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AXONIUS

MeriTalk
Improving the Outcomes
of Government IT



a division of TechTarget

As organizations prepare for a “new normal” coming out of the pandemic, IT and security teams face new challenges associated with the trajectory of IT infrastructure. In a short time, the pandemic has proven out a new operating model for many, while concurrently resetting worker expectations.

IT and security teams responded urgently, with many deploying stopgap measures to support ongoing business operations. As the post-pandemic reality comes into focus, these same teams will need to formalize policies, infrastructure, and operations to effectively secure and scale their businesses.

Axonius set out to better understand the current state of IT and security teams. We partnered with Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) to survey 500 IT and security leaders from all industries. We also partnered with MeriTalk to survey 100 DoD IT and security leaders a subset of questions.

CONTINUOUS VISIBILITY INTO ALL ASPECTS OF IT
INFRASTRUCTURE – BEGINNING WITH AN ACCURATE ASSET
INVENTORY OF DEVICES AND WORKLOADS – IS
FOUNDATIONAL TO THIS EFFORT.

For many, this is an urgent priority for the coming year.

RESULTING *TRENDS* FROM THE PANDEMIC

IT and security teams have certainly risen to the occasion to keep organizations and their employees productive through one of the wildest years in history. Humans are resilient creatures, and those in the technology world

certainly did not disappoint.
But as the world begins to recover
from it all, ***technology has
evolved with some notable
changes***, requiring organizations
to rethink many of their
operational fundamentals.

IT COMPLEXITY INCREASES WITH THE **RAPID SHIFT** TO REMOTE WORK

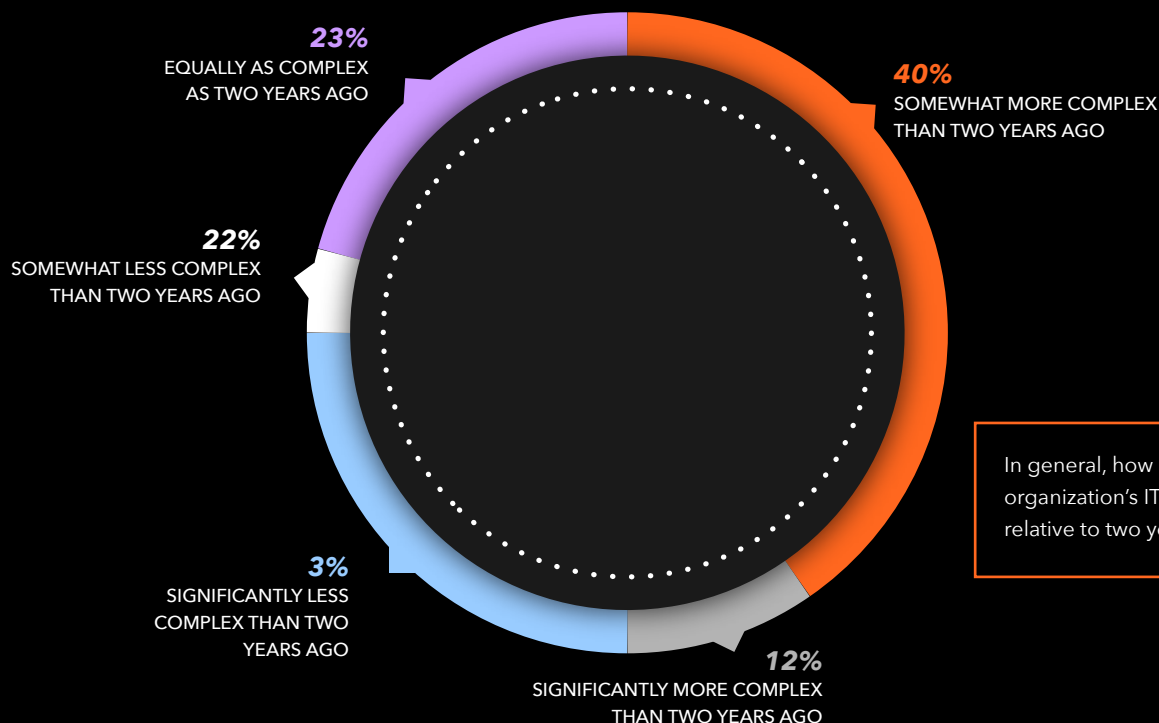
Modern IT infrastructure has grown to become highly diverse and dynamic, leaving many IT and security teams with a growing complexity problem. Research from Enterprise Strategy Group (ESG) and MeriTalk shows that IT complexity is increasing across the board, however

**A MAJORITY (52%) OF DOD LEADERS REPORT
COMPLEXITY IS ON THE RISE, COMPARED TO 72%
OF NON-DOD LEADERS.**

IT COMPLEXITY INCREASES WITH THE **RAPID SHIFT** TO REMOTE WORK

COMPLEXITY CONTINUES TO RISE

DOD Data

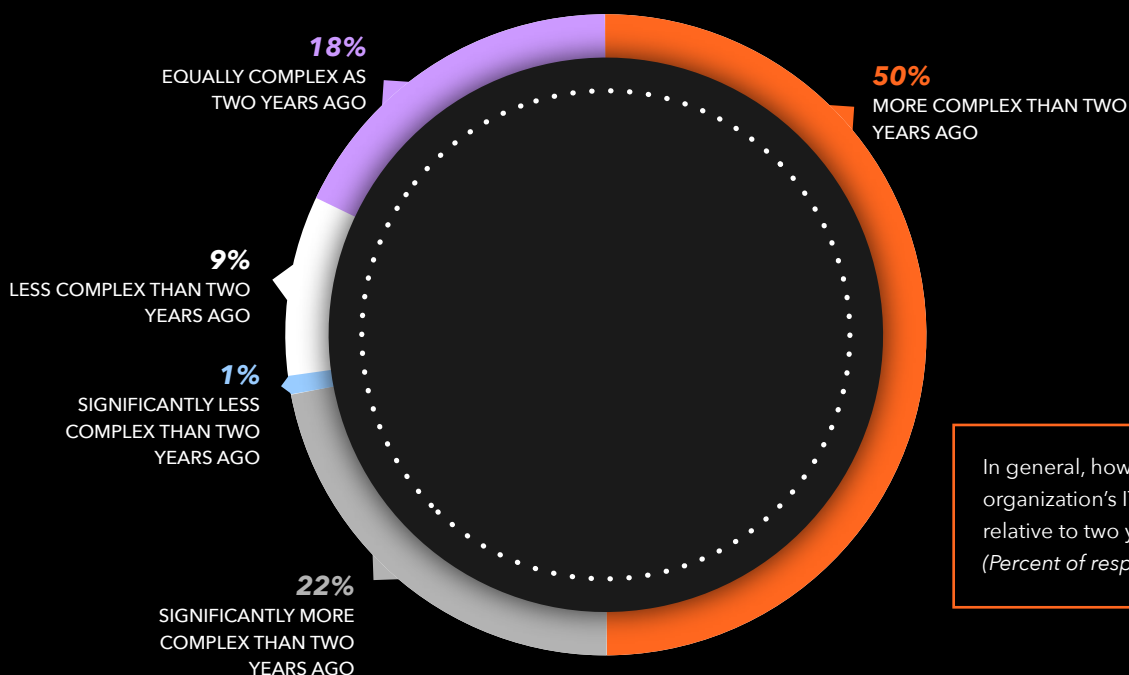


In general, how complex is your organization's IT environment relative to two years ago?



COMPLEXITY CONTINUES TO RISE, DESPITE INCREASED INVESTMENTS

General Data



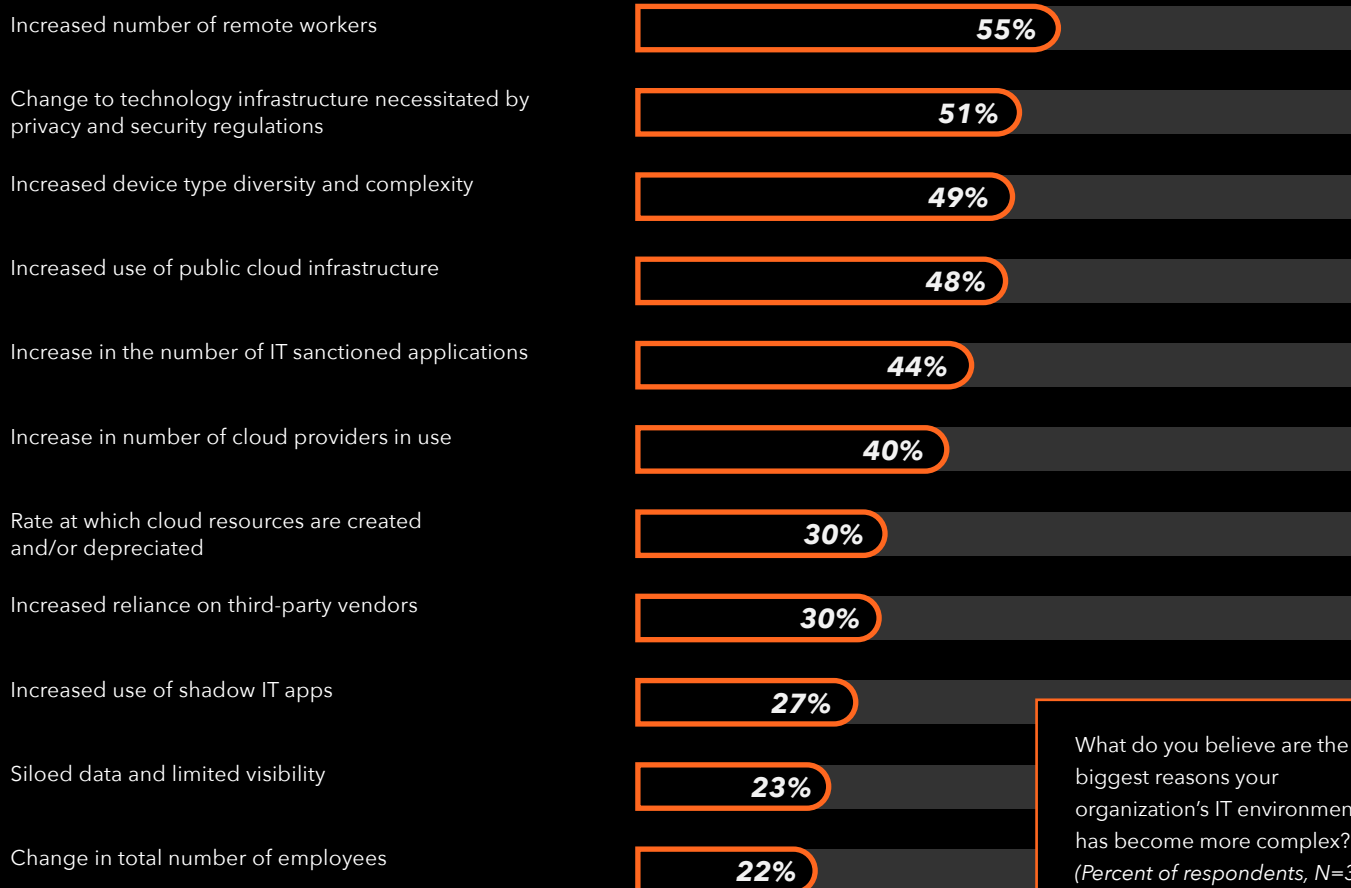
In general, how complex is your organization's IT environment relative to two years ago?
(Percent of respondents, N=500)



The recent, rapid shift to remote work has further exacerbated the problem, leaving many IT and security teams blind to the personal networks and devices powering the remote workers.

55% OF ORGANIZATIONS REPORT THE MOVE TO REMOTE WORK IS A DRIVER OF INCREASED COMPLEXITY (THE NO. 1 MOST FREQUENTLY REPORTED CAUSE).

THE MOVE TO REMOTE WORK DROVE COMPLEXITY



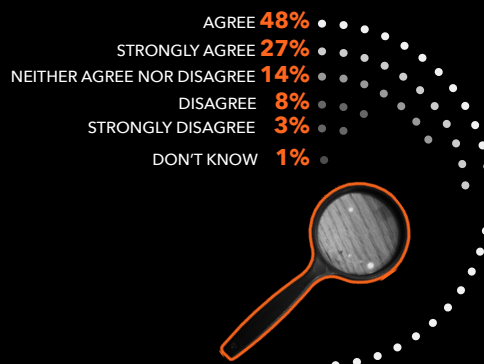
What do you believe are the biggest reasons your organization's IT environment has become more complex? (Percent of respondents, N=364, five responses accepted)

In concert with this move, digital transformation initiatives have accelerated the use of modern cloud operating models as businesses seize the opportunity to engage digitally within this new work paradigm. Managing and securing this increasingly complex environment begins with a basic

understanding of the individual IT assets involved in operating the business – from core business applications, to productivity and collaboration tools, to intelligent, internet-connected devices required to operate infrastructure supporting the efficient creation and delivery of products and services.

VISIBILITY REMAINS A CHALLENGE

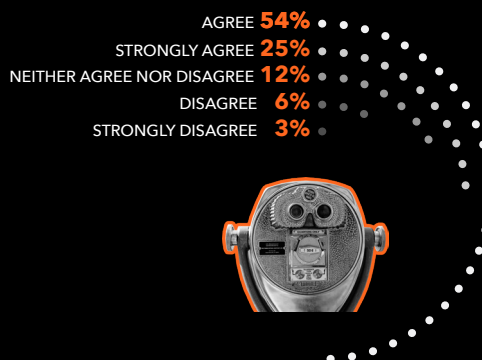
Collectively, these assets represent an attack surface that must be protected against an ever-expanding threat landscape used by adversaries to compromise infrastructure and carry out malicious activities. When IT and security teams lack visibility into any part of their attack surface, they lose the ability to meet security and operational objectives, putting the business at risk.



IOT IS HAPPENING, BUT MOST LACK VISIBILITY

Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: My organization has/will have a visibility gap between what we can quickly and easily see about IoT devices and what we want to be able to see to effectively mitigate risk.

(Percent of respondents, N=483)



CLOUD VISIBILITY GAP IS WIDENING

Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: My organization has a visibility gap between what we can/could quickly and easily see about cloud infrastructure (IaaS/PaaS) assets and what we want to be able to see to effectively mitigate risk.

(Percent of respondents, N=500)



MANY ORGANIZATIONS REPORT WIDENING VISIBILITY GAPS IN THEIR CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE (79%), AND IOT DEVICE INITIATIVES (75%), ACCORDING TO ESG RESEARCH.

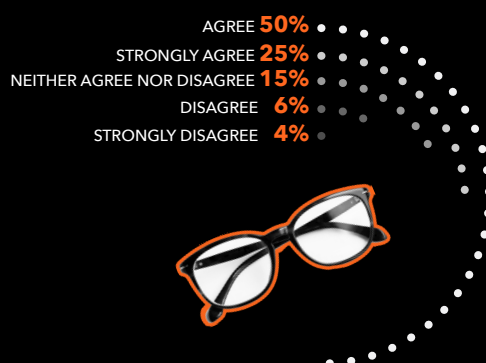
VISIBILITY REMAINS A CHALLENGE

Though it may be expected that an increase in cloud adoption results in additional visibility gaps, many IT and security teams report visibility gaps with respect to end user devices as well. As organizations and agencies look to push initiatives such as zero trust, an understanding of all devices is critical.

Comprehensive asset management is foundational for the regulations that federal agencies face, including FISMA reporting, CDM, and the NIST Cybersecurity framework.

Despite a large number of security and IT tools deployed, many still find it difficult to answer basic questions, such as how many Windows devices do we have? Is endpoint protection installed everywhere it should be? Are we compliant with a particular regulation? This struggle is common between the private sector and DoD.

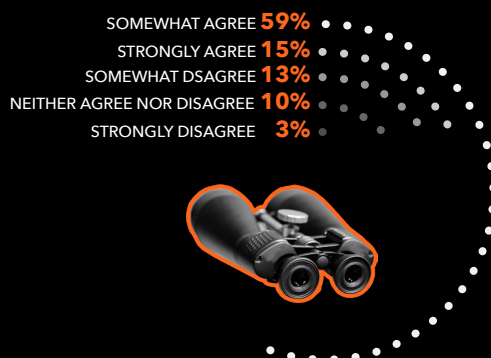
A VAST MAJORITY OF BOTH COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATIONS (75%) AND DOD AGENCIES (74%) REPORT VISIBILITY GAPS IN THEIR END USER DEVICES. ACCORDING TO RESEARCH FROM ESG AND MERITALK



General Data

MOST ORGANIZATIONS LACK THE VISIBILITY THEY WANT INTO END-USER DEVICES

Rate your level of agreement with the following statement: My organization has a visibility gap between what we can quickly and easily see about end-user devices and what we want to be able to see to effectively mitigate risk.
(Percent of respondents, N=500)



DOD Data

MOST ORGANIZATIONS LACK THE VISIBILITY THEY WANT INTO END-USER DEVICES

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: My organization has a visibility gap between what we can quickly and easily see about end-user devices and what we want to be able to see to effectively mitigate risk.

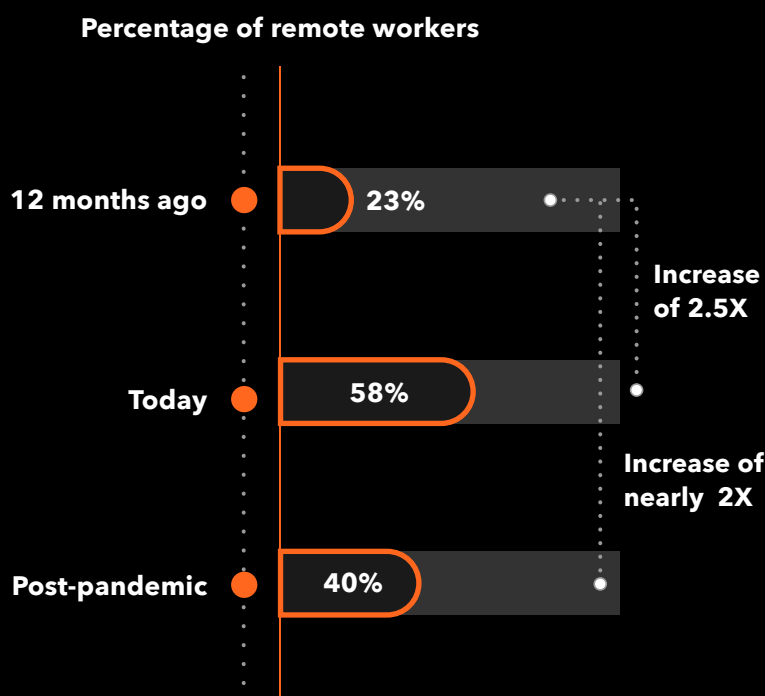
MORE DEVICE AND OPERATING DIVERSITY

As IT and security teams see the light at the end of the tunnel, they are preparing for a “new normal” in IT operating environments. This preparation begins with understanding where and how workers will operate, where and how applications and services will operate, and how workers will interact with critical business and collaboration systems.

While many report workers will return to the office, others are expected to continue working remote.

ON AVERAGE, RESPONDENTS EXPECT 40% OF THEIR ORGANIZATION'S WORKFORCE WILL BE REMOTE WORKERS AFTER THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK IS CONTROLLED—AN INCREASE OF 74% RELATIVE TO BEFORE THE PANDEMIC.

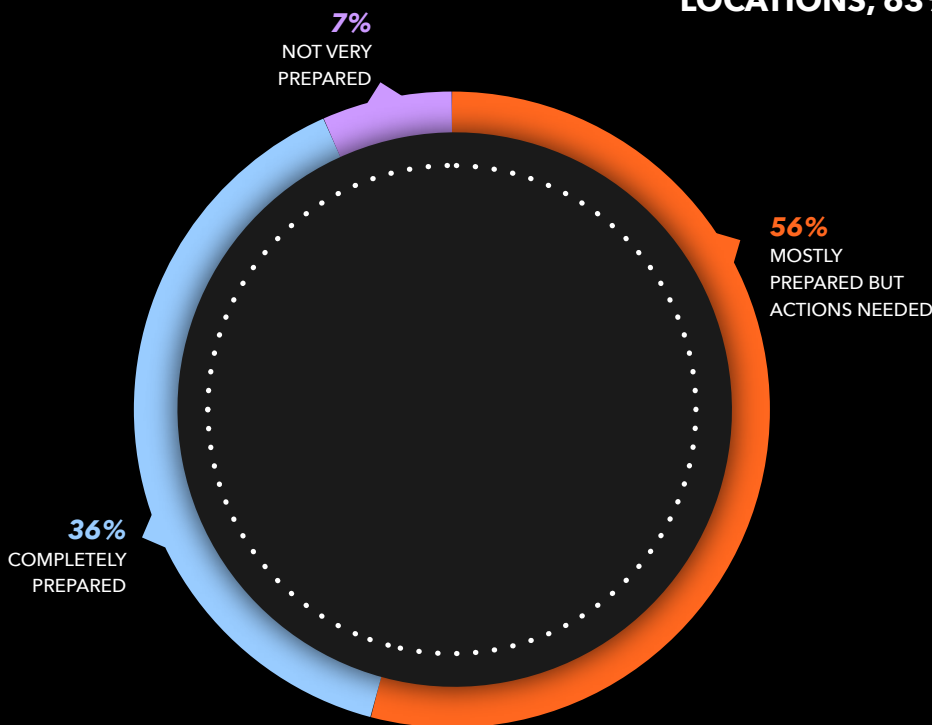
THE NUMBER OF REMOTE WORKERS HAS MORE THAN DOUBLED SINCE THE PANDEMIC AND WILL NOT SNAP BACK TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS



Twelve months ago, prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, approximately what percentage of your organization's employees were remote users? What percentage of your organization's total employees are remote users today?
(Mean, N=498)

Once the COVID-19 outbreak is controlled and it is safe for employees to return to the office, what percentage of your workforce do you expect will still work predominantly remotely?
(Mean, N=449)

WHILE MOST FEEL PREPARED FOR THE RETURN TO CORPORATE LOCATIONS, 63% REPORT THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE



This requires organizations to develop a longer-term operating and security plan for a hybrid environment. Most are well underway preparing for this change, however 63% report they still have work to do.

How prepared do you believe your organization's network and security functions are for the coming influx of employees back to corporate locations (from remote work scenarios)?
(Percent of respondents, N=359)



DOD AND PRIVATE SECTOR DIFFER IN TOP PRIORITIES TO PREPARE FOR INFLUX OF EMPLOYEES RETURNING TO THE OFFICE

While DoD and private sector respondents both identify a need to evaluate IAM, DoD teams are much more likely to update their BYOD policies before staff returns to the office.

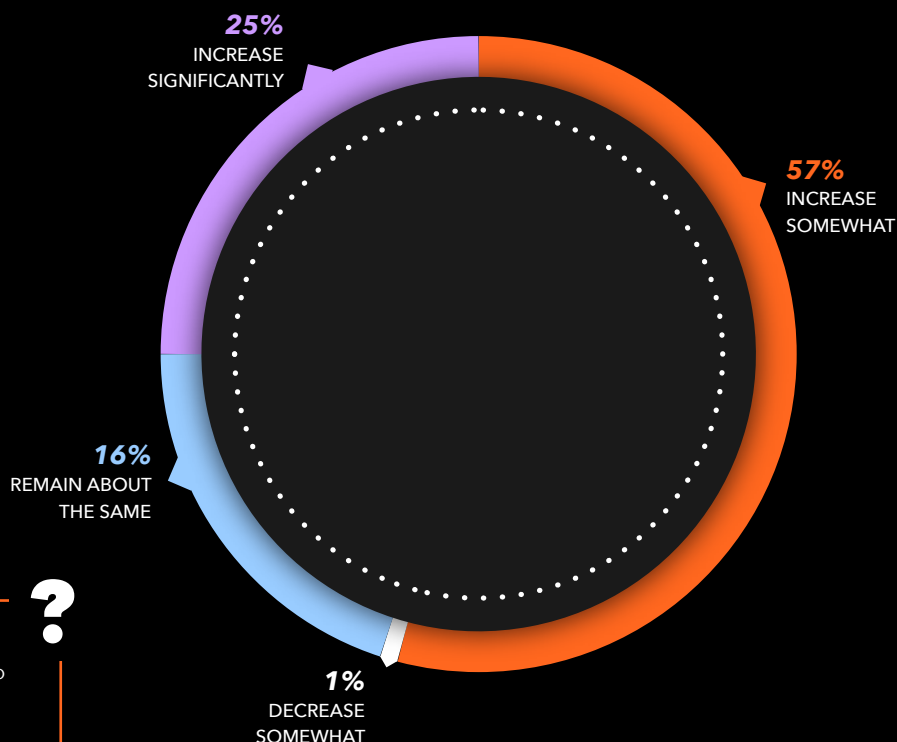
DOD	PRIVATE
1. Reassess identity and access management policies	1. Reassess identity and access management policies
2. Update BYOD policies	2. Reassess DLP policies and controls
3. Vulnerability and configuration drift assessment	3. Vulnerability and configuration drift assessment
4. Reassess patch management and audit software updates	4. Reassess patch management and audit software updates
5. Asset inventory refresh and assessment	5. Asset inventory refresh and assessment
6. Reassess DLP policies and controls	6. Update BYOD policies

What security priorities do you believe are most important for your organization to take as the number of staff in corporate locations/on the corporate network ramp back up? (Percent of respondents, N=359, multiple responses accepted)



4 OUT OF 5 PLAN TO INCREASE INVESTMENTS IN ASSET INVENTORY

Supporting the remote worker redirected both IT and security resources for much of 2020, deferring other previously planned initiatives. As organizations re-envision a state of normalcy, four out of five are planning investment to improve asset management to close visibility gaps.



Over the next two years, how will your organization's spending on initiatives to improve asset management (including technologies, processes, services, etc.) change, if at all?

(Percent of respondents, N=500)

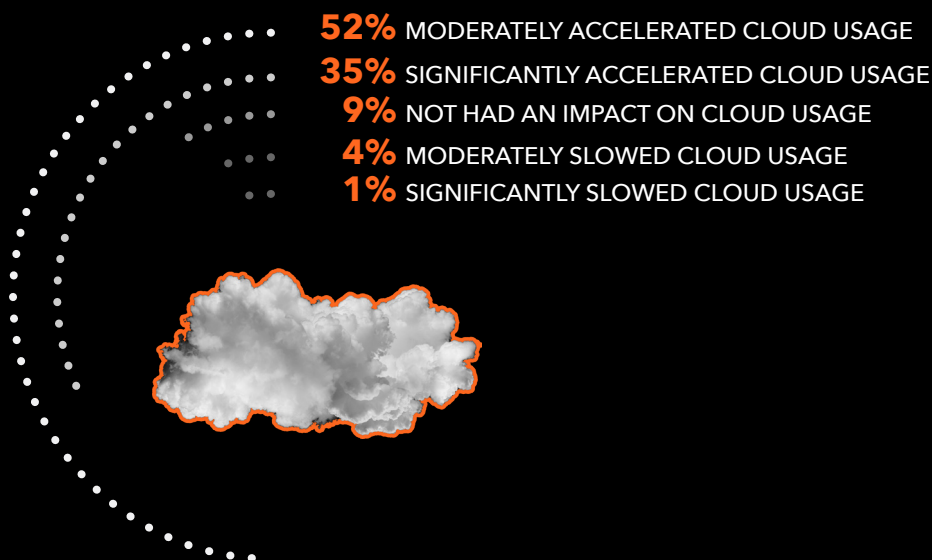


PUBLIC CLOUD CONTINUES TO ACCELERATE

While the move to public cloud was already well underway, the pandemic further accelerated the use of cloud-delivered productivity and collaboration tools while motivating businesses to expedite digital transformation initiatives, widely leveraging public cloud infrastructure.

IN FACT, 87% OF RESPONDENTS SAY THAT THE PANDEMIC HAS ACCELERATED PUBLIC CLOUD ADOPTION.

87% SAY THE PANDEMIC HAS ACCELERATED CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE ADOPTION

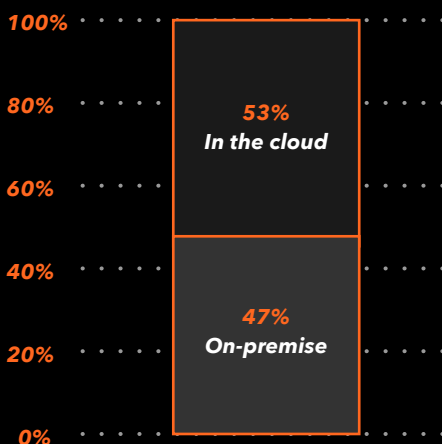


Generally speaking, has the COVID-19 outbreak had an impact on your organization's use of public cloud infrastructure (IaaS/PaaS)?
(Percent of respondents, N=494)



OVER HALF OF IT INFRASTRUCTURE RESIDE IN THE CLOUD, AND DOD AND PRIVATE SECTOR HAVE CLOUD ADOPTION PARITY

DoD repondants report that a majority of their infrastructure is now in the cloud. Ninety-six percent indicate that they have at least some cloud infrastructure.



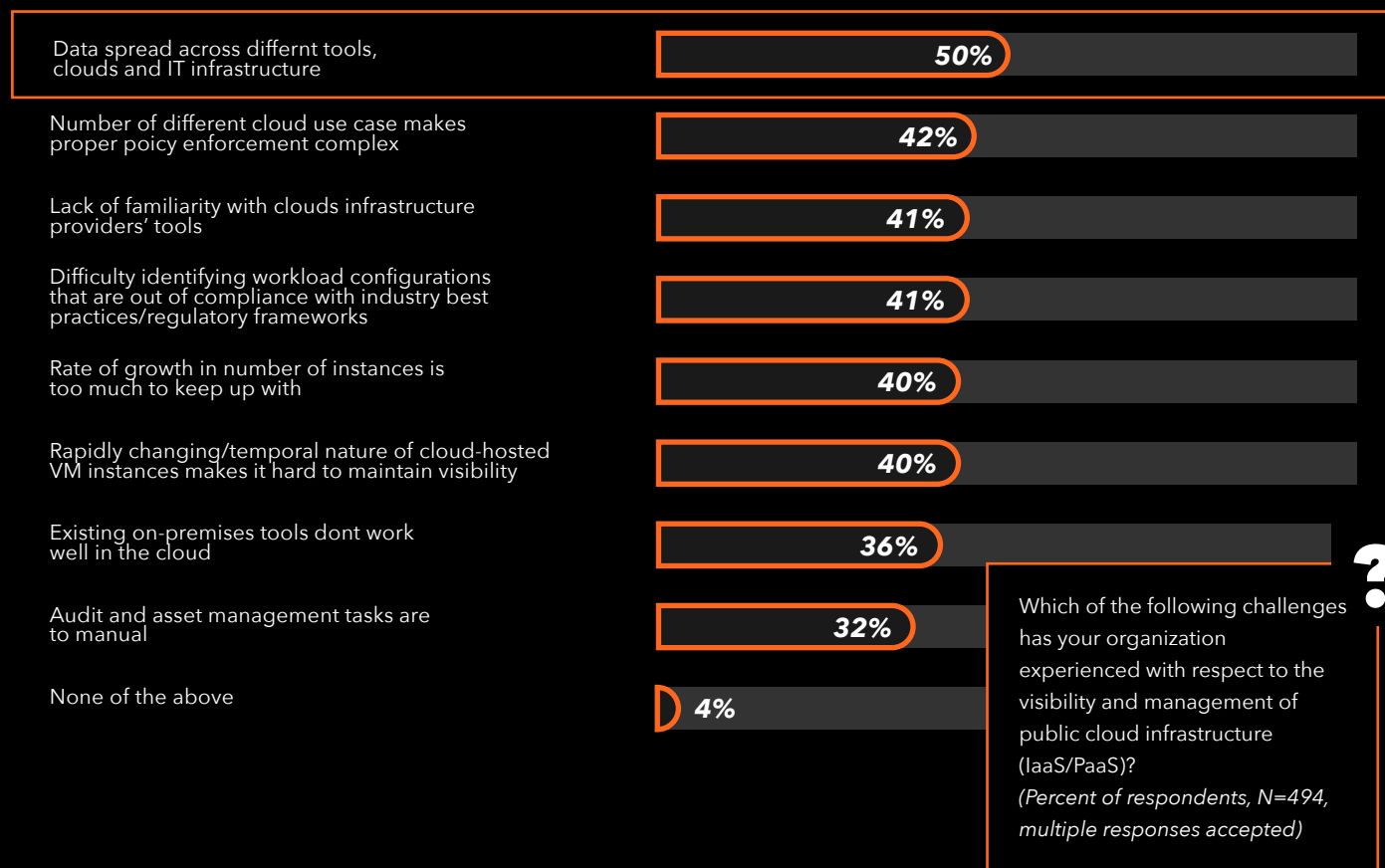
Approximately what percentage of your organization's IT infrastructure environment (e.g., storage, compute, containers, databases, etc.) do you believe is hosted in the cloud vs. on-premises?
(Mean, N=500)



These trends have spread data across a wide variety of infrastructure, multiple cloud service providers, and numerous SaaS applications, creating new complexity in securing and managing data privacy for critical data assets.

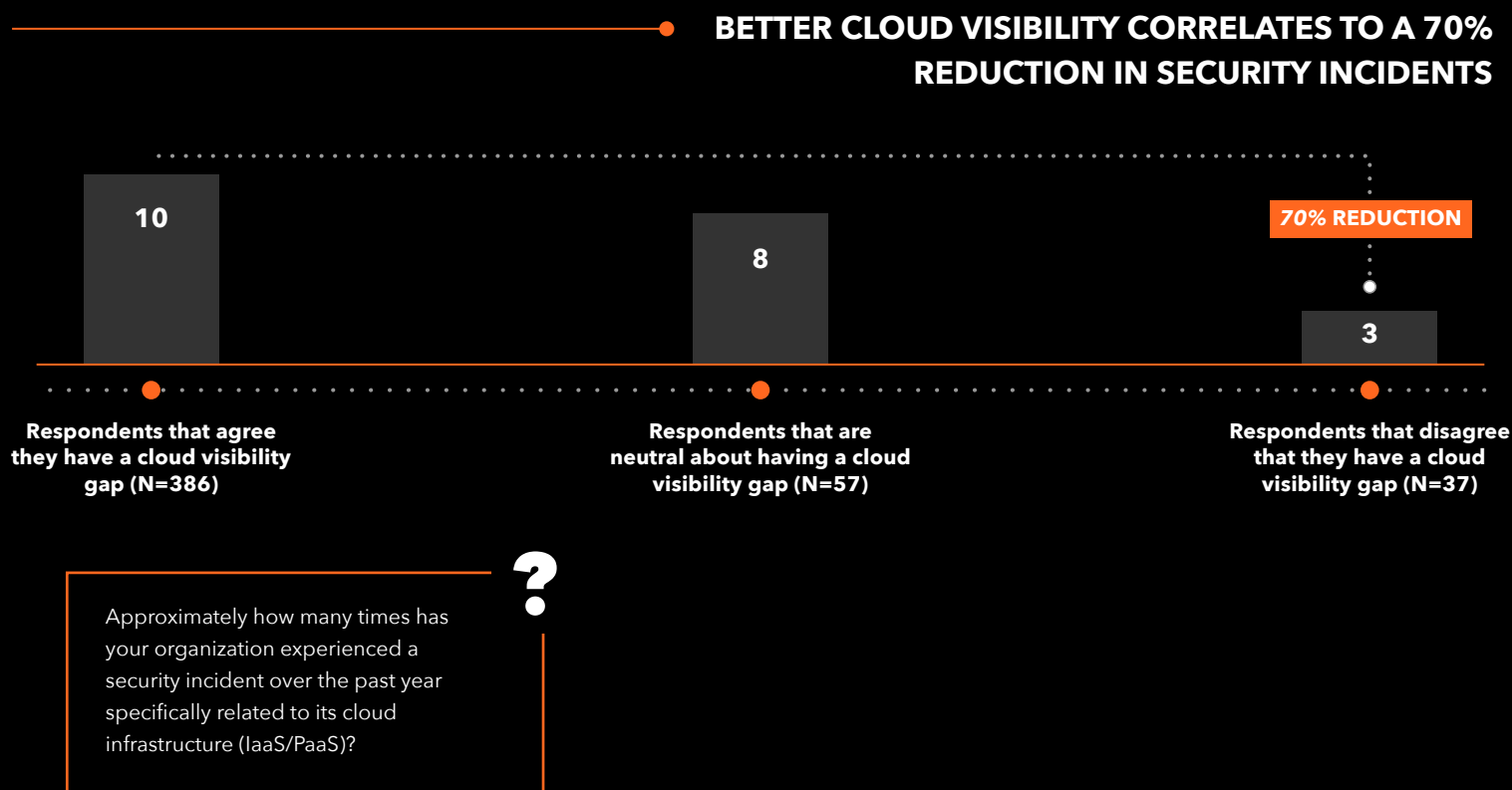
HALF OF ESG SURVEY RESPONDENTS REPORT VISIBILITY AND MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES WITH PUBLIC CLOUD INFRASTRUCTURE, ASSOCIATED WITH DATA SPREAD ACROSS DIFFERENT TOOLS, CLOUDS, AND INFRASTRUCTURE.

HALF REPORT VISIBILITY AND MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH DATA SPRAWL



When IT and security teams lack understanding about where critical data assets reside, they lack the ability to protect critical assets and uphold regulatory compliance laws. Moreover, our research shows a correlation between visibility gaps and security incidents like data loss or exploited vulnerabilities.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE ELIMINATED VISIBILITY GAPS REPORT A 70% REDUCTION IN PUBLIC CLOUD SECURITY INCIDENTS COMPARED TO THOSE WITH VISIBILITY GAPS (AN AVERAGE OF 10 INCIDENTS VS. 3).



CHANGING *PRIORITIES*

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The move to remote work required most organizations to reprioritize plans, delaying some initiatives while accelerating others. The overnight need to support non-corporate devices forced teams to implement stopgap policies for BYOD devices.

Many also report deferring planned IoT projects while focusing on remote work enablement and accelerated digital transformation initiatives. **Reprioritization will continue as organizations prepare for a new, hybrid operating environment.**

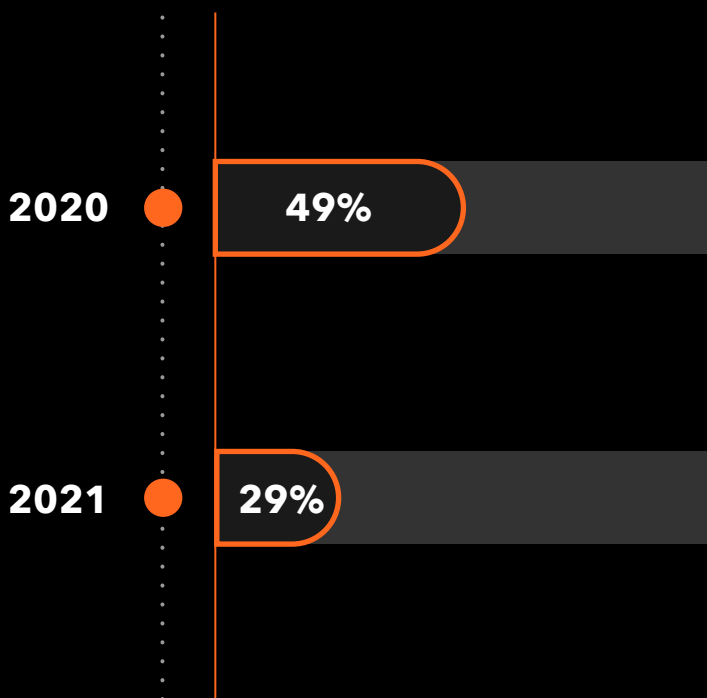
BYOD AND USER SERVICE POLICY ADAPT FOR THE **REMOTE WORKER**

The rapid move to remote work motivated a significant change in BYOD policies for many organizations. Pre-pandemic, half of organizations surveyed prohibited the use of personal devices for corporate activities.

POST-PANDEMIC, THIS NUMBER FELL TO 29%, ADDING NEW MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY COMPLEXITY FOR THESE DEVICES.

BYOD POLICIES HAVE CHANGED DRAMATICALLY FROM 2020

Percentage of organizations prohibiting employees from using personal devices for work

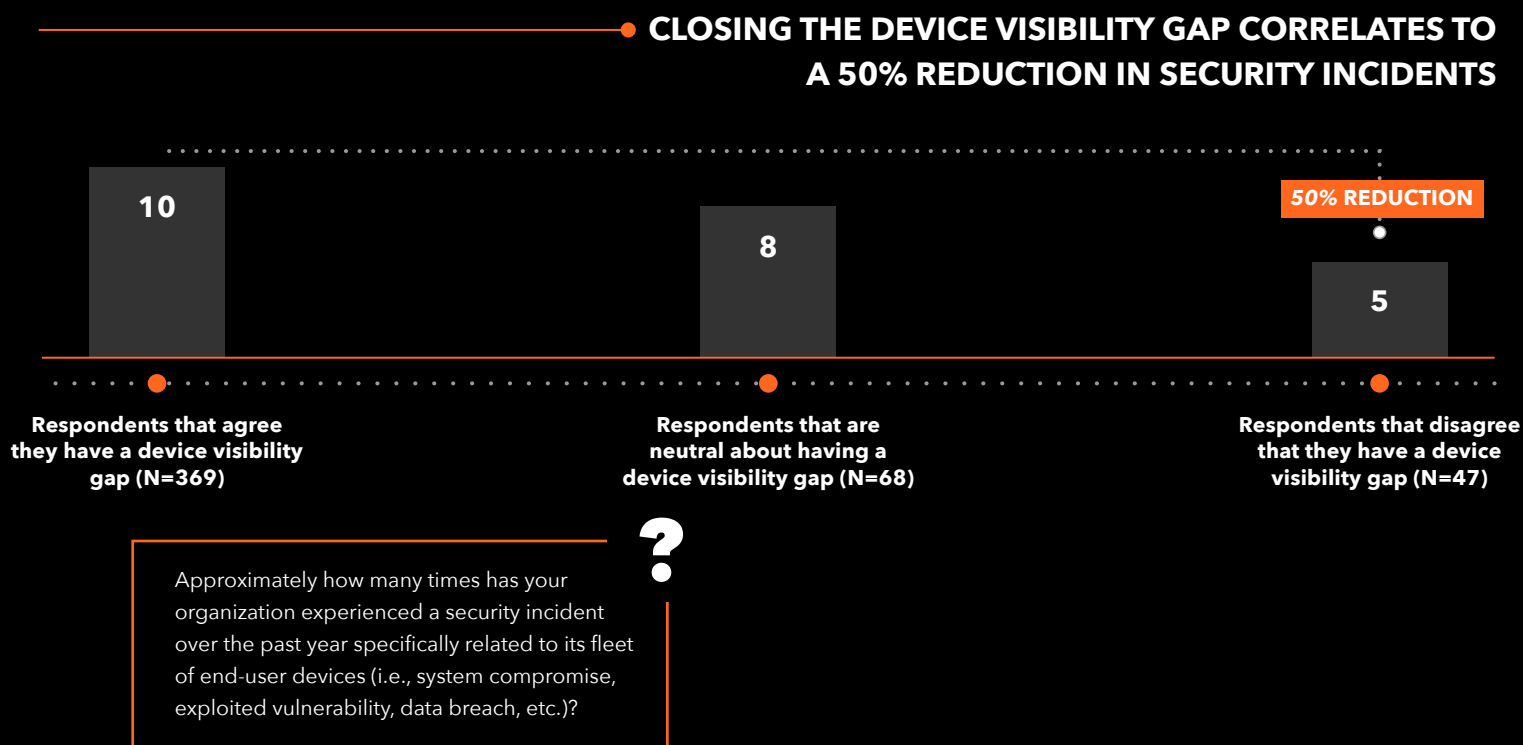


Are employees prohibited from using their own devices for work applications?



As workers depend on devices that are not corporate managed, they operate directly from endpoint to cloud workload, bypassing corporate infrastructure where other identity and access controls have traditionally been deployed. This creates blind spots for most organizations, which are again correlated with real security incidents like compromised systems.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE ELIMINATED VISIBILITY GAPS REPORT A 50% REDUCTION IN END-USER DEVICE SECURITY INCIDENTS RELATIVE TO THOSE WITH VISIBILITY GAPS (AVERAGE OF 10 INCIDENTS VS. 5).



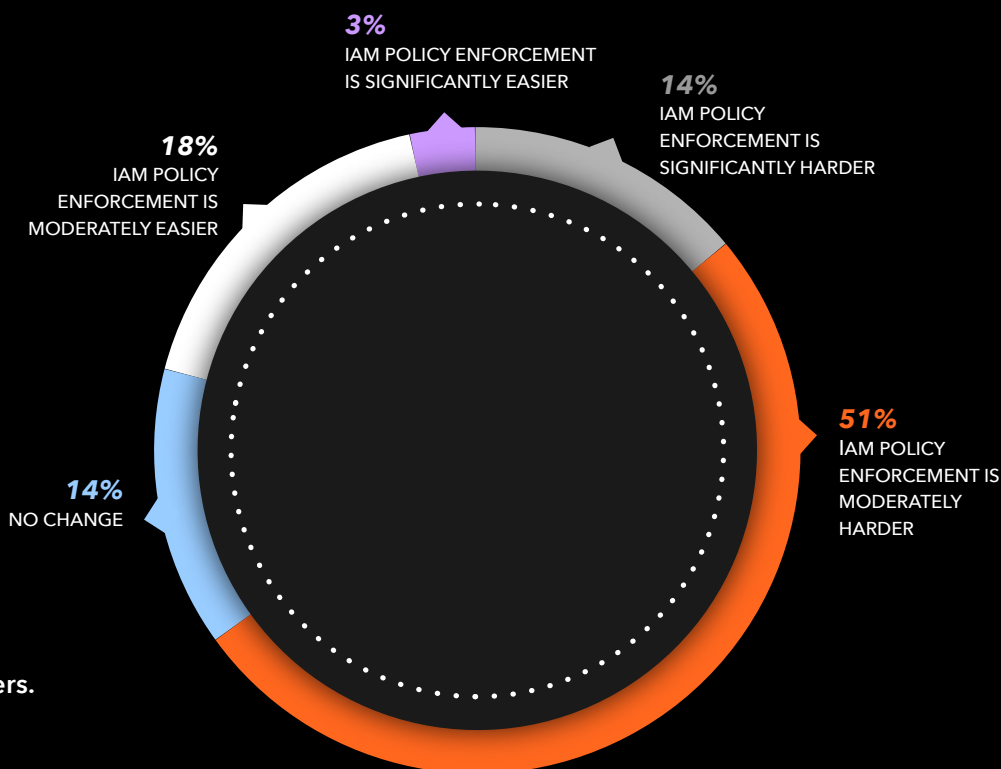
As device diversity increases, IT and security teams are putting more focus on identity and access management (IAM) solutions, with 65% reporting that IAM is more challenging as a result of supporting remote workers.

AS ORGANIZATIONS REESTABLISH A NEW NORMAL, OFFERING WORKERS NEW FLEXIBILITY TO USE NON-CORPORATE, PERSONAL DEVICES, MORE POLICY EVOLUTION IS EXPECTED – ALONG WITH ADDITIONAL FOCUS ON DIRECT-TO-CLOUD IAM SOLUTIONS.

IAM GAINS NEW IMPORTANCE

How has the increase in remote workers supported by your organization impacted the difficulty you associate with secure identity and access management (IAM) policy enforcement?

(Percent of respondents, N=449)



65% think that IAM is more challenging as a result of supporting more remote workers.

IOT PROJECTS DEFERRED AS RESOURCES REFOCUS ON **REMOTE WORK**

As the pandemic redirected IT and security resources to focus on supporting the remote worker and accelerated digital transformation, many IoT projects were furloughed.

**OUR RESEARCH SHOWED A 16 PERCENTAGE-POINT DECLINE
IN THE PERCENTAGE OF ORGANIZATIONS WITH ACTIVE IOT
PROJECTS (55% A YEAR AGO COMPARED TO 39% TODAY).**

IOT PROJECTS DEFERRED DUE TO PANDEMIC

IOT INITIATIVES UNDERWAY TODAY **39%**
 DEVELOPING IOT INITIATIVES AND WILL LAUNCH THEM IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS **37%**
 INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING IOT INITIATIVES **21%**
 NO PLANS OR INTEREST IN IOT INITIATIVES AT THIS TIME **03%**

Based on this definition, how would you characterize your organization's internet-of-things (IoT) initiatives?
(Percent of respondents, N=500)



**16% decline in active
IoT projects**

But IoT projects didn't go away. As organizations regain control over their new, multifaceted work environments, IoT projects will reignite, and organizations need to be ready.

WITH ONLY 34% REPORTING THEY HAVE A STRONG STRATEGY FOR MAINTAINING IOT DEVICE VISIBILITY, THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE.

ONLY ONE-THIRD ARE CONFIDENT IN THEIR IOT VISIBILITY STRATEGY

Which of the following best represents your organization's strategy for maintaining visibility (i.e., configuration, security agents, OS patches applied, etc.) over its IoT devices over the next few years?

(Percent of respondents, N=483)



34%

WE HAVE A STRATEGY, AND I AM VERY CONFIDENT IT WILL BE EFFECTIVE

43%

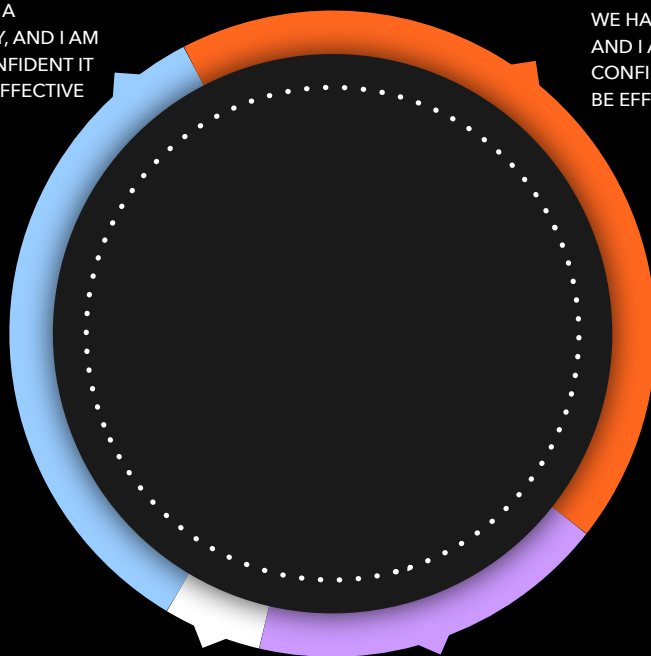
WE HAVE A STRATEGY, AND I AM SOMEWHAT CONFIDENT IT WILL BE EFFECTIVE

5%

WE DON'T HAVE A STRATEGY DEVELOPED YET

18%

WE HAVE A STRATEGY, BUT I AM NOT CONFIDENT IT WILL BE EFFECTIVE



Proof of that fact: 75% of organizations believe they have or will have a visibility gap between what they can quickly and easily see about IoT devices, and what they want to be able to see to effectively mitigate risk.

● IOT IS HAPPENING, BUT MOST LACK VISIBILITY

Please rate your level of agreement with the following statement: My organization has/will have a visibility gap between what we can quickly and easily see about IoT devices and what we want to be able to see to effectively mitigate risk.

(Percent of respondents, N=483)



AGREE **48%**
 STRONGLY AGREE **27%**
 NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE **14%**
 DISAGREE **8%**
 STRONGLY DISAGREE **3%**
 DONT KNOW **1%**



Sixty-two percent report facing challenges with the variety of devices in use, making it difficult to know what agents should be installed and configurations should be in place. New strategies will be required.

● DIVERSITY IN IOT DEVICE TYPES IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF MANAGEMENT AND SECURITY CHALLENGES

Variety of devices in use/that will be in use makes it hard to know what agents should be installed and what configurations should be in place

62%

Rate of growth in devices is/will be too much to keep up with

47%

Tools we use don't support many of the connected devices we are/will support

44%

Audit and asset management tasks are too manual

38%

None of the above

8%

Which of the following challenges, if any, has or will your organization experience with respect to the visibility and management of IoT devices?

(Percent of respondents, N=483, multiple responses accepted)



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The pandemic has increased the attack surface for many organizations. Without proper visibility into their operating infrastructure, IT and security

teams risk losing control. Most report challenges and visibility gaps, making IT asset inventory discovery and management a priority.

MOST DEPEND ON MULTIPLE, INADEQUATE TOOLS FOR IT **ASSET INVENTORY**

Organizations continue to report challenges in keeping up with asset inventory and visibility.



The manual collection of data from multiple, separate, and overlapping tools



Involvement by different organizations and people who **manage these various tools**



Problems with deduplication



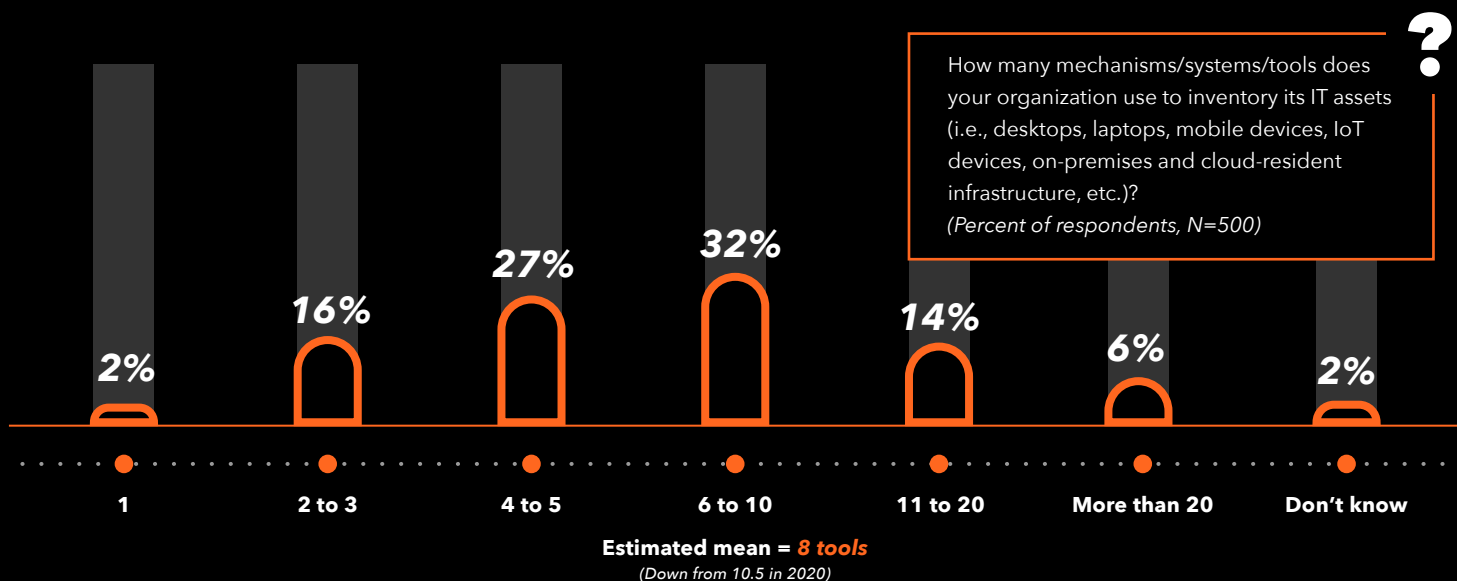
The pace of change for new devices and workloads



Lack of detailed visibility from the tools in use

On average, organizations depend on eight different tools to pull together asset inventories, while reporting intensively manual processes to pull together the data.

ON AVERAGE, 8 TOOLS ARE USED FOR ASSET INVENTORY

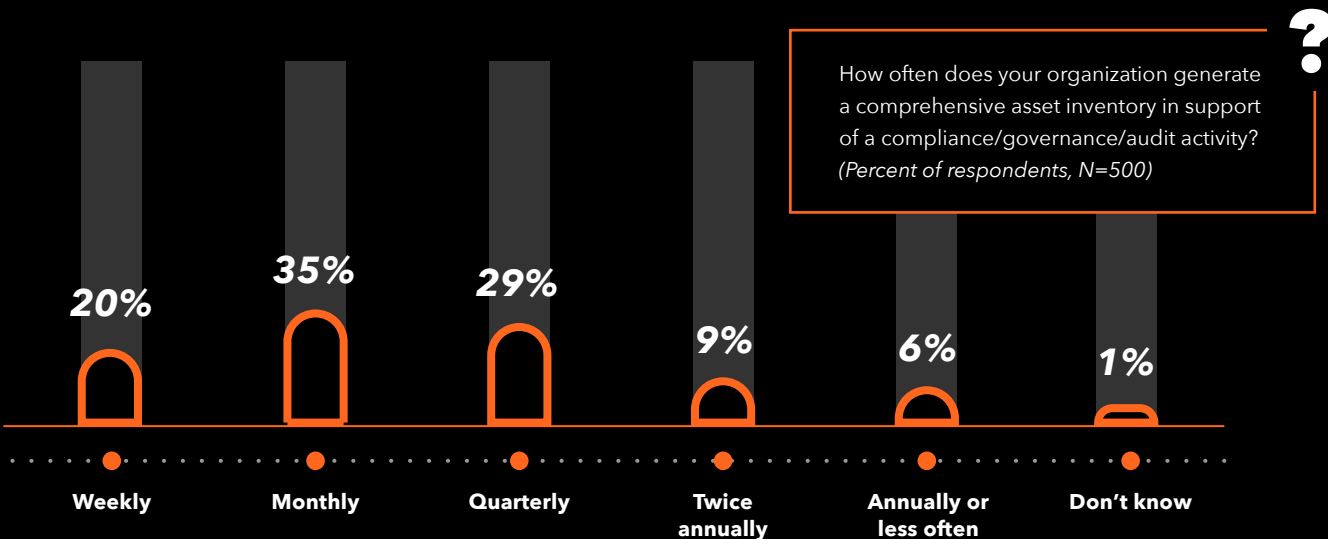


IT TAKES 86 PERSON-HOURS, ON AVERAGE, TO GENERATE AN ASSET INVENTORY, UTILIZING A COMBINATION OF TOOLS THAT WEREN'T BUILT FOR THIS TASK, INCLUDING:

- Endpoint management
- Endpoint security
- Network access controls
- Network scanning
- Configuration and patch management
- Vulnerability assessment

With this kind of effort, **nearly two-thirds (64%) report asset inventory as an event versus a process**, only updating inventories monthly or quarterly. This cadence leaves significant visibility gaps in-between, resulting in unmeasurable business risk.

● TWO-THIRDS REPORT ASSET INVENTORY AS AN EVENT



Looking back to **research data from last year**, organizations have made little progress solving this problem.

THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT 82% REPORT PLANS TO INCREASE INVESTMENTS THIS YEAR TO COMBAT THE PROBLEM.

4 OUT OF 5 PLAN TO INCREASE INVESTMENTS IN ASSET INVENTORY



Over the next two years, how will your organization's spending on initiatives to improve asset management (including technologies, processes, services, etc.) change, if at all?
(Percent of respondents, N=500)

INCREASE SOMEWHAT **57%**
INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY **25%**
REMAIN ABOUT THE SAME **16%**
DECREASE SOMEWHAT **1%**



iN AN IDEAL WORLD

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This year's survey once again reinforces the desire to redeploy IT and security resources currently consumed in the arduous asset inventory process to other more important

activities, including vulnerability assessment, validating security controls and infrastructure, and improved threat investigations and response.

● IN AN IDEAL WORLD

- **IT and security teams would have a continuous inventory of all IT assets, configuration, and the operating software that powers them.** As new devices and workloads are added or changed, continuous visibility would be readily available, helping IT and security teams close gaps that expose organizations to security and operational risk.
- IT and security teams would share a common view of their infrastructure, **manifesting in a more collaborative, efficient workflow to manage and secure the environment.**
- As organizations return to some state of normalcy, getting asset inventory under control can help organizations free up security and IT resources, redeploying them to more important tasks.

IN 2021, ORGANIZATIONS WILL BE ABLE TO GET ASSET INVENTORY UNDER CONTROL, BRINGING NEEDED CONTINUOUS ATTACK SURFACE VISIBILITY. THIS WILL RESULT IN IMPROVED SECURITY POSTURE AND A REDUCTION IN THE COST OF ASSET INVENTORY.



AXONIUS.COM ●

Axonius is the cybersecurity asset management platform that gives organizations a comprehensive asset inventory, uncovers security solution coverage gaps, and automatically validates and enforces security policies. By seamlessly integrating with over 300 security and management solutions, Axonius is deployed in minutes, improving cyber hygiene immediately.

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REQUEST DEMO

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

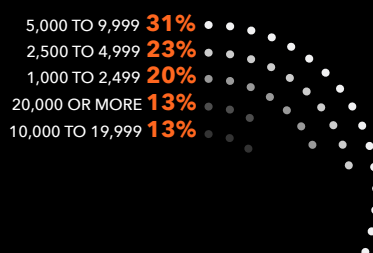
To gather data for this eBook, ESG conducted a comprehensive online survey of IT and cybersecurity professionals from private- and public-sector organizations in North America (United States and Canada), Western Europe (UK and Germany), and APAC (Australia, Hong Kong, New Zealand, and Singapore) between January 22, 2021 and February 12, 2021.

To qualify for this survey, respondents were required to be IT or cybersecurity professionals personally knowledgeable with their organization's cybersecurity environment and cloud infrastructure usage. All respondents were provided an incentive to complete the survey in the form of cash awards and/or cash equivalents. After filtering out unqualified respondents, removing duplicate responses, and screening the remaining completed responses (on a number of criteria) for data integrity, we were left with a final total sample of 500 IT and cybersecurity professionals.

Subsequently, MeriTalk conducted a survey of IT and cybersecurity professionals from DoD agencies (Air Force, Army, Combatant Commands, Marine Corps, Navy, The Joint Staff, DoD Inspector General, Fourth Estate agency) between March 26, 2021 and April 16, 2021

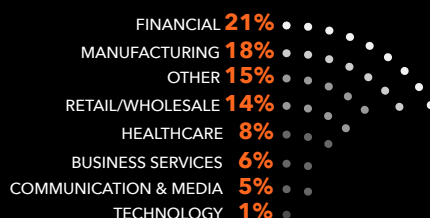
To qualify for this survey, respondents were required to be IT or cybersecurity professionals personally knowledgeable with their organization's cybersecurity environment and cloud infrastructure usage. After filtering out unqualified respondents, removing duplicate responses, and screening the remaining completed responses (on a number of criteria) for data integrity, we were left with a final total sample of 100 DOD IT and cybersecurity professionals.

RESPONDENTS BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES



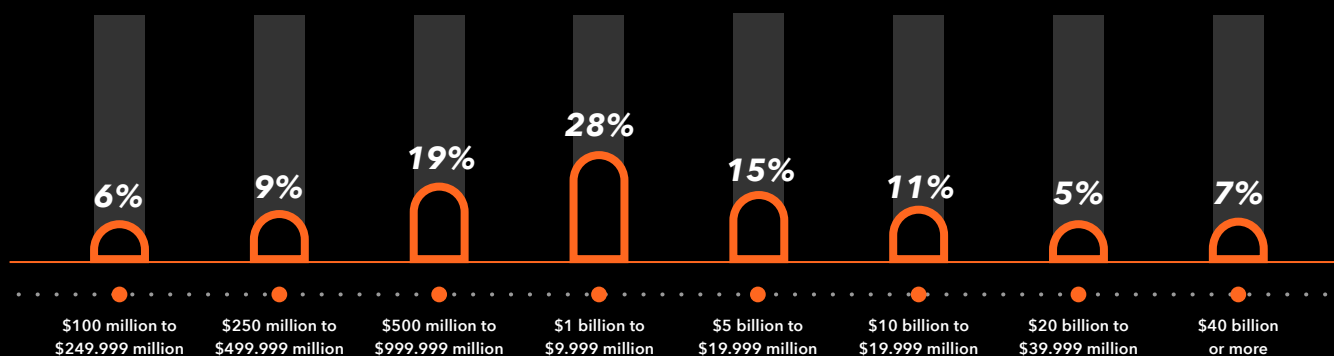
How many total employees does your organization have worldwide?
(Percent of respondents, N=500)

RESPONDENTS BY INDUSTRY



What is your organization's primary industry?
(Percent of respondents, N=500)

RESPONDENTS BY ANNUAL REVENUE



WHICH DEPARTMENT DO YOU WORK FOR?

Answer Choices	Responses
Air Force	14%
Army	25%
Combatant Commands	13%
Marine Corps	10%
Navy	15%
The Joint Staff	10%
DoD Inspector General	7%
Fourth Estate Agency	3%
Other	3%

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR ROLE?

Answer Choices	Responses
CIO/CTO or other executive level IT decision-maker	12%
Deputy CIO/CTO	12%
IT director/supervisor	28%
IT systems engineer or administrator	11%
Application owner	2%
Data center manager	1%
Portfolio Manager	4%
Cloud manager, specialist, or architect	1%
Software/applications manager or engineer	5%
Security application manager or engineer	3%
Other IT acquisition, implementation, or maintenance manager	4%
Mission, business, or program manager	17%
DoD contractor	0%
None of the above	0%