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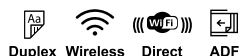
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CONTENT

COVER STORY

6

CHANNEL NEWS 20-29

- CyberArk Introduces First Identity Security Solution Purpose-Built to Protect AI Agents with Privilege Controls



- India's Top 10 IT Distributors Powering the Channel Ecosystem in 2025
- Cloud Costs Meet GenAI: Partners Face a New Reality as Consumption Spikes



- GIGABYTE Partners with WCG India 2025 as Official Laptop Partner to Support India's Esports Growth
- Palo Alto Networks Unveils Cortex AgentiX to Build, Deploy and Govern the Agentic Workforce of the Future
- Parallels Expands in India, Partners with XenTegra to Accelerate Growth of End-User Computing Solutions
- RDAI Pushes Nationwide Rural Insurance Drive, Opening a New Frontier for India's Tech Industry



- CIOs Say AI Agents Can't Work Without Structured Data
- Datadog Launches Storage Management to Help Teams Eliminate Unnecessary Cloud Object Storage



- Singapore Gears Up to Lead Southeast Asia's AI Frontier

How Partners reacting to OpenAI's move into cloud?

TRENDING NEWS 9-12

- India's Top 20 Women CIOs, CTOs & Tech Leaders of 2024-2025



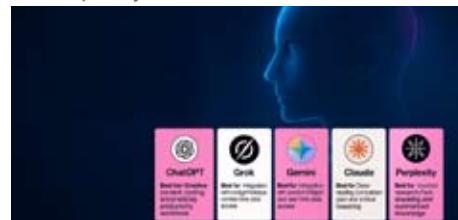
- AI Bubble Fears Surge: Nvidia, Palantir Slide After Michael Burry Bets Against Tech
- The Mathematics of Bias — Why Fair AI Demands More Than Ethics

INSIGHT 13-19

- The Mathematics of Bias — Why Fair AI Demands More Than Ethics



- The great AI Hoax: why every software company is faking Intelligence in 2025
- SMB B2B Marketers Prioritize conversion rate optimization (CRO) in QND
- ChatGPT vs Grok vs Gemini vs Claude vs Perplexity: Which AI Tool Fits You Best?



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How Partners reacting to OpenAI's move into cloud?



OpenAI CEO Sam Altman has sent the global tech ecosystem into overdrive after dropping one of his most consequential hints yet: the company appears to be gearing up to build its own cloud computing platform. What began as a subtle, almost off-hand post on X has quickly escalated into a full-blown industry debate, with technology leaders, cloud architects and AI researchers scrambling to decode what an “OpenAI cloud” would mean for the trillion-dollar hyperscale market long controlled by Amazon Web Services, Microsoft Azure and Google Cloud.

The post itself was brief, but the implications were anything but. Industry watchers say Altman’s message signals that OpenAI is no longer satisfied simply building large language models—it now wants to own the infrastructure those models run on. That move would push OpenAI into direct competition with the largest cloud platforms in the world, positioning the

company as not just an AI leader but a potential cloud superpower. And it comes at a moment when demand for AI-grade compute capacity is exploding, GPU scarcity is tightening, and CIOs globally are looking for infrastructure purpose-built for next-generation AI workloads.

Much of the urgency stems from a simple reality: the AI era has fundamentally changed what “cloud” needs to be. Traditional clouds were engineered in the 2010s, optimized around virtual machines, storage, SaaS hosting and microservices. Today’s

demands are dramatically different. AI workloads require extreme GPU density, high-speed networking, ultra-low latency memory systems, and specialized chips capable of running massive inference loads in real time. Many experts argue that AWS, Azure and GCP—despite their scale—were never architected for this new class of computational intensity. They are adapting, yes, but they are adapting from legacy foundations.

OpenAI, by contrast, has the opportunity to build an entirely new kind of cloud from scratch—one designed first for artificial intelligence rather than for general-purpose computing. This potential shift has triggered strong, sometimes fiery reactions from tech leaders on X, many of whom believe a disruptive newcomer could finally reshape a cloud industry that has remained largely static for nearly 15 years.

Several leaders also highlighted that OpenAI is already sitting on the



SAM ALTMAN, CEO, OpenAI



most important ingredient hyperscalers spent years cultivating: massive demand. The reactions reflect a wider industry concern: OpenAI is the first AI company powerful enough to threaten cloud incumbents not by matching their services but by redefining what cloud services even mean. Consider the trajectory. OpenAI already runs the world's most widely used AI models. It already powers thousands of enterprise applications. With agentic AI systems on the horizon, enterprises will soon require infrastructure that can support continuous reasoning, real-time inference, memory architectures, safety layers and autonomous task execution at scale. Running such systems on generalized cloud infrastructure is extremely expensive and often inefficient. But on a purpose-built AI cloud, that cost profile shifts entirely.

This is where hyperscalers start to feel pressure. AWS still dominates the cloud market, but AI is the fastest-growing workload

on its platform. If OpenAI launches its own AI cloud, that compute could shift away from AWS, cutting into Amazon's most profitable division. Microsoft, meanwhile, faces a uniquely complicated dilemma. It powers OpenAI today and is its biggest financial backer. If OpenAI creates a competing cloud, Microsoft must either support it, compete with it, or find a hybrid arrangement that blurs the line between partner and rival. In any scenario, Azure risks losing control of the AI narrative it has spent years building. Google Cloud, for its part, has always leaned on its AI pedigree—TPUs, Gemini, DeepMind—as its core differentiator. If OpenAI enters the cloud race with next-generation models and native AI infrastructure, Google's edge becomes far less pronounced.

Still, most commentary circles back to one central question: Why is OpenAI doing this?

According to analysts, the answer lies in compute dependency. OpenAI relies

heavily on Microsoft's Azure datacenters, which are powerful but incredibly expensive, especially at the scale required for GPT-6 and agentic systems. If OpenAI wants more autonomy, lower costs, and end-to-end control over safety, performance and latency, building its own compute layer becomes almost inevitable. Some experts believe OpenAI may pair this with custom chips, potentially challenging Nvidia's dominance. Others speculate about hybrid models where OpenAI builds an AI-first cloud while still using Microsoft for overflow capacity.

CIOs and CTOs are already discussing how this shift may change cloud purchasing strategies. Today, infrastructure decisions revolve around reliability, cost, compliance, ecosystem integrations and multi-cloud posture. But an AI-native cloud introduces a fundamentally different calculus: model performance, inference cost, memory systems,

latency to agents, and tight coupling with enterprise AI workflows. Some IT leaders believe organizations may begin splitting workloads—not by vendor, but by architecture—legacy cloud for traditional compute, AI-native cloud for intelligence workloads. As discussions intensify, one fact is becoming increasingly clear: even the possibility of an OpenAI cloud has already disrupted the market psychology. The hyperscaler landscape—once a predictable three-player battlefield—now faces a potential fourth contender capable of rewriting the rules altogether. Whether Altman's hint becomes reality or remains a strategic signal, the cloud industry has received a wake-up call: the AI era will not simply run on yesterday's infrastructure.

And if OpenAI chooses to build the world's first AI-native cloud, the next chapter of cloud dominance won't be written in Seattle or Mountain View. It may be written wherever Sam Altman decides to build.

India's Top 20 Women CIOs, CTOs & Tech Leaders of 2024–2025

In a transformative era where AI and digital leadership define business success, India's women CIOs and CTOs are boldly scripting a new narrative—one of innovation, resilience, and inclusive growth. These leaders are not just managing enterprise technology—they are orchestrating intelligent systems that are reshaping how industries operate,

decisions are made, and customers are served.

At ITPV, we are proud to spotlight 20 remarkable women who are leveraging cutting-edge technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, automation, and data analytics to unlock business agility, drive innovation at scale, and create future-ready enterprises.

From AI-enabled banking

platforms and predictive healthcare diagnostics, to smart manufacturing systems and cyber defense powered by behavioral intelligence, these women are modern-day architects of change—turning challenges into opportunities and vision into value.

Whether it's enabling responsible AI in public governance, building digital twins for customer

experience, or integrating AI-driven compliance frameworks into security operations, each of these leaders is pushing the envelope on how technology can serve people, profits, and the planet. From banking and healthcare to telecom, retail, and regulatory sectors, they are driving AI-powered transformation across boardrooms and beyond.

Akansha Garg – Chief Data Protection Officer, HDFC Securities



Akansha is a leading voice in data privacy and regulatory tech, ensuring customer trust through robust compliance, encryption frameworks, and responsible data stewardship.

Annapurna Kuchibhatla – CTO, Bajaj Electronics

With over three decades in IT, Annapurna is a pioneer in governance, cybersecurity,

and digital risk management in the electronics industry.



Annapurna Vishwanathan – VP, Head of Digital Airbus



A digital change agent, Annapurna leads transformation initiatives and is a champion of diversity in industrial technology.

Annie Mathew – CIO, Ashoka University



Driving digital integration across India, Annie has modernized operations through SAP and agile supply chain systems.

Aparajita Mukherjee Rajput – CIO GSK

Known for simplifying complexity, Aparajita has successfully led enterprise IT transformations in the FMCG

space.



Aparna Kumar – Ex-CIO, State Bank of India



■ TRENDING NEWS

A veteran in BFSI tech, Aparna spearheads CRM, analytics, and digital banking platforms across India's largest bank.

**Aarti Singh –
CIO Mahindra Group**



Founded by: Bhavesh Goswami An early AWS training partner in India, CloudThat provides cloud skilling, solutioning, and end-to-end consulting for government and enterprise clients.

**Anuprita Daga –
CISO, Angel One**

Founded by: Vijay Jain Minfy has established itself as a hyperscale cloud partner with strengths in AI/ML,



application modernization, and digital healthcare transformation.

**Bishakha Jain –
Cyber Data Risk &
Resilience Expert,
Morgan Stanley**



Bishakha's work spans data protection and resilience, setting high benchmarks in global financial security.

**Irina Ghose – MD,
Microsoft India**



With two decades at Microsoft, Irina powers large-scale transformation programs for India's digital economy.

**Jijy Oommen – CTO,
Aavas Financiers**



From core banking to data modernization, Jijy's digital roadmap fuels inclusive financial services across India's heartland.

**Jothi Dugar – CISO,
National Institutes of
Health (NIH), USA**



A global leader of Indian origin, Jothis uniquely merges cybersecurity and holistic leadership to secure public health systems.

**Kirti Patil – Joint
President & CTO,
Kotak Life**



Kirti leads digital-first insurance innovation while building agile tech teams for long-term impact.

**Lily Prasad – CTO, Food
Safety & Standards
Authority of India**



One of the most respected voices in cloud and hybrid infrastructure, Geeta leads strategic engagements across the region.

**Madhu Munshi
Malhotra – CTO, Zuno
General Insurance**



Madhu is simplifying insurance through automation, improving customer touchpoints and service reliability.

**Pooja Chatrath – CIO,
Oncquest Laboratories
Ltd.**



At the forefront of diagnostics innovation, Pooja leads healthcare IT to enhance patient outcomes with AI and analytics.

**Reema Jain – Chief
Information &
Digital Officer, Hero
MotoCorp**



Reema is accelerating digital mobility for India's largest two-wheeler manufacturer through AI, IoT, and CX.

**Sandhya Devanathan –
VP, Meta India**

A trailblazer in digital transformation and policy advocacy, Sandhya drives



Meta's India expansion with social impact at its core.

**Shivani Arni – CISO,
Mahindra & Mahindra**

Shivani leads with a deep focus on enterprise-wide cybersecurity, risk governance, and industrial control systems. Her proactive threat mitigation strategies safeguard Mahindra's diverse business verticals.

"These women are not just leaders—they are creators of new possibilities. Their work inspires a generation of young professionals and reinforces the belief that the future of tech is inclusive, ethical,



and impactful." — Kalpana Singhal, Co-founder & Chief Editor, CXO TV | Techplus Media Group



AI Bubble Fears Surge: Nvidia, Palantir Slide After Michael Burry Bets Against Tech

For months, Silicon Valley floated on an AI-powered high. Nvidia couldn't stop rallying. Palantir turned into a geopolitical darling. Every tech stock with the word "AI" attached to it enjoyed a gravity-defying rise. The markets behaved as if artificial intelligence were not just the next big thing — but the only thing. But the fever appears to have broken.

In a single brutal trading session, the world's largest tech companies lost a staggering \$730 billion in market value, sending shockwaves from Wall Street to Bangalore. The crash was so abrupt, so synchronized, and so emotionally charged that analysts immediately pointed to the unlikely spark behind the sell-off: Michael Burry, the legendary investor who predicted the 2008 housing collapse and was immortalized in *The Big Short*.

When Burry quietly disclosed a massive wager against top AI stocks, it triggered a wave of panic selling, algorithmic liquidation, and a sudden rethink of Silicon Valley's aggressive AI valuations. Nvidia the poster child of the AI boom — took the biggest hit. After doubling, then tripling in value on the back of unprecedented GPU demand, the stock suddenly faced a wall of selling volume.

Investors began asking uncomfortable questions: How long can hyperscalers keep buying \$40,000 GPUs? Will AI inference costs ever stabilize? Are enterprises

actually using the AI tools they claim to be piloting? Palantir, too, faced the heat.

The company's bold narrative that AI would transform militaries, governments, and Fortune 100s overnight cracked under the pressure of market fear. Palantir has strong fundamentals, but it also carries a premium valuation based on AI optimism. When sentiment turns, high-multiple stocks are the first to bleed.

The fall didn't stop there. Meta, Amazon, Alphabet, Tesla, AMD, Arm, Snowflake — every AI-tagged company felt the shock. Even the slightest hint of AI exposure became enough to trigger a sell order. Overnight, the global markets looked less like a confident, AI-driven future and more like the early tremors of a tech correction nobody wanted to admit was coming.

Amid this chaos, Michelle Storting, a well-known market commentator on X, posted a sharp reminder that went viral: "Some of these AI valuations were priced for perfection. Any wobble and the whole structure

shakes." Her post became a rallying cry, reflecting the sentiment of millions of retail traders suddenly wondering whether they had bought into innovation or inflation. But is this truly an AI bubble bursting? Or just a necessary pressure release after months of irrational exuberance? Market analysts argue that the AI narrative isn't dead far from it. Enterprises are still investing. Governments are still regulating. Chips are still scarce.

Every major cloud provider is still doubling datacenter spend. Boards continue to push AI transformation directives, and talent demand for AI roles remains red-hot. The correction, they say, is less about the technology and more about the tempo. No industry not even one as transformative as AI can sustain a constant vertical climb. Periodic resets are part of the cycle.

Michael Burry himself has not made any sweeping public statement — but his trade speaks louder than words. Burry has built a career on identifying moments when narrative and reality diverge. He did it during the housing market mania, again during tech's pandemic boom, and now he's firing a warning shot at an industry that has largely assumed its rise is inevitable. Tech leaders, meanwhile, are urging caution but not pessimism.

Several CIOs posted on LinkedIn that this correction may actually benefit enterprises by cooling down overhyped products, forcing

vendors to prioritize real use cases over flashy demos. What is clear is this: the AI selloff exposed just how emotionally charged and over-leveraged the sector had become. Investors were pricing AI like it would rewrite the world in six months. Reality is slower, messier, and more expensive. Still, the fundamentals remain intact. Nvidia continues to dominate the GPU market. Palantir is deeply entrenched in defense and enterprise intelligence. Google, Microsoft, and Amazon are building multi-billion-dollar AI clouds.

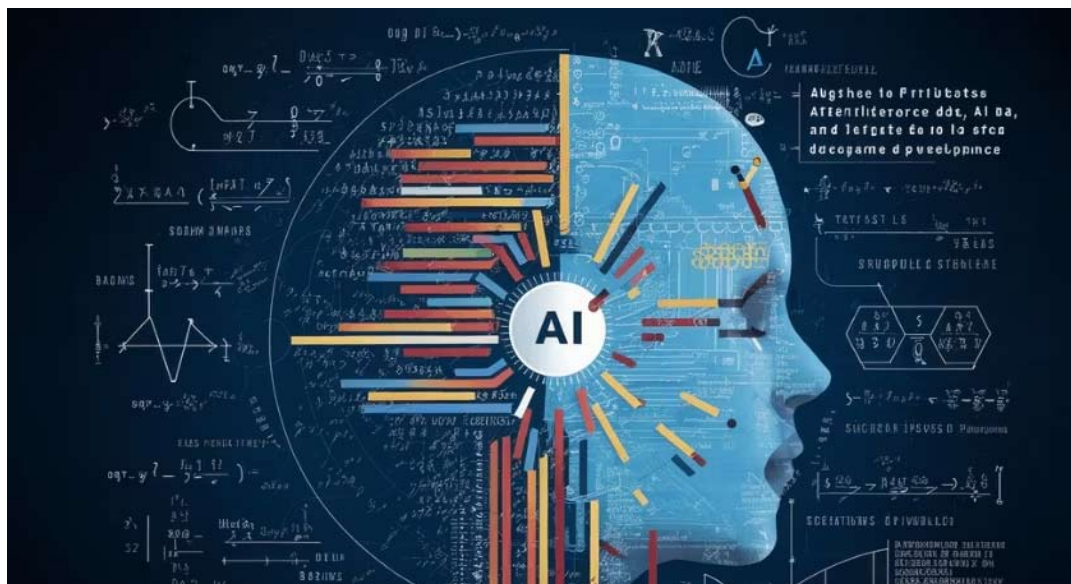
Startups are innovating at the agent layer. And global demand for AI compute still exceeds supply. This correction painful as it may be is likely a recalibration, not a eulogy. Markets may adjust, investors may reposition, but AI remains the most transformative technology of the century. The hype may fluctuate, but the direction of travel is unchanged. Just as the dot-com crash didn't halt the internet it merely cleared out the noise the AI market's turbulence may end up strengthening the industry.

We may look back at this \$730-billion meltdown not as the end of the AI narrative, but as the moment the industry shed its illusions and matured. For now, though, Silicon Valley has been handed a harsh reminder: technology can rise incredibly fast — and correct even faster. The question isn't whether AI will survive. The real question is which companies will emerge stronger after the dust settles.



MICHAEL BURRY

The Mathematics of Bias – Why Fair AI Demands More Than Ethics



Every algorithm simplifies reality — and in doing so, distorts it. Prof. Shalini Gopalkrishnan dismantles the myth that AI bias is purely ethical, revealing instead its mathematical roots. She explains how enterprises can engineer fairness from the ground up — turning integrity into a measurable advantage in the Agentic AI era.

Beyond Ethics: The Real Science of Bias

When AI systems make biased decisions, public discourse often blames “bad ethics.” But Prof. Shalini Gopalkrishnan reframes the debate: bias isn’t moral — it’s mathematical.

Every AI model simplifies reality into numbers. That compression process — converting infinite complexity into finite representation — inevitably introduces distortion. The question isn’t whether bias

exists; it’s how well we measure and mitigate it.

The Three Layers of Bias Auditing

Shalini outlines a three-tier auditing framework for enterprise AI systems — a method that transforms bias detection from philosophical debate into quantitative engineering.

Distributional Robustness:

Most models fail when they face data that diverges from training samples. To test fairness, we must expose models to diverse, “out-of-distribution” data and analyze deviations.

Causal Pathway Analysis:

Fairness is not correlation — it’s causation. Shalini emphasizes Causal AI — a discipline that maps the cause-effect chain behind decisions to ensure models

make fair choices for the right reasons.

Dynamic Bias Monitoring:

Bias evolves as AI learns. Monitoring must be continuous, not static — a feedback loop that detects new disparities as models adapt to changing data.

The Business Case for Mathematical Fairness

For CXOs, mathematical fairness isn’t academic — it’s strategic. As governments tighten regulations (like the EU AI Act), companies that embed bias quantification frameworks will have a competitive edge.

Ethics-driven companies are admired. Math-driven fairness leaders are trusted. Embedding fairness at the algorithmic level reduces legal exposure, improves user trust, and enhances brand reputation — making AI transparency a business

moat.

The Cultural Equation

Even the best mathematical safeguards need cultural support. Shalini warns that enterprises often see bias mitigation as compliance, not innovation. The result? Ethical stagnation.

She advocates a mindset shift: treat fairness as a design parameter, not a checkbox. When fairness becomes part of optimization — like accuracy or speed — AI naturally becomes inclusive.

From Ethical Intent to Measurable Integrity

The future of AI ethics lies in quantification. With mathematical definitions of fairness, bias, and accountability, enterprises can audit algorithms like they audit finances.

The question for leaders isn’t “Is our AI ethical?” It’s “Can we prove it?”

The Bottom Line

Ethics start conversations. Mathematics delivers accountability.

As AI agents become more autonomous, the responsibility to ensure fairness shifts from moral debate to scientific discipline.

For the AI-driven enterprise, fairness is not philosophy — it’s infrastructure.

By Prof. Shalini Gopalkrishnan, AI Strategist at SFB University of California

THE GREAT AI AGENT HOAX: WHY EVERY SOFTWARE COMPANY IS FAKING INTELLIGENCE IN 2025



By 2025, a curious pattern has emerged across the software industry. From global SaaS giants to scrappy startups, the marketing message is the same: “We’ve added AI Agents!” It’s the new badge of relevance, a symbol of being “future-ready.” But peel back the layers of hype, and you’ll often find something much less revolutionary: a chatbot hastily bolted onto a broken product. It’s like attaching a soap dispenser to a bar of soap: unnecessary, complicated, and completely missing the point.

The phrase “AI Agent” was supposed to signal a new era of intelligent systems capable of reasoning, acting, and learning autonomously. In theory, these digital agents could execute workflows, handle customer queries, analyze data, and even make micro-decisions — all without human supervision.

In practice, however, most of what’s being sold as “AI Agents” in 2025 are glorified chat interfaces built on top of outdated architectures. They might answer a few FAQs, summarize documents, or generate reports, but they

are far from autonomous. These “agents” are closer to digital interns — limited, dependent, and error-prone than to the co-pilots that marketing brochures promise. The reason is simple: AI is being added as a feature, not as a foundation. Instead of re-engineering their products around intelligence, companies are simply plugging AI into their existing, messy systems — and hoping no one notices the cracks underneath.

Why is everyone doing it? Because in the post-ChatGPT world, not having AI feels like not having electricity. Every boardroom is asking, “What’s our AI story?” Every investor deck has an “AI-powered” slide. And every sales pitch now includes words like “autonomy,” “agents,” and “LLMs.” The motivations, however, are rarely technical. They are psychological and financial:

- **FOMO (Fear of Missing Out):** No one wants to be the company that “missed the AI wave.” The fear of looking outdated is driving reckless adoption.

- **The Illusion of Value:** Many believe that adding AI automatically makes a product more valuable — a dangerous assumption that often leads to bloated pricing with no real utility.
- **Buzzword Marketing:** “AI” sells. It impresses clients, attracts investors, and keeps the press interested. But behind the scenes, it’s often the same codebase wrapped in a new pitch deck.
- **The Dream of 100% Markups:** With AI hype at an all-time high, companies hope to double their price tags by simply rebranding “smart” versions of old tools.

The result? A market flooded with half-baked “AI-first” products that don’t solve core user problems they just disguise them.

When AI Can’t Save You

Here’s the hard truth: AI can’t fix a broken core. If your product is confusing, adding a chatbot won’t make it easier to use. If your data

is inconsistent, AI will only amplify the chaos. And if your workflows are inefficient, intelligence layered on top will simply automate inefficiency. We’ve seen this pattern before with mobile apps in 2010, with blockchain in 2017, and with “metaverse” initiatives in 2022. In each case, companies chased the trend without understanding the transformation it required. Now AI has become the new stage prop for the same play.

Poor UX? Add an AI assistant.

Slow onboarding? Add an AI copilot.

Complex workflow? Let “agents” handle it.

Except they don’t. Instead, they create new failure points, new dependencies, and new frustrations. A poorly designed AI experience doesn’t just fail it actively erodes user trust.

Agentic AI: the idea that autonomous digital agents can act on behalf of humans is a powerful concept. In the right hands, it can revolutionize how organizations operate. Imagine marketing systems that autonomously A/B test campaigns, or IT systems that self-heal without human intervention. But for agentic systems to work, the underlying product architecture must be modular, interoperable, and context-aware. Most enterprise software today is none of these things. Data silos, legacy dependencies, and spaghetti-code workflows make true automation nearly impossible. Instead of redesigning their products to support autonomy, many vendors are

just adding “AI layers” — chatbots that look smart in demos but crumble under real-world complexity. It’s like painting over rust; it looks new, but the decay continues underneath.

The Human Element That’s Missing

The irony is that AI’s purpose was never to replace human creativity — it was to enhance it. But the current AI race is eroding the very human understanding that software should simplify lives, not confuse them. Instead of solving real user pain points, companies are obsessed with ticking the “AI box.” Designers aren’t asking, “Does this help the user?” They’re asking, “Can we call this intelligent?” Engineers aren’t optimizing performance — they’re optimizing perception. It’s a dangerous shift because when technology becomes theater, users stop believing in the story. The Smarter Path Forward

The companies that will truly win the AI race aren’t the ones shouting about agents — they’re the ones quietly rebuilding from the ground up. They’re redesigning architecture for interoperability, rethinking workflows around context, and using AI as an enhancer — not a bandage. They know that before a product can be “intelligent,” it must first be useful, usable, and trusted. That’s why the future of AI isn’t about who integrates faster — it’s about who integrates better. Success won’t come from flashy demos but from invisible intelligence: systems that adapt silently, learn ethically, and deliver measurable outcomes.

By late 2025, we’ll start to see the market correct itself. Products that merely pretend to be intelligent will fade out, and the true innovators those who rebuilt their systems with intelligence as a foundation will rise.

CIOs and decision-makers are already becoming skeptical. They’re asking harder questions:

- “How does this agent improve workflow efficiency by measurable metrics?”
- “What data does it train on?”
- “Can we control or customize its behavior?”
- “What happens when the AI makes a bad decision?”

The era of blind adoption is ending. The next phase will demand transparency, accountability, and architectural maturity. The AI hype train is speeding through the software industry, and everyone wants a seat. But not everyone deserves one. Adding AI isn’t the same as being intelligent just as wearing a stethoscope doesn’t make you a doctor. Artificial intelligence is a tool, not a trophy. It can amplify excellence, but it can’t hide incompetence.

As enterprises evaluate vendors and as software companies chase their next feature, one truth stands tall: AI can’t fix what you refuse to rebuild. AI won’t solve poor UX, AI won’t repair messy workflows, And AI won’t save companies that mistake noise for innovation. The winners of 2025 will be those who treat AI not as decoration, but as DNA woven thoughtfully into every process, experience, and outcome.

SMB B2B Marketers Prioritize conversion rate optimization (CRO) in Q4



In the fast-moving world of B2B marketing, small and midsize enterprises (SMEs) are telling a familiar story: conversion rate optimization (CRO) is top of mind, yet execution falls short. A recent report shows that although 56% of SMB B2B marketers cite CRO as their primary testing objective this year, just 32% are actively running A/B tests on landing pages.

The findings point to a glaring capability gap. More than half of these marketers say a lack of time, resources, or tools is their biggest hurdle to experimentation. Even more surprising: many campaigns still direct traffic to homepages instead of dedicated, optimized landing pages. Email and website content remain the most common channels for testing (used by ~57% of respondents), while mobile/SMS, landing page experimentation,

and SEO-based tests lag behind.

For CXOs and marketing leaders, this trend raises critical questions. How can smaller B2B firms bridge the gap between ambition and capability? The answer lies in elevating testing culture—not just tools. Priorities must include:

- Allocating dedicated budget/time for CRO efforts
 - Investing in lightweight experimentation platforms
 - Training teams in testing methodology
 - Institutionalizing the habit of “test, learn, iterate” across campaigns
- If SMBs can close this execution gap, they stand to unlock far more value from their marketing investments. But until then, their biggest challenge won’t be deciding on strategy—it will be making those strategies work.



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ChatGPT vs Grok vs Gemini vs Claude vs Perplexity: Which AI Tool Fits You Best?



Artificial Intelligence adoption is accelerating across global enterprises, but an overlooked truth remains: not all AI models are built to do the same job. Leaders evaluating AI capabilities often default to “Which model is better?”, when the smarter question is:

Which model is better for a specific type of work?

Different language models excel in different lanes — creative tasks, research validation, workflow integration, document comprehension, or real-time trend intelligence. Understanding these nuances helps CIOs, CMOs, and digital leaders choose the right tool for organizational productivity.

ChatGPT — The Creative Enterprise Workhorse

For organizations

dependent on content, knowledge workflows, and ideation, ChatGPT stands ahead as the most versatile creative engine.

Strengths in the enterprise:

- Marketing copy, ad concepts, and social messaging
- Storyboarding, email sequencing, and campaigns
- Business writing and customer communications
- Rapid scripting and learning content

Its tone agility, contextual understanding, and reasoning capabilities make it a reliable co-pilot across knowledge-heavy functions.

Enterprise Edge:

Custom GPTs allow leaders to build internal knowledge bots for sales enablement, policy queries, training, and analysis — without coding.

Grok — The Internet’s

Real-Time Radar

Built with access to live, public data streams through X (Twitter), Grok is tuned for agility. It excels in environments where cultural context, trend recognition, and sentiment monitoring matter.

Where it shines:

- Social intelligence
- Trend analysis
- Fast-moving brand contexts
- Witty commentary and agile marketing

For brands playing in the attention economy, Grok is more reactive and culture-aware than traditional models.

Enterprise Edge: Ideal for social listening, campaign reaction, and competitive intelligence in public digital spaces.

Gemini — The Google Workspace Native

If your enterprise operates

heavily within Docs, Sheets, Gmail, Drive, or Meet, Gemini delivers workflow automation directly inside Google Workspace.

Advantages in corporate environments:

- Collaborative research
- Project planning templates
- Email summarization and drafting
- Data handling inside Sheets
- Meeting notes and action extraction

Gemini functions like a productivity layer across the Google suite, reducing switching costs and friction.

Enterprise Edge:

Accelerates team collaboration and operational documentation at scale.

Claude — The Deep Thinking Analyst

Not all AI is good at long-form comprehension. Claude is.

It excels in:

- Reviewing complex documents
- Technical writing and summaries
- Policy interpretation
- Legal and compliance clarity

Claude’s balanced tone and strong ethical reasoning make it uniquely suited for risk-sensitive industries.

Enterprise Edge:

Exceptional for contract review, due diligence, and knowledge distillation — tasks where accuracy and tone matter.

Perplexity — The Verified Research

Engine

Perplexity operates like a hybrid between a search engine and an academic researcher. It prioritizes citations, verified sources, and real-time data.

Where it leads:

- Market research
- Secondary data analysis
- Academic writing support

- Competitive scanning
- Fact-checking

It reduces misinformation risk — critical for enterprise reporting.

Enterprise Edge: Built for decision-makers who cannot afford incorrect data.

Who Should Use What? (CXO Fit Guide)

- CMOs, Creative Leaders →

- ChatGPT + Grok
- Corporate Teams & PMOs → Gemini
- Legal, Policy, Finance → Claude
- Analysts, Researchers → Perplexity
- Social-first brands → Grok
- Marketing Ops & Sales Enablement → ChatGPT

The future belongs to leaders who know when to

combine tools rather than standardize on one.

The Strategic Insight

The competitive advantage is shifting from:

“Who has access to AI?” to “Who knows how to deploy the right AI in the right context?”

Enterprises will increasingly:

- Stack models for complementary strengths
- Build internal agents trained on proprietary data
- Automate niche workflows with custom GPTs
- Integrate AI into productivity ecosystems
- This is where operational value compounds.

The CXO Takeaway

No single model is “the winner.” The right choice depends on:

- Workflow maturity
- Data governance standards
- Integration environment
- Industry compliance sensitivity
- Speed vs. accuracy requirements

In an AI-augmented workplace:

- ChatGPT sparks ideas
- Grok tracks culture
- Gemini supports collaboration
- Claude delivers clarity
- Perplexity ensures truth

Leaders who understand the strengths of each will scale faster, decide smarter, and operate with confidence in an environment where information velocity matters more than ever.

Strategic breakdown.

ChatGPT vs Grok vs Gemini vs Claude vs Perplexity

 ChatGPT Best for: Creative content, coding, and everyday productivity workflows.	 Grok Best for: Real-time trends, pop culture, and candid insights.	 Gemini Best for: Integration with Google Workspace and real-time data access.	 Claude Best for: Deep reading, comprehension, and ethical reasoning.	 Perplexity Best for: Verified research, fact-checking, and summarized knowledge.
USECASE • Writing, brainstorming, and idea expansion • Coding, debugging, and optimizing scripts • Creating learning plans or study guides • Generating marketing copy and storytelling content	USECASE • Tracking trending topics on X/Twitter • Quick summaries of public sentiment • Writing witty, conversational posts • Exploring informal or creative takes	USECASE • Planning projects in Docs, Sheets, or Slides • Researching with updated web data • Collaborative editing and knowledge sharing • Streamlining workflows across Gmail and Drive	USECASE • Reviewing lengthy reports or contracts • Legal or research document summaries • Policy writing and detailed technical drafts • Content requiring nuance, tone, and reasoning	USECASE • Finding accurate data with citations • Researching niche topics or academic content • Comparing multiple reliable sources • Quick summaries with verifiable references
STRENGTHS • Multimodal capabilities (text, image, file uploads) • Advanced reasoning and creativity across topics • Custom GPTs for specific workflows • Seamless context recall for long-term projects	STRENGTHS • Connected to real-time social media updates • Sharp, punchy, and humorous tone • Perfect for content creators and marketers • Fast reactions to breaking events	STRENGTHS • Deep integration with Google apps • Real-time search and updated information • Strong for structured, team-based work • Works seamlessly in business environments	STRENGTHS • Exceptional with long documents (up to 200K+ tokens) • Great at summarizing and rewriting complex text • Balanced tone and natural-sounding writing • Prioritizes safety, reasoning, and factual accuracy	STRENGTHS • Always cites sources and provides transparency • Real-time web-based data • Excellent summarization for research • Ideal for quick, reliable answers
PRO TIP Use ChatGPT to automate your workflow, create custom GPTs for writing, planning, and analysis.	PRO TIP Use Grok to create viral posts or social commentary with personality and wit.	PRO TIP Use Gemini for organization and collaboration inside Google Workspace to keep everything connected.	PRO TIP Use Claude to summarize, fact-check, or rewrite large, complex documents into simple insights.	PRO TIP Use Perplexity when accuracy and verification matter, great for research, reports, and sourcing.

CyberArk Introduces First Identity Security Solution Purpose-Built to Protect AI Agents with Privilege Controls

- *Delivers privilege controls, visibility and compliance for the new class of AI agent identities.*
- *Extends CyberArk's identity security capabilities to secure AI-driven automation at enterprise scale.*



CyberArk the global leader in identity security, is announcing the general availability¹ of the CyberArk Secure AI Agents Solution, expanding the CyberArk Identity Security Platform with industry-first privilege controls to secure the rapidly growing class of AI agent identities.

As organizations rapidly adopt AI agents to automate tasks and drive efficiency, these autonomous entities are emerging as a powerful — and privileged — new identity class. AI agents introduce novel risks, including agent hallucinations, misuse, and potential takeover by malicious actors. These risks are heightened when agents require elevated privileges.

The CyberArk Secure AI Agents Solution addresses these challenges by applying the right level of privilege controls, helping to ensure that AI agents have only the access they need, when they need it, and nothing more. This approach reduces risk, helps prevent unauthorized access, and

enables organizations to scale AI-driven initiatives with confidence.

“As organizations embrace AI agents, both builders and defenders must understand how identity-centric risks evolve when agents require elevated privileges,” said Matt Cohen, CEO, CyberArk. “Without strong discovery, robust privilege controls, and comprehensive lifecycle management, organizations risk losing visibility and opening the door to catastrophic agentic attacks. CyberArk uniquely secures the full spectrum of identities — humans, machines and AI agents — by applying the right level of privilege controls, enabling innovation while maintaining security and compliance.”

Securing AI Agents Requires a Privilege-Focused Approach

According to new CyberArk CISO research, AI agent adoption is expected to reach 76% within three years, yet fewer than 10% of organizations have adequate

security and privilege controls in place. The report, *Securing Agentic AI: Identity as the Emerging Foundation for Defense*, reveals that:

Nearly 40% of enterprise financial institutions and software companies already have agentic AI in production.

Fewer than one in ten organizations have deployed agentic security controls such as risk registries and dynamic authorization at scale.

Two-thirds of CISOs in financial services and software rank agentic AI among their top three cybersecurity risks, with more than one-third citing it as their top concern.

Most expect AI agent security to drive increased cybersecurity spending in the coming year.

AI agents act with autonomy, reasoning, and access to sensitive systems, often requiring privileged permissions to execute their functions. Without proper oversight, these privileges can be misused or hijacked, leading to potentially severe business and regulatory consequences.

Privilege Controls Across Every Identity

The CyberArk Identity Security Platform delivers comprehensive privilege controls across the full spectrum of identities: human, machine, and AI. With the introduction of the Secure AI Agents Solution,

these proven capabilities are extended to autonomous AI agents, applying the same principles of just-in-time access, least privilege, and continuous session monitoring that have defined CyberArk's leadership in identity security.

This unified, privilege-first approach ensures that every identity is governed, secured, and monitored with the same rigor — enabling innovation without compromising security or compliance.

The CyberArk Secure AI Agents Solution will deliver:

Comprehensive Agent Discovery: Automatically detect AI agents across SaaS, cloud, and developer environments, with enriched profiles including ownership, roles, and access rights.

Secure Agent Access: Enforce strong authentication and least-privilege access, with zero standing privileges and agent activity auditing.

Real-Time Threat Detection: Continuously monitor for anomalies and unauthorized access, triggering automated alerts and rapid response.

Lifecycle Management and Compliance: Govern AI agent from creation through decommission, supporting evolving regulatory requirements and audit readiness.

India's Top 10 IT Distributors Powering the Channel Ecosystem in 2025

India's IT channel landscape is entering its most ambitious phase yet, and at the heart of this momentum lies a powerful network of national distributors. From hyperscale cloud partnerships to cybersecurity stacks, from hardware supply chains to subscription-based licensing engines—the country's top distributors now function as the growth backbone for VARs, MSPs, SIs, and OEM ecosystems. Together, these 10 distributors shape over 70% of India's IT product and solution flow, enabling partners to scale into new markets, expand their portfolios, and accelerate digital transformation across enterprises, SMBs and public-sector organisations.

For the channel community, these distributors aren't just supply hubs they are strategic enablers. With India's IT demand surging across cloud, AI, cybersecurity and edge computing, the Top 10 distributors are now shaping how partners build competencies, win enterprise deals, adopt new OEM programs, and drive multi-cloud transformation across sectors.

#	Distributor	Revenue (latest verified)	Key Leader(s)	Key Brands / Vendors They Deal With	Notes
1	Ingram Micro India	~ ₹ 45,036 crore (2024-25 approx)	Flavio Moraes Junior (Managing Director & Chief Country Executive, India)	Apple, Dell, HP, Lenovo, Cisco, Samsung, Microsoft, ASUS, Belkin (based on vendor list)	Major global distributor; India arm strong with hardware + services.
2	Redington Limited	FY24 revenue ~ ₹ 89,610 crore	Rajat Vohra CEO - India	Dell, HP, Lenovo, Hitachi Storage, Apple, Cisco, Microsoft — + 290+ global brands	Broad portfolio across hardware, software, mobility.
3	Rashi Peripherals (RP Tech India)	FY24 revenue ~ ₹ 13,257 crore	Rajesh Goenka (CEO)	Servers, storage, ICT hardware, major brand portfolios (public source lists broad ICT hardware)	Strong in tier-2/3 distribution.
4	iValue Infosolutions Ltd.	FY25 revenue ~ ₹ 942 crore	Sunil Pillai (Founder & MD)	Infrastructure, cybersecurity, cloud-hybrid solutions — specific brand list not fully public	Emerging value-added solutions distributor.
5	Supertron Electronics Pvt Ltd.	FY24 revenue ~ ₹ 6,748.86 crore	Vishnu Kumar Bhandari (Managing Director)	Broad hardware & components brands (not fully enumerated in public source)	Pan-India network of branches + satellite offices.
6	Crayon Software Experts India Pvt Ltd	₹ 3,139 crore in FY2024.	Vikas Waman Bhonsle Director	Software licensing, cloud, SAM Microsoft, IBM, AWS, etc.	
7	Iris Global Services	(2024-25): Rs. 3,200 Cr.	Sanjeev Krishen CEO	National distributor covering hardware + services.	
8	Savex Technologies Ltd.	(2024-25): Rs. 32,850 Cr.	Anil Jagasia	Established dealer/distributor network across India.	
9	Tech Data (India)	revenue ~ ₹ 5,621 crore	Sundaresan Kanappan – Vice President & Country General Manager, Tech Data India.	Global distributor with India operations; strategic cloud/hardware.	
10	iValue Infosolutions Ltd <i>replace this with another</i>	FY25 revenue ~ ₹ 942 crore	Sunil Pillai (Founder & MD)	Infrastructure, cybersecurity, cloud-hybrid solutions — specific brand list not fully public.	

In 2025, the partners who grow fastest will be the ones aligned with distributors that offer

not just products—but capabilities, financing, enablement and innovation. And this Top 10 list captures

exactly those players who are defining the next phase of India's channel evolution.

Cloud Costs Meet GenAI: Partners Face a New Reality as Consumption Spikes



GenAI is driving cloud adoption at historic speed but it's also triggering the industry's newest pain point: unpredictable costs. As enterprises experiment with AI-assisted development, LLM-powered applications, vector databases, and GPU-heavy workloads, cloud bills are rising faster than most IT teams had planned for. And partners are now caught in the middle. While cloud cost optimisation has always been part of the channel value chain, the GenAI wave is reshaping that conversation entirely. Workloads are more complex, pricing models are harder to forecast, and customers are demanding far more transparency from partners than ever before.

AI is rewriting the economics of cloud

Industry analysts note that GenAI workloads behave very differently from traditional lift-and-shift or

SaaS workloads. GPU clusters, high storage throughput, model fine-tuning, and vector search engines create variable consumption patterns that can swing cloud bills overnight. "GenAI is compressing innovation timelines but expanding cost unpredictability," says a senior cloud economist at a leading hyperscaler. "Partners who can't quantify or govern this new consumption curve will struggle to retain customer trust."

Customers want answers—not estimates

Across India and Southeast Asia, CIOs are pushing partners to explain:

- Why GenAI workloads exceed projected budgets
- Where GPU utilisation spikes are coming from
- Which regions and services drive cost overruns
- How to optimise LLM training vs inference

- How to balance performance with predictable billing

This is placing new pressure on VARs, MSPs, and cloud distributors to elevate their advisory role.

FinOps becomes mandatory—not optional

Cloud cost governance is no longer an afterthought. FinOps practices—once adopted only by cloud-native enterprises—are now being pushed down into the partner ecosystem.

Partners are being asked to provide:

- Transparent cost dashboards
- GPU utilisation reports
- Model tuning vs inference cost breakdowns
- Cloud storage lifecycle policies
- AI workload rightsizing
- Real-time budget alerts

GenAI is turning cost optimisation into a core revenue-retention strategy.

Partners must evolve or risk losing accounts

In the GenAI era, customers expect more than provisioning and support—they expect cloud cost intelligence.

This means partners will need to:

- Invest in FinOps-certified teams
- Build AI-specific cost forecasting capabilities
- Offer consumption optimisation as a managed service
- Guide customers toward sustainable AI architectures
- Recommend multi-cloud or hybrid choices when needed

Vendors are also expanding incentive programs to help partners deliver predictable outcomes for AI workloads.

As GenAI reshapes cloud consumption, partners who lead with cost clarity, AI workload governance, and proactive guidance will retain and grow their customer base. Those who stay reactive—or treat GenAI like traditional cloud—will feel the impact in churn and margin pressure. Cloud economics has entered a new era. The partners who master GenAI cost governance will define the next decade of channel leadership.

GIGABYTE Partners with WCG India 2025 as Official Laptop Partner to Support India's Esports Growth



GIGABYTE Technology Co. Ltd., a global leader in motherboards, graphics cards, and high-performance laptops, has partnered with Upthrust Esports as the Official Laptop Partner for WCG India 2025. Powering the nation's biggest esports celebration with its cutting-edge gaming laptops, GIGABYTE aims to demonstrate the competitive gaming experience with world-class performance and innovation. The partnership will reflect the brand's commitment to supporting India's growing gaming community by encouraging competition, creativity, and collaboration through powerful, high-performance technology.

The excitement now moves offline for the WCG National Showdown India LAN Grand Finale, taking place at the CIDCO Exhibition Centre, Navi Mumbai, on November 12 and 13. The event will feature the top four creator-led teams competing in front of a live audience for the WCG India Championship title. Attendees can look forward to an action-packed weekend with creator battles, exclusive meet-and-greet sessions, brand experience zones hosted by GIGABYTE, and live performances and giveaways. GIGABYTE will be showcasing its latest gaming laptops, GIGABYTE G6 and AORUS MASTER 16, offering visitors a hands-on experience with cutting-edge gaming

performance. Additionally, the event will feature an exciting Valorant gaming session, adding to the thrill and competitive spirit of the LAN finale.

"We are proud to have GIGABYTE as the Official Laptop Partner for WCG India 2025 powering the nation's biggest esports celebration with cutting-edge performance and innovation," said Kartik Sabherwal, Founder & CEO, Upthrust Esports. "GIGABYTE's commitment to delivering high-performance gaming technology perfectly aligns with the spirit of competition, creativity, and community that defines WCG. Together, we're enabling creators and players to experience next-level

gameplay, ensuring every moment of the tournament runs at peak power."

"Gaming has always been at the heart of what we do at GIGABYTE and partnering with WCG India 2025 is a proud moment for us" said Supriya Mankame, Deputy General Manager of GIGABYTE India. "India's gaming community is growing rapidly and we're committed to supporting this ecosystem with our high-performance laptops and components designed for both players and creators. With this partnership, we go beyond technology; it's about empowering gamers, inspiring innovation, and driving the future of India's thriving gaming ecosystem."

WCG (World Cyber Games) India is the national chapter of one of the world's most prestigious esports tournaments, bringing together top gaming creators and professional players to compete for the opportunity to represent India at the WCG 2025 Global Festival in Indonesia. GIGABYTE's role as the official laptop partner underscores its mission to empower gamers and creators with next-level performance and reliability.

Tickets for the LAN showdown are available on Swiggy Scenes and official Upthrust Esports channels, while fans nationwide can stream the matches live on YouTube (WCG – World Cyber Games) and Upthrust Esports.

Palo Alto Networks Unveils Cortex AgentiX to Build, Deploy and Govern the Agentic Workforce of the Future



Enhanced platform combines the power of agentic AI with the safety of enterprise-grade guardrails

As enterprises race to adopt agentic AI for productivity gains, they are challenged with complex ecosystem integrations and a lack of control. Today, Palo Alto Networks (NASDAQ: PANW), the global cybersecurity leader, is launching Cortex® AgentiX™ to solve this problem. As the next generation of Cortex XSOAR®, AgentiX is the industry's most secure platform to build, deploy and govern the AI agent workforce of the future.

Starting with the SOC, AgentiX is revolutionizing automation to counter adversaries who can launch attacks up to 100 times faster with AI. Its powerful

prebuilt agents are able to dynamically plan, reason and execute solutions just as an expert would, giving security analysts a decisive advantage. Ultimately, AgentiX delivers up to a 98% reduction in MTTR with 75% less manual work, freeing time up for strategic initiatives.

Gonen Fink, EVP of Products, Cortex, Palo Alto Networks

"Unleashing autonomous agents without tight control is a recipe for disaster. That's why we built AgentiX on our proven Cortex platform, delivering the full power of agentic AI with the control, traceability and permission management every enterprise demands. When applied to security teams, this isn't just automation;

it's the end of manual toil. We're freeing your experts to transform the SOC, not just chase alerts."

Unlike siloed approaches that focus on automating individual SOC tasks, AgentiX delivers end-to-end workflow autonomy. It's the only agentic AI platform built on a decade of security automation leadership and trained on 1.2 billion real-world playbook executions. Additionally, to help ensure seamless support for all critical enterprise tools, AgentiX comes with over 1,000 prebuilt integrations and native Model Context Protocol (MCP) support.

With Cortex AgentiX, organizations can:

- Deploy the industry's most experienced security agents: Go beyond rigid

playbooks with prebuilt agents that work as a seamless extension of your operations, with the first set including:

- **Threat Intelligence Agent:** Aggregates and enriches threat intelligence to uncover related cases and emerging adversary techniques.
- **Email Investigation Agent:** Automates a full-spectrum email threat response, from search and analysis to containment, across all platforms.
- **Endpoint Investigation Agent:** Delivers rapid analysis, forensics collection and host containment across every major EDR platform.
- **Network Security Agent:** Orchestrates threat response, policy control and network management across Palo Alto Networks and third-party firewalls.
- **Cloud Security Agent:** Secures cloud environments end-to-end, from posture and application protection to detection and response.
- **IT Agent:** Streamlines enterprise IT operations by automating upgrades, patching, troubleshooting, and user onboarding.
- Build your own custom

no-code agents: Rapidly create powerful AI agents with an elegant GenAI builder that leverages over 1,000 prebuilt integrations, native MCP support as well as robust guardrails for total control.

- Orchestrate complex workflows across the entire enterprise: Launch context-aware agents directly from any Cortex product or orchestrate complex, enterprise-wide actions from the standalone AgentiX platform.
- Govern autonomous action with enterprise-grade guardrails: Safely operate AI agents with role-based access controls and require human-in-the-loop approval for impactful actions, helping ensure agentic workflows are safe and reliable. Every agent action comes with full auditability to support the strictest compliance and security requirements.

Francis Odum, Founder of Software Analyst Cyber Research (SACR)

"Cortex AgentiX stands apart by building its agentic workforce on Palo Alto Networks existing SecOps backbone and a decade of SOAR maturity. This foundation is crucial: It ensures agents operate within a fully governed automation framework, unlike newer entrants that often lack enterprise-grade policy enforcement and traceability. By deploying natively across XSIAM, XDR and Cortex Cloud, Palo Alto Networks is uniquely positioned as the leader in agentic AI, delivering the scale, breadth and compliance standards required for the autonomous enterprise."

Cortex AgentiX is available today in Cortex Cloud™ and Cortex XSIAM®. Cortex XDR® and the standalone AgentiX platform will be available in early 2026.

Parallels Expands in India, Partners with XenTegra to Accelerate Growth of End-User Computing Solutions

Parallels to host nationwide partner roadshows in Mumbai and Bengaluru this December

Mumbai: Parallels, a global leader in virtualization and end user computing solutions, today announced a strategic partnership with XenTegra India, a leading provider of digital workspace and cloud solutions. The collaboration marks a major milestone in Parallels' accelerated expansion across Asia, with India positioned at the centre of its end-user computing (EUC) growth strategy.

Through this partnership, Parallels and XenTegra India aim to transform how organizations across India deliver secure, flexible, and simple digital workspaces. The partnership combines Parallels' award-winning EUC portfolio—including Parallels RAS (Remote Application Server), Parallels Secure Workspace, Parallels DaaS and Parallels Browser Isolation—with XenTegra's local expertise, partner network, and technical enablement capabilities.

"Parallels is investing deeply in the Asia region—India in particular," said Asif Khan, Country Manager, Parallels India. "This partnership underscores our commitment to helping Indian enterprises modernize their digital workspaces. Together with XenTegra, we are enabling partners to deliver secure, seamless, and scalable workspace experiences to



MOIN KHAN,
Managing Director, XenTegra India

customers navigating the hybrid era."

Moin Khan, Managing Director, XenTegra India, added: "Parallels brings unmatched strength in secure, simplified application and desktop delivery. As a Parallels Platinum Value-add Distributor, XenTegra is proud to collaborate in giving Indian partners and enterprises an alternative that is innovative, predictable, and cost-efficient—built for today's hybrid workforce."

To accelerate partner engagement, Parallels and XenTegra India will host a two-city partner road show in December 2025:

- Mumbai – December 11, 2025
- Bengaluru – December 17, 2025

These roadshows will feature hands-on technical workshops, free partner certifications, and live demonstrations of Parallels Workspace Solutions—empowering resellers, system integrators, and managed service providers (MSPs) to build profitable EUC practices.

This initiative represents a pivotal moment in India's virtualization and digital workspace landscape, as enterprises look for reliable alternatives amid global vendor transitions and rising cost pressures.



ASIF KHAN,
Country Manager, Parallels India

RDAI Pushes Nationwide Rural Insurance Drive, Opening a New Frontier for India's Tech Industry



India's insurance regulator has launched one of its most ambitious expansion programmes to date, signalling a decisive shift in how the financial protection ecosystem will grow over the next decade. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) is pushing a nationwide rural insurance drive aimed at closing long-standing gaps in access and awareness. But behind this policy push lies a deeper transformation: India's IT and AI industries are emerging as central enablers of the mission, turning the rural insurance rollout into a new technology frontier.

At a recent policy forum in New Delhi, IRDAI Member (Non-Life) Deepak Sood emphasised that India's existing agent and broker-led model has reached saturation in urban markets while leaving rural households

underserved. He argued that achieving "insurance for all" will require a fundamental rethink of distribution, product design, and citizen engagement. This shift dovetails with India's broader digital momentum, where Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker and other national digital infrastructure layers have already reshaped banking and payments. IRDAI now wants insurance to follow the same path — with technology driving scale, trust and accessibility.

As part of the rollout, rural districts across Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra, Assam and Bihar have begun seeing awareness camps, micro-agent onboarding sessions, and digital demonstrations. Field officers are using tablets, vernacular audio prompts, and QR-code-based sign-ups to reach citizens who have historically been excluded from the

formal insurance ecosystem. Claims are being explained through live demos, showing how payouts can now be triggered digitally and settled directly into bank accounts without complex paperwork. Early traction suggests that rural India is willing to adopt insurance — if the process is simple, transparent and fast.

This is where the IT and AI industries enter the picture. The rural insurance programme cannot succeed without a robust digital backbone, and insurers have begun turning to technology companies to build it. AI-driven underwriting models are being developed to evaluate risk for customers with limited financial histories by using alternative data points such as weather patterns, satellite imaging, livestock health records, and demographic clusters. Claims automation is another major opportunity, with image

recognition, drone-based surveys, and geotagged evidence enabling faster and more reliable payouts for crop losses, livestock deaths and climate-related damages. Vernacular AI, powered by multilingual natural language models, is expected to become the primary interface for onboarding millions of rural customers who prefer to communicate in local languages rather than English or Hindi.

Across several states, pilot programmes have already begun integrating these technologies. In Telangana and Odisha, AI chatbots guide farmers through claim submissions using voice commands. In parts of Maharashtra, cooperative societies have started using mobile apps to insure cattle at the point of procurement. These experiments point to a future where insurance is not a separate financial activity but an embedded, technology-led service woven directly into rural life. For India's technology sector, the implications are enormous. The rural insurance push represents a multi-billion-dollar opportunity for IT services firms, cloud providers, AI startups, fintechs and InsurTech companies. Rural India accounts for nearly two-thirds of the country's population, yet insurance penetration remains below 20 percent in many regions. With IRDAI targeting universal coverage

by 2027, digital onboarding, claims automation, vernacular communication engines and embedded insurance infrastructure will require large-scale technology investment. Industry analysts estimate that the rural insurance technology stack — underwriting, claims, distribution and analytics — could create a combined market opportunity of \$20–25 billion over the next five years. The regulator’s directive has also triggered internal shifts within insurers, forcing them to modernise legacy systems, adopt cloud infrastructure, and integrate AI across the insurance lifecycle. Many CEOs privately acknowledge that without technology, rural expansion would be commercially unviable. But with automation, digital identity, algorithmic pricing and low-cost distribution, the economics of rural insurance begin to resemble the high-scale, low-margin models that transformed India’s payments industry.

IRDAI’s rural mandate is therefore more than a social protection initiative. It marks the arrival of a new digital ecosystem where insurance, AI, and public infrastructure converge. If the rollout continues on its current trajectory, India could soon see real-time insurance issuance in villages, same-day digital claim settlements, and AI-powered risk models covering millions of households previously left out of the system. The rural protection net could evolve into one of the world’s largest InsurTech deployments, with Indian technology companies powering it end-to-end.

As India enters this new phase, the message from the regulator is unmistakable: universal insurance is not just a financial goal but a digital transformation movement. And for the IT and AI industry, this is the next big growth wave — one that begins not in boardrooms or metros, but in the villages where insurance is becoming a right, not a privilege.

CIOs Say AI Agents Can’t Work Without Structured Data



Enterprises across APAC are accelerating their shift toward AI agents—hoping to automate workflows in customer support, supply chain, finance and operations. But a new reality is emerging beneath the excitement: AI agents are breaking not because of weak models, but because of weak data foundations. Decision-makers from manufacturing, BFSI, logistics and tech sectors agree the barrier isn’t the model it’s the data. “Enterprises really need to ensure their data foundations are strong ... A lot of enterprises still have fragmented data across different departments and functions, stored in inconsistent formats prone to inaccuracies.” Eden Zoller, Chief Analyst (Applied AI), Omdia. From recent research, it’s becoming clear: When data is trapped across disconnected systems, AI initiatives stall. Teams end up reconciling information instead of seeing benefits. “There is no AI strategy without a data strategy.” Sridhar Ramaswamy, CEO of Snowflake. According to accounts from enterprise data leaders, ungoverned data, duplicated records, and unclear schemas are leading to

stalled AI pilots rather than scaled automation. “AI has to have access to data in order to make decisions, and it has to have the ability to actually take some kind of action.” — Andrew Humphreys, VP Analyst at Gartner.

Without clean, governed data, even the most advanced AI agents behave erratically—hallucinating, delivering conflicting insights, and eroding trust. Companies that invested early in data hygiene, metadata standards and single sources of truth are now deploying agents across workflows; others remain stuck in pilot purgatory. Untrusted data cripples AI’s promise ... Governance is key to unlocking AI’s true potential and competitive edge. From “Data Trust and the Evolution of Enterprise Analytics in the Age of AI .As enterprises push into 2026, one message from boardrooms to tech stacks is becoming unavoidable: AI agents don’t fail—unstructured data fails them. The organizations that win this decade will be the ones that build clean, connected, permissioned data foundations—because only structured data unlocks truly intelligent agents, shorter workflows, and enterprise-wide automation at scale.

Datadog Launches Storage Management to Help Teams Eliminate Unnecessary Cloud Object Storage

New product delivers granular visibility, proactive anomaly detection and targeted recommendations to optimize cloud object storage costs



Datadog, Inc. the monitoring and security platform for cloud applications, today launched Storage Management, which helps teams eliminate waste and prevent unexpected cloud object storage spend. The new product is now generally available for Amazon S3, with previews available for Google Cloud Storage and Azure Blob Storage.

Growing cloud object storage usage from data-intensive and AI workloads—including large-scale training datasets, model artifacts and inference logs—has led to a rapid rise in cloud storage costs. Effectively managing these costs has become a key challenge for operations and cloud efficiency teams,

many of which struggle to identify the workloads or stakeholders that are driving costs within large, shared buckets. These teams also regularly lack the granular context across metadata and access patterns that is needed to enforce lifecycle or tiering policies effectively.

As a result, uncovering specific savings opportunities—such as transitioning cold data from expensive storage classes, deleting duplicate objects or stopping the accumulation of non-current object versions—becomes a time-consuming, manual and reactive effort.

Datadog Storage Management addresses these challenges by providing detailed insights into cloud object storage at the bucket

and prefix levels across billions of objects. With it, teams can catch anomalies in storage growth and access patterns, analyze storage behavior in context, and act on specific, automated recommendations to reduce cloud storage spend faster. The product complements Datadog's Cloud Cost Management with a focus on object storage, delivering deeper visibility into usage, cost trends and optimization opportunities.

"For companies building AI products, data storage and processing is consistently the third-highest contributor to cost—greater than expenses for AI model training and inferencing," said Yrieix Garnier, VP of Product at Datadog. "With Datadog

Storage Management, teams are empowered to optimize cloud storage costs and prevent unexpected spend. By rightsizing these costs, companies can keep their focus on building better products and bringing them to market."

Datadog Storage Management helps organizations optimize cloud storage by providing:

- **Granular Visibility:** Pinpoint cost drivers such as infrequently accessed, temporary or duplicate data across workloads, teams and environments.
- **Unified Context:** Correlate cost, usage and metadata across buckets and prefixes in a single view to confidently enforce lifecycle, tiering and retention policies.
- **Proactive Anomaly Detection and Alerts:** Quickly identify and respond to anomalous storage growth, cost spikes and unexpected access patterns.
- **Targeted Optimization Recommendations:** Accelerate savings with specific, actionable recommendations on where to re-tier, archive or delete data.

Singapore Gears Up to Lead Southeast Asia's AI Frontier



Singapore is not merely adopting artificial intelligence — it's engineering a system to lead it responsibly. With billion-dollar investments, bold regulatory frameworks, and a focus on ethical innovation, the city-state is fast emerging as the regional nucleus of AI leadership in Asia. Since the launch of its first national AI strategy in 2019, Singapore has consistently positioned AI as a pillar of its economic growth. The government's recent commitment of over S\$1 billion for the next five years aims to expand compute capacity, boost AI talent, and accelerate adoption across key industries — from finance and healthcare to manufacturing. This proactive approach has placed Singapore first globally in the IMF's AI Preparedness Index, reflecting its readiness in digital infrastructure, governance, and innovation systems. Yet what distinguishes Singapore isn't

just its technology — it's its mindset: innovation guided by accountability.

Where many nations chase rapid AI expansion, Singapore's approach is more nuanced. The government promotes sandbox environments controlled spaces where businesses can safely test AI models, assess risk, and build governance structures before large-scale rollout. This "safe-to-fail" model encourages creativity without compromising ethics, enabling Singapore to blend agility with stability a combination rare in fast-evolving tech ecosystems.

Singapore's philosophy is simple yet profound: trust is the new currency of AI. Rather than imposing rigid laws, the city-state focuses on intent-based governance — regulating outcomes instead of methods. This flexibility allows innovation to flourish while holding organizations accountable for AI misuse. The upcoming updates to

its AI framework will likely influence regional standards, shaping how other ASEAN countries design their digital policies. Five Actionable Takeaways for Businesses in the Region

Leverage Singapore as a Launchpad

With its advanced infrastructure and stable regulatory environment, Singapore serves as a perfect base for testing AI products before scaling into larger ASEAN markets. Use the city as a compliance-safe innovation hub.

Collaborate, Don't Isolate

Singapore's ecosystem thrives on partnerships — between academia, startups, and multinationals. Regional businesses should tap into these collaborations to access shared talent pools, compute power, and innovation funding.

Embed Responsible AI Practices

Build governance into the design phase. Companies that invest early in model transparency, ethical frameworks, and data protection will not only gain regulatory approval faster but also enhance brand trust.

Prioritise Workforce Readiness

Singapore's plan to triple its AI-skilled workforce by 2030 is a warning to others: human capital drives transformation. Invest in upskilling employees across data analytics, automation, and ethical AI to stay competitive.

Adopt the Sandbox Approach

Test before you scale. By running AI pilots in monitored environments, businesses can identify biases, security vulnerabilities, and operational risks — minimizing potential fallout and accelerating smoother go-live rollouts.

Singapore's journey underscores a central truth: AI leadership isn't just about speed or scale it's about sustainability. By marrying innovation with governance, the city-state is building a model that balances ambition and accountability. As AI reshapes industries, Singapore's example may become the gold standard for how nations and businesses can innovate confidently, ethically, and inclusively.

Channel Point



Why B2B Social Media ROI Is Under Scrutiny in 2025

Marketing leaders are entering 2026 with a clear reality check B2B social media ROI is under intense scrutiny. Despite constant activity across LinkedIn, X, and YouTube, social media's contribution to real business growth has sharply declined. In an environment where marketing budgets remain flat at 7.7% of company revenue, CMOs are being asked to justify every dollar in terms of pipeline, not presence. The CFO era of marketing has officially begun.

Across B2B industries, social media's share of traffic has fallen from roughly 3% in 2019 to just about 1% in 2024, according to Forrester. Organic search long the cornerstone of inbound growth also dipped from 39% to 27%, with AI-powered search and chat assistants reshaping discovery patterns. Meanwhile, traffic from partner, referral, and owned ecosystem sources jumped from 58% to 72%. The signal is clear: owned and ecosystem-based channels are outperforming rented social reach. Boards and CFOs are now asking a single defining question — "Does your social media strategy build pipeline or just visibility?"

The problem lies in what vanity metrics hide. Likes, comments, and shares don't equal revenue. Algorithm changes make social reach unpredictable and short-lived. Paid reach keeps getting more expensive, with global social ad spend expected to hit \$276.7 billion in 2025. And new brand risks like deepfakes and impersonation make social presence increasingly volatile. If your customer acquisition cost (CAC) is rising while engagement rises too, you're measuring noise, not growth. Many B2B brands stumbled by copying consumer playbooks chasing mass awareness while neglecting the complexity of enterprise buying. In B2B, decision cycles are longer and layered with multiple stakeholders, requiring tailored content journeys. Social media contributes barely 1–3% of traffic, compared with 40–50% from search, email, and direct channels. As AI search redefines visibility, marketers must re-optimize for owned and intelligent discovery channels or risk digital invisibility.

A standout example comes from Lenovo's "Smarter Leads the Future" program, which engaged over 900 CIOs across APAC using a research-led content-marketing approach. Through a mix of thought-leadership storytelling, the CIO Chat Show series, and personalized nurture tracks, Lenovo achieved a 35% increase in email engagement and a 20% uplift in qualified pipeline conversations — proving that credibility and context beat clicks.

Meanwhile, email marketing continues to deliver unmatched ROI for B2B marketers. With an average return of \$36 for every \$1 spent, open rates around 21%, and CTRs near 2.6%, email provides owned, algorithm-proof access to audiences. Most teams still spend 80% of their time managing social media brands while giving little mindshare to email strategy when the ROI differential is obvious. Beyond direct channels, partner ecosystems are driving the next wave of ROI. Forrester's 2024 benchmarks highlight that partner enablement and engagement deliver some of the highest B2B marketing returns. Microsoft's Cloud Speed Circuit campaign, built around dashboards, incentives, and co-sell frameworks, reduced CAC by double digits and accelerated pipeline velocity by 18%. The takeaway is simple ecosystem-led orchestration consistently outperforms social-first tactics.

The path forward for CMOs is strategy-first growth. Anchor your brand in a strong narrative, build first-party data assets, orchestrate partner ecosystems, and secure AI-first visibility through optimized LLM-ready content. Measure what matters — pipeline velocity, customer lifetime value, acquisition cost, and brand preference. McKinsey data shows that firms linking marketing strategy directly to growth levers deliver 3–5% higher shareholder returns.

In 2025, B2B marketing success will depend less on being loud and more on being accountable. Social channels will remain useful for awareness, but owned data, ecosystems, and email will drive sustained growth. The brands that adapt now — balancing creativity with commercial clarity — will own the decade ahead.

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