Block Club

2026 Research Report

The Influence of AI on the Fintech Buyer's Journey

We asked 30 leaders from enterprise financial institutions how they use AI to research, evaluate, and buy fintech solutions.

What we found

AI was the second most-used research channel, right after traditional search. Respondents reported using search engines and AI more than other sources, followed by analyst reports and vendor content. Review sites ranked last, suggesting a preference for more formal evaluations.

Buyers use AI most at the start of their journey and again during due diligence. A large majority of respondents turn to AI for early discovery, use it less at the longlist and shortlist stages, and then return to AI when the process becomes more documentation-heavy.

Everyone we surveyed verifies what AI tells them. Whether they described themselves as more trusting or more skeptical of AI, all said they do more research before acting on AI-generated information.

Vendor websites are the most common way respondents verify AI findings, followed by analyst reports. In light of this pattern, fintech vendors should ensure their websites are well-suited to verification.

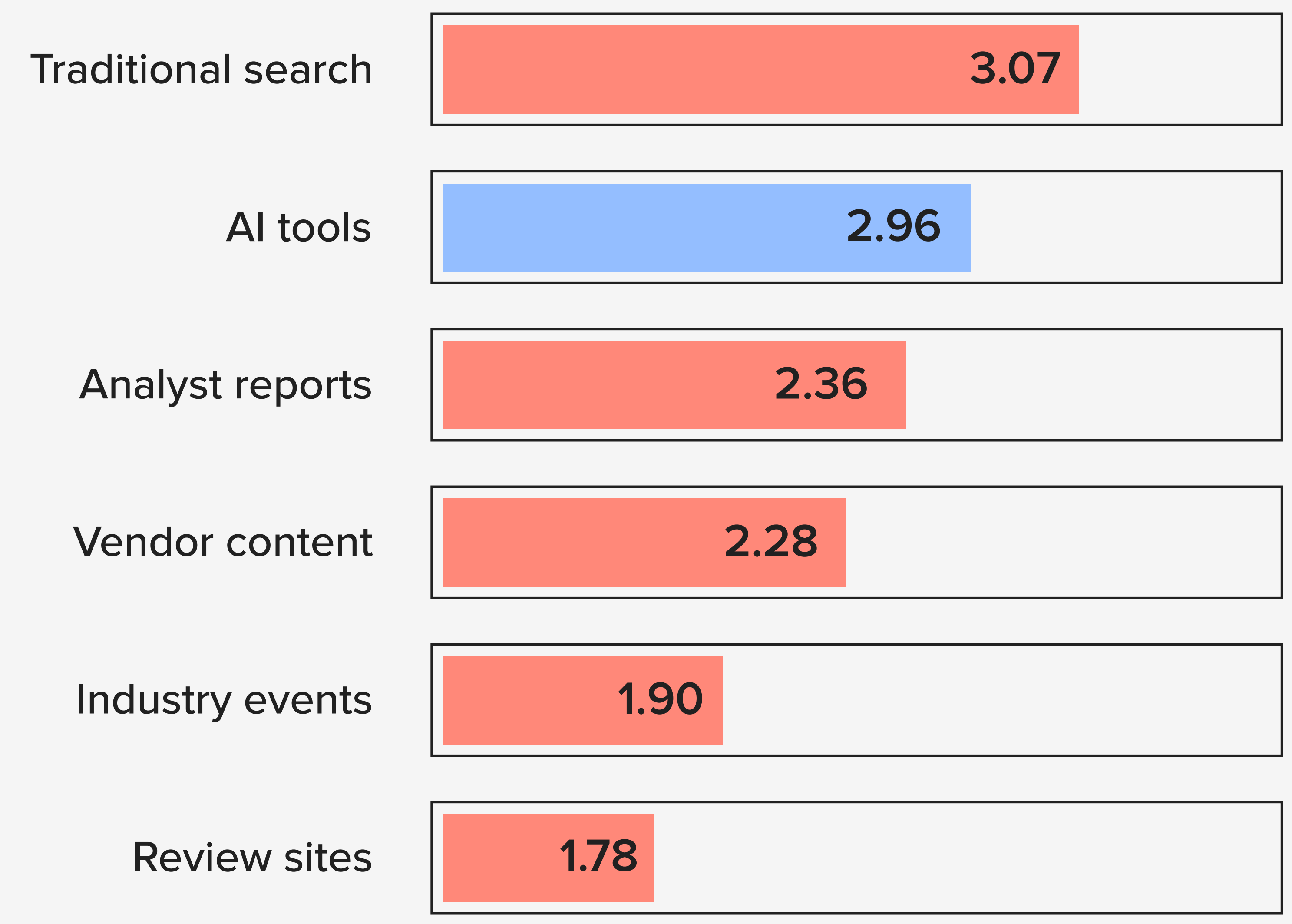
AI visibility and perception matter, but they are not the primary driver of purchase decisions for this group. Several respondents described AI as a filter that can exclude a vendor before human evaluation ever begins. But many will check other sources before writing a vendor off.

Where AI enters the picture

In our survey of 30 U.S. technology and operations leaders from enterprise financial institutions, 97% said they use AI tools when buying fintech solutions. And they use it frequently, just behind traditional search. This reflects how thoroughly AI has embedded itself in enterprise technology research.

Notably, **analyst reports rank third and review sites rank last**, suggesting an audience that leans more on formal, structured third-party evaluations than on peer-driven signals.

How often do you use the following sources to inform your fintech research and evaluation process?



(Scale: 1 = Never/rarely, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Always)

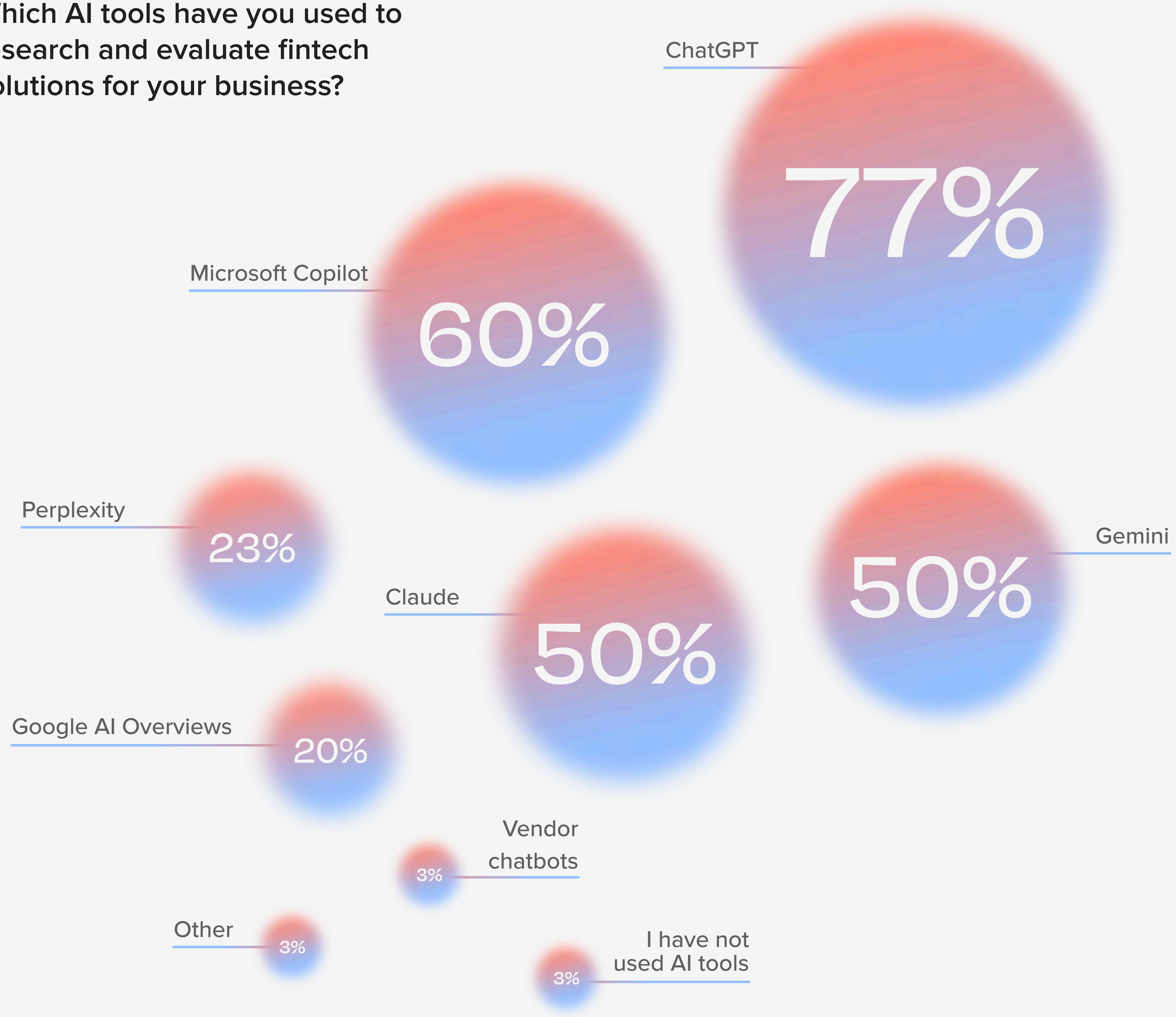
Platform preferences

While AI is clearly important to the fintech buyer's journey, not all AI tools matter equally. In this study, ChatGPT was most commonly used (77%), followed by Microsoft Copilot (60%), Gemini (50%), Claude (50%), Perplexity (23%), and Google AI Overviews (20%).

Microsoft Copilot stands out, with 60% of respondents using it. This reflects the enterprise financial services environment, where many organizations use Microsoft tools.

For fintech vendors thinking about AI visibility, this is important. Copilot gathers and combines information using organizational data and context, while ChatGPT uses general conversational AI models. Fintech vendors should first optimize for both tools and then consider optimizing for other platforms as resources allow.

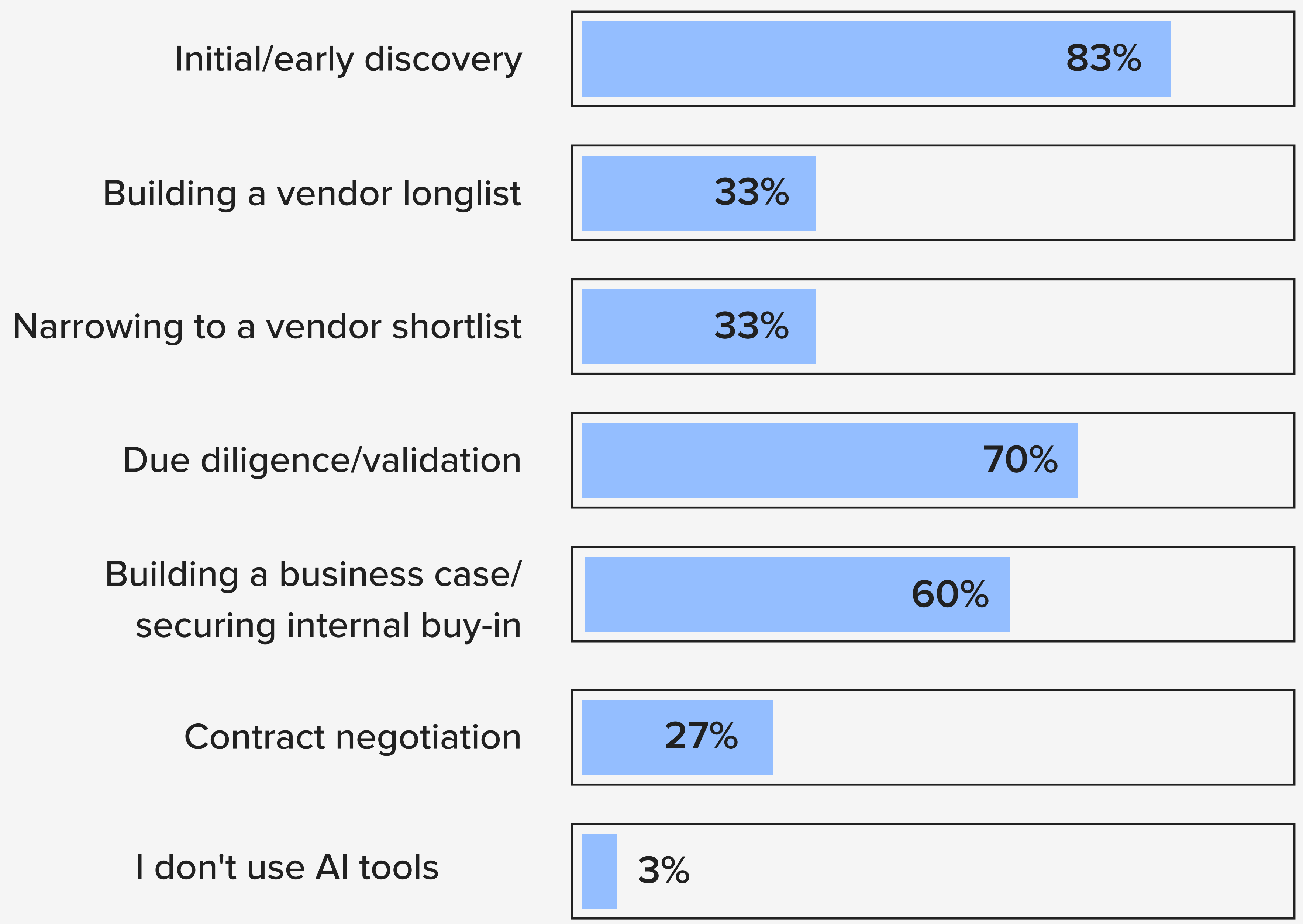
Which AI tools have you used to research and evaluate fintech solutions for your business?



How AI fits into the fintech buying journey

Among the 30 leaders we surveyed, AI use was highest at the start of the buying process, with 83% using it for initial discovery. Use then drops at the longlist and shortlist stages, rises again during due diligence, and falls at the business-case stage and during contract negotiation.

When do you use AI tools to research and evaluate fintech solutions for your business?



The increase in AI use during due diligence is likely explained by the regulatory environment financial organizations operate in. It may be that AI is especially helpful for processing, summarizing, and comparing the complex compliance, security, and technical documentation due diligence in financial services requires.

> **I now utilize AI tools to generate companies and create a starting list as well as use it to perform the work of risk assessments and due diligence. I still do the reviews themselves but allow AI to summarize content and provide where the information was obtained — SOC reports, policies, etc."**
>
> — Director of Information Security

The sharp drop in AI use at the longlist and shortlist stages is also important. Buyers seem to rely less on AI when judgment, context, and organizational fit are key, and then use AI again when they need to handle a high volume of technical information.

This shows that AI has two main roles in fintech procurement. It acts as a discovery tool at the start and as a processing tool during formal validation. In the middle stages, where buyers judge fit and make early decisions, human evaluation is more important.

Not just when, but how

Open-ended response from our survey showed the specific ways buyers use AI beyond discovery and due diligence.

Competitive and comparative analysis

Some respondents said they use AI to compare vendors by creating feature, cost, and risk matrices, or by uploading RFP responses into enterprise AI tools for side-by-side analysis.

> **AI made it easier to build comparisons. We upload RFP responses on internal Copilot instance and analyse using that. It reduces the complexity of having to compare. It throws up immediate differentiators and issues to address."**
>
> — Managing Director

Risk and sentiment scanning

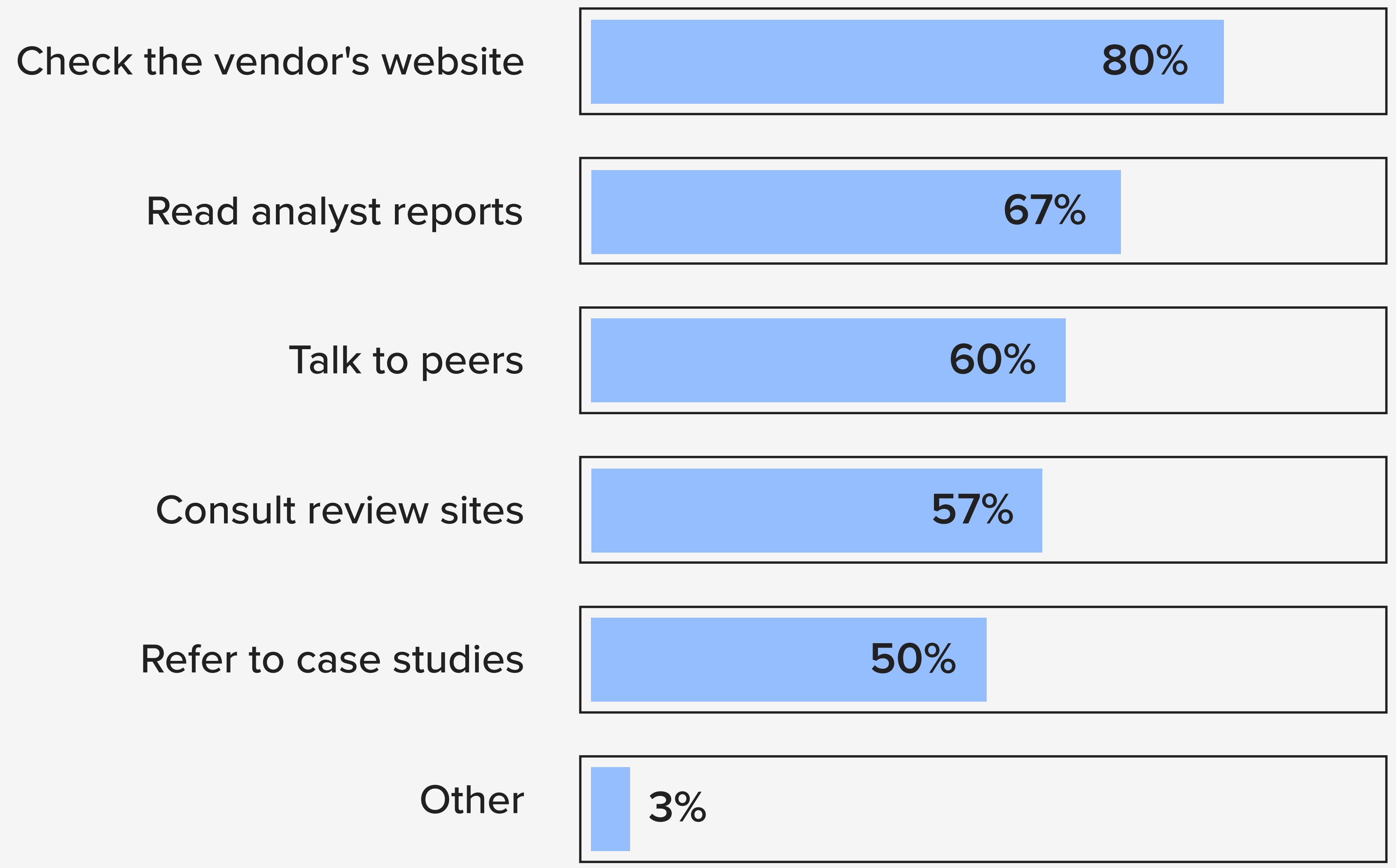
Some respondents use AI to spot negative signals, such as regulatory issues, API maturity concerns, or patterns of customer complaints. They do this as a first filter before spending more time on deeper evaluation.

> **AI has definitely flagged things that made me pause or reshuffle priorities, but I treat it more like an early warning signal than a final verdict. A couple of times, AI surfaced concerns around gaps in API maturity and some pretty inconsistent feedback on scalability claims."**
>
> — Director, Data and Technology Transformation

Buyers' AI boundaries

One thing was true for everyone we surveyed: No one relies only on AI. All 30 respondents said they do extra research to verify what AI tells them.

What do you do to verify or pressure-test what AI tells you about a fintech solution?



BUYERS' AI BOUNDARIES

Vendor websites are the most common way buyers verify information, with 80% of respondents using them to confirm what AI says.

In light of this finding, fintech vendors should review their websites not only for how well they convert visitors, but also for how well they help buyers verify information:

- Can a buyer who just read an AI-generated summary of your product find precise feature documentation?
- Can they find your compliance certifications and security documentation without friction?
- Can they find integration depth like actual API documentation, not just a list of named partners?
- Can they find case studies from comparable regulatory environments or use cases?
- Does your website reflect the technical precision your buyers bring to the evaluation?
- Does your website counteract any negative perceptions AI engines might have raised?

What puts fintech vendors at risk?

AI offers new opportunities but also poses risks for fintech vendors during the buying process. Buyers shared ways AI can work against a vendor during evaluation.

01 Elimination by omission from AI results

Several respondents described AI as a filter that can exclude a vendor before human evaluation ever begins. If a vendor doesn't appear in an AI-generated initial list, buyers may never consider them.

"If AI has left it out, there's a chance it does not get in my evaluation." — Director of Information Security CISO

However, the impact of not appearing in AI results is lessened by how thorough these buyers are. If buyers do not find a vendor in AI results, they often think it is due to data gaps and will check other sources, especially if the vendor is mentioned in analyst reports or by peers, rather than seeing invisibility as a sign of poor quality.

02 AI-surfaced risk signals

Several respondents described using AI specifically to surface risk signals and then deprioritizing vendors accordingly. Common issues include weak API maturity, compliance posture concerns, unclear integration capabilities, and negative customer experience patterns. These are technical and structural concerns that reflect the specific stakes of fintech procurement. Vendors with sparse, outdated, or hard-to-process technical documentation may be most at risk.

"In a few cases, I've deprioritized fintech solutions after AI surfaced potential red flags such as weak API maturity, limited OAuth/OIDC support, unclear compliance posture, or negative developer experience trends." — VP Tech Lead

03 Comparison-driven deprioritization

Several respondents said they use AI to compare vendors using feature matrices, RFP analyses, and rankings, and then remove vendors whose capabilities fall short. In these cases, missing documentation may lead to lower evaluation scores.

“Yes, [I have] both deprioritized and removed from consideration based on AI reporting. Using detailed prompts allowed [us to discover] a few key tool requirements that are more in the weeds technical to not be sufficient in the tool under consideration. Citing vendor documentation that was difficult to find allowed us to double check. Other cases involved prompts directly comparing tools under consideration in different areas, with parameters specific to our company. This resulted in some solutions falling lower in priority/ranking because of the responses via AI.” — Senior Manager, Security

Fintech buyers' AI predictions

When asked how AI will change their evaluation process, fintech buyers said they expect **more automation, rather than AI replacing human judgment.**

A common theme was that AI will eventually take over the most time-consuming parts of formal evaluation, like processing questionnaires, compliance documents, risk screens, and comparison matrices. Several respondents expect that **much of the manual review will be automated, but humans will still make the final decisions.**

> "While it's an important tool, humans need to stay in the loop. It is just a factor in the overall conversation and decision process."
>
> — Development Integration Manager

A smaller group thinks **AI will make vendor evaluation more continuous**, moving from periodic checks to ongoing monitoring of vendor risk, performance, and market position.

Respondents also expect **vendors to adapt to how AI finds and presents their information.** Those who structure their product details more clearly and make them easier for AI to access will have an advantage.

> In the future, no decision will go without being put through some LLM for comparison. Vendors will need to make sure their features are easy to inject and understand using AI."
>
> — Development Integration Manager

Same stakes, different process

Fintech buyers use AI throughout procurement, but how they use it reflects the needs of financial services evaluation. AI is most useful at two points: **first during discovery, where it narrows down many vendors, and again during due diligence, where it helps process large amounts of documentation.**

The human element remains the same. Everyone in this study does extra research before acting on AI-generated information. Final vendor decisions still rely on demos, reviewing formal documents, talking with peers, and direct engagement with vendors. AI speeds up some steps, but it does not replace human judgment.

In light of these findings, fintech vendors first need to be findable in AI at the top of the funnel. Then, they have to ensure their technical documentation is accessible, thorough, and processable by AI when buyers return to it during due diligence.

About this research

This study was designed and analyzed by Block Club in partnership with Wynter, a B2B panel and research platform. All interviews were conducted in March 2026.

There were 30 total respondents, all technology and operations professionals in leadership positions from enterprise organizations (1,000+ employees) in financial services, banking, fintech, insurance, and investment management. Job functions include product management, engineering, information security, data and technology, operations, and risk management.

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