NEWS RELEASE

Research Finds Data Readiness and Infrastructure as Critical to Success in the AI Era

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Study finds industry and size matter: large enterprises outpace peers in building AI-ready infrastructure

SAN JOSE, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- NetApp® (NASDAQ: NTAP), the intelligent data infrastructure company, today unveiled a new global Enterprise AI maturity study conducted by IDC∗. This second annual study reveals a sharp shift in how enterprises approach artificial intelligence and confirms AI has entered a new phase where the most mature organizations prioritize data readiness, protection and security while they make impactful infrastructure decisions and investments to support current and next-gen AI.

Findings from 2024 highlighted AI's potential to drive dramatic business outcomes, but also exposed deep gaps in infrastructure, governance, and skills. In 2025, the conversation has evolved: organizations are now confronting ROI pressures, fragmented adoption, and the need to embed data governance and security from the start.

"AI is no longer about proof of concept—it's about proof of value," said Syam Nair, Chief Product Officer at NetApp. "IDC's latest research shows that the real differentiators are data preparedness and infrastructure: the companies focusing on data quality and building modern, cloud-smart, scalable, and adaptive architectures are the ones turning AI into true business impact. That's why NetApp believes every organization needs an Intelligent Data Infrastructure to succeed in the AI era."

Key findings from the 2025 study include:

- **Maturity pays off.** AI Masters (organizations pursuing the most advanced AI infrastructure, data governance and security approaches) consistently outperform their less mature peers across every AI business outcome: Masters achieved 24.1% revenue improvement and 25.4% improvement in cost savings, far outpacing less mature peers.
- **Infrastructure remains a bottleneck.** While the percentage of firms reporting that their storage required a major overhaul dropped from 63% in 2024 to 37% in 2025, **84% still say their storage is not fully optimized for AI.**
- **Security is now front and center.** 62% of AI Masters increased security budgets for AI initiatives in the past year, compared to just 16% of less mature organizations.
- **Agentic AI favors the Masters.** With stronger data, security, and infrastructure foundations, AI Masters are already ahead. Less mature peers remain siloed in GenAI adoption, an approach that will not scale to

Agentic AI's enterprise-wide demands.

Together, these findings highlight a single point: scaling AI responsibly requires more than experimentation – it demands a trusted, modern, and intelligent data infrastructure.

"Enterprises that modernize their data pipelines, governance frameworks, security approaches, and storage architectures are the ones turning AI pilots into production-grade applications that deliver the highest measurable business outcomes," said Dave Pearson, IDC Research Vice President, Infrastructure Solutions.

The combined 2024 and 2025 findings underscore that the difference between AI hype and AI impact lies in the data practices and architecture beneath AI initiatives. While less mature organizations may report KPI improvement, IDC finds that the greatest and most sustainable business impact comes from a focus on foundational data quality and infrastructure investments. Masters are moving beyond piecemeal upgrades toward architectures that are cloud-smart, scalable, data-aware, adaptive, and automated. In the AI era, speed, scale, security, and adaptability aren't optional - they are key ingredients to realizing the most business value from your AI initiatives.

Methodology

In January of 2024 and June of 2025, IDC conducted a survey of +1,200 global decision makers involved in enterprise IT operations, data science, data engineering and software development related to AI initiatives. These interviews revealed in-depth information about the evolving state of AI initiatives including the array of challenges, numerous business benefits, and best practices that leading organizations have taken to achieve success.

In conducting this analysis IDC has developed an AI maturity model where organizations fall into one of four maturity levels based on their current approach to AI in terms of data and storage infrastructure, data policy and governance, resource efficiency focus, and stakeholder enablement and collaboration. These maturity levels are AI Emergents, AI Pioneers, AI Leaders, and AI Masters.

To access the full report, visit: **https://www.netapp.com/media/142474-idc-2025-ai-maturity-findings.pdf**

*Source: IDC InfoBrief, "Scaling Enterprise AI Responsibly: The Critical Role of Data Readiness and an Intelligent Data Infrastructure", sponsored by NetApp, doc #US53841625, October 2025

About NetApp

NetApp is the intelligent data infrastructure company, combining unified data storage, integrated data, and workload services to turn a world of disruption into opportunity for every customer. NetApp creates silo-free infrastructure, harnessing observability and AI to enable the industry's best data management. As the only enterprise-grade storage service natively embedded in the world's biggest clouds, our data storage delivers seamless flexibility. In addition, our data services create a data advantage through superior cyber resilience, governance, and application agility. Our workload services provide continuous optimization of performance and efficiency through observability and AI. No matter the data type, workload, or environment, with NetApp you can transform your data infrastructure to realize your business possibilities. Learn more at **www.netapp.com** or follow

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