



# Research on AI Data Centers, Costs, & Pollution

Blue Rose Research | America Is All In

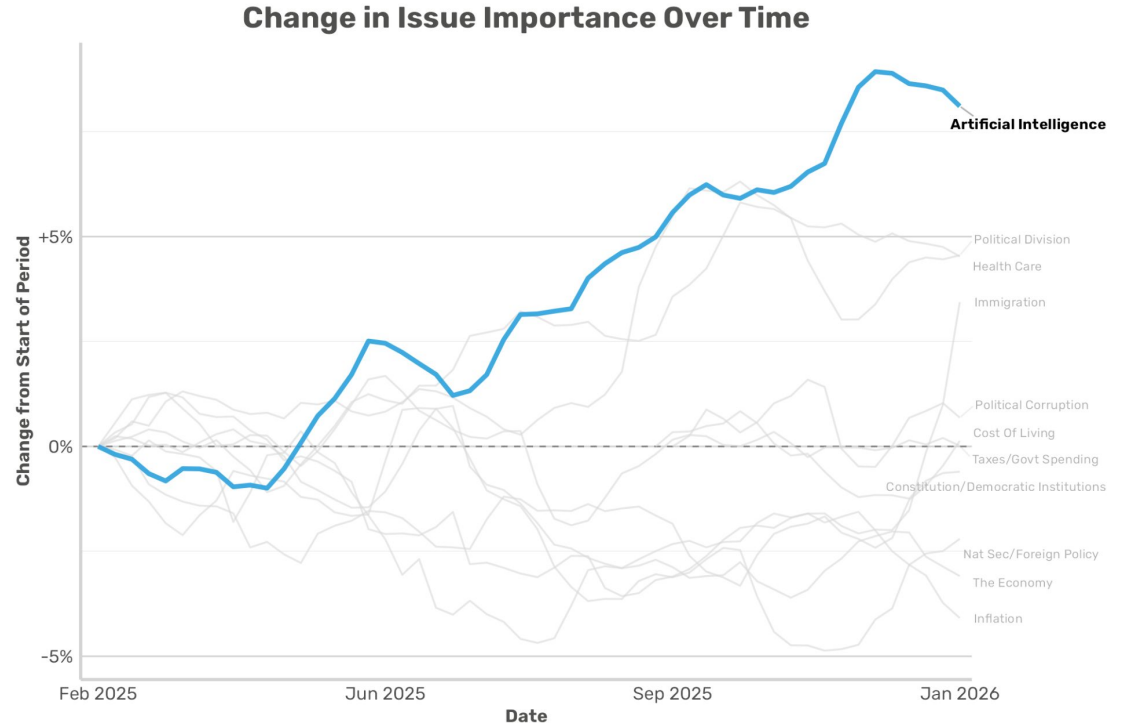
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March 2026

# AI & the Populist Moment

# AI is rising in importance faster than any other issue

While still below average in importance (currently #30 of 40 issues), it is rising in importance faster than any other issue we have been tracking.



*Which of these issues do you believe is the most important facing America today?  
(as measured as a maxdiff experiment)*

# AI arrives at a moment when trust in institutions has collapsed

**Nearly two thirds of Americans (64%)** believe America is rigged for the elite, including more than two-thirds of the swing group.

Response	Which comes closer to your view?			
	Overall	Harris	Swing	Trump
Things in America are rigged for the elite. Big corporations and the wealthy play by their own set of rules, and only they can get ahead.	64%	88%	67%	41%
Things in America are mostly fair for everyone. If you work hard and play by the rules, you can get ahead.	26%	6%	23%	47%
Not sure	10%	6%	11%	13%

Source: Blue Rose Research surveys via online web panels, N=6,260 December 8-9

# This low-trust, populist context is supercharging fears about elites who will benefit from AI at the expense of everyday Americans

Just 27% trust tech companies a lot or some to develop AI to do the right thing.

By a +52 point margin, respondents overwhelmingly agree that decisions about AI should not be left to a small group of private tech companies

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

***“Decisions about how AI is developed and used should not be left alone to a small group of private tech companies.”***

Response	Overall	Harris	Swing	Trump	18-34	35-49	50-64	65+
Total agree	69%	72%	65%	68%	63%	65%	70%	74%
Total disagree	17%	17%	21%	16%	21%	20%	17%	14%
Not sure	14%	11%	14%	15%	16%	16%	14%	12%
<b>Net Agree</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>60%</b>

Source: Blue Rose Research surveys via online web panels, N=5,008 January 17-18

# Americans believe AI will have negative effects across a wide range of impact areas

In your opinion, how will the rise of AI technology impact...	Net Impact			
	Overall	Harris	Swing	Trump
The overall quality of life in your community	-6%	-9%	-8%	-2%
The US economy	-9%	-15%	-9%	-3%
The drinking water supply	-9%	-14%	-6%	-5%
Air pollution	-10%	-15%	-6%	-5%
Inflation	-12%	-17%	-13%	-8%
The environment and climate change	-16%	-22%	-15%	-10%
Energy prices (e.g., oil and gas prices)	-16%	-20%	-17%	-13%
The cost of living	-17%	-22%	-17%	-11%
The economy of your local community	-20%	-24%	-17%	-15%
<b>Your electric bill</b>	<b>-20%</b>	-23%	-20%	-18%
<b>Energy prices</b>	<b>-21%</b>	-27%	-19%	-14%
<b>The number of jobs in your community</b>	-43%	-47%	-45%	-39%
<b>The number of jobs in the US</b>	-49%	-53%	-52%	-45%
<b>Your data privacy</b>	-50%	-52%	-53%	-49%

# Americans aren't anti-AI, but they are worried they won't reap the benefits

Generally speaking, would you say you are optimistic or pessimistic about the future development of Artificial Intelligence?

Subgroup	Optimistic	Pessimistic	Net
Overall	44%	41%	2.8%
Women	40%	43%	-3.2%
Men	48%	39%	9.8%
18-34	47%	36%	11.1%
35-49	46%	40%	6.2%
50-64	43%	42%	0.9%
65+	41%	44%	-3.5%
White Non-College	41%	43%	-2.2%
White College	46%	44%	1.6%
Black	47%	33%	13.5%
Hispanic	46%	36%	9.4%
Asian	48%	36%	11.8%

How do you feel about the current pace at which artificial intelligence (AI) is advancing?

Response	Overall
It's moving too fast	57%
It's moving at the right pace	26%
It's moving too slowly	2%
Not sure	15%

If AI became more intelligent than humans, do you think it would be mostly beneficial or mostly harmful to people?

Response	Overall
Total beneficial	17%
Total harmful	69%
Net beneficial	-52%

# Americans aren't anti-Tech, but they have concerns about 'AI companies' specifically

Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of [company]?

	Company	Net Favorability	Favorable	Unfavorable	Haven't heard enough to say
Tech companies	Google	+58%	78%	19%	3%
	Amazon	+56%	76%	21%	3%
	Facebook	+27%	62%	35%	3%
	Twitter X	-16%	32%	48%	19%
AI companies	Anthropic	-5%	8%	13%	79%
	Open AI	-7%	29%	36%	35%
	xAI	-22%	11%	33%	56%

Source: Blue Rose Research surveys via online web panels, N=4,655 December 19-20

## Most Americans are familiar with the topic of AI data centers in general, though a minority have heard of them being built in their own community

How much, if at all, have you heard about the construction of new data centers...

	Response	Overall	Harris	Swing	Trump
<b>In the US?</b>	A lot	11%	14%	9%	11%
	Some	26%	28%	24%	27%
	A little	29%	29%	26%	31%
	<b>Nothing at all</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>19%</b>	<b>29%</b>	<b>21%</b>
	Not sure	10%	9%	13%	9%
<b>In your community?</b>	A lot	9%	10%	9%	10%
	Some	16%	16%	15%	16%
	A little	20%	20%	20%	20%
	<b>Nothing at all</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>44%</b>
	Not sure	11%	11%	13%	10%

# A majority oppose building AI data centers near their homes, and expect their neighbors would too

Which of the following comes closest to your view regarding AI data centers being built close to where people live?

Response	Overall	Harris	Swing	Trump
I support the construction of AI data centers close to where people live, including near my own community.	16%	14%	15%	20%
I support the construction of AI data centers close to where people live, but not near my own community.	8%	7%	7%	8%
<b>I do not support the construction of AI data centers close to where people live.</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Not sure	24%	20%	28%	23%

Regardless of your own personal opinion, how much do you think your community and your neighbors would support building data centers near where you live?

Response	Overall	Harris	Swing	Trump
Support	27%	25%	26%	30%
Oppose	50%	55%	49%	48%
<b>Net support</b>	<b>-23%</b>	<b>-31%</b>	<b>-24%</b>	<b>-18%</b>

# Americans are skeptical about the local, financial benefits of AI data centers

Which of the following comes closer to your view regarding the impact of data centers on local taxes?

	Overall	Harris	Trump
Data centers <b>generate massive commercial tax revenue</b> , which funds local schools and roads and lowers the tax bill for local residents.	16%	14%	18%
Data centers often receive large tax breaks and incentives to locate here, meaning <b>they bring new burdens without providing enough financial relief to the community</b> .	49%	54%	44%
Not sure	35%	32%	38%

# Trust and AI

# Governors and renewable energy companies hold a unique trust advantage, more so than Democrats or Republicans in DC, or parties in their state

With the rise of AI, more data centers are being built near communities where people live. Some people have raised concerns about potential local impacts, including energy use, utility costs, and environmental impacts on water and air quality.

Who do you trust more to protect communities from its potential negative impacts?

*% Picked*

	Overall	Harris	Swing	Trump
<b>Government agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)</b>	72%	74%	73%	69%
<b>Your Governor</b>	66%	71%	66%	60%
<b>Renewable energy companies (like solar and wind companies)</b>	65%	74%	67%	57%
Democrats in your state	50%	81%	51%	19%
Traditional energy companies (like oil and gas companies)	49%	45%	50%	53%
Republicans in your state	49%	23%	46%	74%
Democrats in Congress	48%	78%	49%	18%
Electric utility companies	48%	54%	48%	41%
The Trump Administration	44%	14%	39%	74%
Republicans in Congress	43%	17%	39%	69%
Big Tech companies	26%	26%	26%	27%

# Big Tech companies are the least trusted party when it comes to the construction of data centers

**With the rise of AI, more data centers are being built near communities where people live. Some people have raised concerns about potential local impacts, including energy use, utility costs, and environmental impacts on water and air quality.**

**Who do you trust more to protect communities from its potential negative impacts?**

**% Picked**

**Overall Harris Swing Trump**

Government agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	72%	74%	73%	69%
Your Governor	66%	71%	66%	60%
Renewable energy companies (like solar and wind companies)	65%	74%	67%	57%
Democrats in your state	50%	81%	51%	19%
Traditional energy companies (like oil and gas companies)	49%	45%	50%	53%
Republicans in your state	49%	23%	46%	74%
Democrats in Congress	48%	78%	49%	18%
Electric utility companies	48%	54%	48%	41%
<b>The Trump Administration</b>	44%	14%	39%	74%
<b>Republicans in Congress</b>	43%	17%	39%	69%
<b>Big Tech companies</b>	26%	26%	26%	27%

# Americans do not trust the Trump administration or Republicans in Congress to hold companies accountable

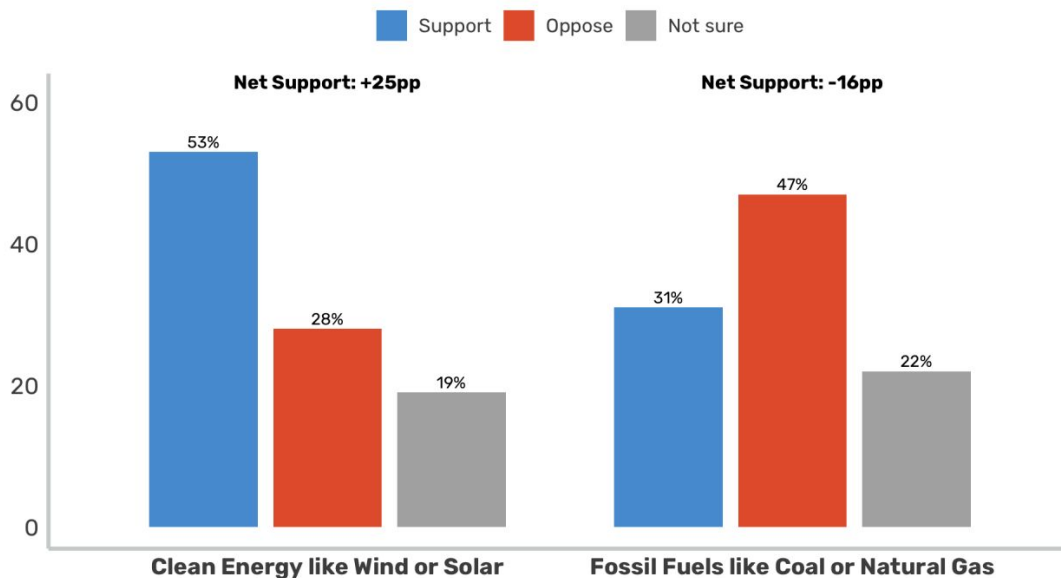
To what extent do you believe the following statement about Artificial Intelligence (AI) is true, if at all?

	Response	Overall	Harris	Trump
<b><u>Trump and Republicans do not hold big tech and utility companies accountable for consuming a huge amount of energy and raising electricity rates.</u></b>	<b>True</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>35%</b>
	False	19%	7%	31%
	Not sure	26%	17%	35%
<b><u>Republicans in Congress do not hold big tech and utility companies accountable for consuming a huge amount of energy and raising electricity rates</u></b>	<b>True</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>41%</b>
	False	17%	8%	27%
	Not sure	26%	20%	33%

# What Do Americans Want?

# How data centers are powered makes a difference—Americans support those powered by clean energy and oppose those powered by fossil fuels

If an AI data center were built near your community and powered primarily by [energy source], would you support or oppose it?



# Americans' preference for clean energy-powered data centers is bipartisan

If an AI data center were built near your community and powered primarily by [energy source], would you support or oppose it?

	Response	Overall	Harris	Swing	Trump
<b><u>Clean energy</u> sources like wind or solar</b>	Support	53%	56%	53%	50%
	Oppose	28%	25%	29%	31%
	<b>Net</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b><u>Fossil fuels</u> like coal or natural gas</b>	Support	31%	21%	33%	41%
	Oppose	47%	59%	45%	34%
	<b>Net</b>	<b>-16%</b>	<b>-39%</b>	<b>-11%</b>	<b>7%</b>

# Increased utility costs are decisively the top concern when it comes to the impact of data centers

Which of the following do you find most concerning about the construction of AI data centers near communities where people live?

% Picked as most concerning

	Overall	Harris	Swing	Trump
<b>Their energy consumption drives up utility costs for families living nearby</b>	64%	62%	64%	67%
Tech companies will pressure local governments to give up public lands or farmlands to be used for the construction of data centers	60%	56%	59%	63%
Their energy consumption can overload the electrical grid and lead to power outages	59%	56%	58%	62%
They do not provide long-term jobs to offset the workers eliminated by AI	58%	56%	58%	60%
They are often approved without meaningful input from local residents	58%	54%	57%	61%
The public may end up subsidizing the private companies that build the data centers through higher taxes or fees	56%	54%	55%	58%
Data centers can raise long-term costs for maintaining roads, water, and power systems	53%	51%	54%	55%
They benefit large tech companies more than the surrounding community	53%	53%	52%	53%
They take up large amounts of land that could be used for housing or other community needs	52%	51%	53%	51%
They can increase air pollution if powered by fossil fuels, affecting the health of families living nearby	51%	53%	52%	49%
Local governments may have to reallocate resources in order to pay for new infrastructure to support data centers	51%	48%	50%	53%

# Americans overwhelmingly believe AI will increase energy bills, and data centers intensify that concern

To what extent do you believe the following statement about Artificial Intelligence (AI) is true, if at all?

	Response	Overall	Harris	Swing	Trump
<b>More AI adoption will certainly increase my electric and energy bills.</b>	Definitely true	22%	30%	20%	20%
	Mostly true	31%	31%	31%	32%
	Mostly false	9%	8%	9%	11%
	Definitely false	3%	3%	3%	3%
	Not sure	34%	29%	38%	34%
	<b>Net True</b>		<b>+41%</b>	<b>+47%</b>	<b>+41%</b>
<b>More AI adoption <u>means more data centers</u>, which will increase my electric and energy bills.</b>	Definitely true	25%	31%	23%	23%
	Mostly true	34%	35%	34%	34%
	Mostly false	10%	7%	9%	12%
	Definitely false	2%	3%	2%	2%
	Not sure	29%	25%	32%	28%
	<b>Net True</b>		<b>+47%</b>	<b>+53%</b>	<b>+44%</b>

## Across the board, Americans believe more energy investments are needed and they will be inevitable

To what extent do you believe the following statement about Artificial Intelligence (AI) is true, if at all?

	Response	Overall	Harris	Trump
<b>AI and data centers will continue to grow and require more energy no matter what, so government needs to invest in more energy to keep up with the demand</b>	True	66%	67%	64%
	False	11%	11%	11%
	Not sure	24%	22%	25%

# Gubernatorial Messaging Lanes

## The top messaging lanes on AI tend to focus on creating guardrails to protect citizens and preserve human decision-making

Important decisions about healthcare, job applications, and legal rights **should be made by people, not machines**. They will require human oversight for high-stakes decisions and stop corporations from hiding behind algorithms. **When your life is on the line, you deserve a human being who is accountable.** (+1.9pp support, 95th percentile)

Americans deserve to trust what they see and hear. AI-generated scams, fake voices, and deepfake videos are already tricking families, seniors, and small businesses. **We should require safeguards, labeling, and accountability** so people are protected from fraud and deception and bad actors cannot weaponize AI to rip people off. (+1.7pp, 92nd percentile)

**Human creativity should not be stolen or replaced by machines.** Artists, writers, musicians, and creators are seeing their work copied by AI systems without consent or pay. They will **protect creative workers, require permission and compensation, and ensure technology supports human expression** instead of exploiting it for corporate profit. (+1.3pp, 69th percentile)

**Kids' safety must come first with AI technology.** Parents need real tools and control that we didn't have during the social media era. AI companies must **verify users' ages, set time limits, ban companion bots for children, and build safety into one national standard** with no loopholes so families can protect their children. (+1.3pp, 68th percentile)

## Less effective frames focus on more abstract concepts like fairness and corruption, as well as extreme weather

Trump and Big Tech Billionaires are out of control, building AI data centers that use more electricity than New York City and San Diego combined, raising our utility bills and polluting our air. We need CANDIDATE to **stand up to Trump and his billionaire donors** to put common-sense guardrails on data centers to protect American families against the big corporations. (+0.6pp, 30th percentile)

[Democratic Governor] is **standing up to Big Tech and opposing AI data center projects that shift costs onto local communities**. These projects often rely on taxpayer subsidies, drive up energy prices, and deliver few long-term jobs in return. They believe communities in our state should not be asked to pay more so large tech companies can profit. (+0.6pp, 28th percentile)

As Governor, they will help communities **prepare for extreme weather by modernizing our early warning systems and emergency response using AI**. AI should be used to protect lives, homes, and infrastructure as climate risks grow, making resilience and public safety central to how new technology is deployed. (+0.4pp, 20th percentile)

## Broader messaging findings on AI: Topics where we can develop successful contrasts on...

- **Keep human oversight in AI work**
- **Protect Americans from fraud**
- **Ensure AI companies will share the benefits – shared prosperity agenda**
- **Ensure AI strengthens long-term American jobs and manufacturing – not just company profits**
- **Build it responsibly: make sure data centers are powered by clean energy and everyday Americans are not paying for data centers' energy needs**

## Key Takeaways

**Americans are broadly concerned about the effects of AI:** nearly 7-in-10 respondents believe AI's rise will be mostly harmful for society, compared to just 17% who believe it will be mostly beneficial.

**A slim majority generally oppose the construction of data centers near residential areas:** 52% say they would not support data centers being built near areas where people live, while an additional 8% say they wouldn't oppose them in general but would not support a data center being built in their own community.

- Just 16% of Americans say they support the construction of data centers near residential areas, including their own.
- By a 23pp margin, Americans also believe that their neighbors would oppose the construction of a data center in their community.

**Governors are among the most trusted parties when it comes to the construction of data centers,** while Big Tech companies and DC politicians tend to be less trusted.

**Americans support data centers if powered by clean energy but oppose them if powered by natural gas or coal.**

- Asked whether they support the construction of data centers powered by fossil fuels, respondents opposed by -16pp.
- However, when asked about **data centers powered by clean energy, respondents supported their construction by +25pp.**

**'Utility costs' and 'excessive energy consumption' are top concerns when it comes to data centers.**

- These issues were selected as the bigger concern 64% of the time and 59% of the time, respectively, when Americans were shown random one-on-one matchups of data center concerns.
- Nearly six in ten say that as the rise of AI leads to more data centers, their energy bills will increase.

**Top message frames around AI revolve around protecting people from fraud and preserving human decision-making.**