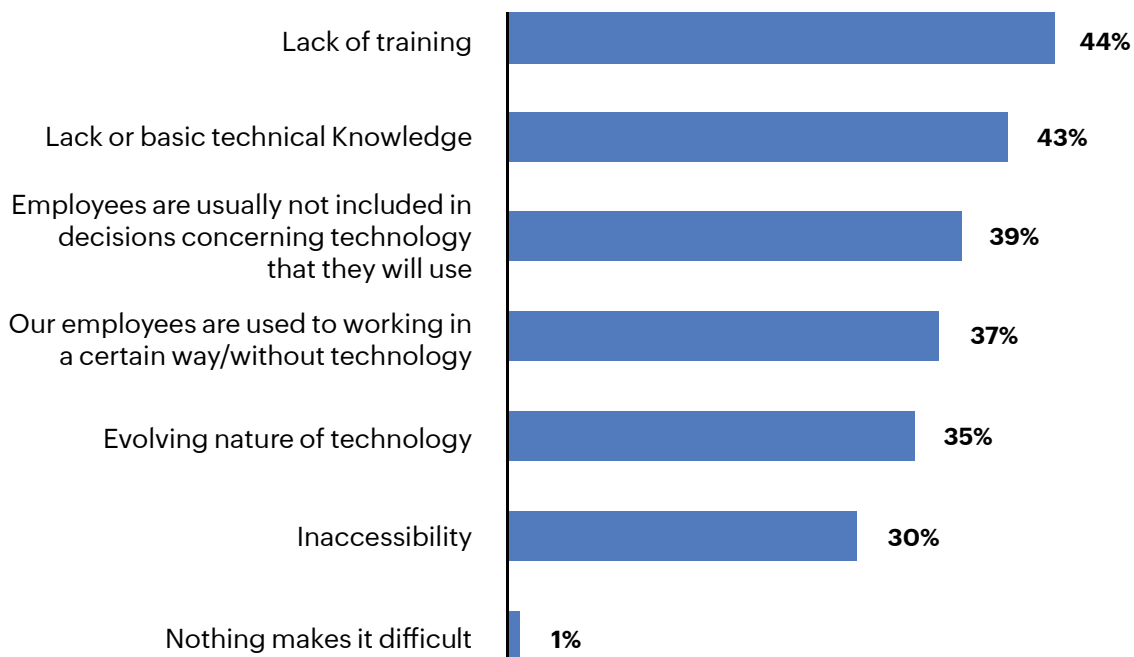


Figure 3: What are the barriers for your organisation’s employees to take full advantage of the technologies that your organisation currently uses? [137], shown to to BDMs, omitting some answer options

These issues can, of course, be solved, but the way they are solved may differ by organisation – we saw above that respondents are split when it comes to whether IT in their organisation will be centralised or decentralised. Should central IT manage their organisation’s technical training needs, or should other business departments take control through their own resource channels?

A variety of approaches are used by organisations when it comes to technology training. These approaches rely either on the business functions themselves having adequate technology knowledge to roll out and run the training, or the IT team having a good knowledge of what technologies are being adopted in different functions. Both these approaches have their potential pitfalls, but how successful are organisations when it comes to training their various departments in technology processes and tools?

Current indications show that training needs to be improved. No department can be singled out as notably more likely to require additional technical training, showing that individual organisations' exact needs are likely to vary. The key takeaway here is that, despite the autonomy that business functions have when it comes to technology choices, the knowledge and expertise of IT is still vital. And this brings us to a key concern that many organisations may have.

SECTION 3

IT leaders and the future

The truth is that ITDMs are looking beyond their current employer when it comes to their future. More than six in ten (62%) of ITDMs agree that "My organisation should have supported me more in the last two years". Similarly, 45% of ITDMs agree that "I feel less loyalty to my employer than I did two years ago" (albeit 53% disagree with this), and 39% agree that "I am actively looking for a new job". While this latter figure is somewhat less than the global equivalent (48%), it is still a notable minority that could be handing in their notice in the near future. 52% employees are more willing to make a risky career move now than two years ago.

However, while ITDMs may be at risk of feeling alienated from their organisation and be ready to move on, there may still be a chance for organisations to keep hold of their talent. Equally, as well as offering opportunities to their IT talent, organisations must be careful to not take away existing benefits from their employees. More than half of ITDMs say that they would be driven away from their organisation if the flexible working model (56%) or pay increases in line with inflation (55%) were taken away (among several other existing benefits). There is clearly a delicate balance for organisations to strike if they are to hold on to the knowledge and skills that have been built up in their IT department's leadership.

Conclusion

The IT department holds considerable control over many aspects of the company, but potentially this control could (or should) go further in key areas (e.g. security). And while there is significant collaboration between departments (which is improving), there is still room for further enhancement.

But questions remain regarding the best way to involve IT in business strategy. There is no consistent approach regarding innovation (the level and manner of IT's involvement is up for debate). Decentralising IT is already happening, but there are notable challenges in doing so, and there is an almost equal split between organisations that expect IT to be centralised and those that expect IT teams to be attached to individual departments.

Departments outside of IT are already likely to hold autonomy to some degree when it comes to tech choices. This has influenced decisions around recruitment and skills training in these departments. But skills training is a definite weakness in a large proportion of organisations. And yet it is at this critical time for IT, that ITDMs may at least be considering leaving to find a new role in another organisation.

If IT decentralisation is to continue successfully, innovation to flourish, and functions across the organisation are to take full advantage of technologies available, organisations will need to work hard to retain their tech talent. This applies to the UK & Ireland as equally as it does to any other regions this research study explored, but it should be noted with this region in particular that decentralisation is somewhat behind the curve compared to most of the region, making it even more vital that tech talent is not wasted.

Methodology

ManageEngine commissioned independent market research agency Vanson Bourne to conduct the research upon which this executive summary is based. 300 decision makers across IT and other key business functions, from organisations across the UK & Ireland, were surveyed from a range of private sector organisations. The wider global research included 3,300 decision makers across IT and other key business functions, from organisations across the globe, were surveyed from a range of private sector organisations. All interviews were conducted using a rigorous multi-level screening process to ensure that only suitable candidates were given the opportunity to participate.

About ManageEngine

ManageEngine is the enterprise IT management division of Zoho Corporation. Established and emerging enterprises—including 9 of every 10 Fortune 100 organizations—rely on ManageEngine’s real-time IT management tools to ensure optimal performance of their IT infrastructure, including networks, servers, applications, desktops and more. ManageEngine has offices worldwide, including the United States, the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, India, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Singapore, Japan, China and Australia, as well as 200+ global partners to help organizations tightly align their business and IT.

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