

Gartner Insights

Predicts 2026: AI Will Shift Digital Workplace Focus From Tools to AI-Augmented People

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Initiatives: Delivery of Functional Responsibilities

Autonomous operations, GenAI, and human-centric strategies are redefining digital workplace priorities, moving from tool-centric approaches to valuing adaptability and collaboration. Heads of I&O can use this research to understand trends and position their organizations for success.

Overview

Key Findings

- Early-stage autonomous endpoint management (AEM) capabilities are enabling digital workplace teams to reduce patch cycle time by up to 87%, freeing up time to address rising stakeholder expectations and urgency. ¹
- AI-powered assistants are commonly deployed for IT support, however autonomous agents remain rare. AI integration in endpoint management and DEX tools has increased, as well as automated tasks completed without human input.
- Cultural inertia and risk-aversion limits AI's impact, narrowing adoption to low-risk, low-value tasks and limiting the transformative returns.
- Digital workplace staff's role will shift from reactive support to proactive employee enablement, requiring a heightened emphasis on soft skills.
- Integrating digital workplace and business teams results in improved digital employee experience (DEX), fosters strategic alignment and strengthens executive buy-in through clearer communication.
- The boundaries between HR and IT are overlapping and some organizations are merging these functions. The AI-augmented future of work demands shared responsibility and close partnership across both disciplines.

Recommendations

- Enhance operational resilience by exploiting AEM capabilities in endpoint management tools and leveraging intelligence-driven automation to accelerate patch cycles, address configuration drift, tune performance and minimize employee disruption.
- Prepare for AI-driven automation across support and engineering teams by assessing digital workplace processes for feasibility versus risk and extending governance.
- Address AI innovation hesitancy by establishing responsible exploration practices and exploiting AI capabilities in existing tools to demonstrate value and build confidence in automation.
- Improve digital workplace soft skills by including skills-gap evaluation into performance reviews and establish a partnering program pairing high-potential employees with staff excelling in soft skills.
- Adopt multidisciplinary teams by blending IT and business roles, with shared accountability for DEX and productivity outcomes.
- Drive digital dexterity and improve employee experience by establishing a formal IT-HR partnership, shared governance model and joint decision-making structure.

Strategic Planning Assumptions

- By 2029, over 50% of organizations will adopt AEM capabilities within advanced endpoint management and DEX tools, an increase from 15% in 2026.
- By 2030 AI assistants, AI agents and AI-powered automation will result in at least a 75% reduction in digital workplace tickets requiring human intervention.
- By 2029, over 50% of heads of I&O who fail to enable autonomous operations will be replaced due to inefficiencies, errors, and higher costs.
- By 2029, over 35% of organizations will hire digital workplace staff for adaptability and empathy ahead of technical expertise, marking a shift in strategic priorities for hiring.
- Through 2029, multidisciplinary digital workplace teams that blend business and technology roles and responsibilities will be 50% more likely to deliver positive outcomes than those formed by IT alone.
- By 2029, 20% of organizations will blend HR and IT teams, leading to faster delivery of digital workplace solutions but requiring significant change management and cultural integration efforts.

Analysis

What You Need to Know

AI remains a top priority for many organizations, and its influence is now pervasive across digital workplace technologies and strategies. For I&O leaders, this presents an opportunity to build on last year's predictions of using human-centric IT and data-driven decisions to enhance DEX.

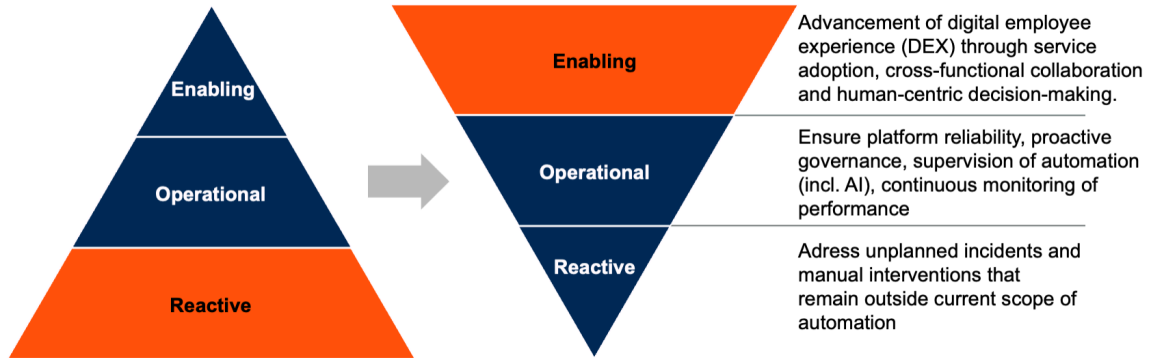
As AI becomes embedded in enterprise technology, critical but labor-intensive processes such as endpoint configuration, compliance, patching, issue detection and resolution are accelerated by tools that can identify anomalies and trends, then predict and suggest next actions. Routine tasks will increasingly be performed autonomously by agents that are supervised by digital workplace teams. The remaining work will be complex and require advanced skills from IT engineers instead of basic operations and support.

Organizations that fail to elevate beyond highly reactive, transactional IT services will be replaced by service providers or others that embrace the autonomous digital workplace. To enable proactive IT services, I&O leaders must partner cross-functionally and implement employee enablement initiatives that strengthen digital dexterity and accelerate technology adoption. Those who ignore the shift will be marginalized as businesses expect improved outcomes.

Gartner's digital workplace assessment maturity data shows that digital workplace teams with strong relationships inside and outside of IT achieve 50% higher digital maturity on average, reinforcing collaboration as a key part of improving experience.² Some organizations are already exploring new delivery models by combining HR and IT functions. Over time, Gartner expects to see typical workloads shift and an increased emphasis on enablement instead of reactive workloads, see Figure 1.

Figure 1: Expected Shift in Workload Over Time

Expected Shift in Workload Over Time



Source: Gartner
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Strategic Planning Assumptions

Strategic Planning Assumption: By 2029, over 50% of organizations will adopt AEM capabilities within advanced endpoint management and DEX tools, an increase from 15% in 2026.

Analysis by: Tom Cipolla

Key Findings:

- Endpoint management teams face increasing pressure from the relentless pace, volume, and urgency of updates, vulnerabilities, and patches, straining resources, risking delays, and increasing exposure to security and performance issues.
- The business and workforce is demanding reduced friction and an improved DEX across the entire endpoint management life cycle, including the implementation of policies and application and OS updates.
- AEM capabilities are emerging in endpoint management tools that use real-time telemetry to inform intelligence-driven automation and effectively balance endpoint configuration, performance, risk and DEX. Early successes include 87% faster patching with minimal impact on DEX caused by disruptions. ¹

Market Implications:

- Endpoint management vendors are adding near real-time performance monitoring and employee sentiment collection and automation to address operational DEX (OpDEX) use cases. Real-time telemetry is essential for continuous visibility into health, performance, risk and compliance status, accelerating intelligence-driven decisions and automation. It also plays a critical role in early detection and prevention of disruptions that erode workforce productivity and satisfaction.
- Widespread use of automation will significantly shift endpoint management staffing dynamics as routine tasks are performed autonomously, freeing staff to work on more strategic initiatives. Responsibilities are evolving from deep expertise toward automation oversight, exception handling, and optimization, demanding new skills.

- AI-powered AEM will extend beyond traditional operational tasks like patching and policy enforcement to include anomaly detection, root cause analysis, remediation prediction and self-healing of issues before impacting employees. Some tools already autonomously and continually optimize (physical and virtual) endpoint performance based on user context.
- New use cases will emerge to cover intelligent software deployment and removal, employee persona management, dynamic compliance enforcement, configuration drift detection and remediation, and change impact simulation.

Recommendations:

- Reduce endpoint management overhead by using intelligence-driven autonomous change, patch, and update management following ring-based deployment strategies. This approach eliminates slow and often unreliable scripted or manual testing.
- Accelerate task execution by adopting AEM capabilities within advanced endpoint management tools for patching, configuration drift and performance tuning. Greater automation and change impact visibility drives significant operational efficiency and DEX improvements.
- Boost reliability and minimize disruptions by tuning automation thresholds and confidence scores. Confidence scores, derived from configuration, performance, compliance, risk, and experience data, and help align decisions with organizational risk tolerance and guide autonomous actions.

Related Research:

- [Innovation Insight: Autonomous Endpoint Management](#)
- [Market Guide for Endpoint Management Tools](#)

Strategic Planning Assumption: By 2030 AI assistants, AI agents and AI-powered automation will result in at least a 75% reduction in digital workplace tickets requiring human intervention.

Analysis by: [Stuart Downes](#)

Key Findings:

- Ninety-eight percent IT leaders from the 2025 Gartner Generative and Agentic AI in Enterprise Applications Survey report they are exploring, piloting or have already deployed AI agents, but only 15% are considering goal-driven autonomous agents with no human oversight. ³
- AI-powered IT support assistants are now a common point of contact for issues and requests. Integration with endpoint management and DEX tools is increasing as is the number of tasks autocompleted without human intervention.
- AI assistants in end-user computing tools are also enabling IT staff to perform tasks through natural language.
- AI agents that can operate end-user computing environments and provide support are emerging. However, capabilities today are limited, and costs are often high. Expect rapid maturity and near elimination of basic, repetitive, and low-human-value activities.
- By 2030, advanced IT support and operations automation will be performed by the combination of traditional automation, AI assistants, and AI agents informed by data from analytics tools.

Vendors are rapidly adding GenAI and AI agents to end-user computing tools and are prematurely marketing those capabilities before they are fully developed.




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