Our Life with AI

From innovation to application

Country Findings: Italy

Overview

Google and Ipsos partnered once again to understand global public attitudes on AI, conducting 21,000 interviews across 21 countries.

The findings within this report provide more detail on the results specifically among Italian adults in the hope of continuing to contribute to the conversation about how AI can benefit individuals and society.

Methodology

These are findings from a survey conducted by Ipsos between September 17-October 8, 2024.

A sample of 1,000 adults age 18+ who are residents of Italy were interviewed online. The survey has a credibility interval of +/-3.8 percentage points.

AI upswing

AI in the hands of more people

This is Italy's inaugural year in the Our Life with AI survey. Forty-three percent of Italians report that they've used generative AI in the last year, which is slightly lower than the global average (48%) though in line with Europe overall (42%). Generative AI usage varies and goes beyond experimenting with the technology: Italians are using it not only to entertain but to support their work, personal projects, and education.

AI excitement

Last year, we noted that experiencing is believing when it comes to AI. When people use AI, excitement about what the technology can do outweighs and assuages concerns. We've seen this shift prove itself again this year: Italy is in line with most markets in that excitement about AI's potential outweighs concerns about the risks (54% excited/46% concerned), and Italians who have used AI are even more excited (70%) than concerned (30%).

It is also clear that the public wants to ensure AI regulations help foster groundbreaking innovations in science and medicine with AI regulation. Italians, unlike most of their counterparts around the world, are split on whether fostering advancements in science, medicine, and other fields through AI innovation is more important (48%) than protecting impacted industries through AI regulation (52%).

AI usage - Italy

■ Global Average ■ Italy
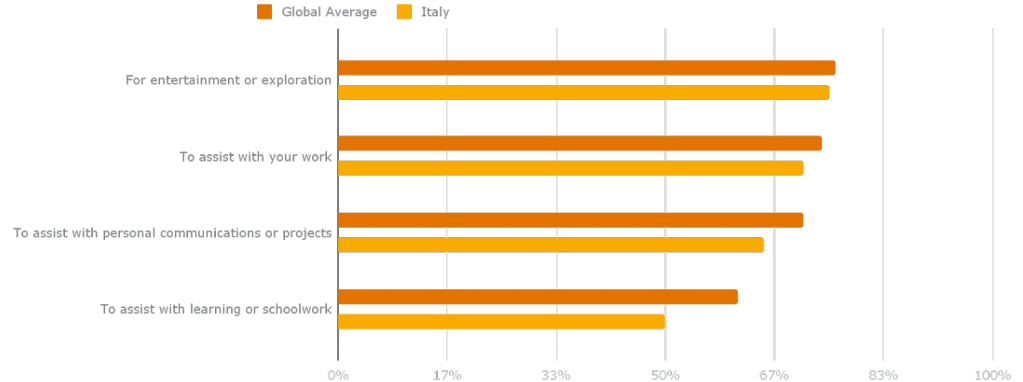
Question asked in survey: Have you used an AI application in the last twelve months for the following? [Among AI users]

AI's benefits for society

Powering economic growth

Italians are optimistic about AI's impact on the economy. Like their global counterparts, Italians believe AI will change jobs and industries in the next 5 years and believe that change will be a good thing (61%), compared to 24% who do not (the global average is 58% "good thing"). One third (37%) of Italians believe AI will change the economy in a positive way (33% say AI's impact will be negative). Fewer than one in five workers who believe they will be impacted by AI think they will have to find a new role or industry (14%, in line with the global average).
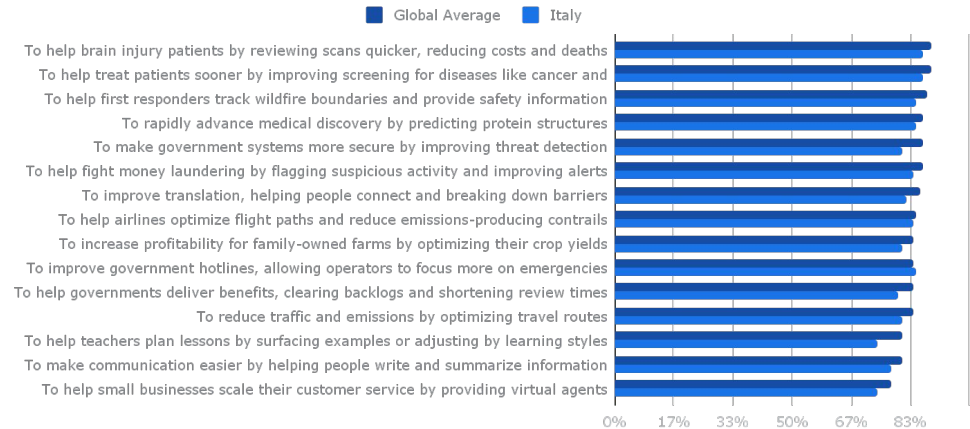
While excitement about AI and positive perceptions of AI's economic impact are both on the rise globally, countries with higher overall excitement about AI's potential tend to also expect the most positive economic gains from the technology. Italians have a more tempered view, as they are equally excited about AI compared to the global average (54%, compared to 57%) but more likely to believe there will be little change to the economy as a result of AI in the short term (30%, compared 22%).

Powering societal advancements

Italians see value in every current application of AI tested (see graph on right), but are most excited by AI's ability to benefit society by powering scientific discovery and advancing health care and medicine.

Looking ahead, over 7 in 10 Italians expect AI to have a positive impact on science (72% positive impact) and medicine (72%), leading a list of promising applications including education (59%), cybersecurity and agriculture (both 43%).

Importance of current AI applications

■ Global Average   ■ Italy

To help brain injury patients by reviewing scans quicker, reducing costs and deaths
To help treat patients sooner by improving screening for diseases like cancer and
To help first responders track wildfire boundaries and provide safety information
To rapidly advance medical discovery by predicting protein structures
To make government systems more secure by improving threat detection
To help fight money laundering by flagging suspicious activity and improving alerts
To improve translation, helping people connect and breaking down barriers
To help airlines optimize flight paths and reduce emissions-producing contrails
To increase profitability for family-owned farms by optimizing their crop yields
To improve government hotlines, allowing operators to focus more on emergencies
To help governments deliver benefits, clearing backlogs and shortening review times
To reduce traffic and emissions by optimizing travel routes
To help teachers plan lessons by surfacing examples or adjusting by learning styles
To make communication easier by helping people write and summarize information
To help small businesses scale their customer service by providing virtual agents

0%   17%   33%   50%   67%   83%

Question asked in survey: Here are some ways AI is being used. Please indicate how important, if at all, you think each one is for society. [Total important]

Leveraging and leveling up with AI

AI for people – personally

A majority of Italians believe AI will benefit people like them (53%), which is slightly higher than the European average (48%), though Italians are slightly below the global average (59% globally say AI will benefit "people like me").

Italians are excited about promising new AI applications: majorities say they are excited about AI being used to help people find information online (68% excited), for personal assistants that can help shop online, organize schedules, and plan trips (54%), and as a personal tutor or homework helper (53%). Italians also believe that individual-level applications like helping people write and summarize information (78%) and improving translation (82%) are important for society.

AI for people – professionally

Professionally, people see AI not just as a tool for being more productive, but for operating at a higher, more strategic level. Italians prioritize using AI to help people use complex data or systems (82% important) and supporting worker wellbeing (82%) as the most important AI workforce applications. Like their counterparts around the world, more Italians believe AI will free up workers time so they can focus on the more rewarding aspects of work (58%) than feel AI will increase demands on workers to do more with less (42%).

Using AI at work

Seven in ten (71%) Italian AI users say they use AI for work. Workplace and work-related use among Italian workers is varied, and goes far beyond drafting emails or cover letters. Italians use generative AI to assist with writing (74% of workplace users), brainstorming (62%), and problem solving (78%) as well as using AI to help digest longer documents (72%) or complex information (71%).

Harnessing AI's benefits – together

About half of Italians feel their country is appropriately seizing the moment when it comes to AI: 53% believe Italy is doing enough to ensure their economy can benefit from AI, below the global average (63%).

The public expects government and technology companies to collaborate to leverage AI's benefits, with 65% of Italians supporting AI companies helping governments learn about AI and 61% supporting AI companies working with their government to test AI tools for government services. Italians also prioritize government investment in AI infrastructure, with more than six in ten (65%) supporting government investment in high-speed internet and electrical generation to support AI.

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