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Americans Favor Greater AI and Quantum Regulation

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July 2025

In the span of just a few years, artificial intelligence (AI) and other advanced technologies have pervaded almost all facets of American life. However, novel research conducted by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and Ipsos (fielded June 27–29, 2025) shows Americans have yet to embrace this digital revolution. Majorities are concerned about data privacy and misinformation, and a plurality prefer greater regulation of these technologies at all levels. These findings suggest that efforts to create some form of governance around these technologies may alleviate public anxieties about the perceived risks.

Key Findings

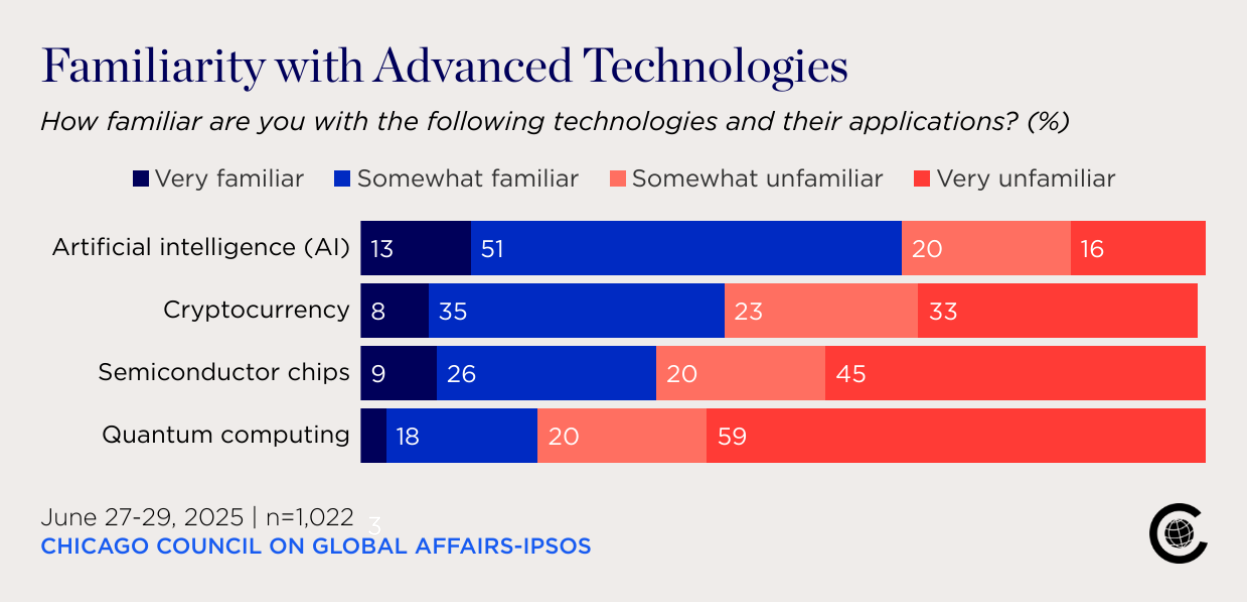
- While two-thirds of Americans (64%) are at least somewhat familiar with artificial intelligence, only two in 10 (21%) are at least somewhat familiar with quantum computing.
- Given their limited understanding of quantum computing in particular, large percentages of respondents say they are not informed enough to provide their opinions on many of the questions (up to 43%).
- At the outset of the survey, more Americans say they are concerned about the risks (51%) than they are excited about the opportunities (29%) that these advanced technologies will bring.
- Americans are most concerned about AI-generated misinformation (62%), the potential erosion of personal data (58%), and the decryption of critical data infrastructure by malign actors (51%).
- A plurality of Americans think there is not enough regulation for these technologies (44%; 11% just enough, 7% too much).

- Those who are familiar with AI and quantum computing are generally more positive than others toward most of the applications of these new technologies.

Majority of Americans Are Familiar with AI Applications, but Not Quantum

Recent years have seen a dramatic and widespread adoption of AI technologies in the United States. Americans are increasingly using AI-enabled products in their daily lives—from Alexa and ChatGPT to navigation apps and algorithmic social media feeds. But more than just an assistant, AI is also transforming industries like education, healthcare, and manufacturing, among many others. The applications of AI systems seem infinite.

In the recent Chicago Council-Ipsos poll, two-thirds of Americans say they are at least somewhat familiar with AI and its applications (64%, 36% unfamiliar). However, majorities are unfamiliar with other advanced technologies like quantum computing (79% somewhat or very unfamiliar), semiconductor chips (65%), and cryptocurrencies (56%).

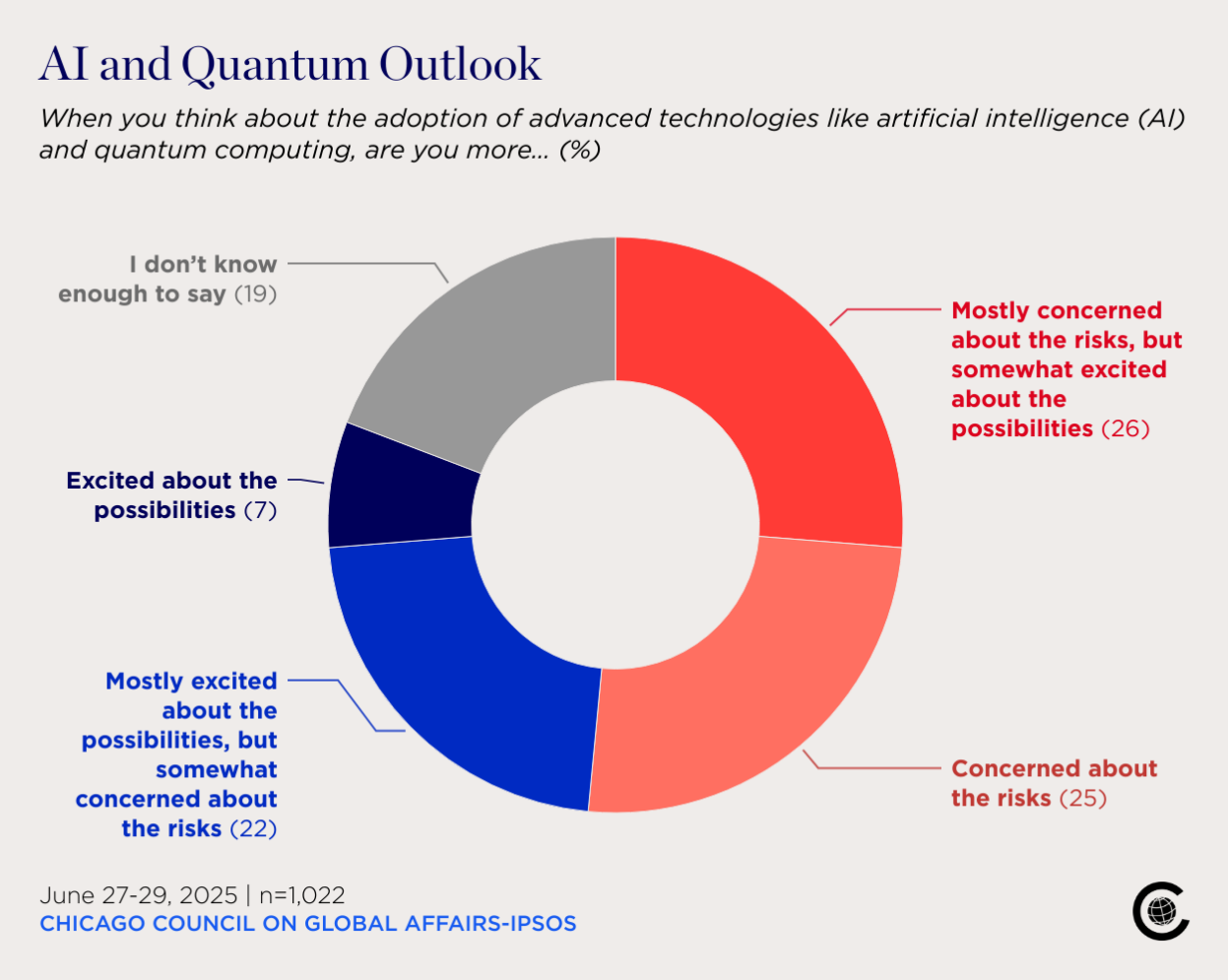


With the exception of quantum computing, which few adult Americans regardless of age are familiar with, Millennials and Generation Z express more familiarity with advanced technologies than older Americans—likely due to their more digitally integrated educations and social lives (see appendix table 1). Americans with higher levels of education are also more likely to be familiar with these advanced technologies, including quantum computing, than those with high school diplomas or less (see appendix table 2).

Concerns Outweigh Excitement for AI and Quantum Adoption

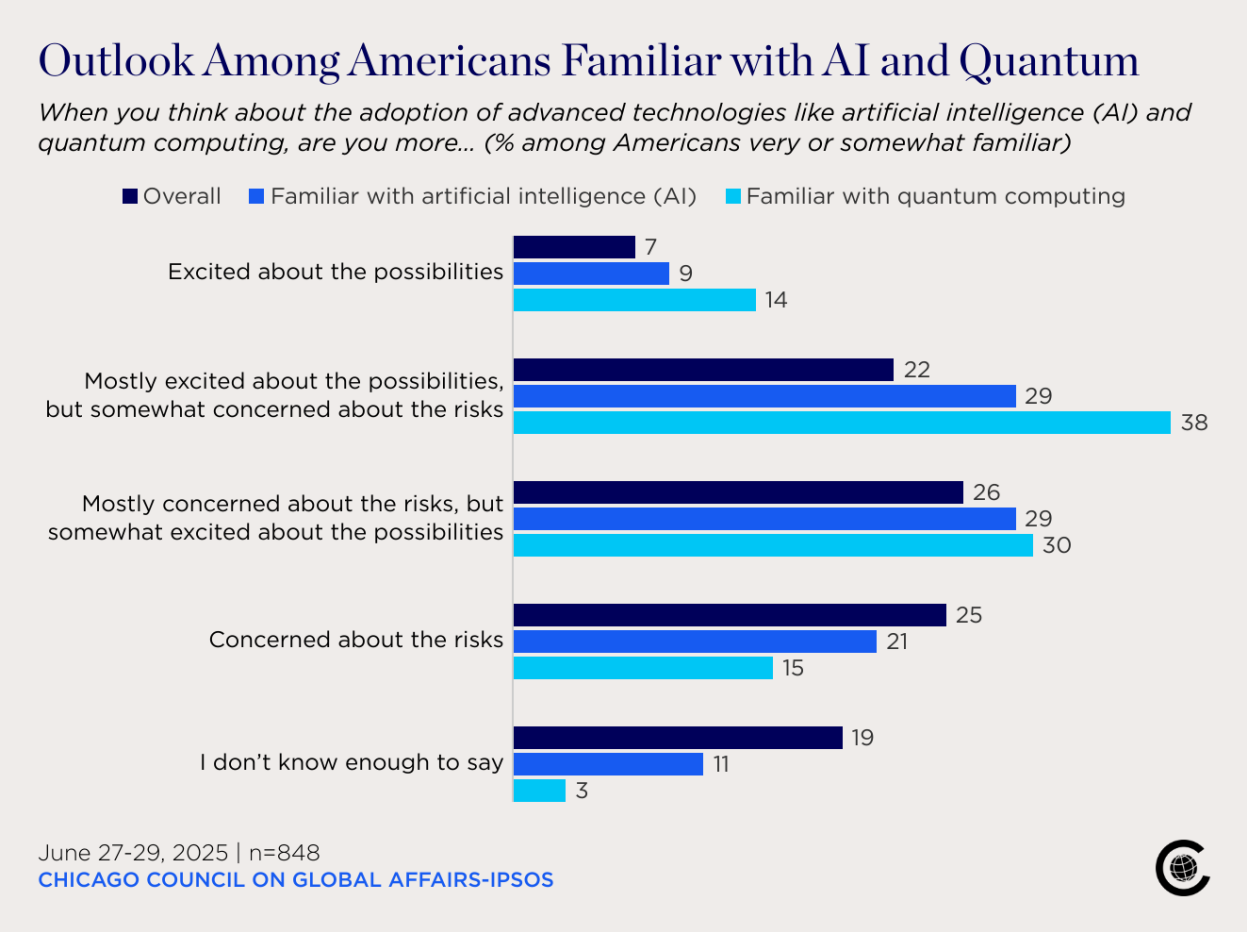
For everyday Americans, the perceived risks of advanced technologies overshadow the perceived possibilities. A quarter say they are "mostly concerned about the risks, but somewhat excited about the possibilities" (26%), while a similar portion say they are concerned about the risks outright (25%). The cumulative concern totals 51 percent.

On the other hand, a combined three in 10 are either "mostly excited about the possibilities, but somewhat concerned about the risks" (22%) or are simply excited about the possibilities (7%—a combined total of 29 percent). An additional 19 percent say they don't know enough to say.



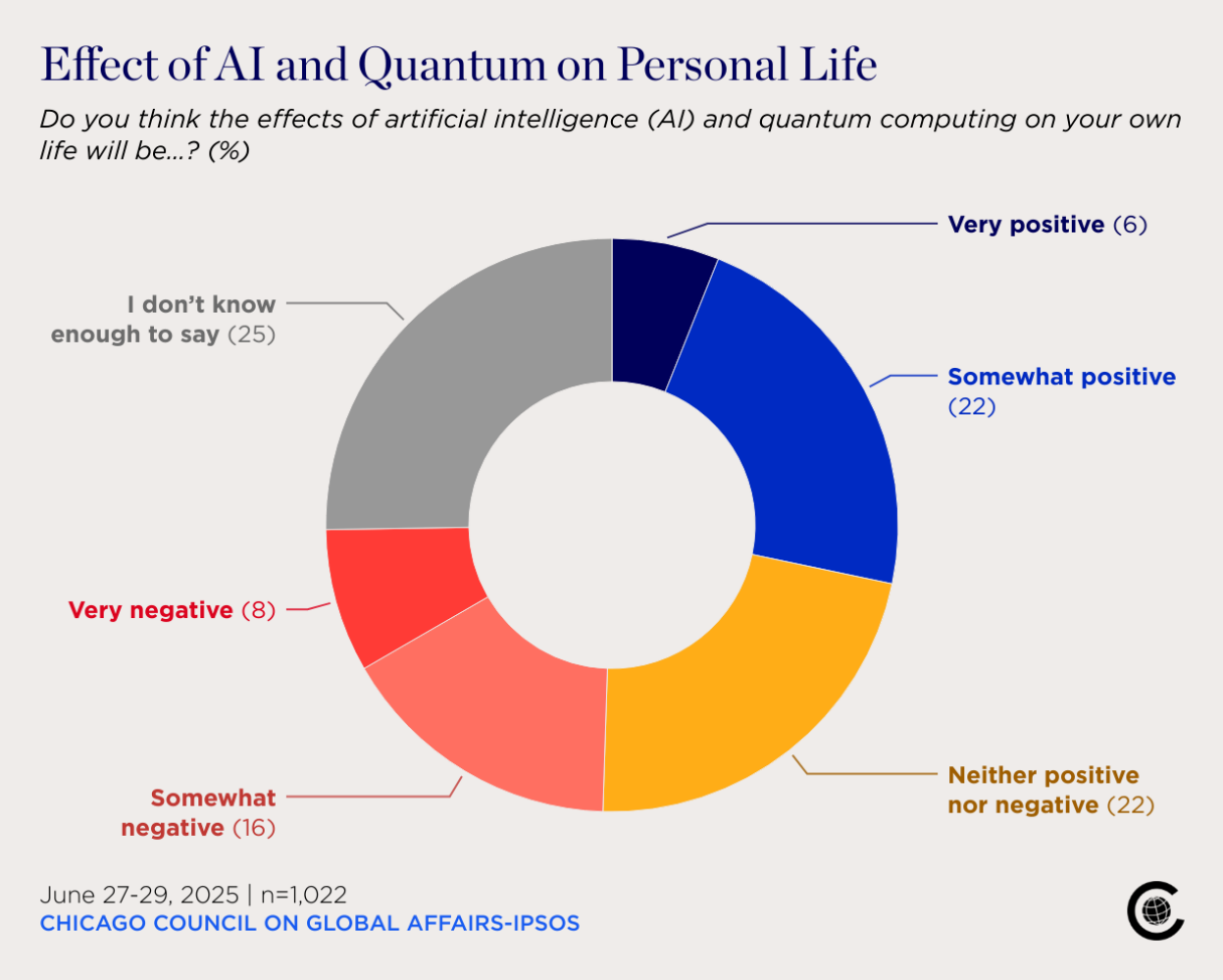
Those who are familiar with both AI and quantum computing are more likely than average to sense the possibilities of these innovations. But even those who are familiar with quantum computing are, at best, divided on whether

adopting these technologies will bring more possibilities than risks (see appendix table 3).[1]



Additionally, a narrow plurality of Americans expects AI and quantum technologies to affect their own lives at least somewhat positively (28%), while a quarter believes they will be affected at least somewhat negatively (24%). About two in 10 say the effects of these technologies will be neither positive nor negative (22%); a quarter does not know enough to say (25%).

[1] Because subgroups of those who are familiar with AI and quantum are smaller than the overall survey sample, the margin of error in comparing these two groups is higher than the overall margin of error. See methodology section for more details.



Americans Expect Healthcare and Data Security to Benefit Most

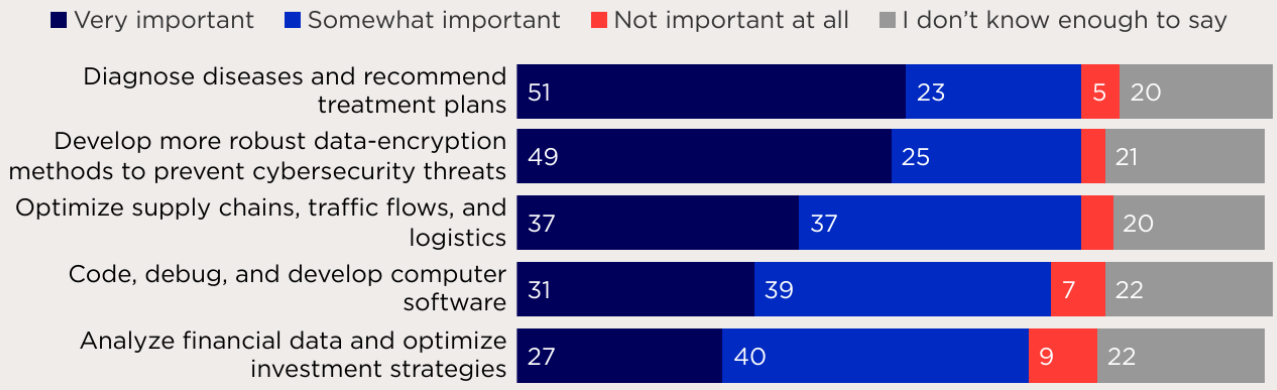
Capable of performing complex tasks that typically require human intelligence like language processing, pattern recognition, and decision making, AI systems are quickly being integrated across industries to enhance productivity, lower costs, and drive innovation. Notwithstanding their concerns, Americans recognize the potential for advanced technologies like AI and quantum computing to revolutionize the economy and benefit society.

Half say the potential for AI and quantum computing to diagnose diseases and recommend treatment plans (51%) and develop more-robust data-encryption methods to prevent cybersecurity threats (49%) are very important benefits of adopting these technologies. Those who are familiar with AI and quantum technologies are more likely than average to say that all potential benefits are very important, but similar to the overall population,

they are most likely to prioritize advances in medicine and encryption (see appendix table 4).

Importance of Benefits Provided by AI and Quantum

Below is a list of benefits that advanced technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing can provide. For each benefit, please select whether you see it as very important, somewhat important, or not important at all. (%)



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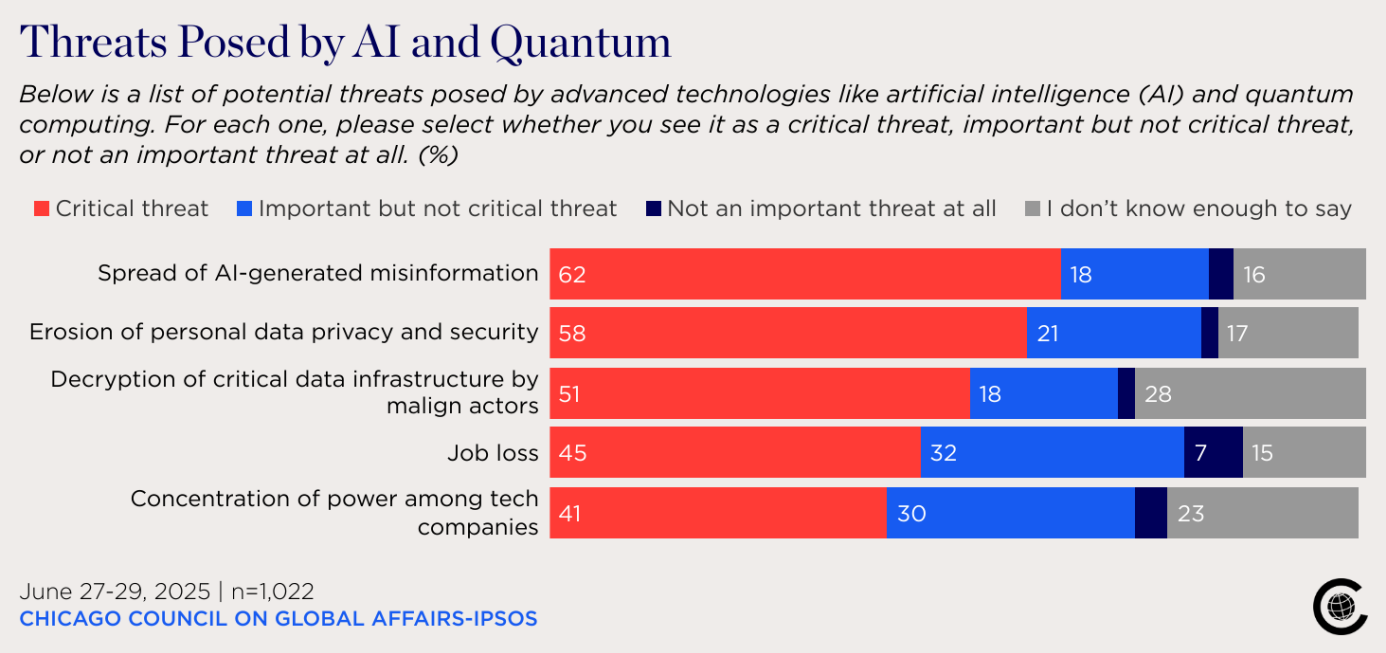
Other potential benefits are viewed as important, though less so than potential progress in medicine and encryption. These include optimizing global trade supply chains, traffic flows, and logistics (37% very important), using AI and quantum computing to code, debug, and develop computer software (31% very important), and analyzing financial data to optimize investment strategies (27% very important).

Misinformation and Erosion of Privacy Are Considered Greatest Risks

Despite the many potential benefits of AI integration, many experts and industry leaders are sounding the alarm over the possible risks posed by unregulated AI models, including national security threats and the erosion of democratic norms.

Of the potential threats posed by advanced technologies that were presented in this survey, Americans say the spread of AI-generated misinformation (62%) and erosion of personal data privacy and security (58%) are the most

critical, followed by the decryption of critical data infrastructure by malign actors, like unfriendly nations and terrorist organizations (51% critical threat).[2]



Potential job loss (45%) and the concentration of power among tech companies (41%) as a result of adopting these technologies are viewed as less alarming than other potential threats. While job loss is less of a threat than these other items, a 2024 Pew Research survey shows many Americans are concerned that in the next 20 years, there will be fewer jobs for cashiers (73%), factory workers (67%), journalists (59%), and even teachers (43%) as a result of technological advances.

Those who are more familiar with quantum computing are somewhat more likely than average to be concerned about the decryption of critical data infrastructure (64%), but otherwise, familiarity has little effect on the ratings for the threats seen as most critical (see appendix table 5).

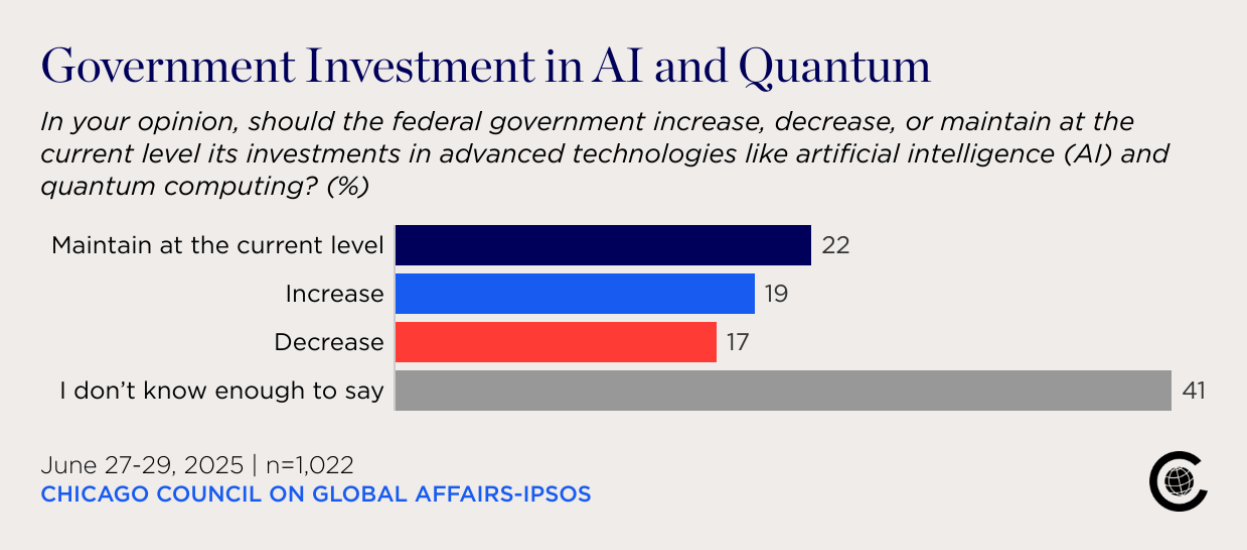
Public Supports Greater Regulation of AI and Quantum Technologies

American leadership in AI has become a central focus of the second Trump administration, which swiftly reduced federal barriers to AI development and

[2] On this item and that on important benefits, majorities of respondents consider all of the potential threats and benefits to be very critical or important and very or somewhat important, so we focus on the most stringent measures (critical threat and very important) for this analysis.

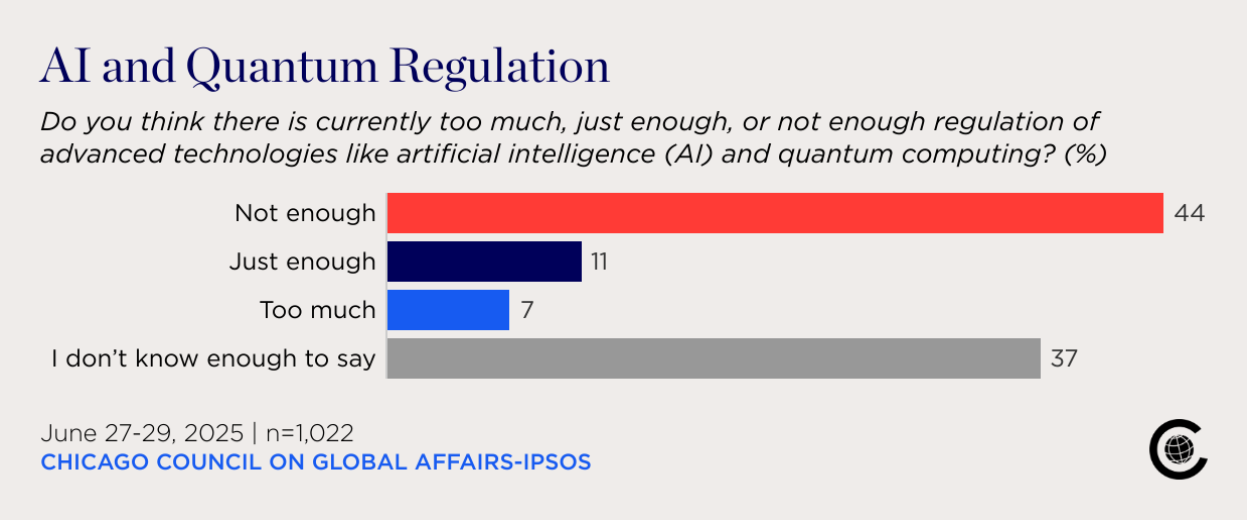
pledged billions of dollars in public and private investment in AI infrastructure upon US President Donald Trump's return to the Oval Office.

For their part, Americans are divided on whether the federal government should maintain at the current level (22%), increase (19%), or decrease (17%) its investments in advanced technologies like AI and quantum computing. Most (41%) say they do not know enough to say one way or the other.



Perhaps because at this point the public understands the risks more than the rewards to the advent of these new technologies, they would like to see more government regulation—even at the state and local levels.

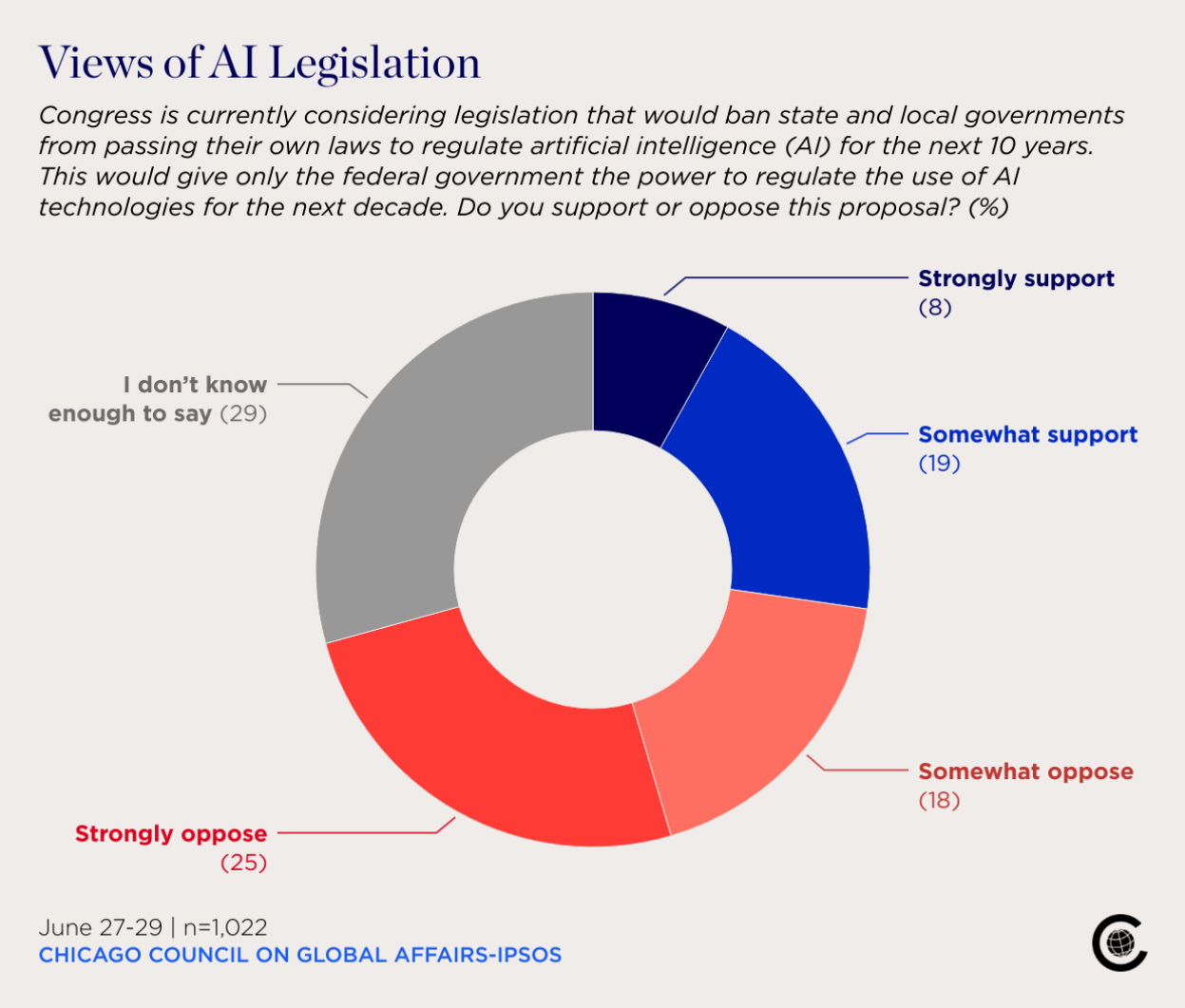
Just under half of Americans say there is not enough regulation of advanced technologies like AI and quantum computing (44%), while much smaller shares say there is just enough (11%) or too much (7%). Four in 10 do not know enough to say (37%). A 2025 YouGov survey found even higher percentages saying they would like to see more regulation on AI specifically (71%; 41% much more, 30% somewhat more).



US Public Prefers Tech Experts and Federal Government Most to Regulate

When thinking about who should be most responsible for the regulation of advanced technology, more Americans say it should be a consortium of researchers and academics who specialize in these technologies (26%) than say the US federal government (21%). Few say tech companies (7%), international organizations (5%), or state (4%) and local governments (2%) should bear this responsibility.

At the same time, a plurality of Americans oppose legislation banning state and local governments from passing their own laws to regulate artificial intelligence (AI) for the next 10 years (43%). This law would give only the federal government the power to regulate the use of AI technologies for the next decade, something just a quarter of Americans support (27%); 29 percent do not know enough to say.

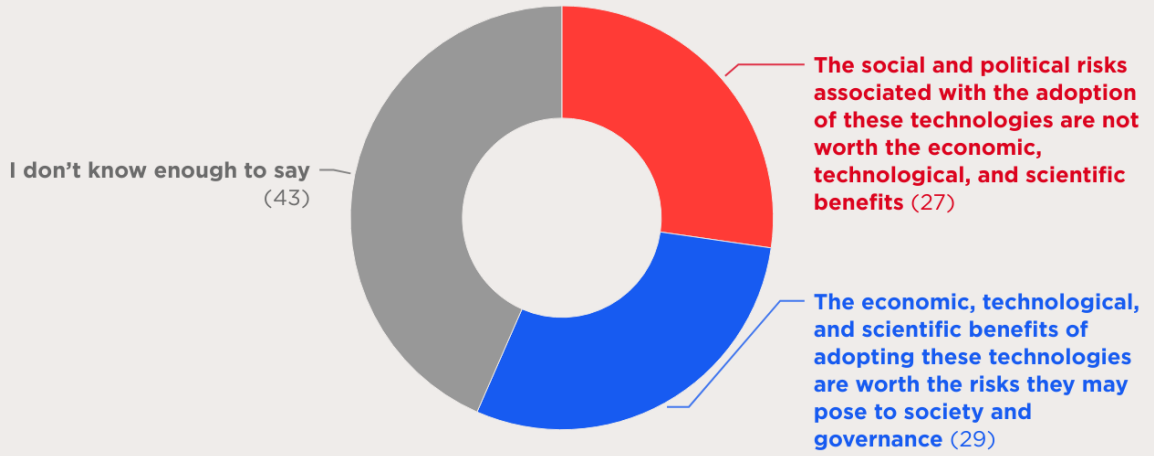


On Balance, US Public Divided on Whether the Benefits Outweigh the Risks

After rating the series of potential opportunities and threats that AI and quantum could bring, Americans seem even less certain about these new technologies. The public divides on whether the social and political risks associated with the adoption of AI and quantum computing are worth the economic, technological, and scientific benefits they provide (29%) or not (27%). But the plurality says they don't know enough to say (43%).

AI and Quantum Tradeoff

Based on what you know about the applications of artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing, which of the following statements best represents your view: (%)



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Conclusion

Despite the rapid integration of AI and other advanced technologies into their daily lives, Americans remain cautious and have yet to embrace the digital revolution ahead. More seem attuned to the potential risks these technologies pose than the rewards they might bring, and concerns about misinformation, data privacy, and national security are top of mind. As investments in AI and quantum computing grow and the pace of innovation in these fields accelerates, experts and industry leaders can assuage public concerns by developing some set of regulatory mechanisms to mitigate the threats these advanced technologies may pose.

Appendix

Table 1. Familiarity with Technologies Across Generational Groups

How familiar are you with the following technologies and their applications? (%)					
	Overall	Boomer	Gen X	Millennial	Gen Z
Artificial intelligence (AI)	64	47	63	75	76
Quantum computing	21	13	21	28	23
Cryptocurrency	43	27	40	58	56
Semiconductor chips	35	34	34	38	29

Table 2. Familiarity with Technologies Across Educational Groups

How familiar are you with the following technologies and their applications? (%)					
	Overall	Less than HS	HS	Some college	Bachelor or higher
Artificial intelligence (AI)	64	48	55	63	75
Quantum computing	21	11	15	21	28
Cryptocurrency	43	38	37	43	50
Semiconductor chips	35	26	24	33	46

Table 3. Feelings Toward AI and Quantum Adoption Among Those Very or Somewhat Familiar with the Technologies

When you think about the adoption of advanced technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing, are you more... (%)					
	Overall	Artificial intelligence (AI)	Quantum computing	Cryptocurrency	Semiconductor chips
Excited about the possibilities	7	9	14	10	13
Mostly excited about the possibilities, but somewhat	22	29	38	32	30

concerned about the risks					
Mostly concerned about the risks, but somewhat excited about the possibilities	26	29	30	27	31
Concerned about the risks	25	21	15	22	19
I don't know enough to say	19	11	3	10	7

Table 4. Importance of AI Benefits Among Those Very or Somewhat Familiar with the Technologies

Below is a list of benefits that advanced technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing can provide. For each benefit, please select whether you see it as very important, somewhat important, or not important at all. (% very important)					
	Overall	Artificial intelligence (AI)	Quantum computing	Cryptocurrency	Semiconductor chips
Diagnose diseases and recommend treatment plans	51	58	66	59	66
Optimize supply chains, traffic flows, and logistics	37	42	52	43	49
Develop more-robust data encryption methods	49	55	63	55	62

Analyze financial data and optimize investment strategies	27	30	32	29	31
Code, debug, and develop computer software	31	34	38	34	38

Table 5. Perception of Threats Posed by Advanced Technologies Among Those Very Familiar with Them

Below is a list of potential threats posed by advanced technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum computing. For each one, please select whether you see it as a critical threat, important but not critical threat, or not an important threat at all. (% critical threat)					
	Overall	Artificial intelligence (AI)	Quantum computing	Cryptocurrency	Semiconductor chips
Spread of AI-generated misinformation	62	69	71	68	73
Concentration of power among tech companies	41	43	50	46	46
Erosion of personal data privacy and security	58	62	59	61	62
Decryption of critical data infrastructure by malign actors	51	54	64	55	64
Job loss	45	48	43	44	42

Methodology

The study was conducted June 27–29, 2025, by Ipsos using its large-scale, nationwide, online research panel, KnowledgePanel, among a weighted national sample of 1,022 adults 18 or older living in all 50 US states and the District of Columbia. The margin of sampling error for the full sample is ±3.1 percentage points including a design effect of 1.05. The margin of error for subgroups, such as those Americans who say they are somewhat or very familiar with AI and quantum computing, is higher.

The data for the total sample were weighted to adjust for gender by age, race/ethnicity, education, Census region, metropolitan status, and household income using demographic benchmarks from the 2024 March Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS).

Specific categories used were:

- Gender (Male, Female) by Age (18–29, 30–44, 45-59 and 60+)
- Race/Hispanic Ethnicity (White Non-Hispanic, Black Non-Hispanic, Other Non-Hispanic, Hispanic, 2+ Races Non-Hispanic)
- Education (Less than High School, High School, Some College, Bachelor or Higher)
- Census Region (Northeast, Midwest, South, West)
- Metropolitan Status (Metro, Non-Metro)
- Household Income (Under $25,000, $25,000–$49,999, $50,000–$74,999, $75,000–$99,999, $100,000–$149,999, $150,000+)

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