Generative AI in Ireland 2024 – Adoption Rates and Trends
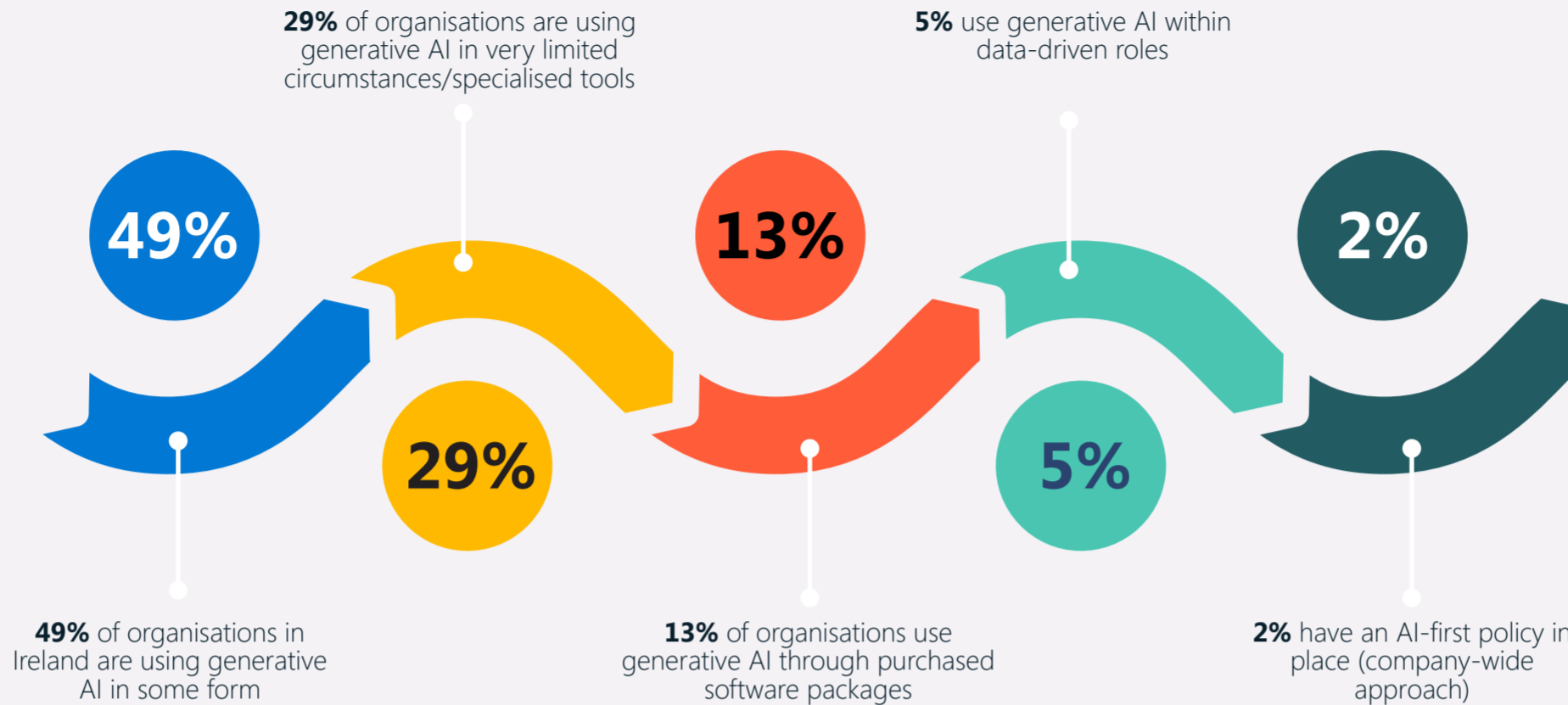## A Report by Microsoft Ireland and Trinity College Dublin

Microsoft

Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Trinity Business School › Transforming Business for Good

01 Adoption and usage of generative AI across organisations in Ireland

A study of 400 senior leaders in Ireland highlights strong adoption rates and overall positive perception of generative AI, with almost half of organisations using some form of the technology, even at this early stage. That said, first mover advantage and AI policy integration need to be fully embraced for Ireland to realise its digital leadership potential in the EU and the transformational economic opportunity generative AI innovation can bring to the Irish economy.

49%

29%

13%

5%

2%

29% of organisations are using generative AI in very limited circumstances/specialised tools

5% use generative AI within data-driven roles

49% of organisations in Ireland are using generative AI in some form

13% of organisations use generative AI through purchased software packages

2% have an AI-first policy in place (company-wide approach)

30%

Indigenous versus multinational approach:

Indigenous private and public sector organisations have demonstrated high adoption rates when it comes to generative AI tools. However, they still lag compared to multinationals in Ireland who are generally leveraging 30% more generative AI.
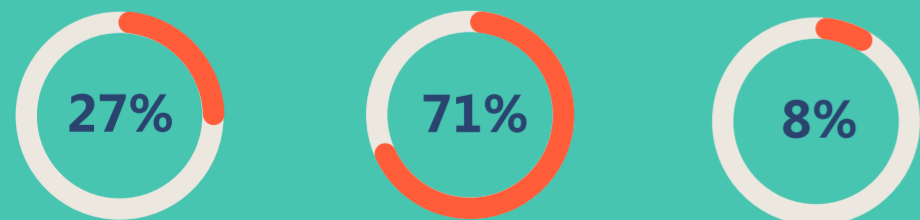
02 Shadow generative AI culture emerging

Despite the prevalence of generative AI usage in organisations, the study exposes the potential emergence of a shadow IT culture in Irish workplaces. Employees and senior managers appear eager to integrate generative AI tools into their daily work. The hesitancy of organisations to introduce formal policies for generative AI has led to publicly available consumer tools being used, even in defiance of workplace policies. This indicates the need for organisations to introduce policies that support responsible generative AI use to prevent employees from seeking workarounds.

Organisational generative AI policies

50%

37%

23%

50% of senior managers trust generative AI technologies, despite its infancy.

4/5 senior managers plan to introduce generative AI at some point, while **37%** have adoption plans in place in the next **0-18 months.**

23% of organisations have forbidden the use of free generative AI software.

Employee sentiment towards generative AI

27%

71%

8%

Over **1/4** of respondents (**27%**) admit to using publicly available consumer generative AI tools in their daily work. 1/4 of managers said that they are aware of their employees doing so.

Those with a generative AI-first policy see more benefits and productivity increases from generative AI (**71%**).

8% of respondents were aware of employees using free publicly available, generative AI despite it being forbidden in their organisation.
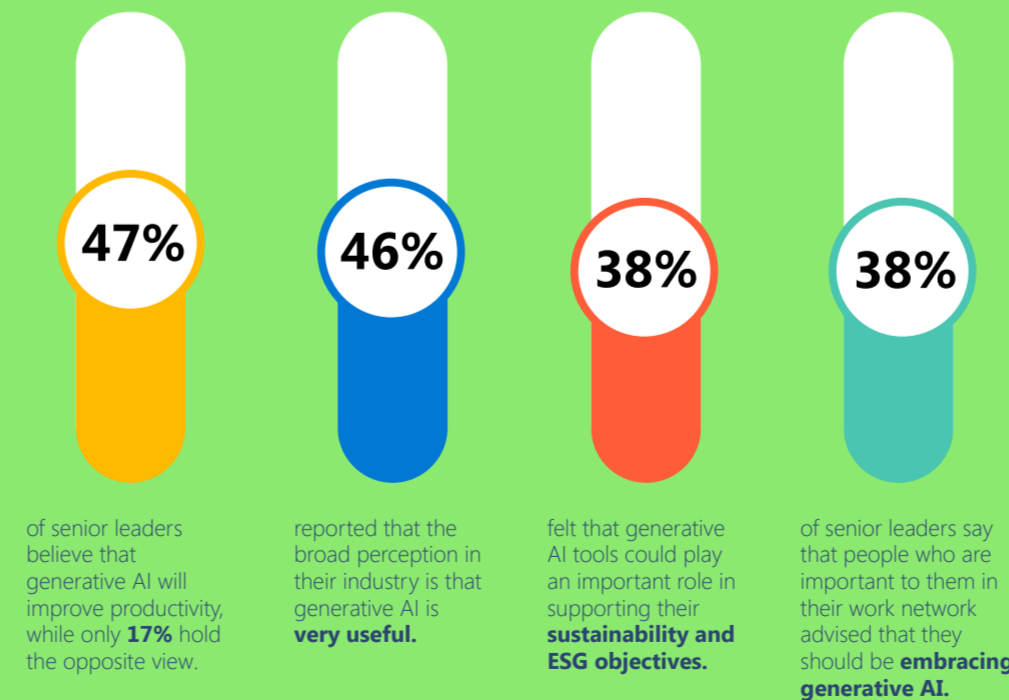
03 Productivity and innovation

Senior managers are more concerned about the threat of IP infringement regarding open-source generative AI than enterprise-grade generative AI.

Leaders recognise that a generative AI-first policy (a company-wide approach) yields greater productivity, skills development, innovation and governance. It is imperative now that generative AI usage and adoption is managed in line with national and international guidelines for responsible AI adoption.

50% of senior managers fear that using public or free-to-use generative AI tools might allow other people or companies to use their confidential information without their knowledge.

47%

46%

38%

38%

of senior leaders believe that generative AI will improve productivity, while only **17%** hold the opposite view.

reported that the broad perception in their industry is that generative AI is **very useful.**

felt that generative AI tools could play an important role in supporting their **sustainability and ESG objectives.**

of senior leaders say that people who are important to them in their work network advised that they should be **embracing generative AI.**

For further information about Microsoft AI: https://news.microsoft.com/ai

04 To deliver sustainable value from generative AI investments, organisations in Ireland must:

Address skills gap:

A strategic approach to generative AI requires not only technology, data, and expertise, but also calls for business domain knowledge and change management skills. The report highlights that more education and support is required for organisations, especially SMEs. The study finds that firms with senior executives more aligned to generative AI and organisations with higher external training are better equipped to adopt and innovate through generative AI.

Transformative versus incremental innovation:

Organisations can innovate and transform using generative AI — but they will only invest if AI moves the needle on metrics that matter in the short-term. However, a visionary approach, and a deeper assessment of the benefits of AI to transform an organisation and shape their digital destiny is required, particularly in the public sector which is under pressure to provide higher quality public services to citizens. While some organisations will prioritise incremental advancements, they should also consider a roadmap to embrace transformative innovation and disruptive AI to achieve true growth and support Ireland's ambition to be a digital leader in Europe.

Leverage platforms and providers that take responsibility and security seriously

Train and educate decision-makers around the issues of data privacy and legal issues related to the use of generative AI. Our research indicates this to be an area of concern for many business leaders. Leverage platforms that take responsibility for data storage and with enterprise-grade security to prepare for possible future regulations, customer data security, and allay fears of business leaders. Organisations in Ireland risk missing out to international competitors without a clear, responsible and secure generative AI-first strategy.