

2024 Edelman Trust Barometer

Global Report: Innovation in Peril

TOP 10

01 Acceptance is as important as invention

Respondents by nearly a two-to-one margin believe innovation is poorly managed (insufficient government regulation, lack of trust in traditional leaders, suspicion of science's independence from politics and money). Respondents need to know that the inventions have been evaluated by scientists and ethicists, are effectively regulated, and feel in control over the impact on their lives.

02 The virtuous circle of trust

Trust is based first on economic prosperity, evidenced by the fact that developing countries have higher trust levels than developed countries. Innovation can drive growth for all levels of society, resulting in higher trust in institutions.

03 Business must lead on innovation

Innovation is the central tenet of business growth. Business must lead on innovation because it is the most trusted institution – 52 points more competent and 32 points more ethical than government.

04 Society is changing too quickly

A majority of respondents who believe that innovation is poorly managed think that society is changing too quickly and not in ways that benefit people like me. There is also concern that the system is biased in favor of the wealthy.

05 AI is the battleground but mRNA is also at the crossroads

Respondents are ambivalent about these innovations. When innovation is well-managed, people are 12 points more likely to embrace and 17 points less likely to reject AI, a net difference of 29 points. For gene-based medicine, that equivalent net difference is 22 points.

06 Concern that science is losing its independence

Fifty-three percent of global respondents say that science has become politicized in their country; two-thirds in both China and the U.S. In developing markets, 63 percent of respondents say that government has too much control of science.

07 Peers are on par with scientists

Seventy-four percent say they trust scientists and peers, equally, for the truth about innovations. Among those who think innovation is poorly managed, peers have more trust (72 percent) than scientists (68 percent).

08 Innovation is politicized in Western democracies

In the U.S., Republicans are 41 points less likely than Democrats to accept innovations such as green energy, AI, gene-based medicine and GMO foods. There are also large right-left differences in Australia (23 points), Germany (20 points), and Canada (18 points).

09 Demand for public-private partnership grows

Over the past decade, there has been a 15-point increase in the percentage of respondents who say they would trust business more with innovation if it partnered with government – rising from 45 percent in 2015 to 60 percent today.

10 Trust in industry sectors doesn't guarantee trust in innovation

There's a trust discount for innovations relative to their sector: technology is trusted by 76 percent, but AI only by 50 percent; healthcare is trusted by 73 percent, but gene-based medicine only by 50 percent; and food and beverage is trusted by 72 percent, but GMO foods only by 32 percent.