

Top 8 Trends in Cybersecurity for 2026



Secure new frontiers

- 1 IAM adapts to enable and secure AI agents.
- 2 Postquantum moves from theoretical risk to action plans.

- 3 Agentic AI demands program oversight.



Transform governance

- 4 AI and cyber resilience redefine the CISO's remit.
- 5 Global regulatory volatility drives massive cyber-resilience efforts.

- 6 AI democratization drives collaborative data security governance.



Normalize AI adoption

- 7 GenAI breaks traditional cybersecurity awareness tactics.
- 8 AI-driven SOC solutions destabilize operational norms.



Secure new frontiers

1 IAM adapts to enable and secure AI agents.
The rise of agentic AI introduces novel challenges that expose gaps in some traditional IAM approaches. While foundational machine IAM practices can be leveraged today, key capability gaps remain in most organizations.

2 Postquantum moves from theoretical risk into action plans.
The accelerating pace of quantum computing development projects ups the likelihood of conventional asymmetric cryptography becoming unsafe by 2030. Cybersecurity leaders must evaluate and adopt PQC solutions promptly, as remediation requires multiyear efforts.



Transform governance

3 Agentic AI demands program oversight.
CEOs and CIOs continue to push for aggressive AI adoption. Despite security concerns, CISOs can't afford to slow or pause AI initiatives. As indications of unmanaged AI agent adoption increase, CISOs must quickly catch up. If not, they risk "rogue" automations that operate with excessive agency outside of cybersecurity oversight.

4 AI and cyber resilience redefine the CISO's remit.
The shift from cyber protection to cyber resilience, along with urgent needs around adopting and securing AI, are expanding CISOs' responsibilities. This often includes data governance (securing shadow AI), AI policy (guiding safe AI adoption standards), privacy, and business continuity management — plus operational technology (OT) or cyber-physical systems (CPS) security.

5 Global regulatory volatility drives massive cyber-resilience efforts.
CISOs face an overwhelming regulatory storm with global mandates, including SEC disclosures, NIS2, DORA, the EU AI Act and evolving APAC laws, dismantling any illusion of unified governance. When you add in escalating geopolitical turmoil and the rise of technonationalism, it's clear cybersecurity is now a critical business risk that could determine organizational durability worldwide.

6 AI democratization drives collaborative data security governance.
The environment created by AI advancements makes collaborative data security governance urgent. Cybersecurity leaders should take proactive action. Human involvement remains central to the majority of data breaches, but adoption of AI and shadow AI is surging, and cybersecurity is often an afterthought.



Normalize AI adoption

7 GenAI breaks traditional cybersecurity awareness tactics.
Accelerated GenAI adoption has broken traditional cybersecurity awareness tactics and efforts to reduce cybersecurity risk exposure are failing. CISOs must shift to security behavior and culture programs (SBCPs) to address specific breaks in defenses caused by unmanaged "shadow AI" use and the GenAI-augmented attack techniques that are increasingly difficult for employees to detect.

8 AI-driven SOC solutions destabilize operational norms.
To successfully adopt AI in the SOC, leaders should prioritize augmenting staff capabilities rather than replacing roles. This ensures long-term operational health alongside ongoing skill development. Maintaining existing processes and roles without adaptation will cause organizations to fail.

Disclaimer: These trends are not listed in order of significance.

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