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A Preview of the 2024 SIM IT Trends Study

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A Preview of the 2024 SIM IT Trends Study

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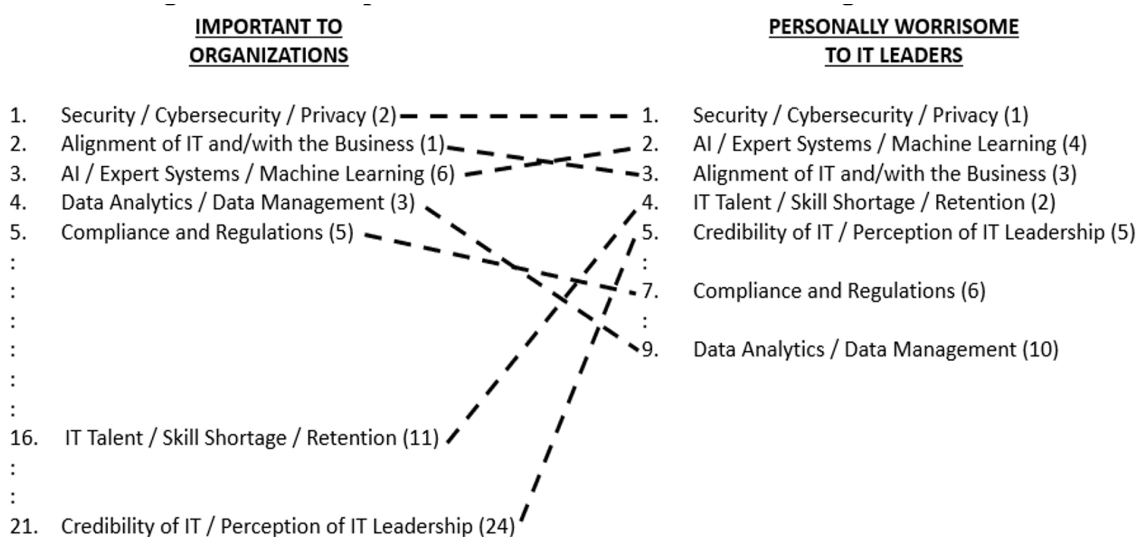
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Each year the Society for Information Management (SIM), a co-founder of *MIS Quarterly* (*MISQ*) and *MIS Quarterly Executive* (*MISQE*), in collaboration with a team of academicians, has surveyed SIM members to identify IT issues currently of concern to CIOs. For 44 years, the SIM IT Trends Study has provided an insightful, comprehensive, and ever evolving investigation of information systems (IS) management issues, practices, and leadership. The complete report provides IS executives, as well as researchers, with trend insights and a snapshot of the state-of-the-art of IT management. This preview highlights a few interesting findings from the 2024 study; the complete report will appear in the March 2025 issue of the *MIS Quarterly Executive*.

Data was collected from April to June 2024. The research team reached out to 4,983 SIM members, of which 691 (13.9%) responded. Our 2024 sample is representative of 431 unique organizations and 248 senior IT executives in the US, stemming from more than 30 different economic sectors. Respondents' organizations ranged from start-ups to long-lived incumbents, spanning private, government, non-profit, and publicly traded enterprises; their reported average revenue was $4.9 billion with a median of $400 million.

As with past years, and recognizing that organizational priorities do not always fully align with those of IT leaders, the SIM IT Trends Study examines and reports on the IT management issues that are considered both the most important to organizations and most worrisome to senior IT leaders. In 2024, as in 2023, persistent challenges stemming from inflation-driven cost increases continue to affect our organizations, exacerbated by ongoing global tensions. In addition, finding and retaining IT talent continues to be challenging. This year, we also observed interesting shifts in the areas of IT investment and focus. Investments in AI and machine learning have increased significantly. This is likely a function of growing interest in generative

Figure 1: Most Important and Most Worrisome IT Management Issues



Number in parentheses refers to an item's ranking last year.

AI and related applications, such as ChatGPT, which offer organizational benefits related to efficiency, innovation, and scalability.[1]

In the sections below, we spotlight some interesting findings addressed by the SIM IT Trends study: most important and most worrisome IT management issues, largest IT investments of organizations, and measuring IT performance.

Most Important and Most Worrisome IT Management Issues

Participants were asked to choose up to five IT management issues from a list of 30 options in two categories: "most important to the organization" and "most worrisome to senior IT leaders."[2] While some issues like "Security/ Cybersecurity/Privacy" and "Alignment of IT with the Organization" have consistently ranked high in both categories, we have found discrepancies between concerns that IT leaders personally perceive important and those they perceive important for their respective organization. "Agility/Flexibility of the Businesses," for example, reentered the top-10 list for organizations, rising from 16th position in 2023 to seventh in 2024; for IT leaders, this topic was only ranked 18th. Figure 1 illustrates the rankings and differences in those categories.

Areas of Organizational IT Investments

Senior IT leaders were also asked to select up to five areas/technologies from a list of 28 options in three categories: (1) their organization's largest near-term IT investment areas; (2) areas that should receive more investment, and (3) areas of greatest concern to them personally.

The near-term investments in "Analytics/ Business Intelligence" and "Security/ Cybersecurity" continue to occupy the top two positions. We found a significant rise in interest for investment in "AI and Machine Learning," which advanced from eighth to fifth position, and in "Integration/ Application Integration/Data Integration," which jumped from 19th to ninth position. Overall, "AI and Machine Learning" were consistently ranked high among areas that should receive more investment and those of great concern for senior IT leaders. Table 1 presents a

1 McGrath, Q. "Responding to the Sharp Rise in AI in the 2023 SIM IT Trends Survey," *MIS Quarterly Executive*, 23:1, 2024, pp. 125-129.

2 All lists used in the SIM IT Trends Study are reviewed each year by an advisory group consisting of SIM CIOs, representing a broad variety of industries. Based on the advisory group's input, changes are incorporated to better reflect challenges facing organizations and IT leaders.

Table 1: Areas that Should Receive More Investment

Information Technology	2024	2023
AI / Machine Learning / Expert Systems	1 (45.0%)	1 (38.8%)
Security / Cybersecurity	2 (32.5%)	3 (29.1%)
Analytics / Business Intelligence / Data Mining	3 (30.6%)	2 (35.1%)
Data Integration / Quality	4 (20.0%)	6 (17.9%)
Disaster Recovery / Continuity Planning	5 (17.4%)	5 (18.3%)
Staff Development / Training / H1B	6 (17.9%)	4 (20.0%)
Legacy Applications - Replacing / Replatforming	7 (14.8%)	8 (15.6%)
Application Software Dev. / Maintenance	8 (14.2%)	10 (14.4%)
Master Data Management / Data Quality	9 (13.5%)	16 (9.6%)
Cloud Computing (e.g., SaaS, PaaS, IaaS, etc.)	10 (13.0%)	7 (15.8%)

list of areas that, according to senior IT leaders, should receive more investment.

Measuring IT Performance

Senior IT leaders were asked to choose up to five items from a list of 33 performance measures to evaluate both their internal IT organization as well as their personal performance. Our study shows that the top measures for internal IT performance have remained mostly stable, with "Availability/Up Time" maintaining the top spot, followed by "Customer/User Satisfaction" in second place, and "Cybersecurity" as well as "Cost Control Reduction" tying for third position.

For senior IT leaders' personal performance, "Customer Satisfaction – Internal Users" and "Value of IT to the Business" retained their top positions from last year, continuing to rank first and second, respectively. "Cost Control / Reduction – IT" also held steady in third place; however, this year, it shared the third spot with "IT's Contribution to Strategy," which moved up from its sixth position last year.

All This and More in the Next Issue of MISQE

Those are just the highlights of the 2024 SIM IT Trends Study. Do you want to know what keeps CIOs up at night, who they spend their time with, and what they spend it doing? How about issues around IT spending, workforce planning, cloud utilization, shared services, governance, and cybersecurity? If any of those are important to you, see the complete report in the March 2025 issue of the MIS Quarterly Executive.