# Successful AI starts with secure and unified access to data

Here's how unified access can create faster, more reliable AI outcomes for your organization.

To stay competitive in today's fast-paced digital world, enterprises across virtually all industry sectors are turning to AI. In a 2025 McKinsey survey, 78% of respondents said their organizations use AI in at least one business function, up from 72% in early 2024 and 55% a year earlier.[1]

Winning with AI, however, requires more than just the ability to process high volumes of clean data. Having secure and unified access to data is equally, if not more, essential.

In today's complex enterprise environment, data is diverse and tends to be dispersed among a wide range of locations. Data varies based on where it originates, where it's stored, and even what shape it takes. This presents a conundrum for many AI training initiatives, because there's no clear pathway for locating all that data or determining which data is more current or more important.

The solution is a plan for unified data access. "Unified access is critical for AI deployment because it ensures all developers and data subject matter experts are working from the same view across all your datasets, no matter if they are on-premises or in the cloud," says Chad Smykay, AI chief technology officer and distinguished technologist at Hewlett Packard Enterprise.

With a constant cycle of new AI breakthroughs, having a secure and unified platform also helps organizations evolve their data strategy to meet the future needs of their business. Here are some of the most critical ways that secure and unified data access can help your organization achieve greater AI success.

## Improve the quality, reliability, and fairness of AI outputs

Unified data access can improve the overall quality of your AI outputs by ensuring the underlying models are trained on complete, diverse, and representative datasets. A secure data pipeline also helps maintain data integrity and consistency.

"Unified access increases reliability by giving you a complete view of your organization's datasets to verify nothing is missing when applying the company data to the AI use case," says Smykay. "It also improves model fairness by enabling the AI model or agent to have a complete view of any data, whether it is a positive or negative sentiment to the use case in question."

## Accelerate development and experimentation

Centralized, consistent access reduces time spent by data scientists and engineers on data wrangling. This frees up time to focus on model development, enabling faster iteration cycles. It also facilitates the reusability of datasets and model components.

"By eliminating data silos, unified access simplifies and speeds collaboration across teams, not only in data visibility but in allowing for the consolidated management of data security," Smykay notes.

[1] "The state of AI: How organizations are rewiring to capture value," McKinsey, March 2025.

## Mitigate security risks

Secure data access is one of the most significant challenges for enterprises, and securing AI training data can be particularly problematic. AI models can also be vulnerable to so-called jailbreaks, which occur when hackers exploit vulnerabilities in AI systems to bypass ethical guidelines and undertake restricted actions.

With a centralized view of data sources and secure access controls, enterprises can better manage which users can view or modify sensitive data. It also reduces the risk of data breaches by enabling better monitoring capabilities and helping to enforce compliance.

"Guardrail technology, like the guardrails feature contained within HPE Private Cloud AI, can help protect your intellectual property and the sensitive data used in your AI models," says Smykay. "Not only does it protect the underlying data, but it permits only users with appropriate credentials to access the responses from that data."

## Future-proof your data infrastructure

As AI continues to evolve at a rapid pace, your data infrastructure must be able to adapt quickly and cost-effectively. A hybrid cloud platform is one of the best ways to enable future scalability, global access, and easier integration of new AI tools and regulations as they emerge. Hybrid cloud can particularly help organizations optimize AI workloads.

For example, on-premises resources can be used to manage longer-running AI initiatives, while a public cloud platform can be used for AI experiments. Hybrid cloud also provides organizations with the flexibility to manage where data is kept — on-premises or in the cloud — as part of their compliance requirements.

And finally, hybrid cloud opens the door to AI innovations from multiple pathways. "A hybrid environment allows enterprises to take advantage of innovations across different cloud providers, reducing dependence on a single provider," says Smykay.

## Secure and unified data access: Essential for long-term success

When it comes to successful AI initiatives, secure and unified data access is not just a technical requirement but a business imperative. Without it, AI projects can be hampered by data silos, limited visibility, and inconsistent quality. Seamless access to all your organization's data — no matter where or how it is stored — is the key to achieving greater speed, scalability, and effectiveness for your AI programs now and in the future.

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