

How the Canadian 🍁 book industry is approaching AI

Nataly Alarcón

October 2026

BOOKNET CANADA

BookNet Canada staff contribute their work from the traditional territories of

- the Mississaugas of the Credit,
- the Anishinaabe,
- the Haudenosaunee,
- the Wyandot,
- the Mi’kmaq,
- the Ojibwa of Fort William First Nation,
- the Three Fires Confederacy of First Nations (which includes the Ojibwa, the Odawa, and the Potawatomie
- the Métis,
- as well as the unceded and ancestral territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, or Tsleil-Waututh peoples.



Visit native-land.ca.

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Agenda

01
About the survey

02
Results overview

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Bonus: More on AI; beyond the survey

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Q&A

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About the survey

background + context

Background

2023

AI working group

BISG's AI working group convened and later designed the first iteration of the survey.

2025

Survey 2025

BISG & BNC collected **559** responses (**101** 🍁).

2026 (April+)

Data sharing

Results of the survey are shared through webinars and in April through a free report.

2026 (June-Sep.)

Survey 2026

A second iteration of the survey is fielded, receiving **771** responses (**284** 🍁).

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RESEARCH & EDUCATION

NEW

AI use across the North American book industry



BISG | BOOK INDUSTRY STUDY GROUP

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Purpose

- Empower the industry with data
- Identify needs for guidance
- Keep a finger on the pulse

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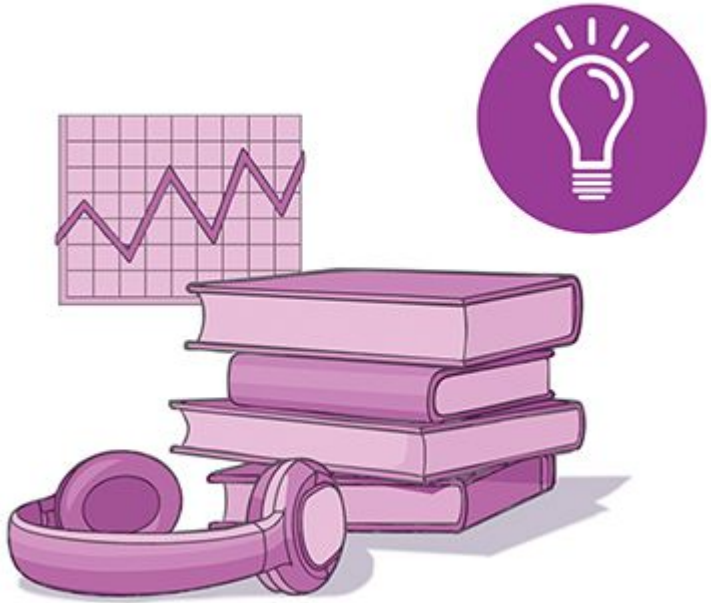
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Canadian data

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Canadian survey respondents: Who are they?



Respondents:

65% Work for an organization

35% Are self-employed

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Respondents work for:

41% Publishers

29% Libraries

9% Indie booksellers

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Publisher employees work for:

77% Trade publishers

18% University presses

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Self-employed respondents are:

24% Self-publishers

21% Editors

18% Authors working with a trade publisher

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Other key findings:

EMPLOYEES

Years in the industry

51%
10 years or less

49%
11 years or more

ORGANIZATION

Years in business

68%
36+ years

13%
15-25 years

ORGANIZATION

Employee count

31%
100+ employees

23%
21-50 employees

Results overview

Individuals + AI

what's the story?

Individuals: Use of AI in 2026

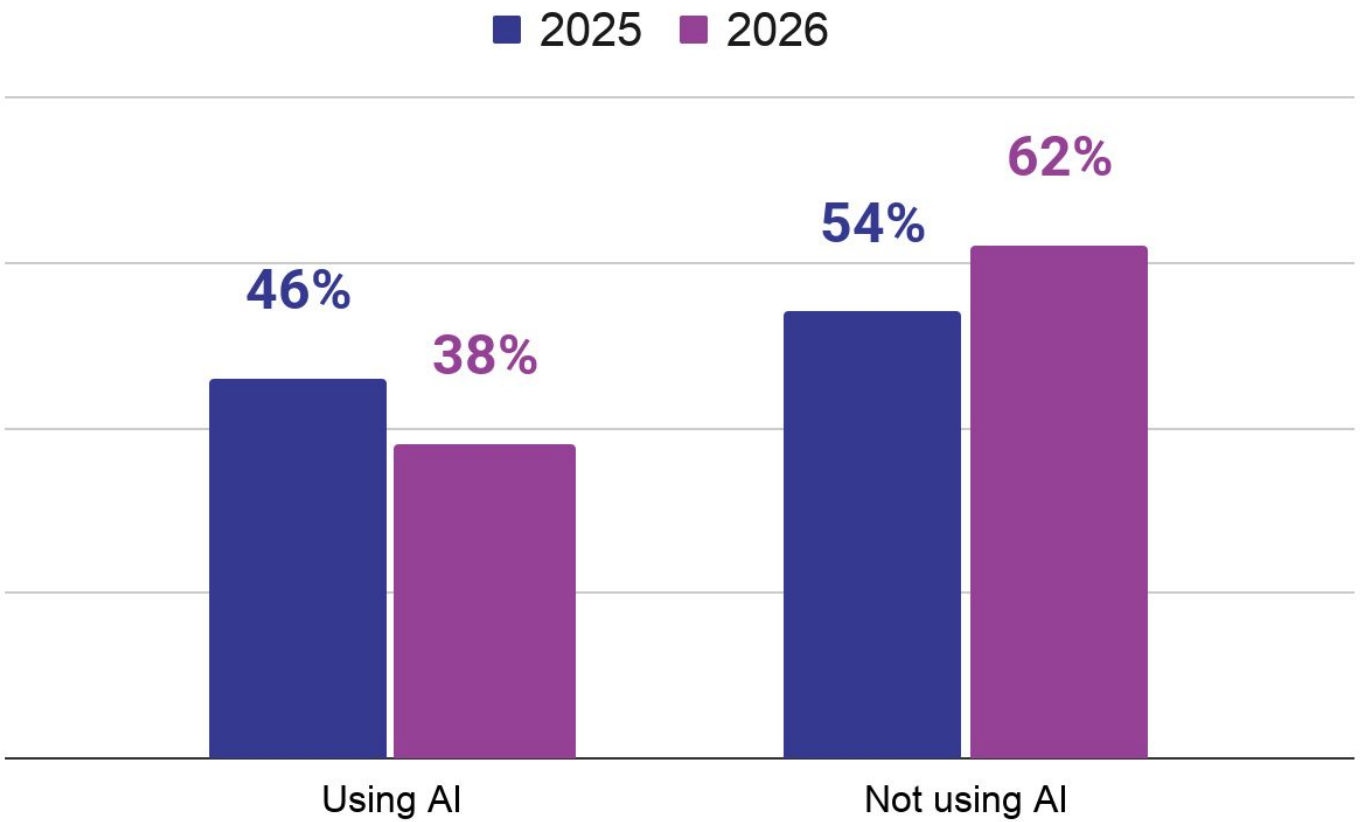
38% Using AI

62% Not using AI

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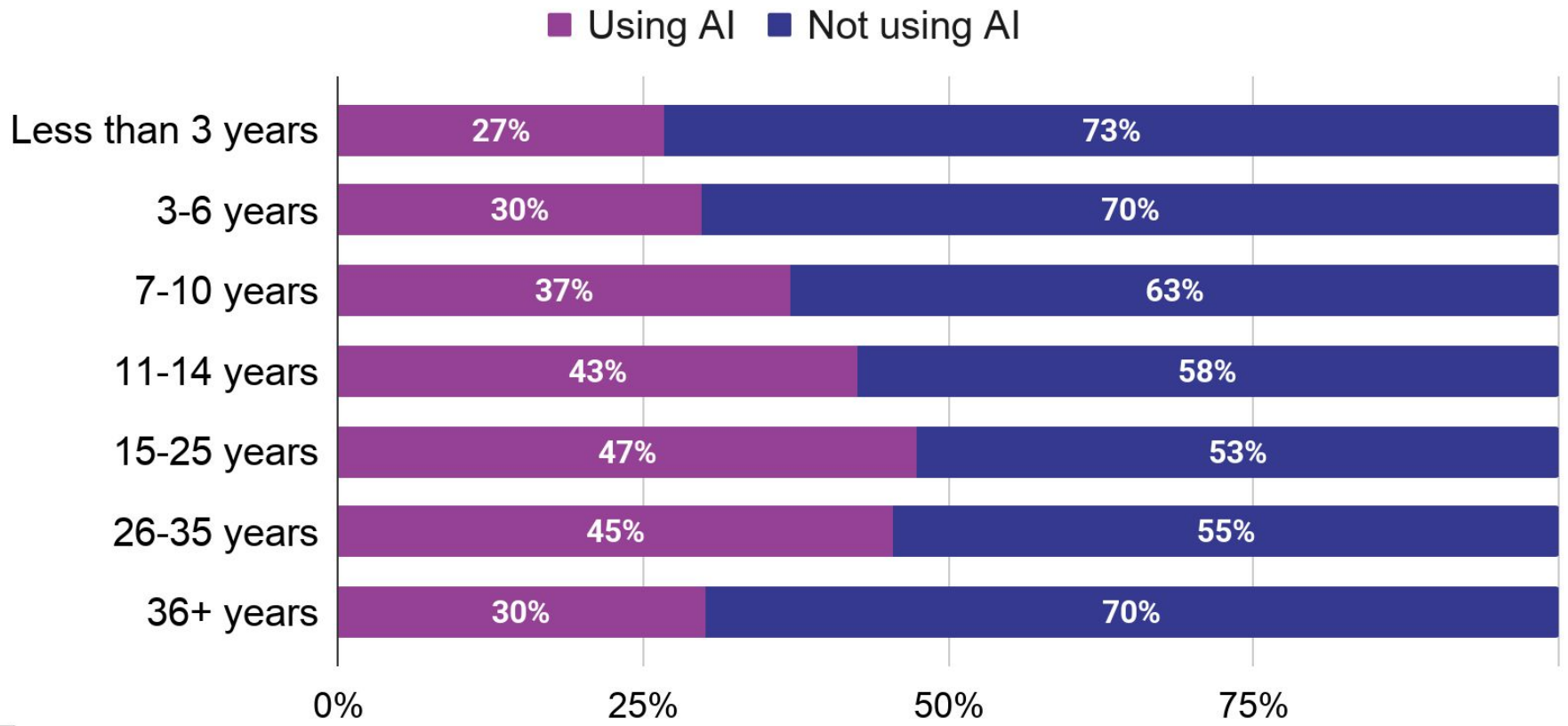
Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Individuals: Use of AI, year over year



Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Individuals: Use of AI by years working in the industry



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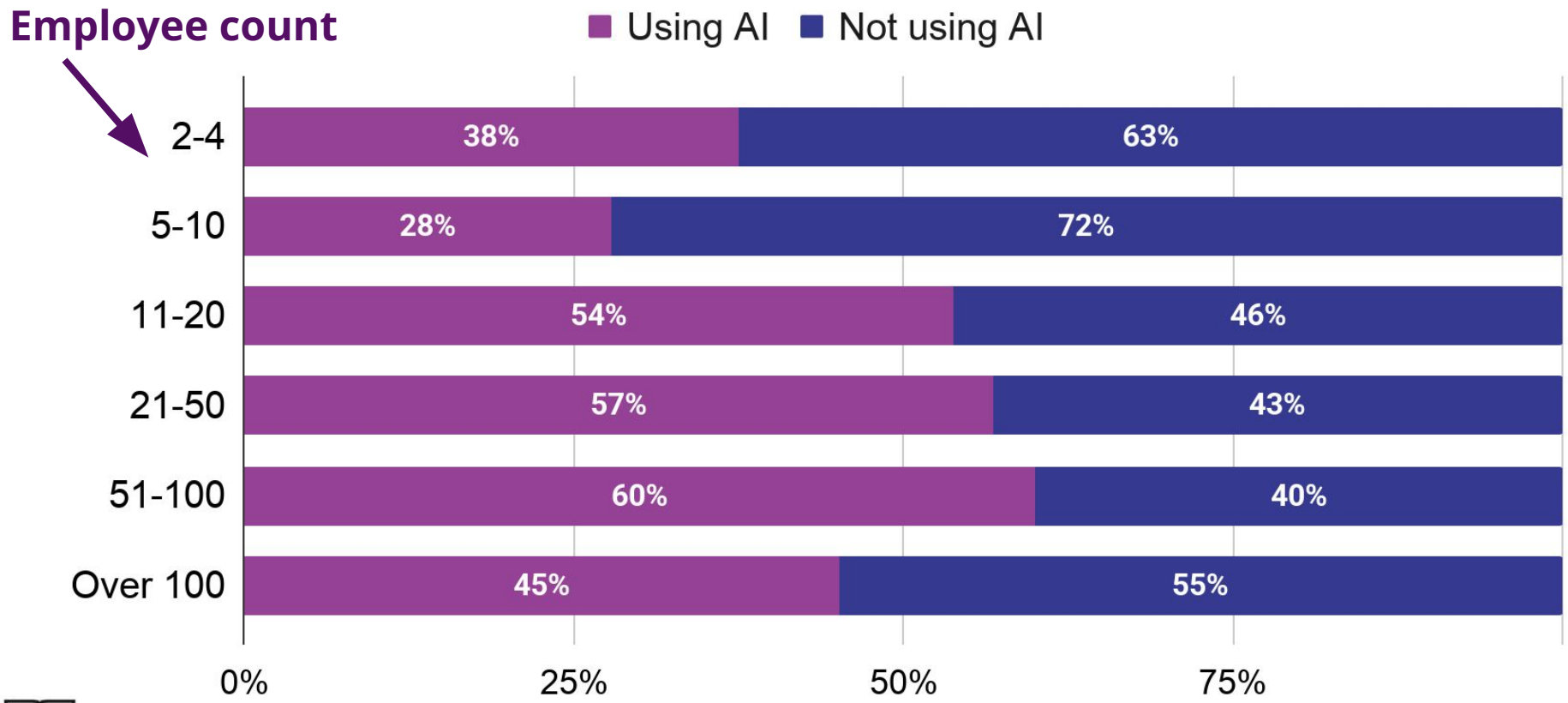
Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey



Survey data indicates that the longer (but no more than 36 years) someone has been working in the industry, the more likely they are to use AI tools in some capacity.

Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Individuals: Use of AI by organization size



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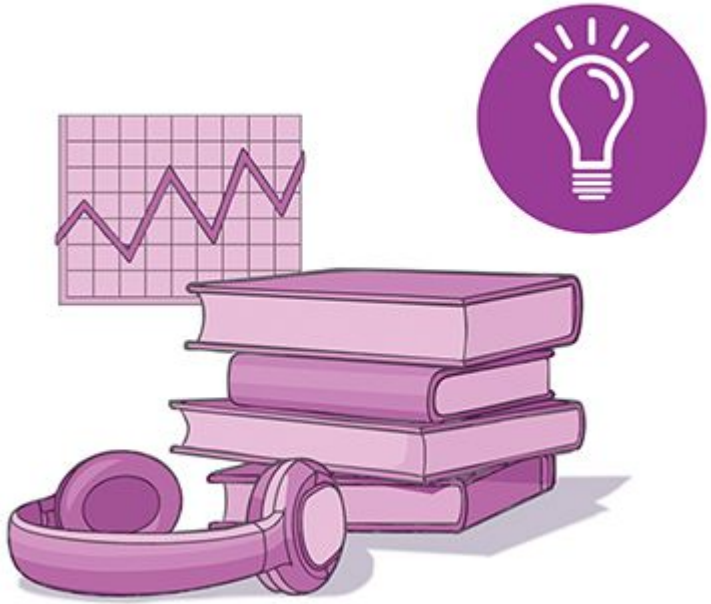
Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey



Survey data indicates that employees working for medium to large organizations (11-100 employees) are more likely to, as individuals, use AI for work.

Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Environments, and areas of use



Individuals: Types of accounts used

44%
Enterprise/team

19%
Personal with privacy protections

18%
Personal without privacy protections

12%
Combination of enterprise + personal

Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey



Training opportunity!

Survey data shows that the years an employee has been working in the industry are NOT an indicator of their understanding of the types of accounts and agreements they have available when choosing an AI tool.

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Highest use of accounts with privacy protections is seen in respondents working for 15 to 25 years.
Highest use of accounts without privacy protections is seen among the 7 to 10 years group.

Individuals: Areas of use

1. Research: **43%**
2. Marketing: **37% (+1% YOY)**
3. Administrative: **36% (+8% YOY)**
4. Editorial: **25% (+6% YOY)**
5. Data analysis: **24% (+1% YOY)**
6. Metadata and title optimization **22% (+2% YOY)**

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Individuals: Areas of use

7. Educational: **15%**
8. Publicity: **14%** **(-2% YOY)**
9. Sales and forecasting: **13%** **(+3% YOY)**
10. Accessibility: **11%**
11. Production: **10%** **(+1% YOY)**
12. Customer service: **7%** **(-8% YOY)**

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Individuals: Areas of use

13. Code development or management for digital products: **7%** **(-2% YOY)**
14. Translation: **5%** **(-2% YOY)**
15. Manuscript evaluation: **4%**
16. Rights and licensing management: **4%** **(+3% YOY)**
17. Creating AI-voiced audiobooks: **3%** **(No change YOY)**
18. QA testing: **1%** **(-1% YOY)**

Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Respondents using AI for metadata tasks were:

Using AI as an assistant to identify potential additions or changes to an originally human-created metadata record: **62%** (**52%**)

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Respondents using AI for metadata tasks were:

Using AI only to help with BISAC and/or Thema subject code classification:

14% (6%)

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Respondents using AI for metadata tasks were:

Using AI to create all the metadata records of frontlist titles: **5%** (**6%**)

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

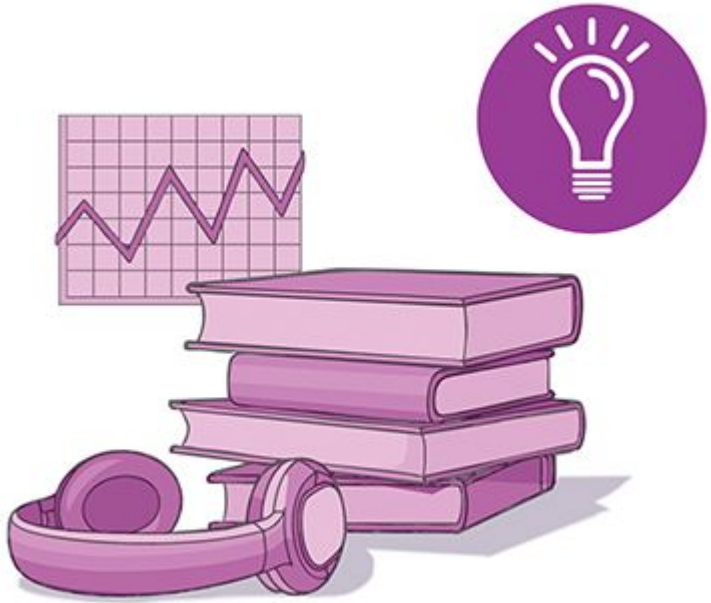
Respondents using AI for metadata tasks were:

Using AI to optimize the metadata records of backlist titles: **5%** (**18%**)

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

AI use & efficiency/ productivity



70% of Canadian respondents who use AI for work said AI has increased their efficiency and/or productivity.

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

On AI and efficiency and/or productivity:

I use AI primarily to assist with research and writing, specifically editing, brainstorming, and wordsmithing my writing for reports. I would say it streamlines the research process and makes my writing and editing quicker because I find myself getting stuck less.

Works at a library.

Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

On AI and efficiency and/or productivity:

AI has helped me address issues in copy (e.g., in having a book description meet our guidelines) and pointed me to sources to support statements in books when the original source was an AI hallucination.

Works for a professional publisher.

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

30% of Canadian respondents who use AI for work, said AI has NOT increased their efficiency and/or productivity.

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

On AI and efficiency and/or productivity:

I have tried to use Chat GPT to suggest comp titles and have found that the responses produced were totally unhelpful. The amount of time spent with additional prompts to produce more helpful results was greater than if I just did the research myself.

Works for a trade publisher + marketing department.

Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

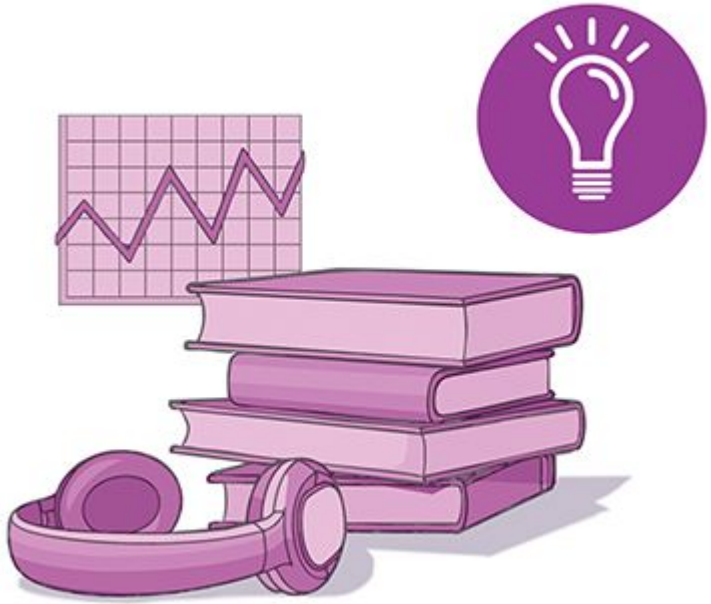
On AI and efficiency and/or productivity:

I have used it to create apps scripts which replace a few manual tasks such as copy/pasting information between spreadsheets but to be honest these were not hugely time consuming tasks so I can't say that it has had a significant impact. Anything important still has to be done by humans since AI is so unreliable and prone to hallucinating.

Works at a library.

Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Training and professional development



On AI training:

37%

Ethical objections; not relevant to their work.

23%

Ethical objections; relevant to their work.

13%

Relevant; not a priority yet.

12%

Relevant; actively look for it.

9%

Not relevant; but expect change.

5%

Not relevant; don't expect change.

Organizations + AI

what's the story?

Organizations: Use of AI

59% Using AI

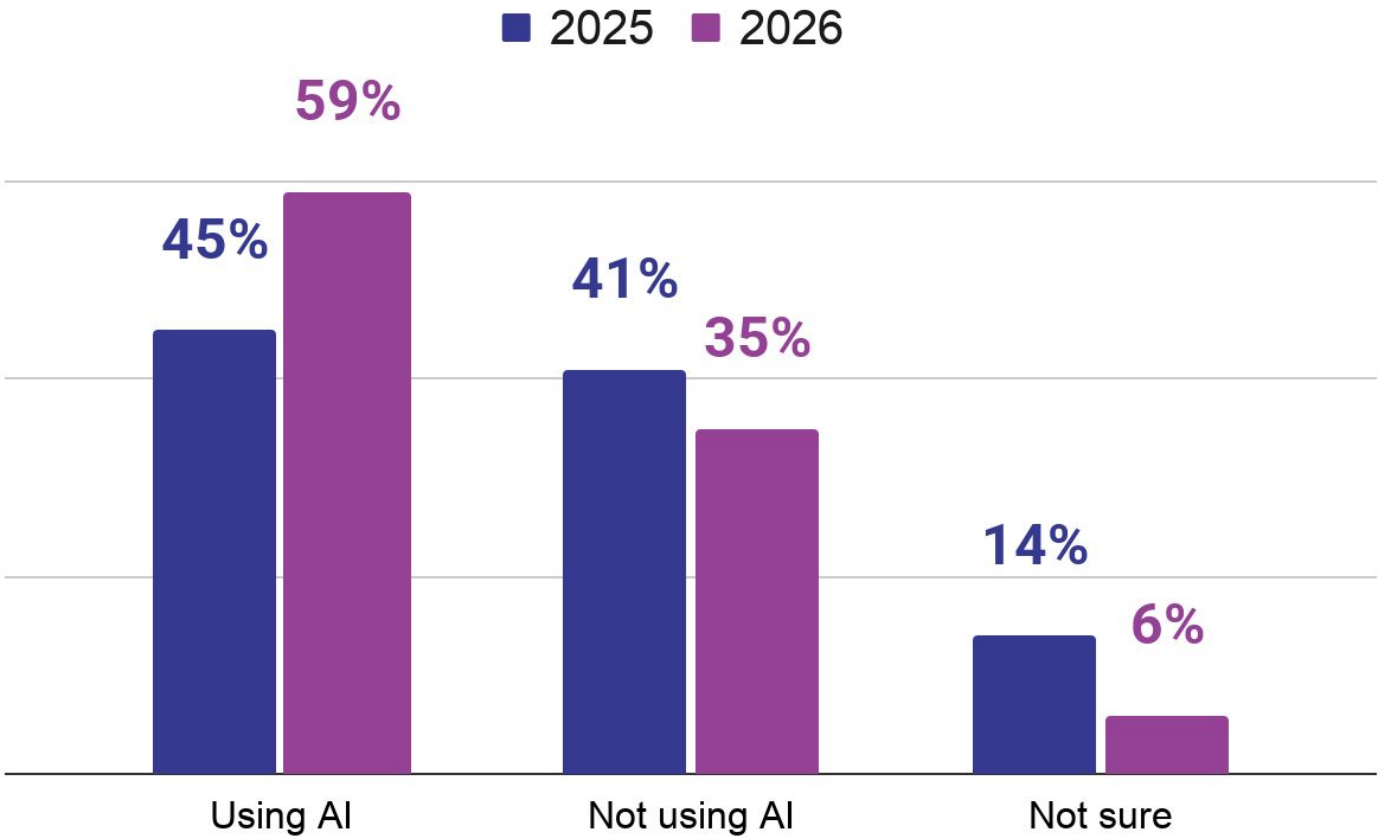
35% Not using AI

6% Not sure

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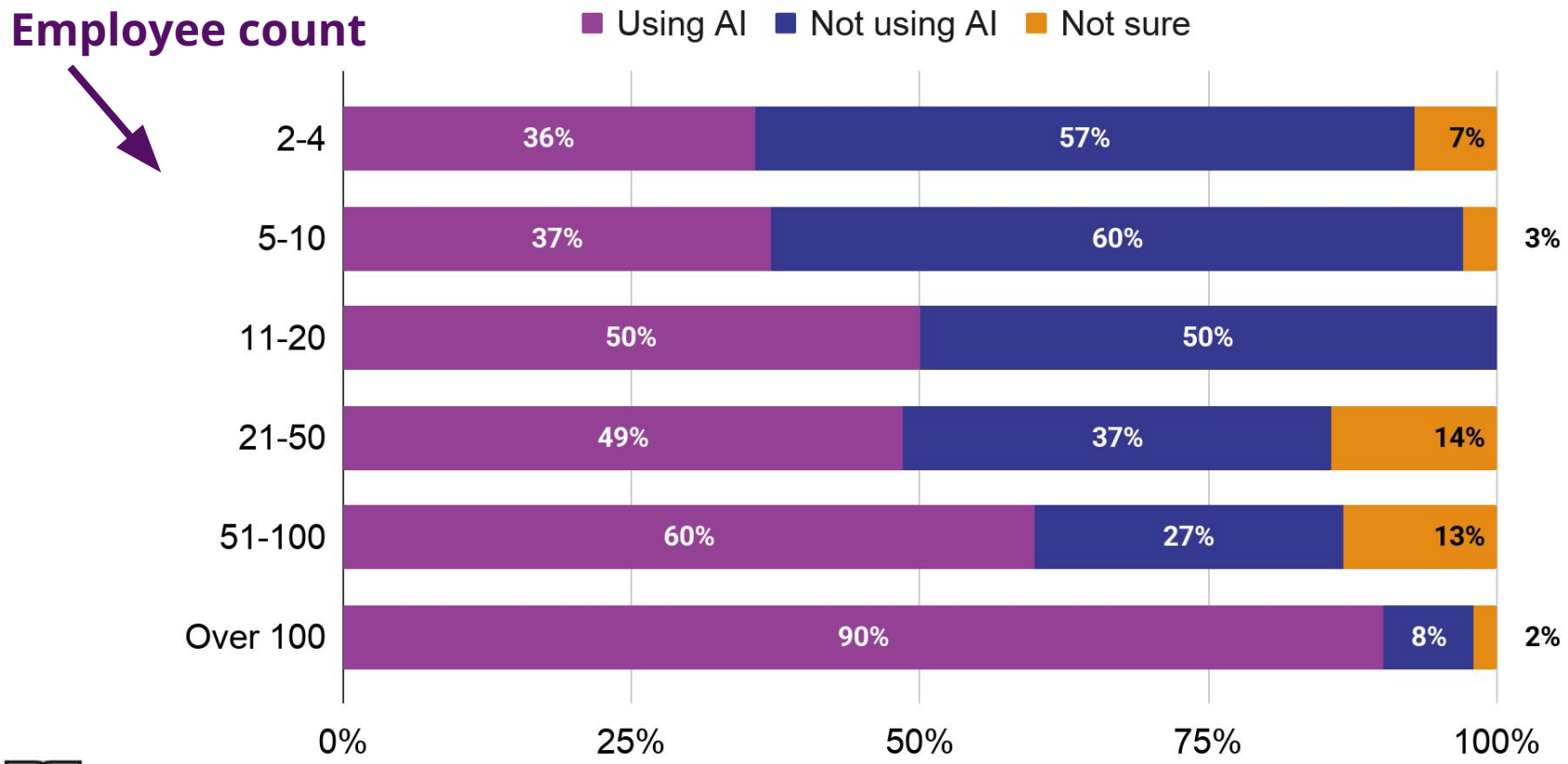
Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Organizations: Use of AI, year over year



Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

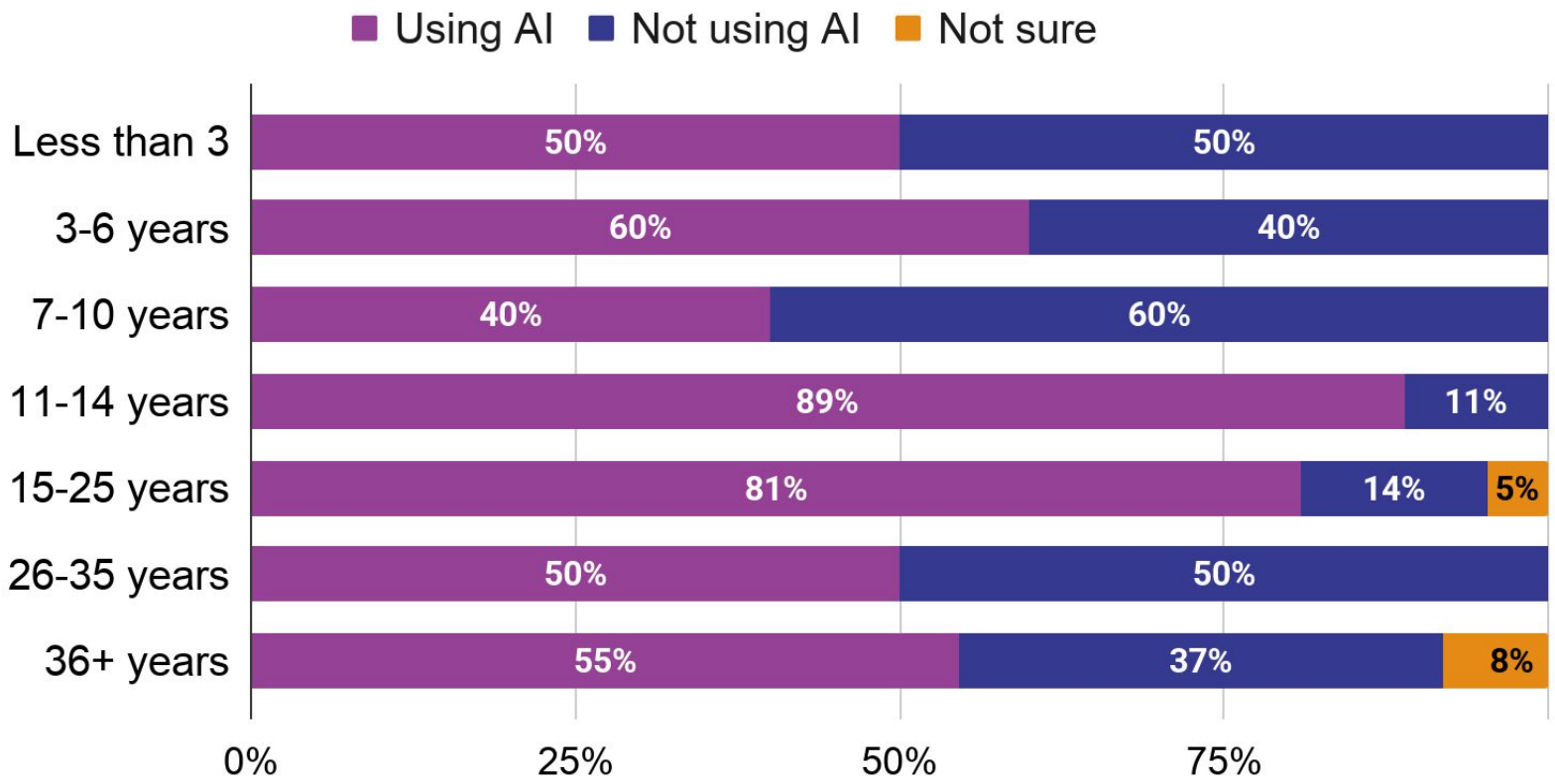
Organizations: Use of AI by organization size



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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Organizations: Reported AI use by years in business



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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

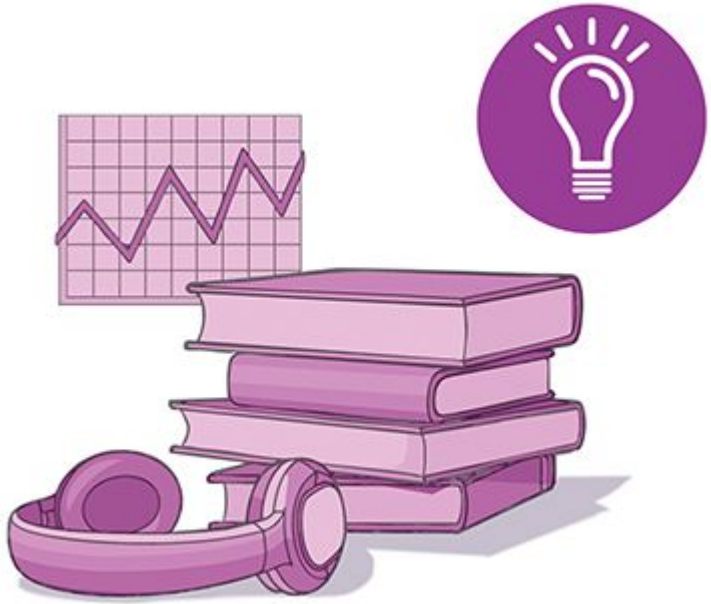


Survey data indicates that organization size has a bigger impact on potential adoption of AI compared to years in operation.

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Environments and areas of use



Types of AI tools used at organizations

AI features within existing software such as Google Workspace, Microsoft, Adobe, etc.

55% (+19% YOY)

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Types of AI tools used at organizations

Enterprise versions of models such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude

47% (+22% YOY)

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Types of AI tools used at organizations

Standard (sometimes free) versions of models such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude

41% (+5% YOY)

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Areas of organizational use of AI:

1. Administrative: **48% (+20% YOY)**
2. Marketing: **47% (+11% YOY)**
3. Research: **33%**
4. Data analysis: **28% (+5% YOY)**
5. Editorial: **27% (+9% YOY)**
6. Educational: **27%**
7. Publicity: **25% (+9%YOY)**

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Areas of organizational use of AI:

8. Metadata and title optimization **25% (+5% YOY)**
9. Accessibility: **22%**
10. Customer service: **16% (+1% YOY)**
11. Production: **15% (+7% YOY)**
12. Sales and forecasting: **13% (+2% YOY)**
13. Code development or management for digital products: **10% (+1% YOY)**

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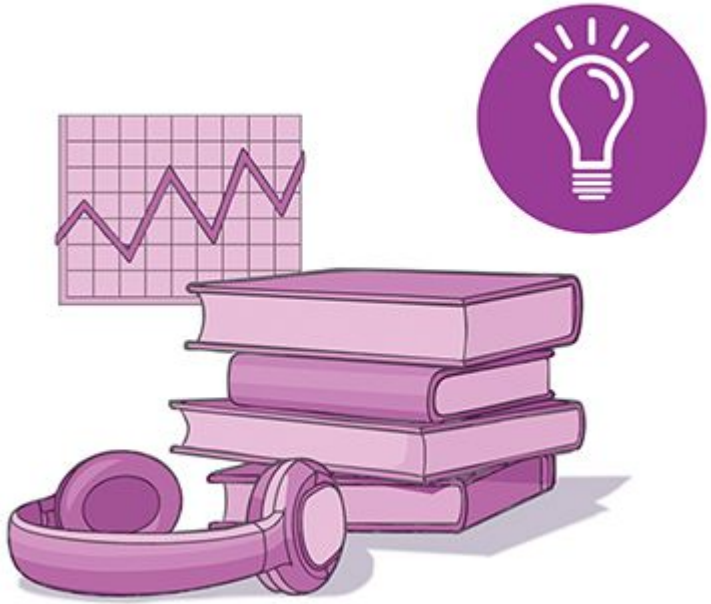
Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Areas of organizational use of AI:

14. Manuscript evaluation: **5%**
15. Rights and licensing management: **5% (+4% YOY)**
16. Book content translation: **5% (-1% YOY)**
17. QA testing: **4% (+2% YOY)**
18. Creating AI-voiced audiobooks: **1% (-2% YOY)**

Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Approaches to AI from an organizational perspective



“My organization_____

...discourages the use of AI.” - **25%** (9%)

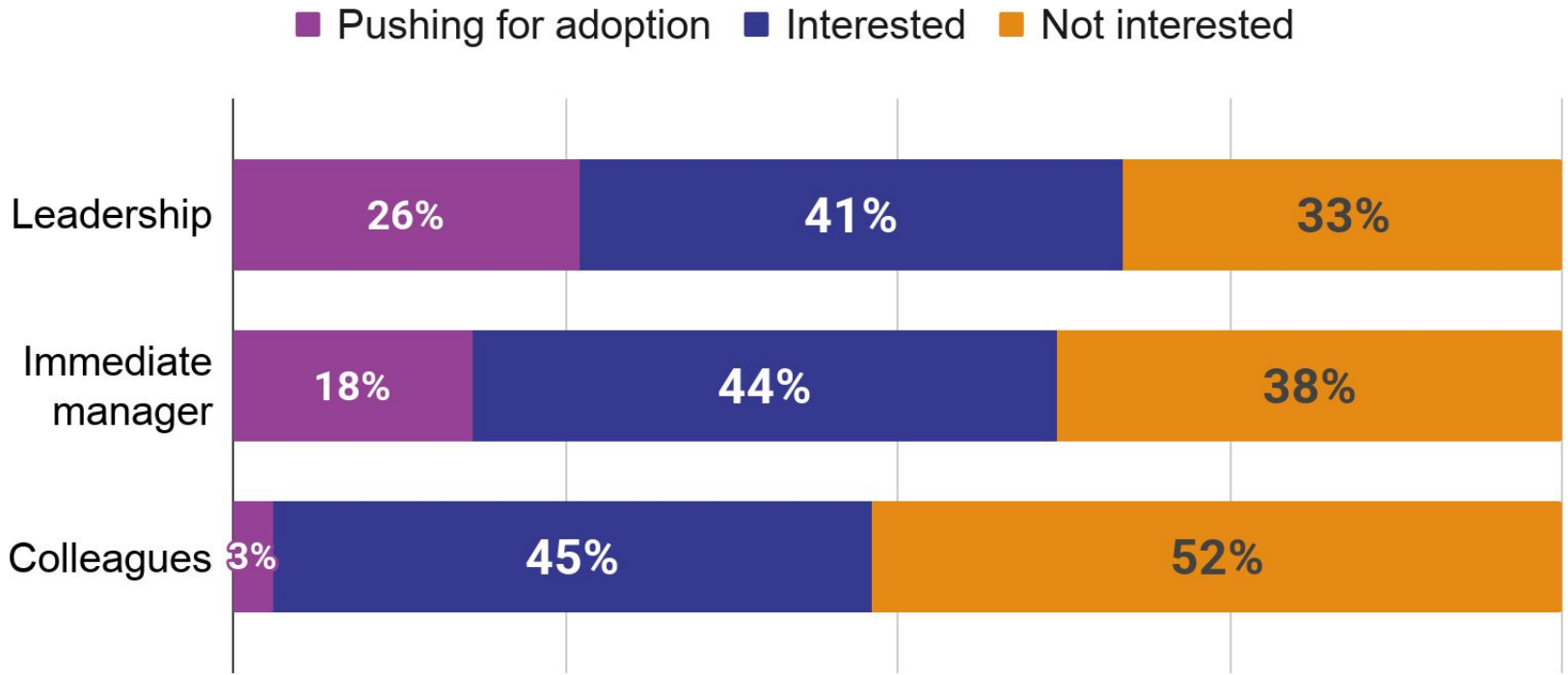
...is in an exploratory phase, figuring out a definitive approach to AI.” - **23%** (21%)

...encourages the use of AI within controlled workflows and/or for specific tasks or departments.” - **19%** (33%)

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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Interest in adopting AI at organizations:



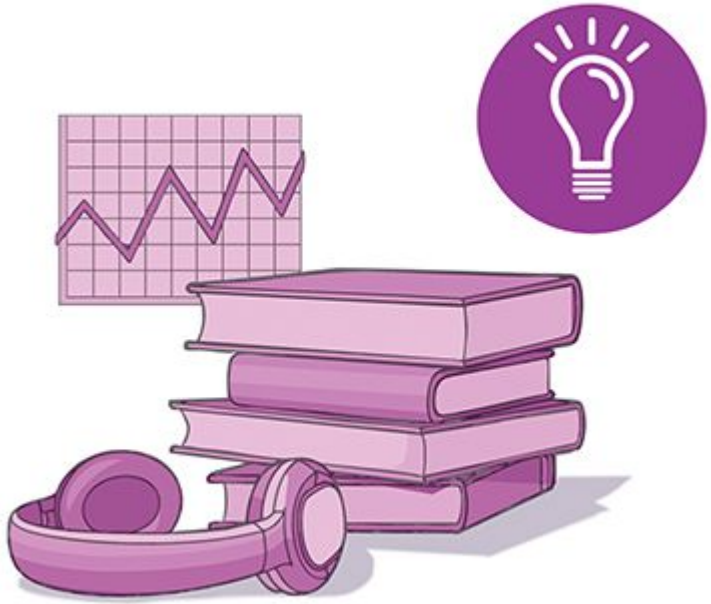
Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Organizational interest in adopting AI by employee count



	LEADERSHIP	MANAGER	COLLEAGUES
INTEREST IN AI ADOPTION ↑	100+ Employees	51-100 Employees	11-20 Employees
INTEREST IN AI ADOPTION ↓	5-10 Employees	5-10 Employees	2-4 Employees

Corporate governance + AI



Does your company have an AI policy or guidelines?



(+11% YOY)

45% Yes



(+7% YOY)

30% No, but we're working on it



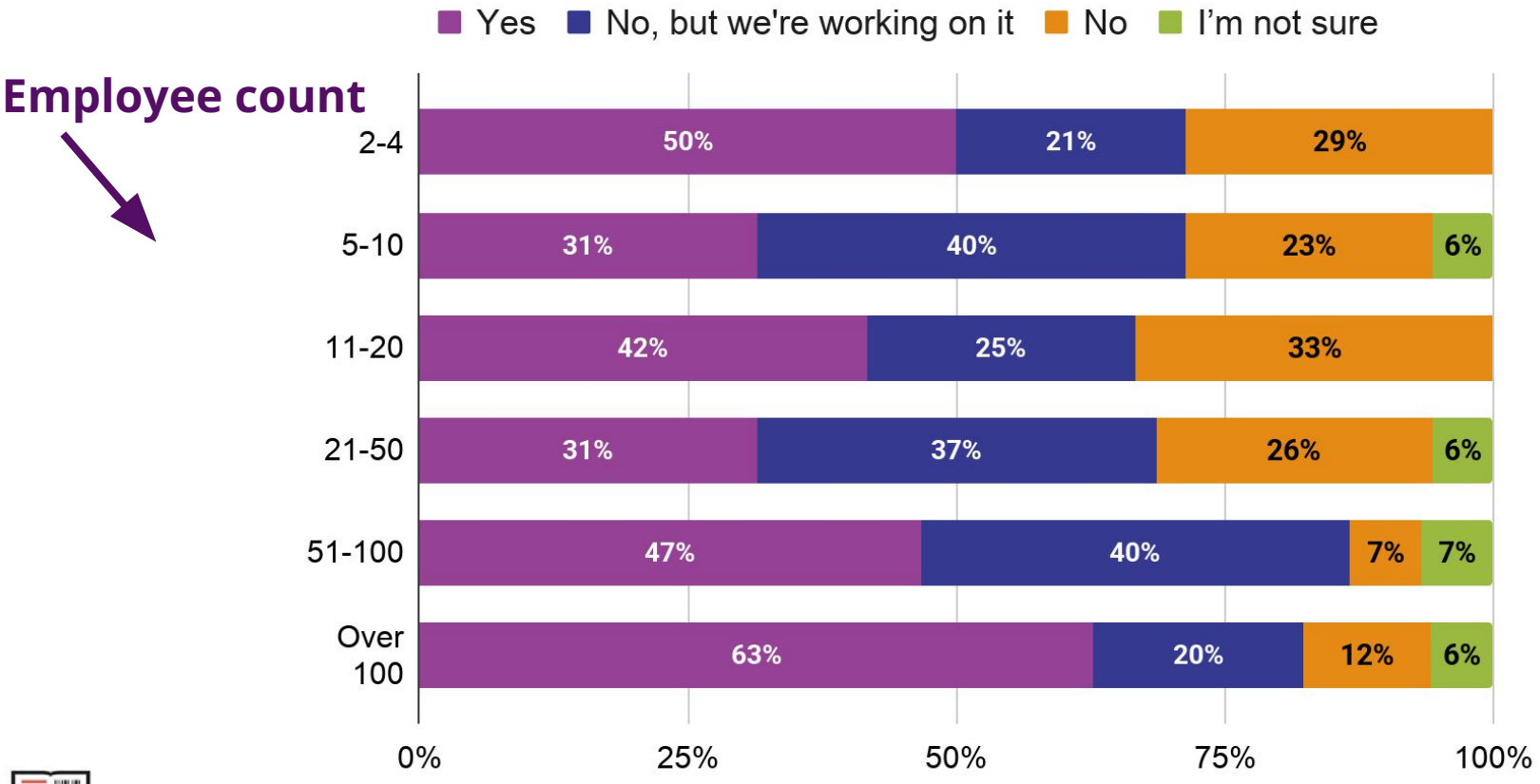
(-15% YOY)

20% No

Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

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Does your company have an AI policy or guidelines?



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Source: AI use across the North American book industry 2026 survey

Top areas where guidance is needed: Publishers

1. AI policy development: **62%**
2. Laws and regulations: **60%**
3. Disclosure of the use of AI tools in the creation of books: **57%**
4. Metadata creation and optimization to aid with book discovery: **50%**
5. Ethics: **43%**

Top areas where guidance is needed: Libraries

1. AI policy development: **74%**
2. Collections management **74%**
3. Digital literacy and community education: **72%**
4. Data privacy and security: **67%**
5. Laws and regulations: **67%**

Concerns and pain points



Top concerns:

RISK-RELATED

Copyright
86% (86%)

Job loss or negative impacts on creators
81% (79%)

Environment and sustainability
80% (76%)

TRUST-RELATED

AI-generated books flooding retail platforms
91% (88%)

Accuracy of information when using the tools
86% (90%)

Accuracy of information for consumers
86% (85%)

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Takeaways



Takeaways

Engagement is higher	The publishing industry has become more engaged with AI, but not necessarily more enthusiastic about widespread adoption.
AI is improving efficiency	70% of AI users say AI improved their efficiency or productivity.
Informed > accelerated adoption	Respondents generally favoured staying informed and prepared rather than simply accelerating adoption.

Takeaways

US and CA alignment → Both markets are aligned on their approach to AI in key areas.

Trust is a priority → Trust is a big issue and touches on key areas: trust in the technology and trust in people.

Top concerns remain → While adoption increases in some areas and new applications arise, the core pain points remain.

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Bonus:
More on AI



More on AI from BookNet Canada:

>> Visit bnctechforum.ca

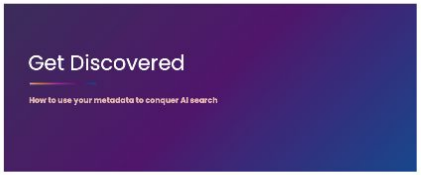


Get discovered: Adapt your marketing for the AI search era

Marketing | Publishing | Slide Deck | Video

September 17, 2026

Learn about how AI is changing the way books are discovered and what tactical—and technical—changes you can make to your promotions to ensure your books aren't left out of AEO, GEO, SEO, and retail search systems.



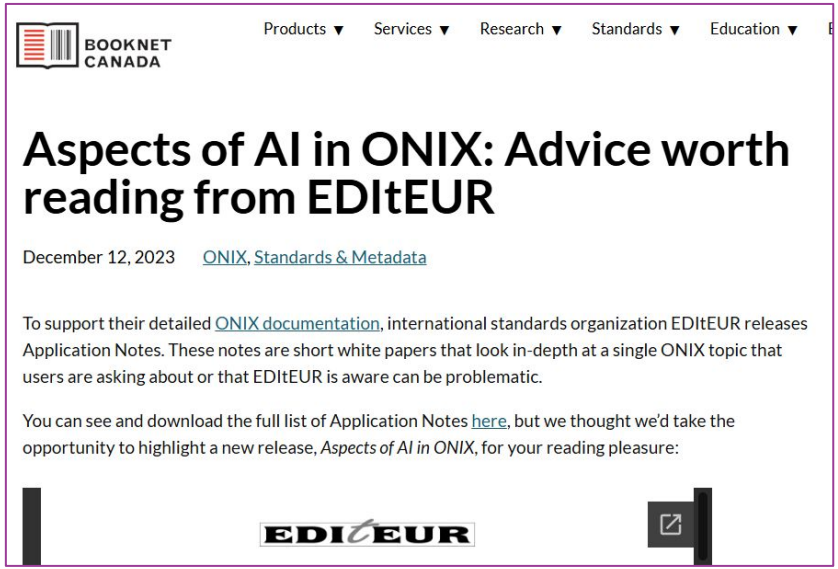
Get discovered: How to use your metadata to conquer AI search

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September 3, 2026

Learn about up-to-date best practices on how to use your metadata to stay discoverable to AI search engines.

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