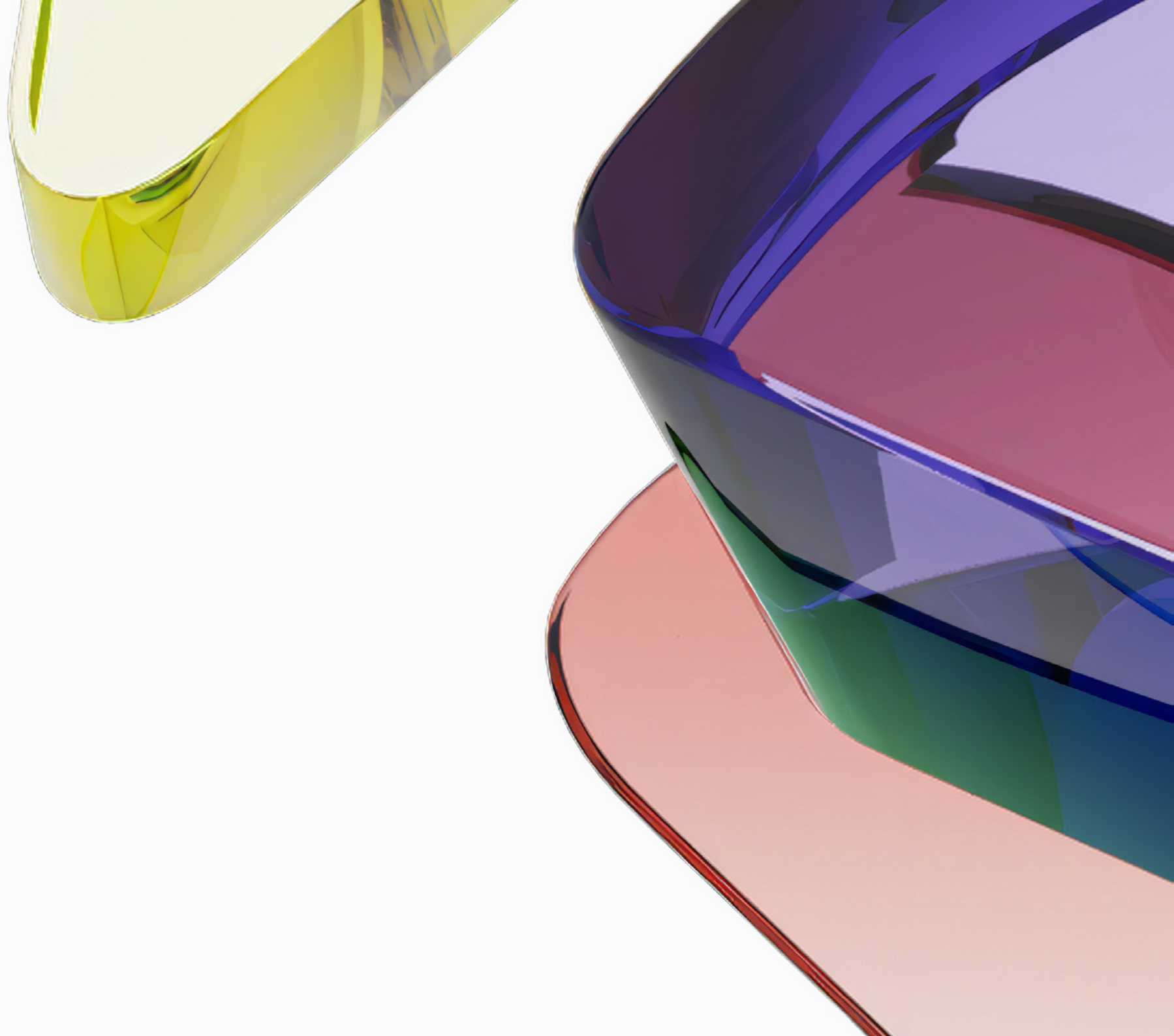




Your partner  
in progress

# Evolution of Digital Trust

Accelerating opportunities  
in an AI era



# Introduction

The volatility of the last few years has helped turbo-charge the acceleration of innovation and technology, from the rapid adoption of cloud accelerated by the COVID pandemic<sup>1</sup> to the explosion of generative AI, tipping it into the mainstream in 2023. This opens a new world of opportunity for organizations of all sectors and sizes to help build a better society and sustainable world.

The evidence of this is all around us. A recent World Economic Forum (WEF) report<sup>2</sup> highlighted the impact of ten emerging technologies across a wide-range of industries. Whatever the sector, one vital ingredient underpins these examples of positive progress – trust.

Trust has long been the cornerstone of successful relationships.<sup>3</sup> We see this clearly as technologies like AI become prevalent in society. For example, according to BSI's Trust in AI Poll<sup>4</sup> more than half of us feel excited at AI's potential to improve accuracy of medical diagnosis and speed up recovery – but 74% say they need a strong level of trust when AI is used in this way.

As AI adoption accelerates and organizations seek to unlock the true power of digital transformation, trust in people, in technology, in processes and in the interactions that surround them is critical. Developing this trust has the potential to accelerate progress towards a sustainable world for individuals, organizations and society.

Understandably, new and emerging technology brings with it an element of uncertainty. Trust can offer the certainty to allow us to confidently move towards a smarter world where real life and virtual interact seamlessly. From AI management to the digital supply chain, BSI partners with organizations to enable them to make responsible digital choices that are designed to build consumer trust and help organizations grow.



# Defining digital trust

In simple terms, digital trust is about having trust in the innovations and technologies that are shaping how we live in today's changing digital economy. For example, how do we trust AI given it is already changing the way we work? In BSI's Trust in AI Poll 38% of people said they use AI in their jobs on a daily basis, expected to rise to 62% by 2030.

The WEF's<sup>5</sup> definition of Digital Trust expands this further: "Digital trust is individuals' expectation that digital technologies and services – and the organizations providing them – will protect all stakeholders' interests and uphold societal expectations and values."

This means trust in the organization, its product or service, how it operates and its interactions with you on a personal level. It means a secure digital ecosystem that underpins the business strategy. And it means looking externally at your digital supply chain and how technology can be an enabler to achieve efficiency, resilience and trust.

Over the decades many emerging technologies have arrived and quickly been embraced by the mainstream – from computers and the internet to the cloud and smart devices. According to International Telecommunication Union (ITU) data<sup>6</sup>, 66% of the global population are using the internet, a proportion enhanced by what was described as the 'COVID connectivity boost'.

Today, we're seeing the coming-of-age of AI<sup>7</sup> and the swift development of quantum computing.<sup>8</sup> These are potentially transformational technologies with the capacity to shape a digital society beyond our imaginations.

We have the opportunity to fully realize the benefits of such innovation by building understanding of how digital trust can help enhance how we live and work in this new society. To do this, we can explore the evolution of digital trust.

62% of people globally expect to be using AI at work by 2030

BSI Trust in AI Poll, 2023

# Evolution of digital trust

Let's start by debunking a couple of myths – one, digital trust is new, and two, it is a rebrand for cybersecurity.

In fact, aligned to digitization<sup>9</sup>, the evolution of digital trust began around half a century ago with the advent of computers and computing technology in the 1970s. This brought a need to manage security within this brave new world, but it wasn't considered an important topic<sup>10</sup> until the arrival of the first computer viruses in the late 1980s. Over time the issue of computer security evolved into information security and IT assurance. The mainstream emergence of the internet<sup>11</sup> and regulatory changes ensured that these terms continued to evolve until the current day.

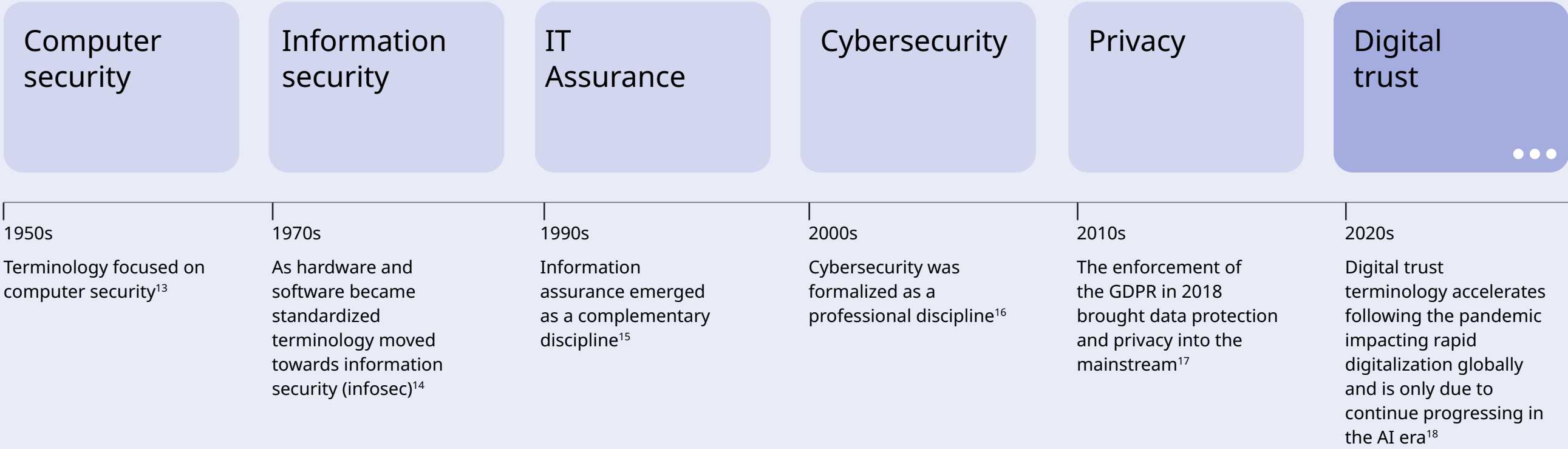


Today, much of the terminology is around cybersecurity and privacy, but these are just pieces in the digital risk puzzle – now accepted as digital trust - a much broader term that covers digital ecosystems and supply chain.

That's because organizations and their needs have fundamentally changed. Those who prioritize the management of digital risk and accelerate their operations through the amplification of technology are ideally positioned to thrive<sup>12</sup>. This is the opportunity presented by digital trust.



# An evolving concept



# Progressing digital trust so organizations can thrive

The roadmap demonstrates how thinking about technology security has evolved along with technological advancements. The issue of trust is something that has only recently come to light. Yet given the pace of AI development and predictions for its future capacity, digital trust has the potential to be a critical enabler of AI and other emerging technologies.

As US business magnate Warren Buffett<sup>19</sup> famously said: “It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it.” With BSI research<sup>20</sup> finding that over 80% of digital trust-related budgets are controlled by the c-suite, it’s no surprise that CXOs responded stating they want to know how they can trust that their digital investments are appropriate and aligned to digital risk best practice.



Over 80% of digital trust-related budgets are controlled by the c-suite

BSI Gartner Research, 2022

# Adding value by building digital trust

According to Forbes<sup>21</sup>, 84% of digital transformation projects do not meet expectations and one in two are complete failures. Given this, there are clear benefits that can come from organizations taking the time to reassess their digital investments.

With worldwide spending on AI solutions predicted to grow to more than \$500 billion in 2027<sup>22</sup>, and a notable shift in the weight of technology investments toward AI implementation and adoption of AI-enhanced products/services - what will these investments achieve and how can they drive business advantage and trust?

Research from McKinsey<sup>23</sup> shows that digital trust leaders are 1.6 times more likely than the global average to see revenue and EBIT (earnings before interest and taxes) growth rates of at least 10%.

These leaders set goals for digital risk management and are twice as likely to mitigate a variety of digital risks as a result.

With this in mind, here are three digital trust considerations for organizations looking to shape their transformation strategies and accelerate AI adoption to thrive in tomorrow's world:

Worldwide spending on AI solutions is predicted to grow to more than \$500 billion in 2027

International Data Corporation (IDC), 2023

# Digital trust considerations

01

## Digital society strategy:

What does the digital society mean to you? Do you have a grasp of the speed of development and the executive support to go 'beyond the bandwagon' and really explore the strategic fit?

Digital has become pivotal to how society operates. A digital strategy is a key ingredient in setting organizations up for success. At BSI, we're being asked by more and more clients to help them elevate the digital trust within their organization and ensure technology functions are evolving to more closely align to business strategy – especially with technologies like AI already shaping the future of work across business divisions.

02

## Digital by design:

What role does digital play in your organization? Is it an enabler or the core foundation on which your operations are built?

If we assess today's business landscape by sector or by market, it appears that more and more organizations are digital by design<sup>24</sup>. The largest hotel company and real estate company in the world is digital but owns no properties and the largest taxi transportation company in the world is digital but owns no vehicles<sup>25</sup>. But even small businesses are increasingly digital by design. This is representative of the current era and even if an organization is not digital by design, its evolution will likely be underpinned by a digital mindset in order for it to build resilience for the future.

03

## Consumer trust:

Where does consumer trust feature on your technology/transformation agenda?

The digital evolution has not only changed how organizations service and deliver to consumers, it has also made it easier than ever for people to switch in search of a trusted partner. Customer loyalty is what really places digital trust not just at the heart of technology and the digitization of business, but at the heart of successful consumer engagement.

Integrating digital trust into operations whilst continuing to deliver for people has the potential to help organizations succeed. Those who acknowledge consumer choice and cultural shifts plus the societal importance of digital trust have the opportunity to retain and grow their business and thrive.



# Conclusion

Digital trust is about embracing digital opportunities. It's also about understanding that building that trust offers the potential to help organizations grow and accelerate a sustainable world, harnessing today's technology.

At BSI we partner with organizations to embed digital trust within every aspect of life to benefit individuals, organizations, and wider society.

Having been on the frontline of technological progress for more than a century, we continue to support partners every day on how to navigate technology risk, whether that is shaping international best practice or training leading experts from globally renowned consulting firms.

Our expertise and related standards are designed to help organizations optimize their digital ecosystems and build trust with consumers and supply chains. Together, amidst the AI transformation, we can seek to accelerate progress to a fair society and sustainable world – with digital trust at its very heart.






**Mark Brown**  
Managing Director,  
Digital Trust Consulting,  
BSI

Mark is an expert in cybersecurity, data privacy and business resilience. Mark uses his wealth of knowledge on the Internet of Things (IoT) and the expanding cybersecurity marketplace to support organizations as they grapple with digital transformation and in addressing new technology that brings new business risks.

Explore insights  
from Mark and  
his digital trust  
colleagues [here](#).

## References

- 1 [How The Pandemic Has Accelerated Cloud Adoption](#), Forbes, September 2021
- 2 [Top 10 Emerging Technologies of 2023](#), World Economic Forum, June 2023
- 3 [Cycle of distrust](#), Edelman Trust Barometer 2022
- 4 BSI partnered with Censuswide to survey 10,144 adults across nine markets (Australia, China, France, Germany, India, Japan, Netherlands, UK, and US) between 23rd and 29th August 2023
- 5 [Digital trust initiative](#), World Economic Forum
- 6 [Measuring Digital Development](#), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), March 2023
- 7 [The age of AI has begun](#), Gate Notes, March 2023
- 8 [Quantum computing is coming faster than you think](#), Forbes, November 2023
- 9 [A very short history of digitization](#), Forbes, Dec 2015
- 10 [Timeline of the history of information security](#), Saylor Academic, accessed January 2024
- 11 [Share of population using the internet](#), Our world in Data, May 2023
- 12 [Why digital trust truly matters](#), McKinsey, September 2022
- 13 [Timeline of the history of information security](#), Saylor Academic, accessed January 2024
- 14 [Timeline of the history of information security](#), Saylor Academic, accessed January 2024
- 15 [Timeline of the history of information security](#), Saylor Academic, accessed January 2024
- 16 [Implementing the national cyber security strategy – developing the cyber security profession in the UK](#), Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, July 2018
- 17 [A brief history of data protection – how did it all start](#), International Network of Privacy Law Professionals, June 2018
- 18 [How digital trust varies around the world](#), Harvard business review, February 2021
- 19 [Warren Buffett Says You Can Ruin Your Life in 5 Minutes by Making 1 Critical Mistake](#), Inc. November 2021
- 20 BSI Gartner research 2022
- 21 [Why 84% of companies fail at digital transformation](#), Forbes, January 2016
- 22 [AI everywhere will impact businesses at every level](#), IDC FutureScape, November 2023
- 23 [Why digital trust truly matters](#), McKinsey, September 2022
- 24 [Digital by design: Strengthening co-ordination and skills to foster digital transformation](#), OEDC, 2021
- 25 [The battle is for customer interface](#), Tech Crunch, March 2015



# Your partner in progress

BSI Group  
Floor 23, Cambridge House,  
TaiKoo Place, 979 King's Road, Hong Kong  
+852 3149 3300  
[bsigroup.com/en-HK](https://bsigroup.com/en-HK)

© 2024 BSI. All rights reserved.