EdTech Trends 2026

A Survey of What's Working,
What's Not, and Where AI is Heading

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>
> *These are very difficult times in education.*

It probably comes as no surprise that teachers and professors are worried about recent cuts to the education infrastructure in the US. "These are very difficult times in education," one says, explaining that "these massive cuts are impacting our ability to hire [and] retain [staff] and protect the rights of our students."

What may be surprising, however, is how satisfied educators are with their technology tools. And artificial intelligence? According to one, "There's no avoiding it!" Far from being Luddites, teachers have nuanced views about AI, and most of them are already using it as part of their jobs.

In May 2025, Jotform conducted a survey of teachers, instructors, and professors about technology, AI, and their reactions to the unprecedented changes in US education. A total of 48 respondents completed the survey, which was hosted on the Wynter platform. Seventeen of the respondents work in K–12, while 19 work in higher education.

Essential digital tools

A vast majority (91 percent) of educators say that they need digital tools to help them **manage student information**. They would also like digital tools to help with **student and parent communication** and **curriculum management**.

They aren't particularly interested in digital tools for **procurement and facilities management, collecting payments, and HR**. This may be because they don't deal with such tasks as part of their regular duties.

Importance of digital tools to manage tasks

Importance
- High
- Medium
- Low
- N/A, not essential
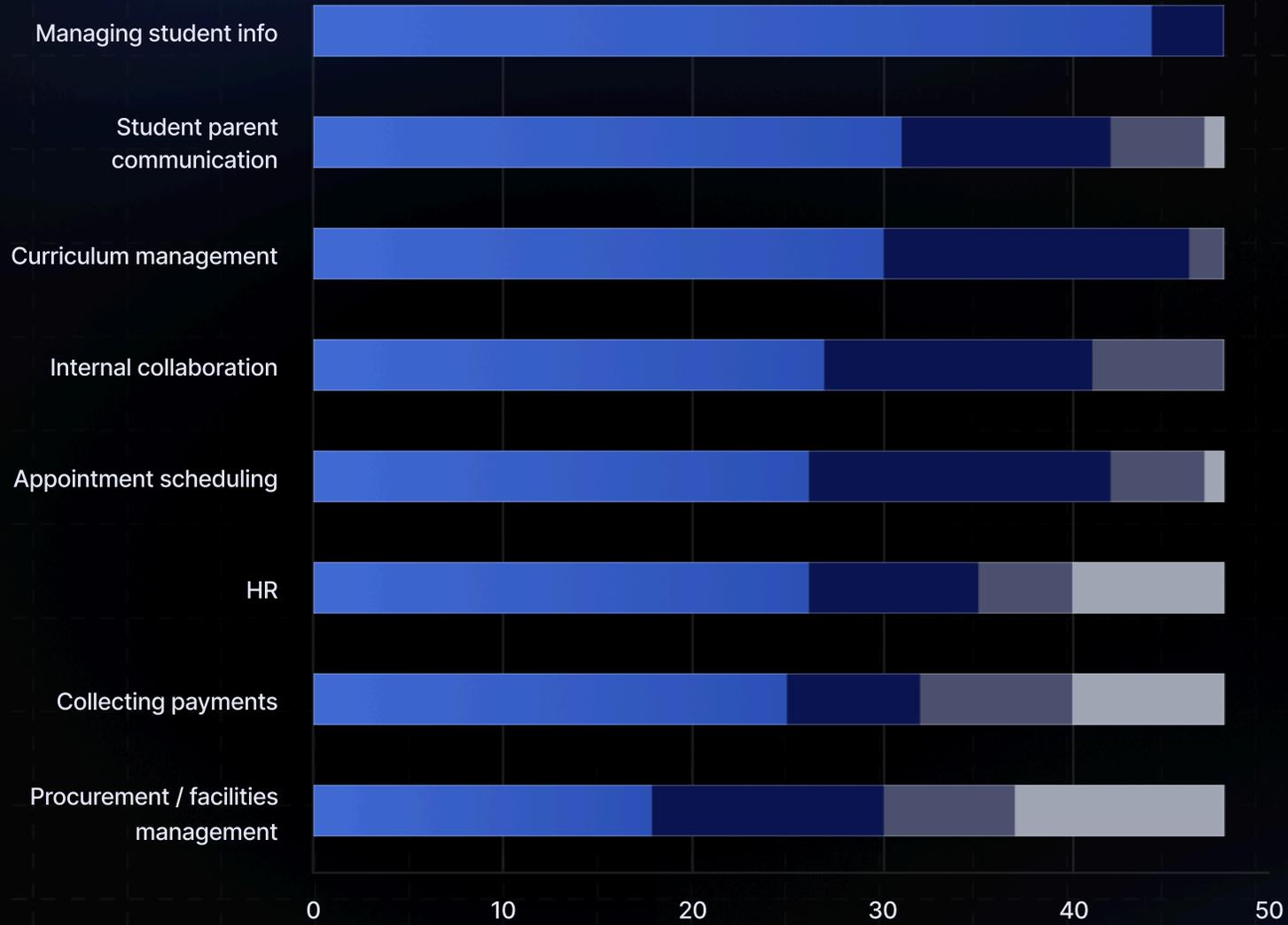
K–12 teachers put slightly more emphasis on tools that help them **manage student information**. They rank tools for **curriculum management** and **student and parent communication highly**, while those in higher education rank the need for **tools to collect payments** and **schedule appointments** highly.
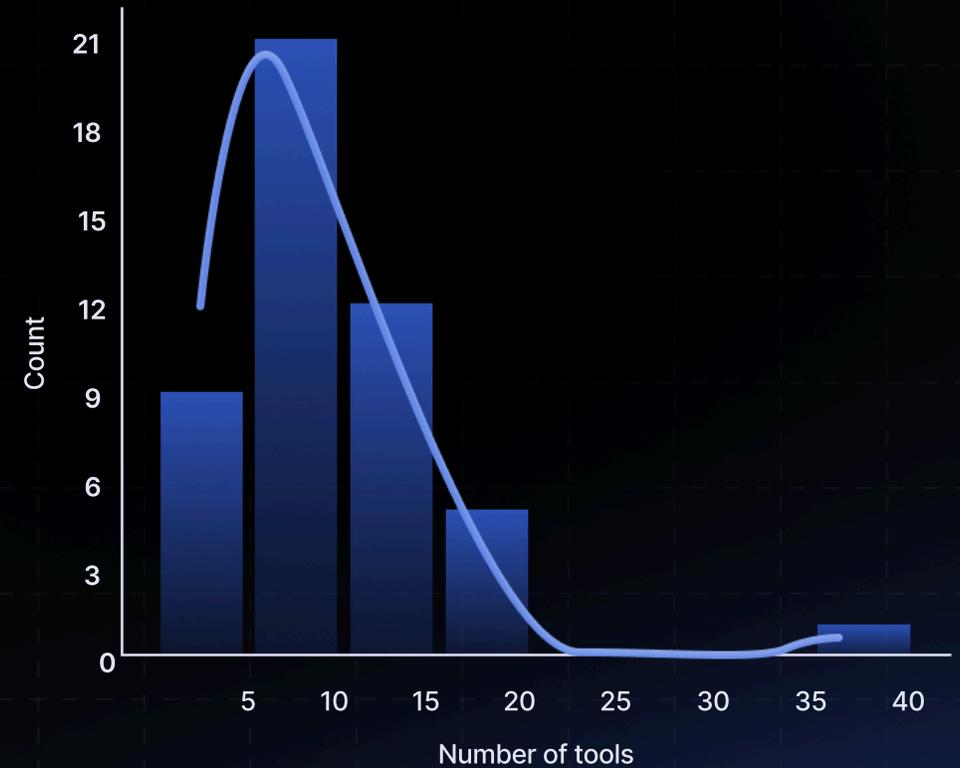
Digital priorities in education: K–12 vs higher education

While both sectors rely on digital tools, their priorities reveal distinct focuses — administration vs connection.

K–12

- Student parent communication
- Internal collaboration
- Appointment scheduling

Managing student information

Rated highly important across **both groups**. Serves as the foundation for all other digital processes.

Higher education

- Collecting payments
- HR and staff management
- Procurement and facilities

Number of different digital tools used

Distribution of number of tools used

The most common number of digital tools educators reported using is 5.

Decision-makers for digital tools

When it comes to purchasing digital tools for educational institutions, the most frequent decision-makers are **IT departments** and **university or district leadership**. Others may be involved in the process, to provide feedback or speak to specific needs.

For instance, if tools are to be used across the school or district, often the IT team, perhaps in collaboration with leadership, makes the decision. When tools fall under the purview of a single team, such as finance, the IT team usually works with that team (in this case, finance), to choose a tool. Likewise, tools for specific courses tend to be recommended by instructors or course coordinators and are then approved by IT.

One respondent said that though "the dean or assistant dean makes the purchasing decision…, they ask for faculty and staff input and take the feedback we provide into great consideration. Since they are responsible for the budget, they have to receive approval but they expect faculty and staff to surface needs and possible solutions."

Effectiveness of digital tools
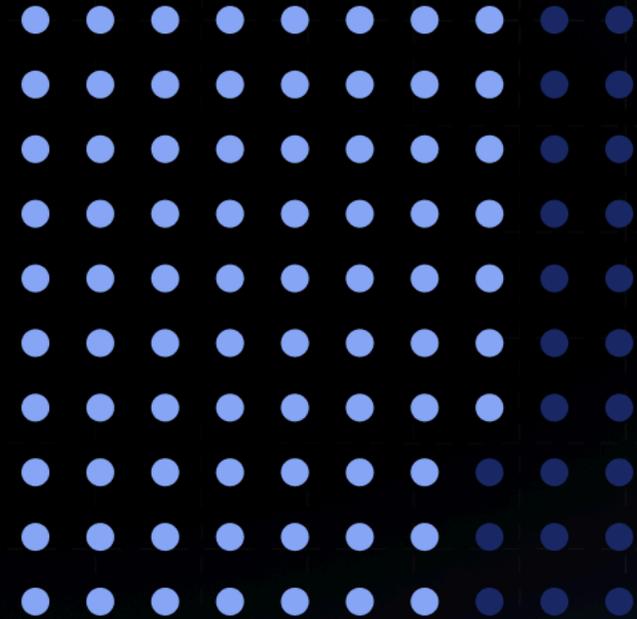
77% say that the digital tools they currently use **work well** or **extremely well**

Difficulties with digital tools
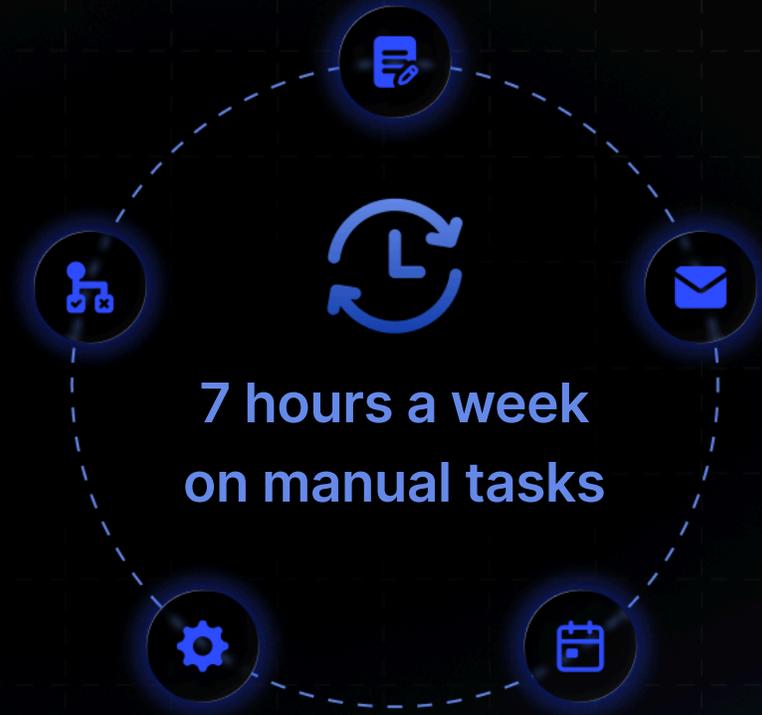
Lack of integration between systems

73%

Too many platforms

50%

When asked about difficulties with digital tools, educators cited **lack of integration between systems** (73 percent) the most, followed by a related difficulty — **too many platforms** (50 percent).

Time spent on manual tasks

7 hours a week on manual tasks

The average number of hours respondents reported spending on **manual tasks per week is 7**, and the most common and median number is 5.

K–12 respondents skewed slightly higher and higher-education respondents, slightly lower.

Additional functionality needed in digital tools

Better tool integration

The most common functionality respondents want in their digital tools is better integration among tools, such as "databases and college-wide systems, including grading, attendance, and curriculum building tools."

Specific requests included data flowing directly into IEP management platforms and integrations that make it easier to communicate internally and externally.

Put another way, "The number one thing I would like for my digital tools to do is to talk to each other. I feel like often we have to jump from one platform to another just to get work done."

Respondents also requested the following
(in order according to the number of comments):

Automation and AI functionality

One respondent wanted a tool to "automate responses to frequently asked questions I receive every day. Anticipate the needs of staff and clients, then generate responses — informed by policy and based on responses I have written before — that I approve [before sending]." Another requested "built-in artificial intelligence, to help streamline workflow." And yet another mentioned an "AI assistant that allows users to ask questions about the tool and certain characteristics/aspects of it."

Better usability and UX

For example, "easier access — streamlining of cybersecurity functions, blending of onsite and offsite application access."

Better customization

Including "role-based customization options"

An all-in-one solution

One respondent expressed a desire for an "active parent portal. One stop for student information and grades and attendance. One easy-to-use communication platform." Another said, "It would be helpful if there were a central dashboard where I could access and manage everything in one place."

Challenges in completing work

> " The volume of students doesn't allow me to give the personalized feedback I wish I could give.

1. Not enough staff support

2. Too many administrative tasks

Teachers and professors face many challenges in completing their work responsibilities. Here are the most common ones:
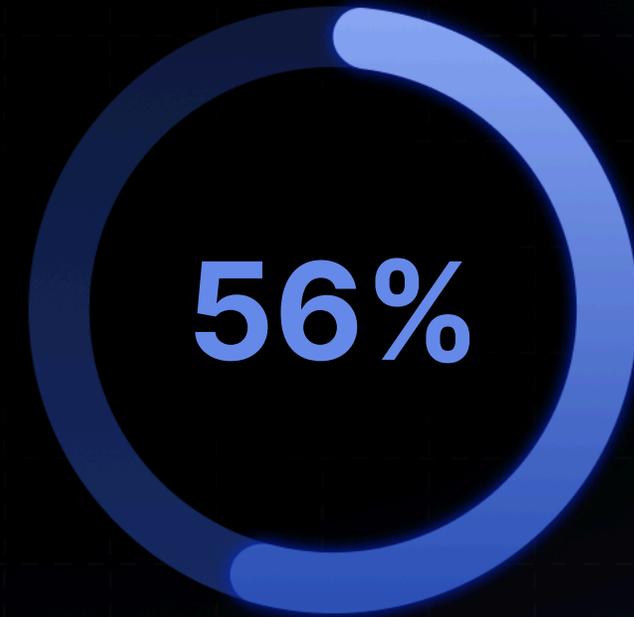
3. Poor communication

4. Not enough time (too much to do)

5. Limited staff training

The impact of cuts to US education on students' access to education and quality of education

56%

Most respondents are **very concerned** (56 percent) about the potential impact of the recent cuts to the education infrastructure in the US. In particular, they worry that students won't get a quality education.

The impact of cuts to US education infrastructure on the ability of educators to do their jobs

When asked how they thought recent cuts to US education infrastructure will impact their ability to do their jobs, the vast majority of respondents reported significant concerns. One called this "a disaster for everyone." Many mentioned the potential effects of reduced budgets, as seen below.

|	
Fewer support staff	Lack of funding for research
Larger class sizes	Higher teacher turnover
Freezes on technology upgrates	Greater difficulty recruiting and retaining teachers
Limited professional development opportunities	Fewer resources/funding for programs like special education
An inability to collect and report on data in a timely manner	

Use of AI in education

Yes (65%)

48%

Admin work
(39%)

Both
(48%)

Student learning
(13%)
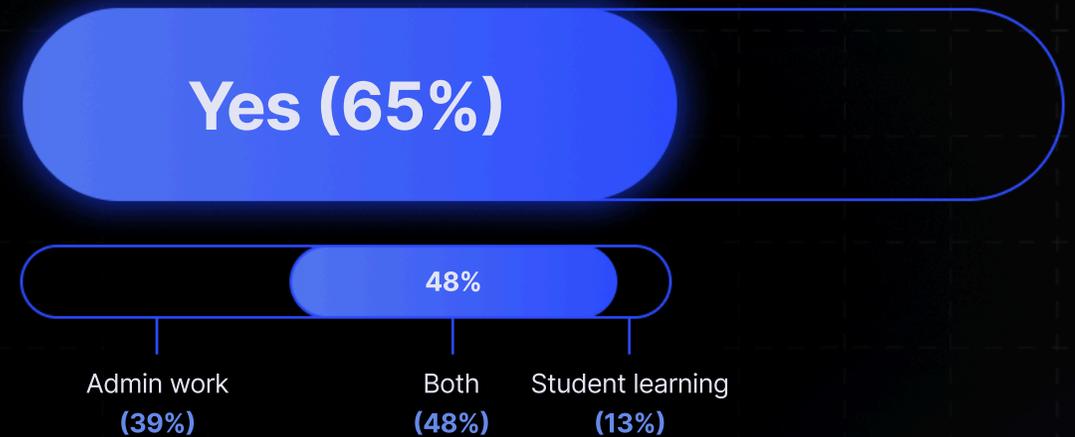
A majority (65 percent) of respondents currently use AI to **support administrative work or student learning**. Of those using AI, 48 percent use AI for **both administrative work and student learning**. A total of 39 percent use AI only for administrative work, and 13 percent use AI only for student learning.

Those in K–12 are more likely than their higher-education counterparts to use AI. K–12 teachers are also more likely to use AI for administrative work than student learning or a combination of both.

How AI is used in education

58% of respondents use AI most frequently as a productivity tool, for tasks such as

Research

Summarizing long documents

Brainstorming and ideation

Writing (emails, feedback, letters, worksheets, report card comments)

Administration (planning projects, filing, scheduling meetings, analyzing surveys)

35% of educators use AI for course and material design, including

Creating assignments

Creating videos and graphics for courses

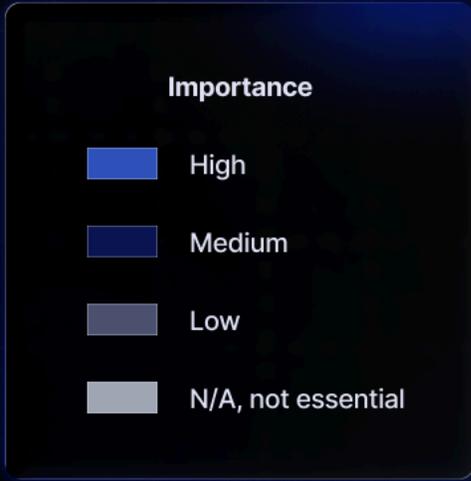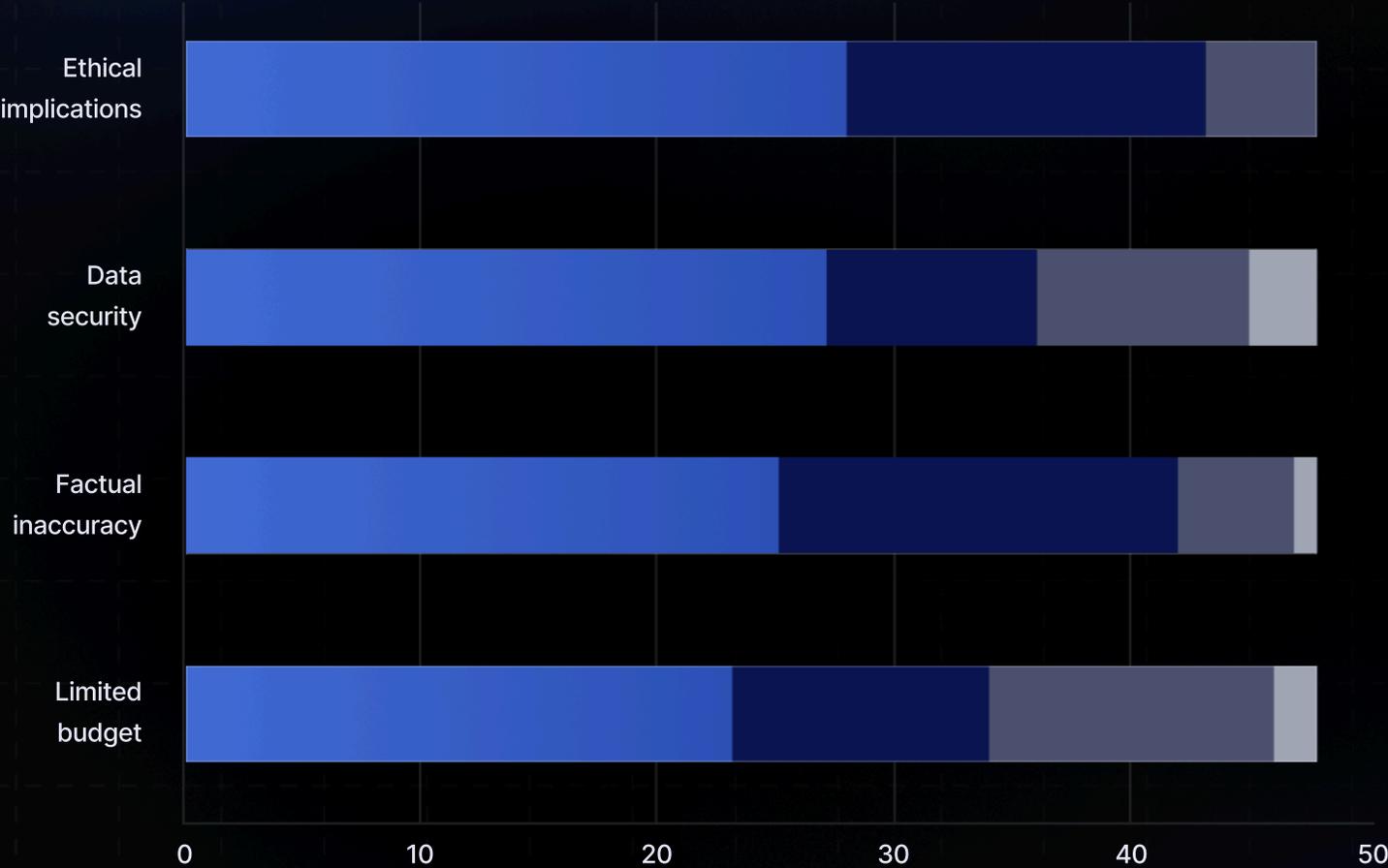Drafting lesson plans

Generating practice problems

Reviewing course assignments created for missing concepts and standards

Creating study guides

Concerns about AI in education

Importance
- High
- Medium
- Low
- N/A, not essential

Respondents are most concerned about the **ethical implications** of using AI, followed by **data security**, **factual inaccuracy**, and **limited budget**.

Other comments about AI in education

General comments about AI trended more positive than negative. Few respondents thought AI shouldn't be used at all.

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"My students need to first learn how to think critically, analyze, and synthesize information before they can begin using AI to assist them."

"Human analysis and oversight are necessary."

"I look at it as a tool for efficiency. I believe a human with content knowledge and expertise still has to be behind it to vet and personalize information."

"Our entire educational system will look totally different in five years.... AI will disrupt everything."

"My biggest concern is how to craft assignments that require students to master the material, even if they do use AI tools to support their work, rather than assignments that they can easily just use AI for without any cognitive work on their end."

"There's no avoiding it! We all need more education and communication and empowerment so we (faculty and students) can use tools mindfully, ethically, and in a way that supports creativity and innovation."

"AI is the great new invention that will shape the 21st century."

There's no avoiding it!

Perhaps the most balanced comment came from a respondent who urged, "Rather than fight it, let's learn how to use it responsibly and effectively to take the work load off of good humans who are doing the right thing. Let's recognize the need for human work and analysis and how to leverage AI for good."

Conclusion

Education publications, as well as major news organizations, have reported widely on the recent cuts to education infrastructure in the US. As expected, the educators who completed this survey are worried, not just about their ability to do their jobs or the continued existence of their jobs, but about education and society in general.

Educators for the most part say they need help. They face daunting obstacles, including too many administrative tasks, not enough staff support, communication issues, limited time, and a lack of training on digital tools. To get their work done, most spend about 5 hours per week on manual tasks.

However, more than three-quarters of respondents think that their digital tools work well. The problem is how many tools they have to use to complete their tasks — an average of 8 different digital tools — as well as the fact that these tools often don't work together.

Though faculty may not be the decision-makers when it comes to buying digital tools for their institutions, those who do make these decisions often depend on their input. Their opinions matter.

When it comes to AI, those opinions trend toward the positive, with clear-eyed caveats: "I think that it will do wonders for education if we use it correctly, and if we create the right training and materials."

Many of the issues confronting educators have complex causes, and while many of the solutions will be equally complex, there are solutions that can help them right now. User-friendly digital platforms that integrate with existing tools and provide smart automation and AI features would be a great start.

Want to learn how Jotform Enterprise can help your educational institution?

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