

AI anxiety drives workers to hoard skills and knowledge to protect jobs, Adaptavist report reveals

AI adoption is fueling a culture of self-preservation, with two in five US knowledge workers (43%) gatekeeping skills to maintain their usefulness

LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM, November 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- AI's perceived threat to jobs is triggering a culture of self-preservation and anxiety in workplaces worldwide, according to technology consultancy [Adaptavist's](#) latest report, '[The human cost of digital transformation](#).' As companies race to adopt AI, the study showed the enormous impact it's having on knowledge sharing and education, with more than a two-fifths (43%) hoarding knowledge for fear of being replaced, and a huge 45% admitting they're reluctant to train colleagues in areas they see as personal strengths.

Adaptavist's survey of 4,000 knowledge workers (1,000 from the US, UK, Canada, and Germany, respectively), conducted by Attest, also revealed that one in five (21%) US workers are directly experiencing stress and anxiety due to their fear of being replaced by AI. This figure rises to 28% among Gen Z workers, and reflects shifting workplace realities. The unemployment rate for new college grads has [risen 30%](#) since bottoming out in September 2022. Although less pronounced, Adaptavist found that the same fears still impact more than 1 in 10 (12%) US knowledge workers aged 55+, showing how anxiety around AI and job losses transcends generations.

Despite workers' fears of being replaced, 64% of US workers still believe their company would struggle to replace their skill set if they left, and 3 in 5 (59%) worry about losing critical knowledge when their colleagues exit the business. These findings paint a complex picture of the psychological impact AI's advent into the workplace is having on employees, who are torn between feeling confident in their abilities and apprehensive about which jobs AI will replace.

Neal Riley, Innovation Lead, The Adaptavist Group, commented:

"Workers are understandably concerned about the personal impact AI could have on them and their jobs, making it critical that business leaders act thoughtfully and empathetically when it comes to AI adoption. The onus is on these leaders to implement AI training and upskilling, alongside proper change management, to show employees how their careers can evolve alongside the technology. Companies should also create incentives for knowledge-sharing over hoarding, and encourage teams to feel safe enough to speak up, share ideas, and admit when

things go wrong.

Knowledge is a team sport that loses its value the moment it's hoarded or walks out the door. The report confirms that when organizations embed AI with this structured approach, they build cultures where employees feel part of the journey. The result is a healthier, more engaged, and resilient workplace, one where technology supports people, rather than the other way around."

Meeting madness

As businesses increase their focus on productivity and efficiency, Adaptavist's study also examined how workers are actually spending their time, particularly in meetings. The research revealed that US knowledge workers now spend an average of 5.1 hours per week in meetings, nearly identical to the 4.9 hours they spend socializing with friends. According to Fellow's state of meetings report, meeting time has tripled since 2020 with flexible working.

For some, meeting overload is even more extreme, with more than one in 10 (15%) US workers losing a full day to meetings every week, equivalent to 50 days a year. Interestingly, workers in large organizations spend more time in meetings than small and medium-sized businesses: 6 hours on average, compared to 4.5 hours for SMEs.

Over half of US respondents (54%) report having been in meetings where a colleague has enlisted an AI assistant to attend in their place. However, this approach can carry consequences, as a third (33%) of staff view the practice of sending AI to meetings instead of attending personally as 'rude'.

Similarly, the time spent using AI tools at work (5.8 hours) exceeds personal use (4.7 hours), and the combined total spent on AI, 10.5 hours weekly, far surpasses social time with friends.

Properly embedded AI improves job satisfaction

While workers are anxious about AI replacing them, the research also uncovered a direct correlation between properly implemented AI and job satisfaction. The findings show that when embedded thoughtfully within team workflows and where experimentation is encouraged, workers can enjoy the benefits of AI without the overwhelming feelings of anxiety associated with job losses.

Half (50%) of US respondents with AI embedded in their daily work said they feel energized and motivated by their work environment, compared with just 22% of those without. These employees also see technology as a driver of career progression: 48% of those with AI integrated into their workflows believe technology has significantly helped their career, compared with only 18% who lack easy access to AI. Engagement is also higher: just 3% of workers in positive AI cultures report feeling frustrated or disconnected, versus 11% where AI has not been properly embedded.

The study also revealed a strong link between AI adoption and task autonomy. Among those using AI in their workflows, the majority (85%) said digital tools give them more control over how they complete tasks or that they retain full control, compared to just 35% of those without AI integration.

Riley added:

"By embracing asynchronous communication, improving documentation, and using AI to surface relevant information, organizations can ease meeting fatigue while building resilient and aligned teams. The benefits are tangible. Employees can reclaim hours previously lost to unnecessary meetings, knowledge becomes accessible to everyone who needs it, and teams maintain alignment across time zones and schedules. It's a shift that improves both productivity and quality of work life."

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Methodology:

Research surveyed 4,000 knowledge workers from the US, UK, Canada, and Germany in August 2025. The research was conducted by Attest.

About Adaptavist and The Adaptavist Group

Founded in 2005, Adaptavist is a global technology and innovative solutions provider that helps organizations improve agility and overcome the challenges of digital transformation.

We are experts at delivering innovative and tailored solutions and quality services across some of the world's most trusted technology ecosystems, including Atlassian, AWS, monday.com, GitLab, and many more.

It is the pioneer brand of The Adaptavist Group, a global family of companies with one common goal: to make business work better. We combine the best talent, technology, and processes to make it easier for our customers to excel—today and tomorrow.

The Adaptavist Group exists to support clients' day-to-day workflows, business transformation, and high-growth strategies. We offer a comprehensive but always evolving range of services across five key practices: agile, DevOps, work management, ITSM, and cloud. Our depth of knowledge across these practices unites us in our mission to help businesses embrace continuous transformation and make it their competitive advantage.

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