

75% Of Middle East Organizations Plan To Adopt The Cloud In 2019

Three-quarters of the Middle East organizations that have not yet moved their digital estates and IT environments to the cloud plan to do so in 2019, according to Microsoft's *2019 Middle East Digital Transformation Manifesto* survey.

The survey involved more than 1,300 technology and digital decision makers from across the Middle East. Nearly half of all respondents (48%) said that their organization had yet to move some or any of its IT infrastructures to a third-party cloud. But more than 73% plan to do so in the coming year.

The recent finding reflects previous, similar discoveries made by Microsoft and independent global research firms, suggesting a region-wide accelerated engagement with cloud computing and related technologies.

Artificial intelligence is one such example, with 39% of companies in the Middle East already adopting AI solutions and 37% planning to adopt them in 2019.

Companies are getting bolder with their budgets in embracing AI. Nearly 72% are planning to spend on AI this year, suggesting that most previous adopters are planning further investments. Around 34% plan to spend more than 5% of their budget on AI, and 9% are setting aside more than 10%.

Attitudes toward the security of third-party data centers have also progressed. Findings on cybersecurity reveal a troubling threat landscape from which migrating organizations appear eager to escape. Some 63% of respondents said their company lost either productivity or data to a cyber incident in 2018. 46% of these victims were affected more than once and almost one in 10 victims reported incidents once a week or more.

"The overarching lesson from these findings is that the region's need for a trusted, secure, intelligent cloud has never been greater," says Ihsan Anabtawi, Chief Operating and Marketing Officer for Microsoft Gulf.

"Concerns over security and escalating IT budgets, as well as the desire to develop intelligent digital ecosystems that serve business needs in real time, are driving more and more organizations to the cloud. Microsoft's commitment to regional economic development will take another huge step forward, when we open our first Middle East hyper scale cloud data centers in Abu Dhabi and Dubai this year," added Anabtawi.

A recent IDC report shows that the cloud and the Microsoft ecosystem will bring over 520,000 jobs to the Middle East & Africa over the next five years, also the World Bank recently concluded that for every technology job created worldwide, 4.3 more are generated across sectors and income groups.

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[2019](#)