

Make Your Enterprise Network a

# Top Priority for Hybrid IT

Hybrid IT has become a vital element in enterprises' digital transformation strategy. But putting in place a hybrid IT framework is one thing, and actually achieving it is another altogether. Smart organizations pay close attention to their enterprise networks' features and performance in order to turn hybrid IT from a plan into a reality. New research sheds light on the symbiotic relationship between hybrid IT and enterprise networks.

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Digital transformation has quickly become one of the most important goals of C-level executives. While the term is widely thrown around in management circles with different intent and nuance, one of the best definitions comes from *MIT Sloan Management Review*: **“The use of technology to dramatically improve organizational performance.”**

At the heart of implementing a digital transformation strategy is the innovative and flexible use of IT resources, wherever and however it makes the most sense. This ability to mix and match infrastructure, applications and architecture both on-premises and in the cloud is often referred to as hybrid IT, and it is now a linchpin in most digital transformation strategies. In fact, recent research projects hybrid IT spending will hit \$150 billion in 2017, which is about three-quarters the size of the total all-cloud market.<sup>1</sup> At the core of

<sup>1</sup> “2017 Cloud Predictions: A Little Less Talk and a Lot More Action in the Cloud Market,” Technology Business Research, December 2016

hybrid IT—and its undeniable link to digital transformation—is the ability to use the optimal infrastructure framework at any point in time, for any workload. Enterprises simply are unable to fully achieve digital transformation when they are stuck in rigid paradigms dictating all-or-nothing approaches to either on-premises infrastructure or cloud-based models.

To make hybrid IT a reality, organizations must consider issues related to applications and business processes, as well as how, when and where to deploy key workloads. But infrastructure—particularly network infrastructure—is also an essential component in organizations’ efforts to successfully use hybrid IT to achieve digital transformation. In fact, new research based on responses from 171 technology professionals indicates how decision-makers are using or plan to use their networks more strategically and effectively under a hybrid IT framework.

This research—conducted by TechTarget with IT and networking professionals who are registered visitors within its wide range of technology content sites—concluded the following:

- Hybrid IT is either very or somewhat familiar to the vast majority of IT and networking audiences, with its primary benefits being agility, alignment between IT and business goals, security, and application availability and performance.
- When assessing cloud services, security, reliable uptime, bandwidth capabilities and low latency are the top features respondents look for in their enterprise networks.
- For the most part, enterprises are reasonably satisfied with how their networks deliver on their most-cited requirements, although relatively few said they are highly satisfied.
- Enterprises have not yet dramatically transformed their network connectivity for cloud and hybrid IT, but they do expect to make major improvements to their network connectivity over the coming 12 months.

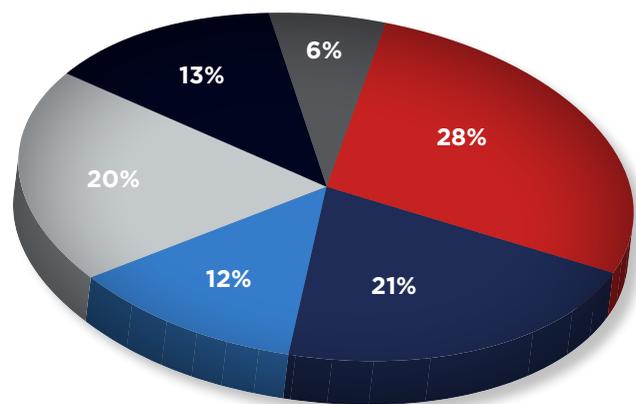
### Cloud and digital transformation

It should come as no surprise that cloud computing is now deeply entrenched in the day-to-day operations of

IT organizations—across all industries, geographies and company sizes. In fact, survey respondents overwhelmingly indicated that their organizations have made the move to cloud in one form or another.

What is important to point out, however, is that the cloud isn’t being used just for tactical applications, perhaps using the popular software-as-a-service model. Nearly half of the respondents said they are using cloud services for tier-one workloads—those most strategic to the organization’s business success. This is a strong indication that cloud computing is at the heart of many organizations’ digital transformation efforts.

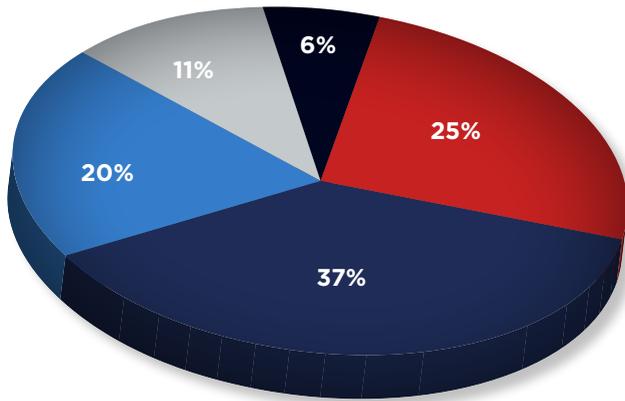
### To what extent has your organization embraced cloud services?



- Strategic part of delivering most IT services
- Using it for some Tier 1 workloads, but not most
- Using it primarily for Tier 2 workloads
- Begun pilot programs for cloud deployment
- Still evaluating cloud; no deployments yet
- Not using or evaluating cloud

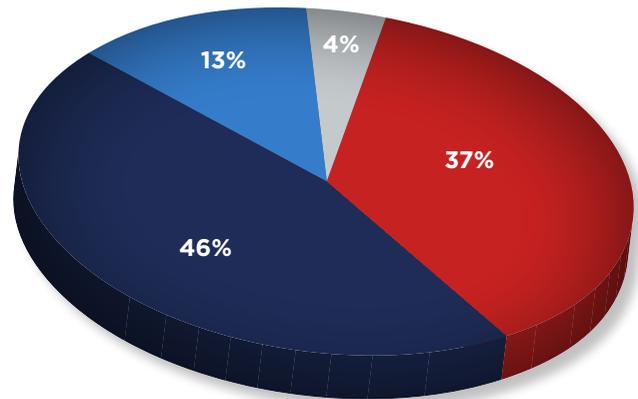
Respondents also were upbeat about the role digital transformation will play in their organization’s future. Nearly two thirds of respondents said their organization consider digital transformation—defined as “the use of technology to dramatically improve organizational performance”—very important. However, not all of those respondents indicated that it has been widely adopted into business processes.

**How important is digital transformation to your organization? How widely has it been adopted into your business processes?**



- Very important, widely adopted
- Very important, not yet widely adopted
- Moderately important, moderate adoption
- Moderately important, little/no adoption
- Little/no importance

**How familiar are you with the concept of hybrid IT?**



- Very familiar
- Somewhat familiar
- Not very familiar
- Not familiar at all

**Hybrid IT trends**

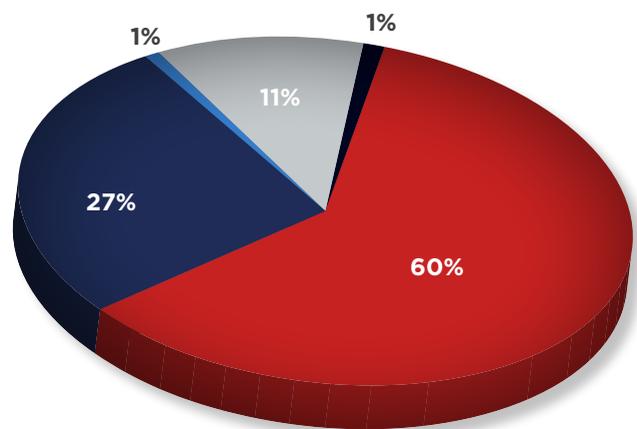
Similar to respondents' attitudes toward digital transformation, the concept of hybrid IT is understood and appreciated by IT decision-makers. Although hybrid IT market development and visibility are still evolving, more than a third of survey respondents said they are very familiar with the term, and most identified with a definition of the term focused on the mixing and matching of cloud and on-premises resources.

Respondents also had clear ideas as to the primary organizational goals in adopting a hybrid IT strategy. In fact, one of the overriding benefits of moving to a hybrid IT framework appears to be the ability to achieve numerous goals with a singular, comprehensive approach for the enterprise. Topping the list of important goals for hybrid IT: increasing organizational agility, aligning IT service delivery with achieving key business goals, and improving application availability and performance.

**The role of the network in hybrid IT**

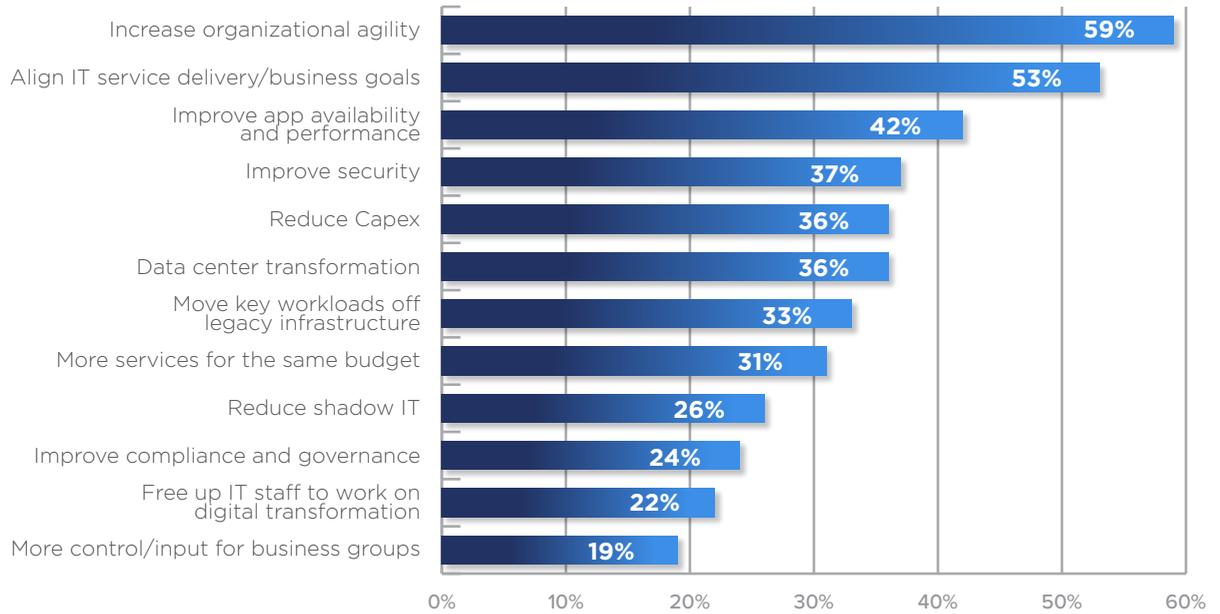
Discussions about the ins and outs of hybrid IT and digital transformation typically center on such issues as

**Which best aligns with your definition of hybrid IT?**



- Use of both on-prem infrastructure and cloud services
- Use of mix of cloud models
- Ability to move workloads from cloud to cloud
- Ability to move workloads between on-prem and cloud
- Other

**Which are significant goals of a hybrid IT strategy?**



business processes, applications and service delivery. But it's essential to keep in mind that no hybrid IT strategy can achieve its goals without reliable, secure and flexible infrastructure—particularly enterprise networks. With more and more data going over network pipes—both among physical and virtual networks, as well as to and from the cloud—having a robust, high-performance network infrastructure is more important than ever.

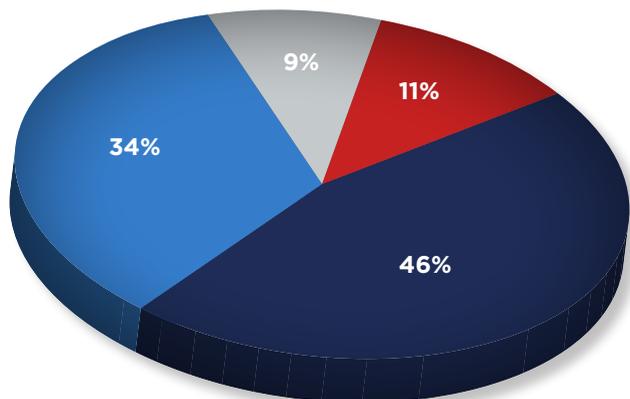
Another important point is that organizations need to continuously monitor the behavior and performance of their networks to ensure that the most-desired network features

and capabilities are actually meeting the expectations of IT and business users.

That's why it's significant that survey respondents reported a gap between the importance of key features in their connectivity solutions and how satisfied they actually are with those features in terms of accomplishing their objectives. On average, survey results showed an 11% shortfall in ratings of key features, when measuring the importance of those features and respondents' satisfaction with actual achievements.

Objective	Importance (1-5)	Satisfaction (1-5)	Gap
Security	4.7	3.8	-19%
Reliable uptime	4.6	3.9	-15%
Bandwidth capabilities	4.3	3.8	-14%
Low latency	4.3	3.7	-14%
Flexible/scalable bandwidth	4.1	3.8	-7%
Opex costs	4.0	3.5	-13%
Self-service or automation	3.9	3.5	-10%
Capex costs	3.8	3.6	-5%
Automated, self-service provisioning	3.8	3.6	-5%
Remote and branch office connectivity	3.8	3.6	-5%
<b>AGGREGATE</b>	<b>4.13</b>	<b>3.68</b>	<b>-11%</b>

**To what degree have you transformed your network connectivity approaches in order to support cloud computing and hybrid IT?**



- Extensively
- Moderately
- Minimally
- Not at all

For instance, although respondents said security is the most desired feature of their connectivity solutions (respondents rated security 4.7 on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being very

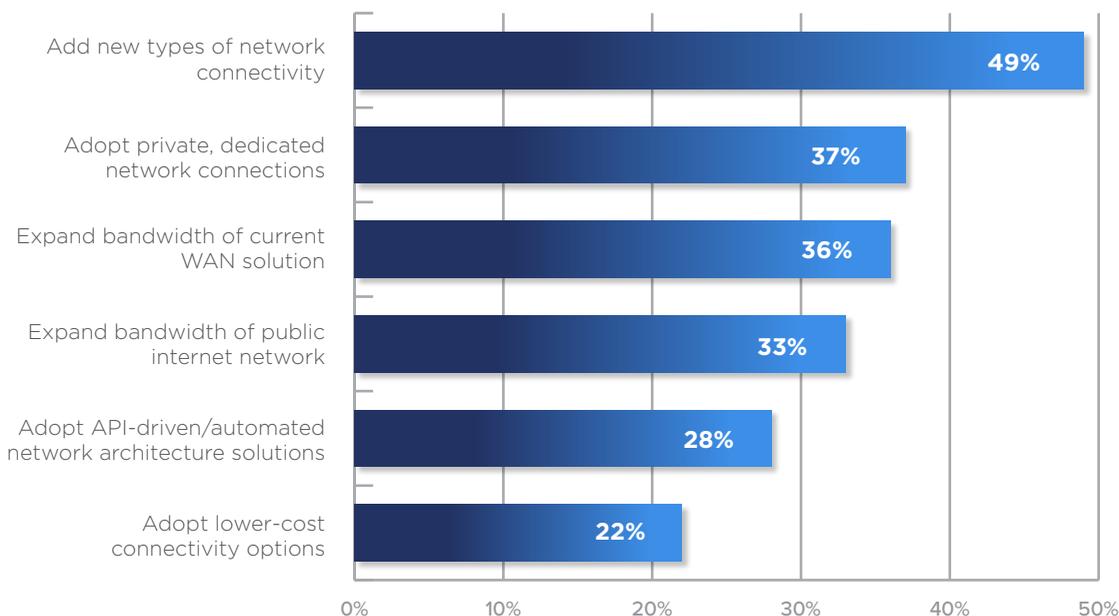
important), they rated it only 3.8 on the same scale when it came to their satisfaction with that requirement. That represents a 19% gap between the importance of security and respondents' satisfaction with their connectivity solutions' ability to actually achieve their security objectives—the largest satisfaction gap among 10 features measured.

One possible explanation for the gap between requirements and satisfaction levels for network connectivity features may be that many enterprises' recent investments in network connectivity have lagged the dramatic increase in the volume, variety and velocity of data traveling over those networks, particularly when traveling over wide distances to cloud service providers' facilities.

For instance, relatively few survey respondents—11%—said they have extensively transformed their network connectivity for cloud and hybrid IT. In fact, the survey found organizations were **more than three times as likely to have made only minimal** transformation efforts to their network connectivity as they were to have made **extensive** transformation efforts.

Fortunately, respondents seem to be poised to make upgrades to their network connectivity in order to better align their network infrastructure with the expanded

**How will your organization approach its network connectivity strategy 12 months from now?**





requirements in today's era of hybrid cloud and digital transformation. Over the next 12 months, respondents said they expect their organizations to increase their support for new network connectivity options, as well as adopt private, dedicated network connections.

## Conclusion

Digital transformation has quickly become the new reality for how enterprises modernize their operations, better serve their customers and improve their competitive positioning. At the heart of enabling digital transformation is hybrid IT, which affords organizations increased agility, flexibility, cost efficiency and scalability as business conditions evolve.

To turbo-charge their hybrid IT programs, IT and networking decision-makers should look to upgrade their network infrastructure for greater security, resilience, availability, bandwidth and automation. While survey respondents cited the importance of these and other network connectivity

options in a hybrid IT environment, they also said their connectivity solutions still have to make improvements to keep up with rapid and important changes brought on by hybrid IT and digital transformation.

Technical and business leaders tasked with planning, executing and supporting their organizations' digital transformation programs should pay attention to the innovation being delivered by network connectivity suppliers in infrastructure and services in their next-generation solutions.