Mac Admins Survey

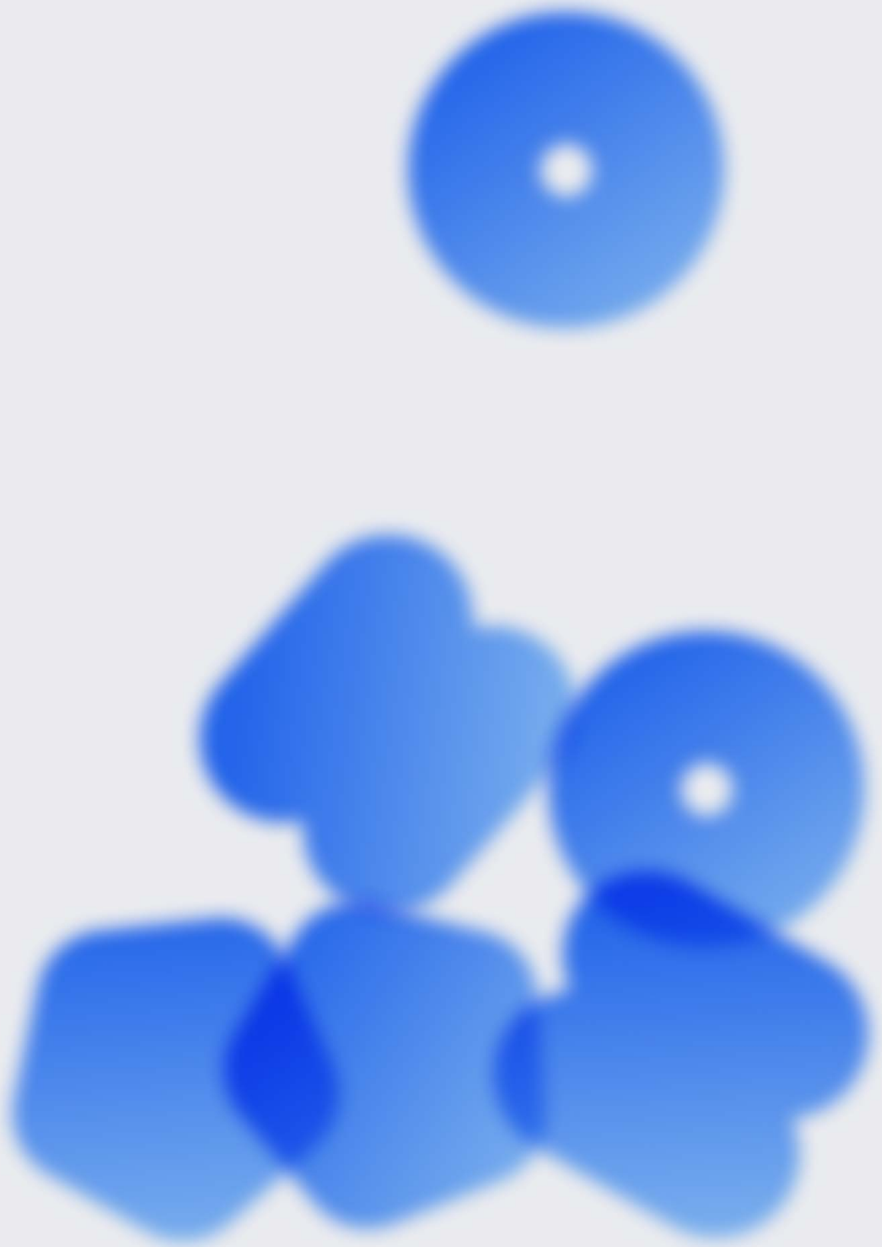
2026

by MacPaw

Intro

The second edition of the **MacPaw's Mac Admins Survey** offers an in-depth look at the practices, challenges, and priorities of enterprise Mac administrators in 2025. Developed by the **CleanMyMac Business** team, this report explores device lifecycles, IT workflows, troubleshooting trends, cybersecurity strategies, AI adoption, and system comparisons.

By highlighting emerging trends and identifying pain points, this report provides **actionable insights** to help IT teams optimize Mac management, address challenges, and uncover opportunities as they plan for 2026.

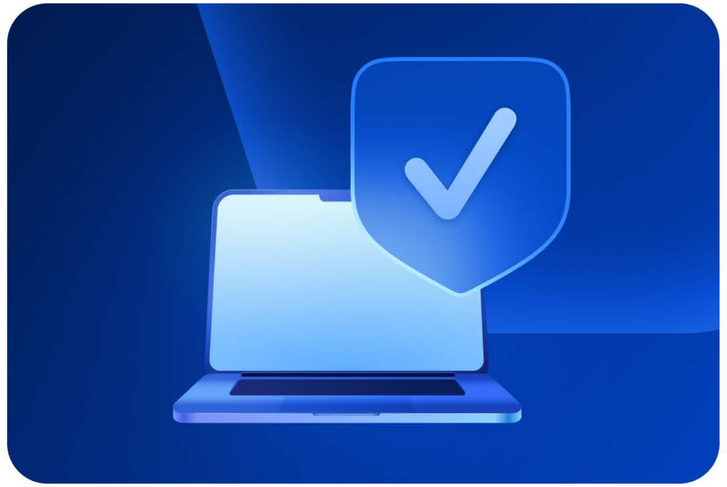


Contents

Key Takeaways

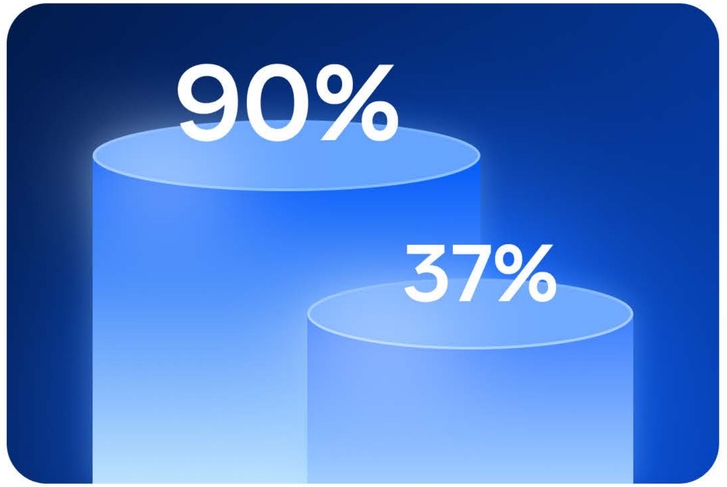
Macs Are Lasting Longer, But Performance Drives Replacement.

Almost half of Macs now last 3–5 years, an increase from last year, but performance issues still drive most upgrades.



Cybersecurity Matters More Than Ever.

Phishing, credential risks, and outdated software continue to challenge admins, reinforcing the need for comprehensive security strategies.



Information Gaps Are Growing, Despite Satisfaction with Tools.

90% of admins love their tools, but 37% say public resources fall short when it comes to tackling complex tasks, up 10% from last year.

Methodology

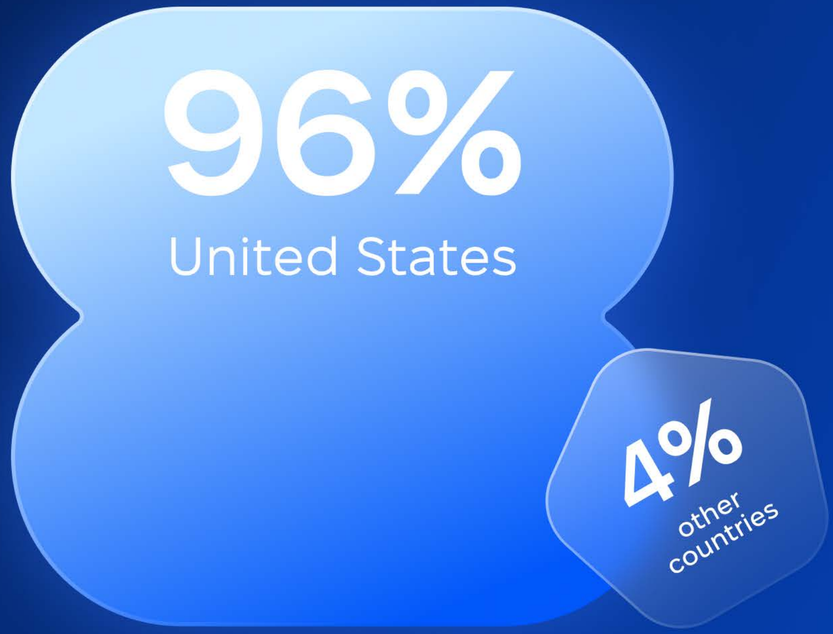
396 Mac administrators

completed the survey in **October 2025**.

Data collection:

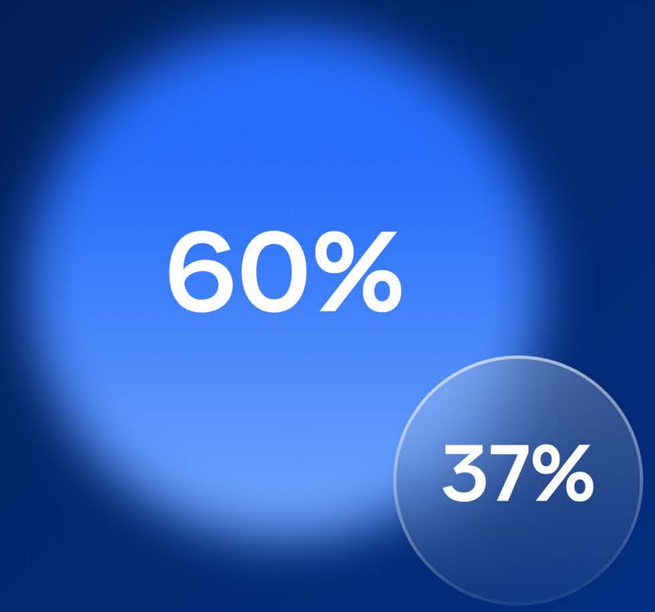
Responses were collected via the **Cint panel**, social media outreach, and MacPaw's engagement at industry conferences, including **JNUC**.

Geography:

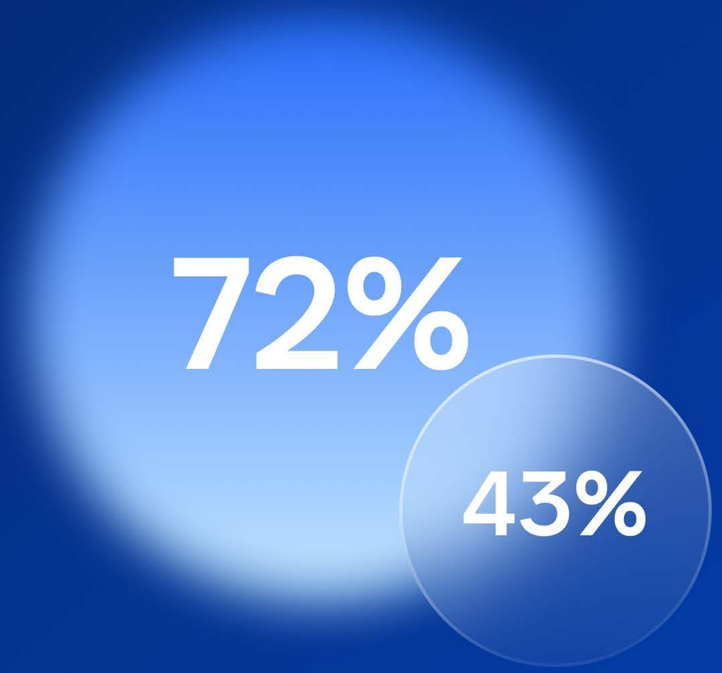


Disclaimer: This report includes comparisons with last year's survey. Only statistically significant differences are highlighted.

Jobs and Titles



Nearly 60% of respondents are Heads of IT, while **37%** are IT/Systems Administrators.



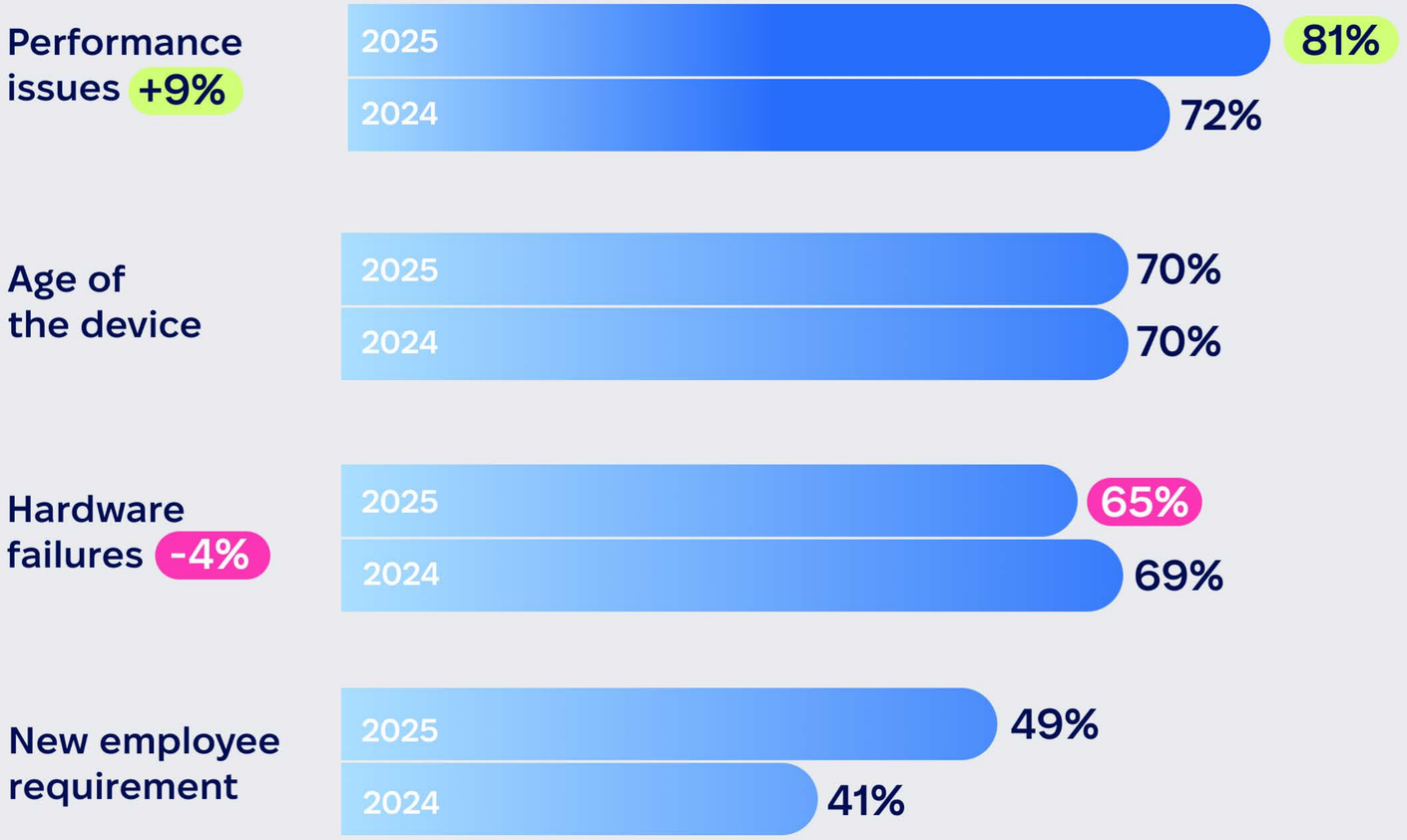
72% of respondents work at organizations with 500+ employees. **43%** of respondents manage more than 100 Macs in their fleet.

Mac Maintenance Routine

Lifecycle of a Mac:

Focus is shifting toward maintaining productivity rather than replacing due to hardware faults.

Top Replacement Drivers:



Mobile Device Management (MDM)

Among the small share not using MDM, IT teams cited either a perceived lack of need within their current setup or the complexity of implementing the system.

Virtual Machines

87%

of respondents rely on virtual machines.

The primary purposes are:

Testing new software updates: **80%**

Running applications that require different operating systems: **75%**

Most Common Virtual Machine Use Cases:

Testing new software or updates

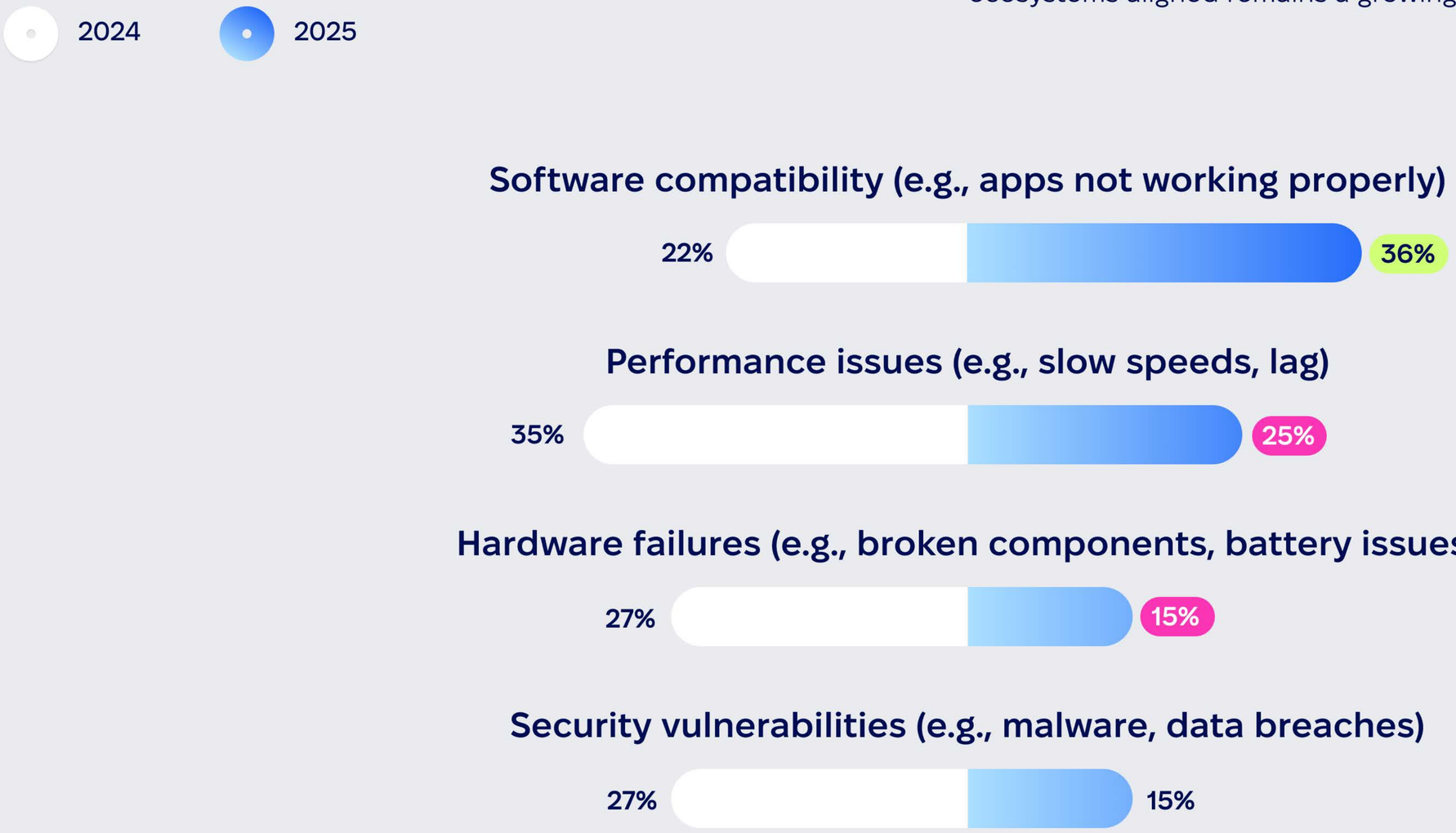
Running applications that require a different operating system

Development and coding environments

Providing secure remote access

The Most Common IT Issues and Challenges

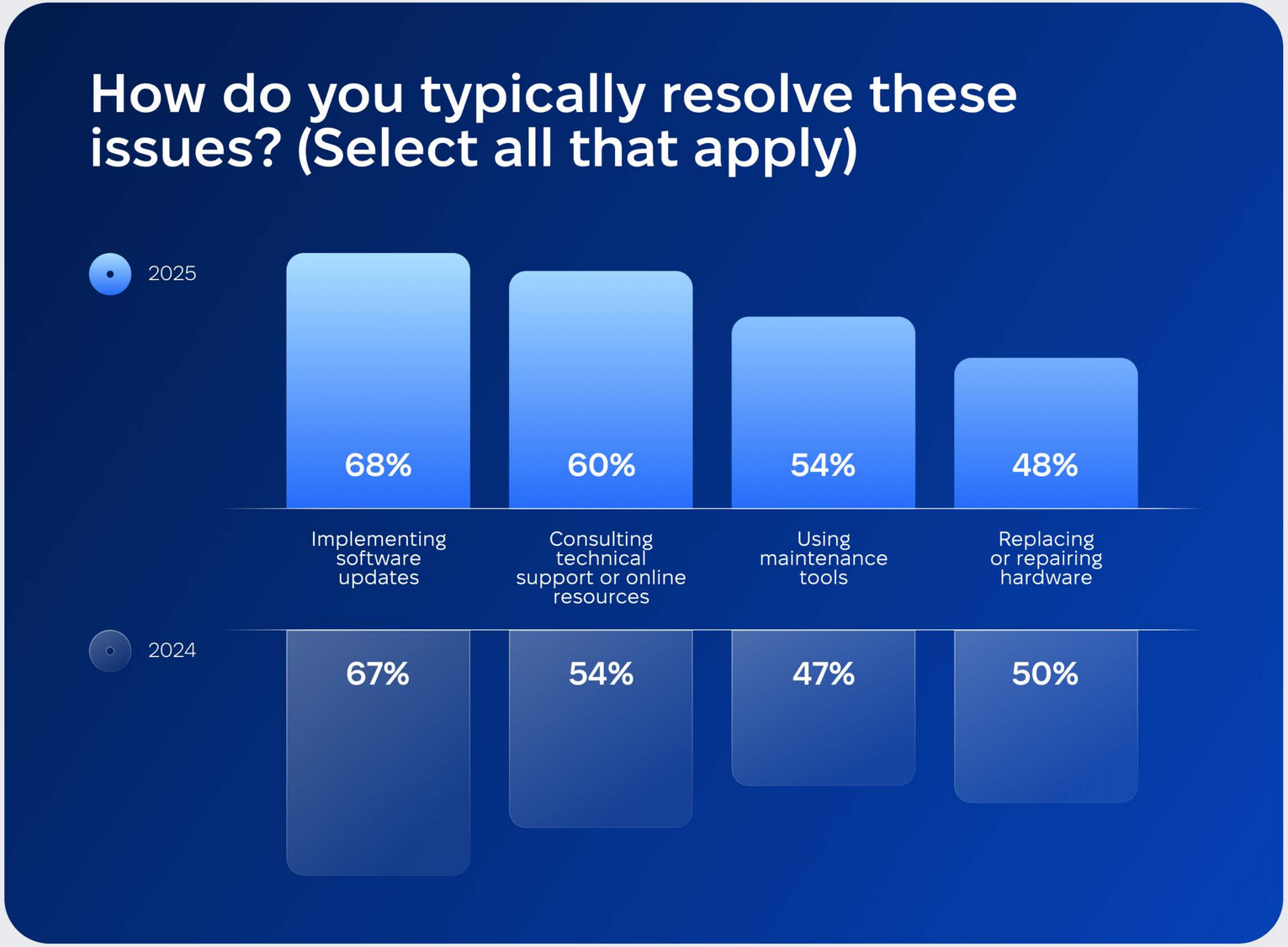
The most frequently reported IT issue was software compatibility, rising by up to 14%. In contrast, performance and hardware failure reports decreased by 10% and 12%, respectively, compared to 2024. While Macs are becoming more reliable, keeping software ecosystems aligned remains a growing pain point.



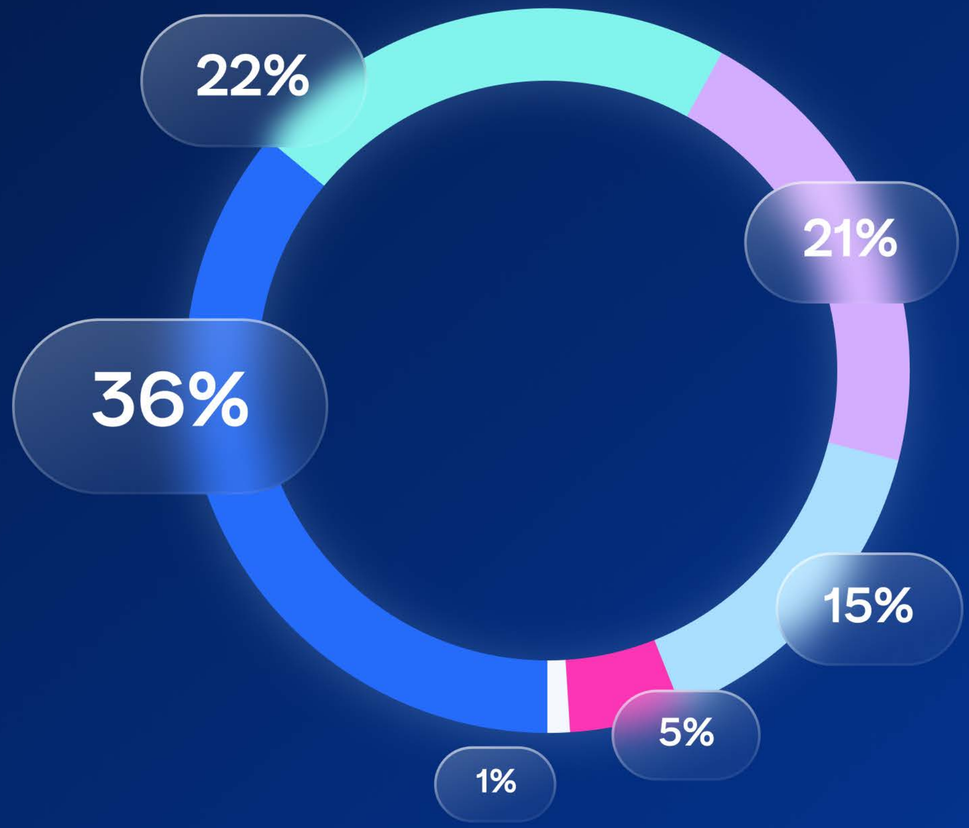
Problem Solving Approaches

Software compatibility issues are the most time-consuming to solve for 36% of respondents.

- The majority of respondents resolve problems by implementing software updates **(68%)** or consulting technical support and online resources **(60%)**.
- The use of maintenance tools has also increased, up 7% since 2024, now used by 54% of respondents.



What issues are the most time-consuming for you to solve?



- Software compatibility
- Performance issues
- Hardware failures
- Security vulnerabilities
- None of the above
- Other

Where IT Teams Need More Support

Compared to 2024, 5% more teams reported a lack of information, and 10% fewer said they had enough resources. This shows a growing need for better guidance in Mac fleet management in enterprises.

90%

reporting satisfaction
(unchanged from last year)

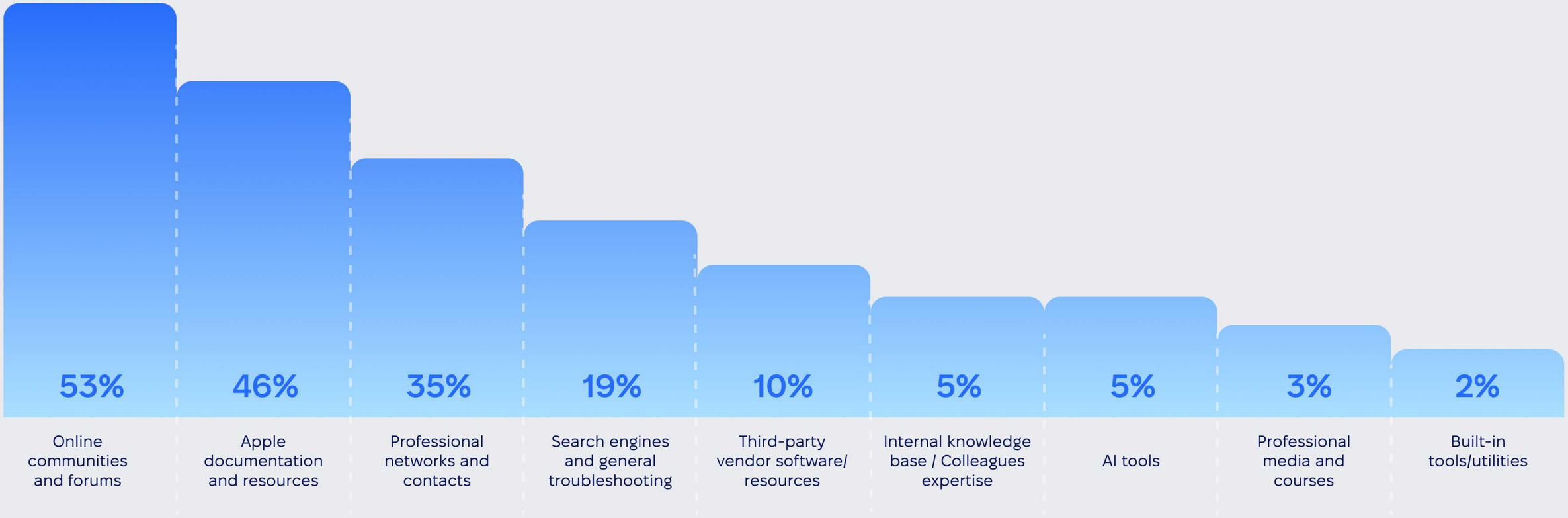
Mac admins remain highly satisfied with their tools and methods.

However, access to publicly available resources shows growing gaps.

Top Resources for Mac Admins

When it comes to solving Mac administration challenges, IT teams most frequently turn to online communities, forums, and Apple's official documentation and resources.

What resources do you rely on to solve Mac administration problems?

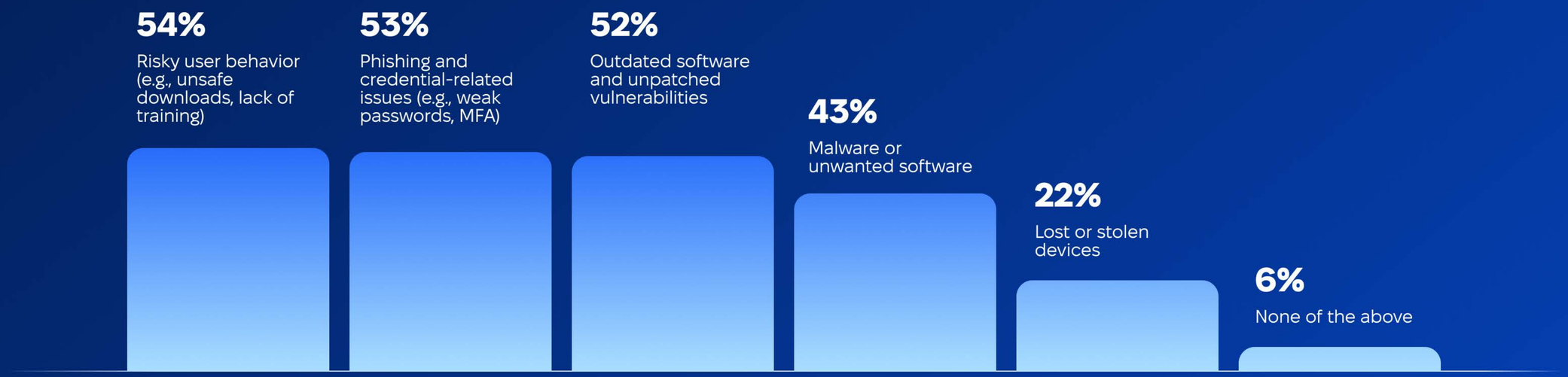


Qualities of Systems for IT Administration: Cybersecurity Practices

39%

of Mac Admins report experiencing cybersecurity incidents or breaches **frequently/very frequently.**

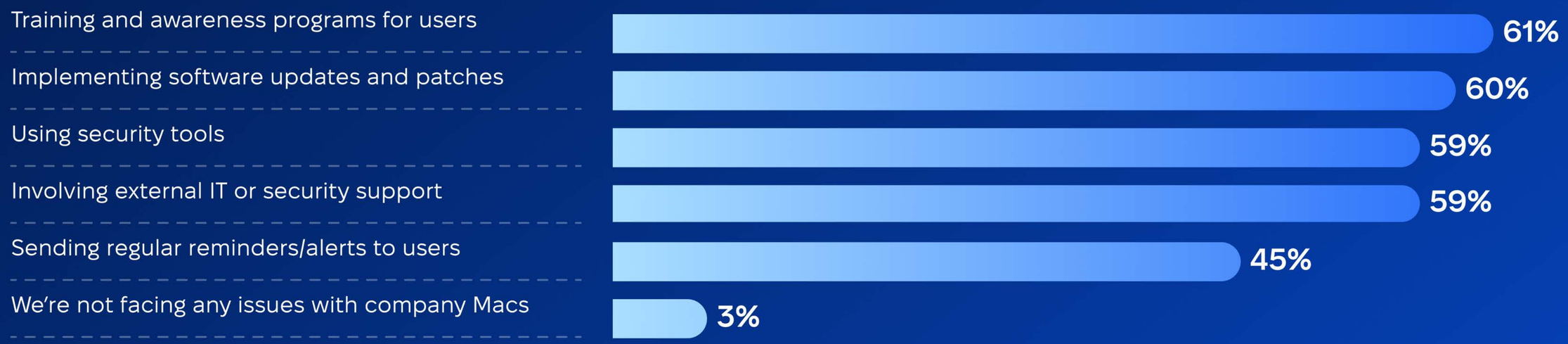
What are the most frequent security issues you face with company Macs?



Cybersecurity Prevention

Mac admins use a diverse toolkit to prevent security issues, with around 60% leveraging **user training, software updates, external IT support, and security tools.**

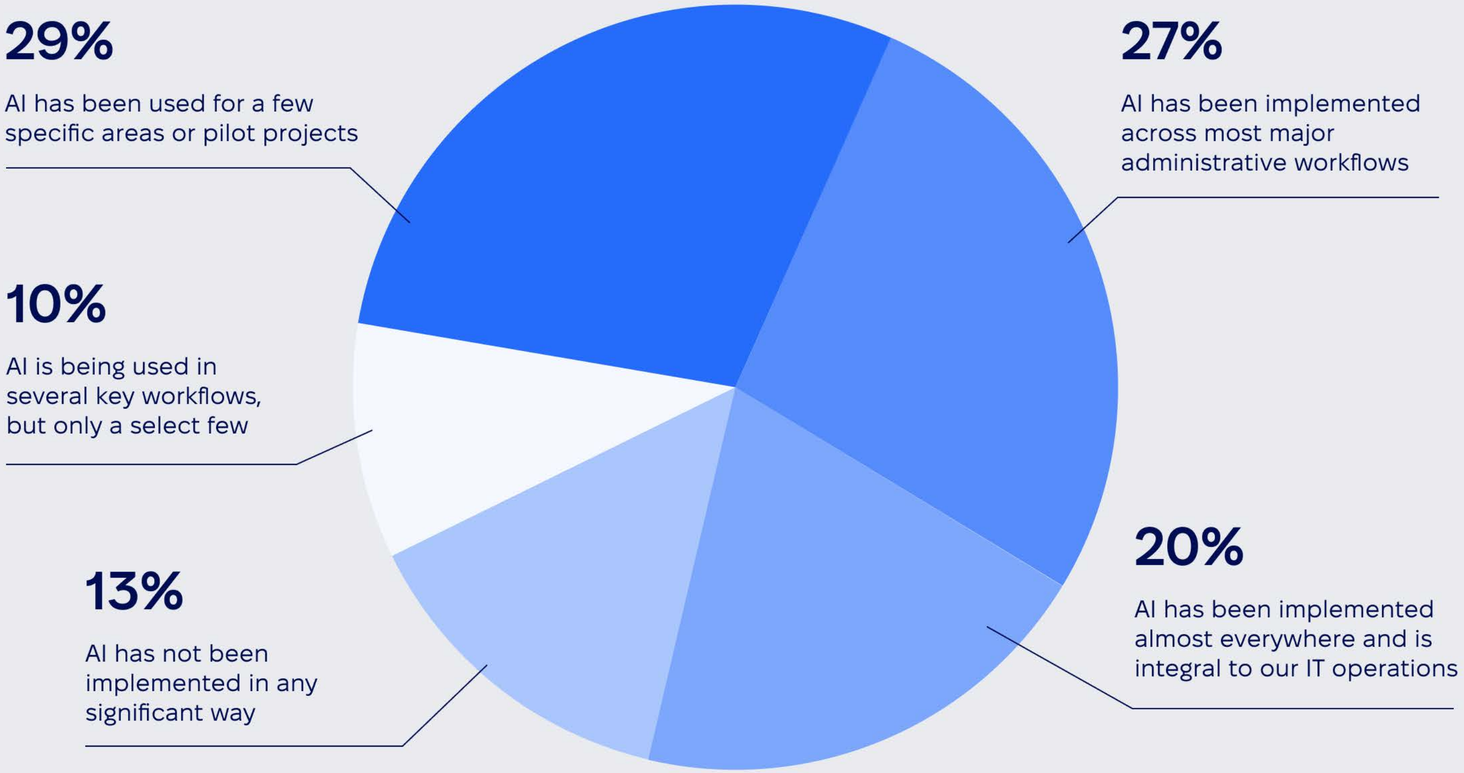
How do you typically address or prevent security issues with company Macs?



AI in IT workflows

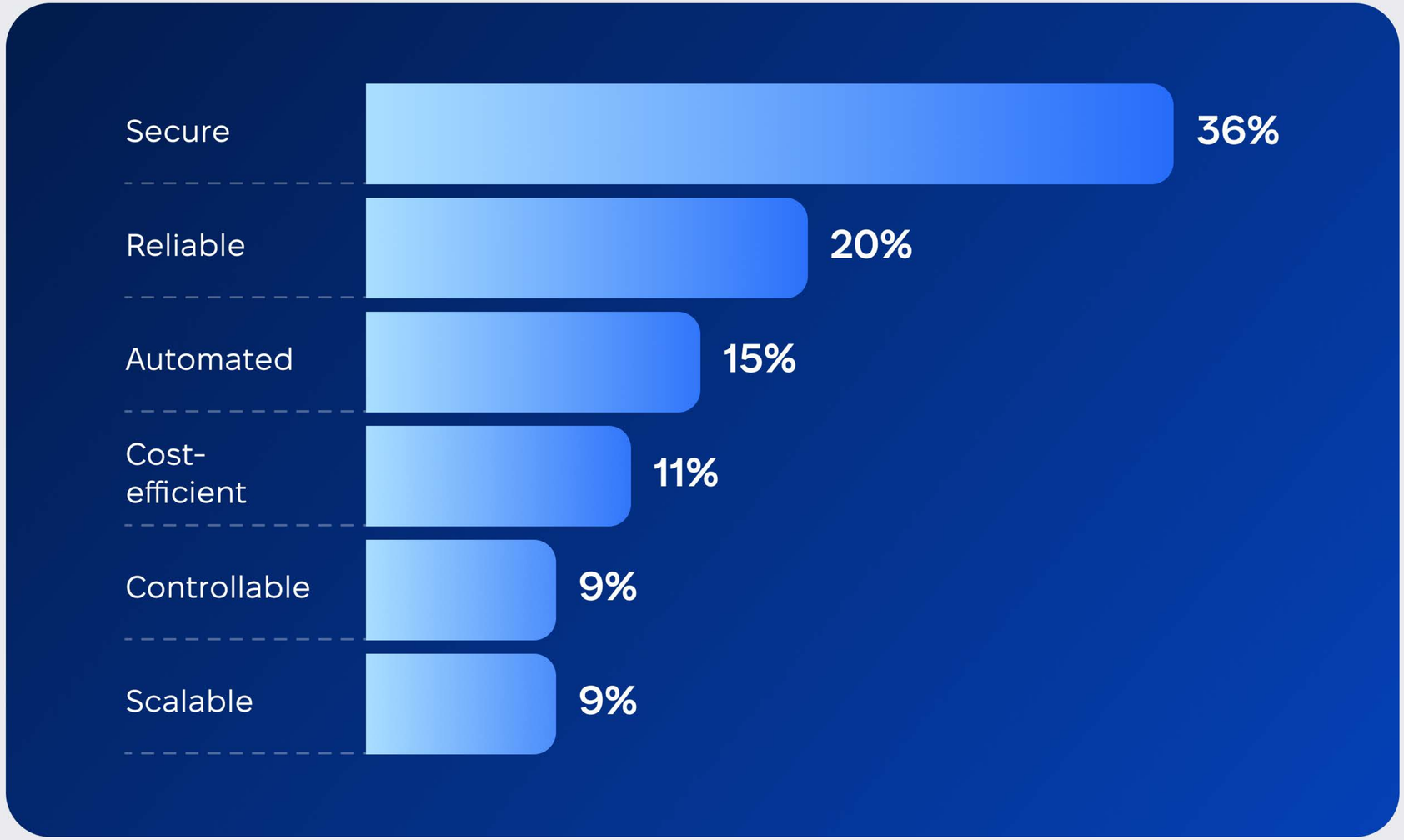
The adoption of AI in IT workflows is ongoing: **29% of Mac admins** report it being used for **specific areas or pilot projects**, while **27%** have implemented it across **most major administrative workflows.**

Common AI Integration Use Cases



When ranking the qualities of AI integrations for IT workflows, the **36%** of Mac Admins rank **Secure of the first priority;** Reliable follows with being the first choice of **20%** of Mac Admins.

Top AI Integration Qualities for IT Workflows by Respondent Share



Zero Trust Architecture

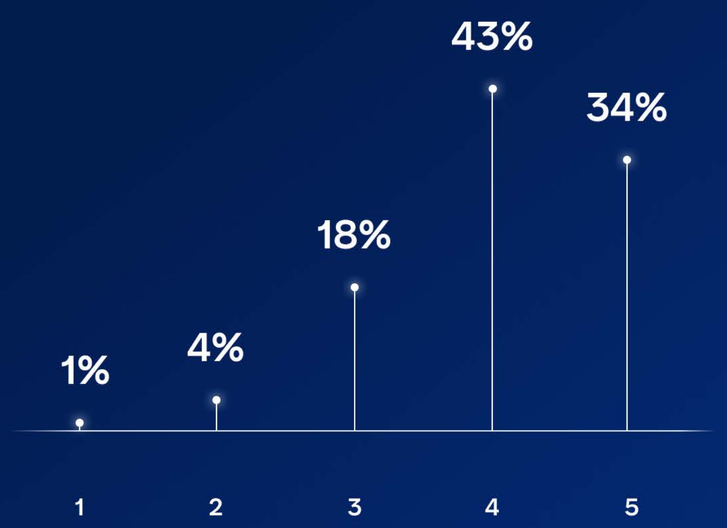
51%

51% of Mac admins report that their organizations currently employ a Zero Trust architecture for their Mac fleet.

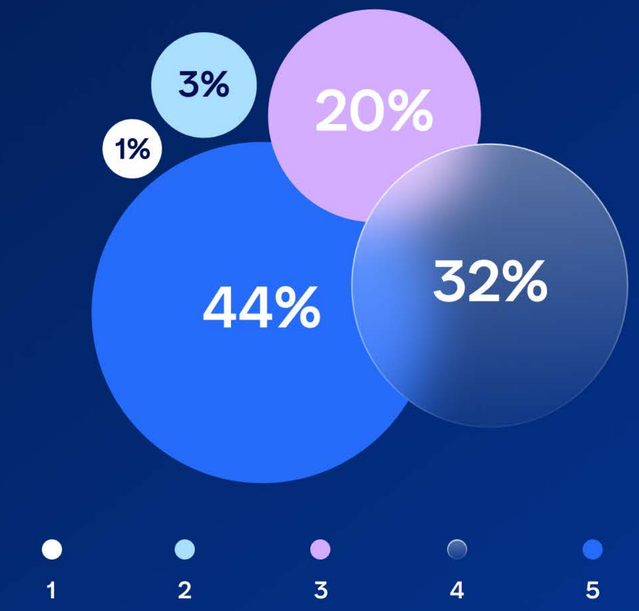
30%

are considering adopting it.

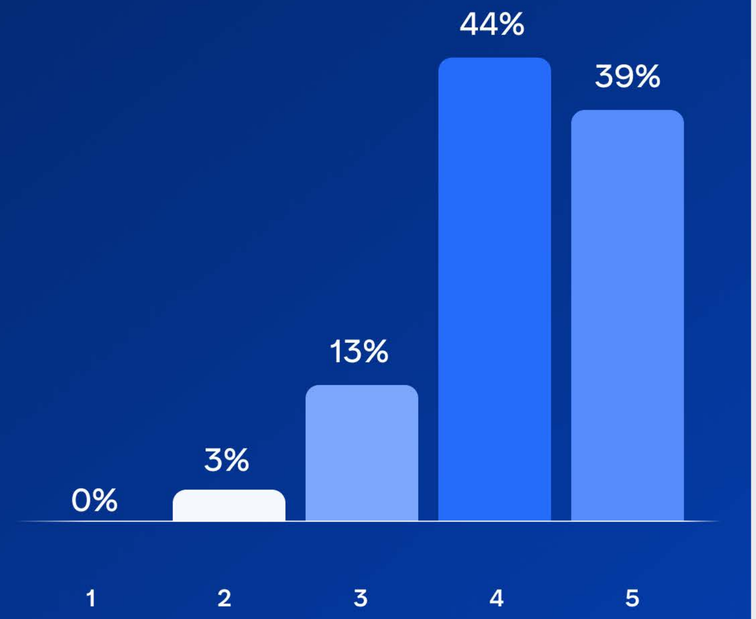
Implementability



UX Quality

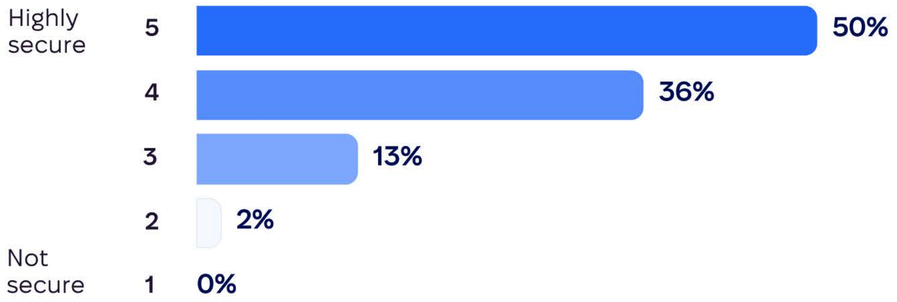


Value

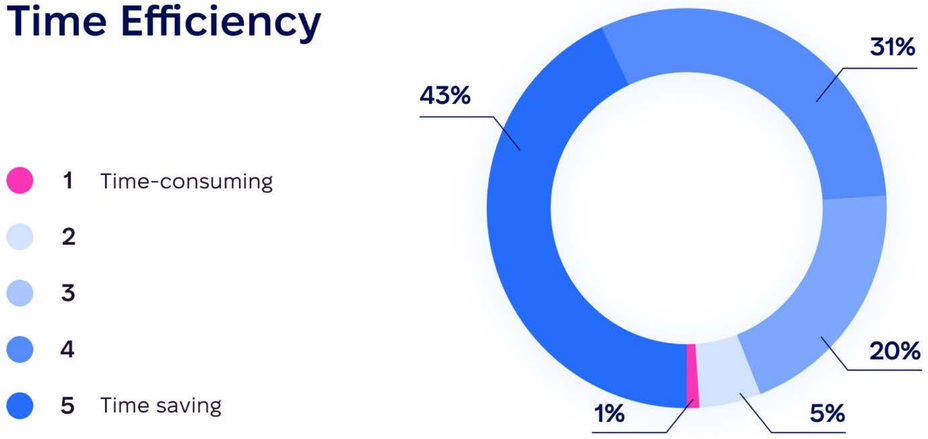


Efficiency, Security and Scalability of Zero Trust Architecture

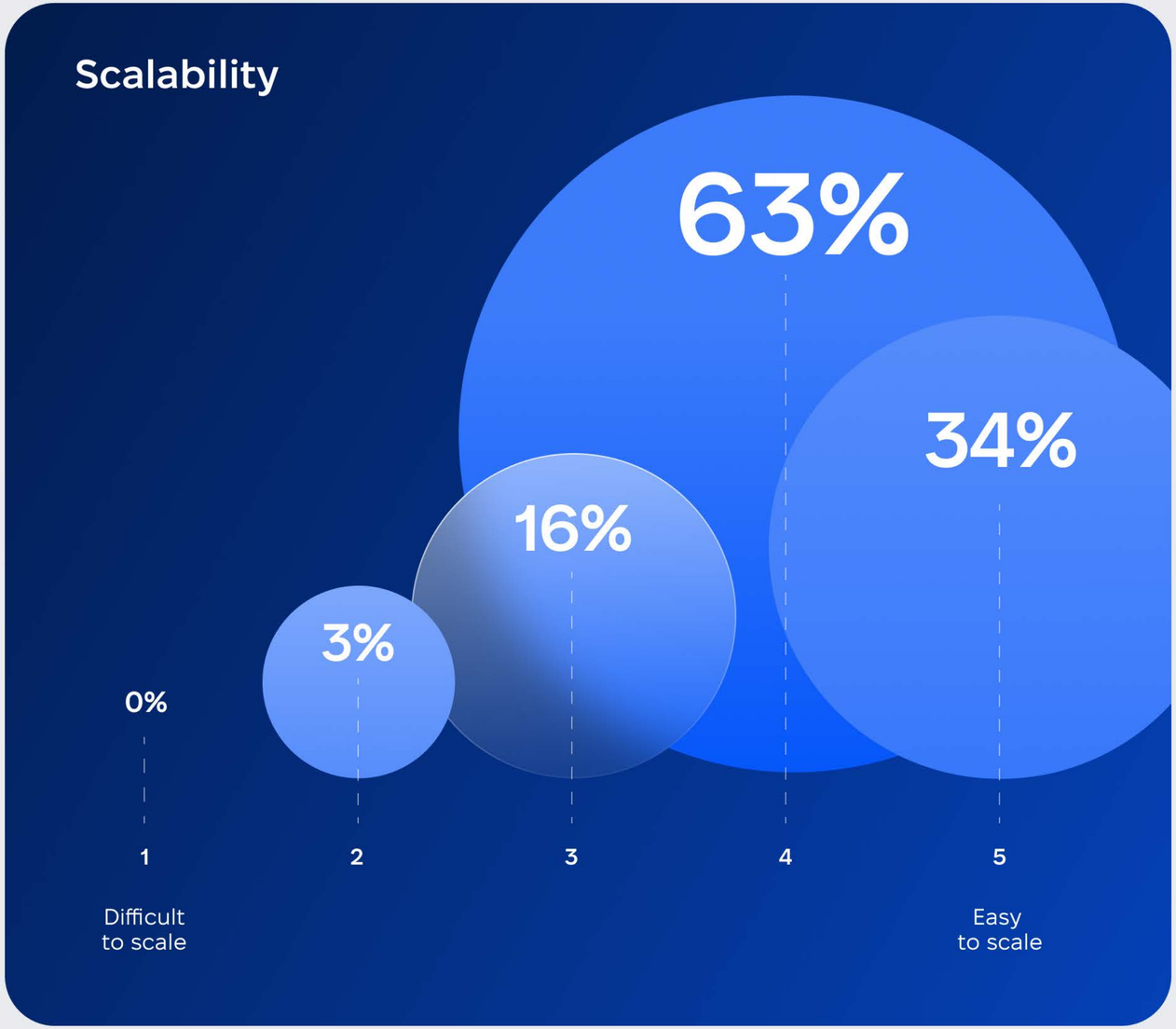
Security



Time Efficiency



Scalability



System Comparisons

Among respondents

96%
have managed Windows

65%
have managed Linux devices

Mac admins evaluated macOS, Windows, and Linux across six categories: Deployability, Usability, Aesthetics, Security, Integrability, and Software Variety.

Top Choices and Trustpoints:

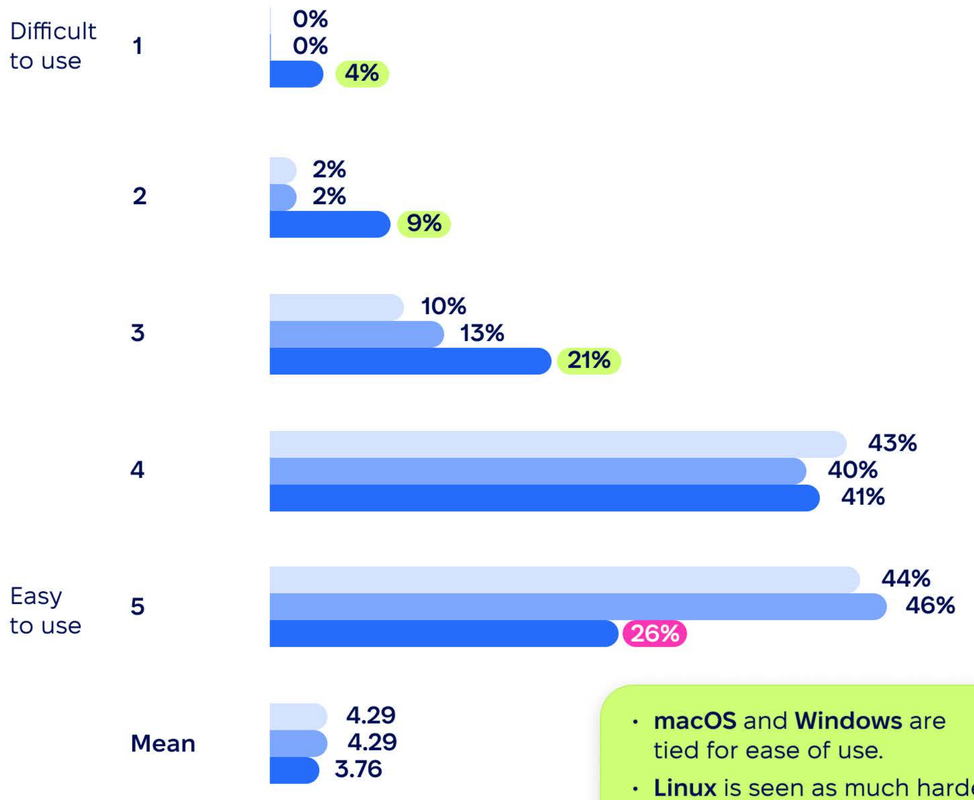
- **Windows:**
  Similar deployability & usability to macOS, lower aesthetics & security, wider software options
- **Linux:**
  Harder to deploy, less user-friendly & visually appealing, matches macOS in security & software variety

We asked Mac admins whether they had experience managing this OS. Highlight means the % is statistically significantly higher than macOS; pink signifies it is lower.

System Comparisons

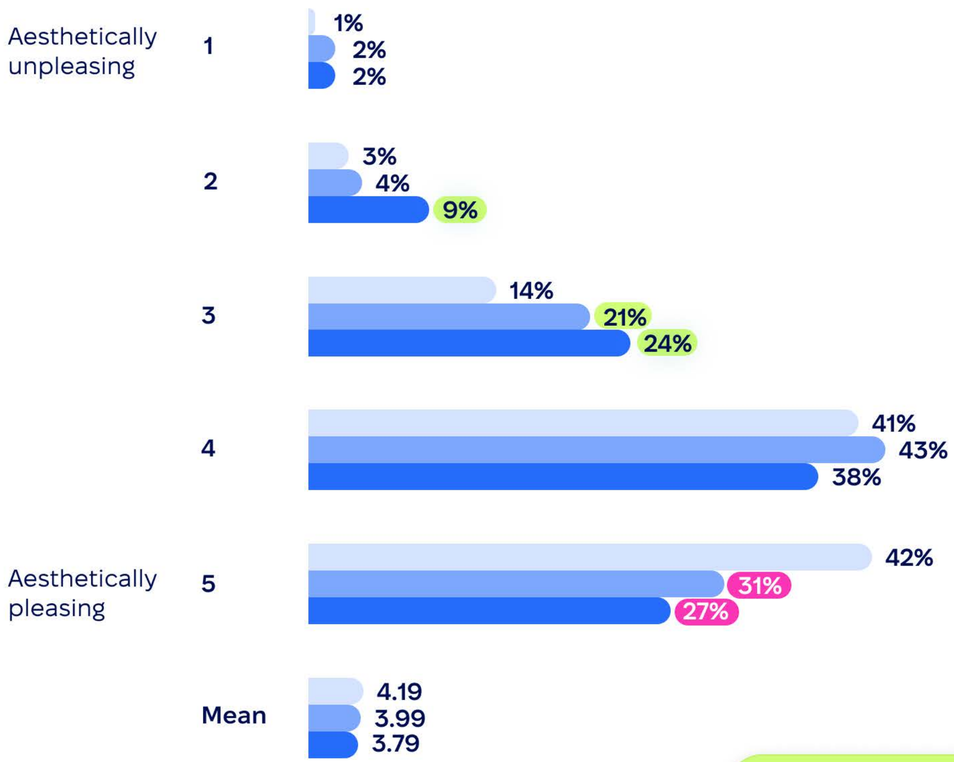
macOS (N=396) Windows (N=381) Linux (N=259)

Usability for employers



- **macOS** and **Windows** are tied for ease of use.
- **Linux** is seen as much harder for regular employees.

Aesthetics

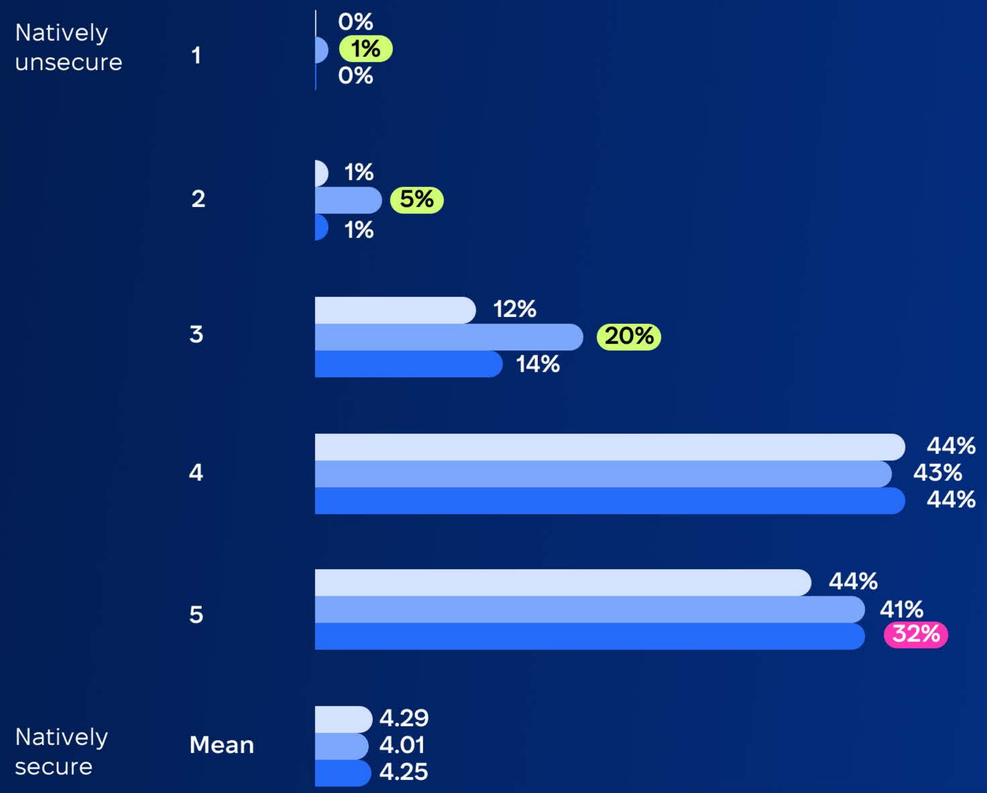


macOS wins clearly.

System Comparisons

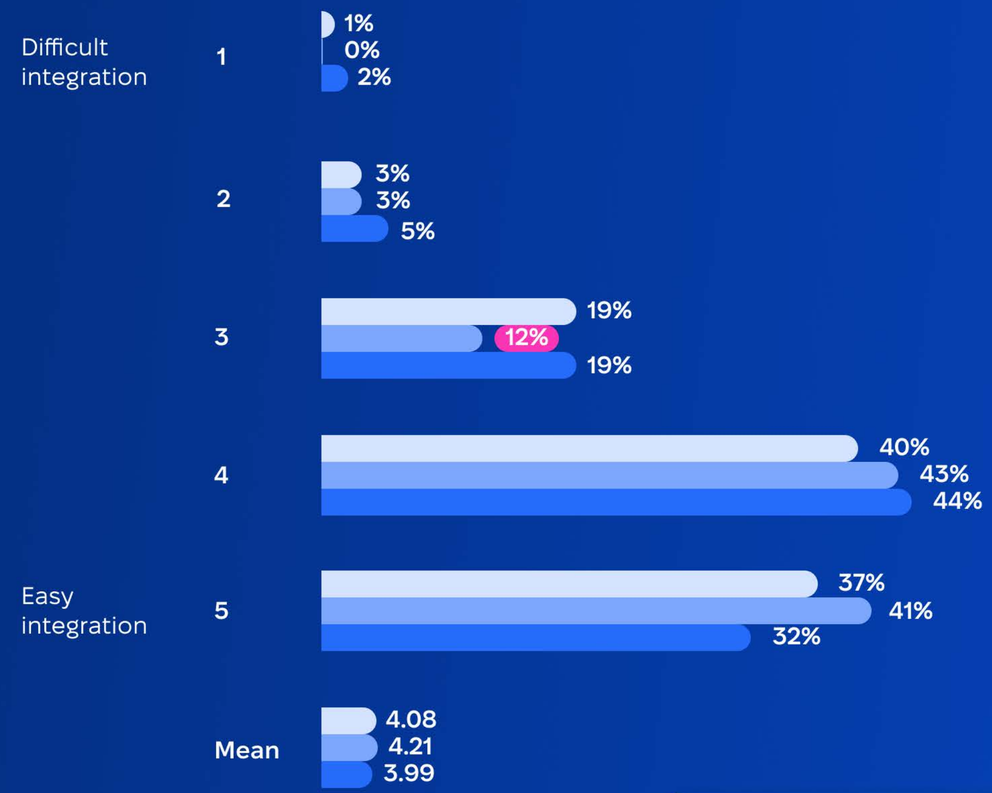
macOS (N=396) Windows (N=381) Linux (N=259)

Security



People trust **macOS** and **Linux** more for safety.

Integrability

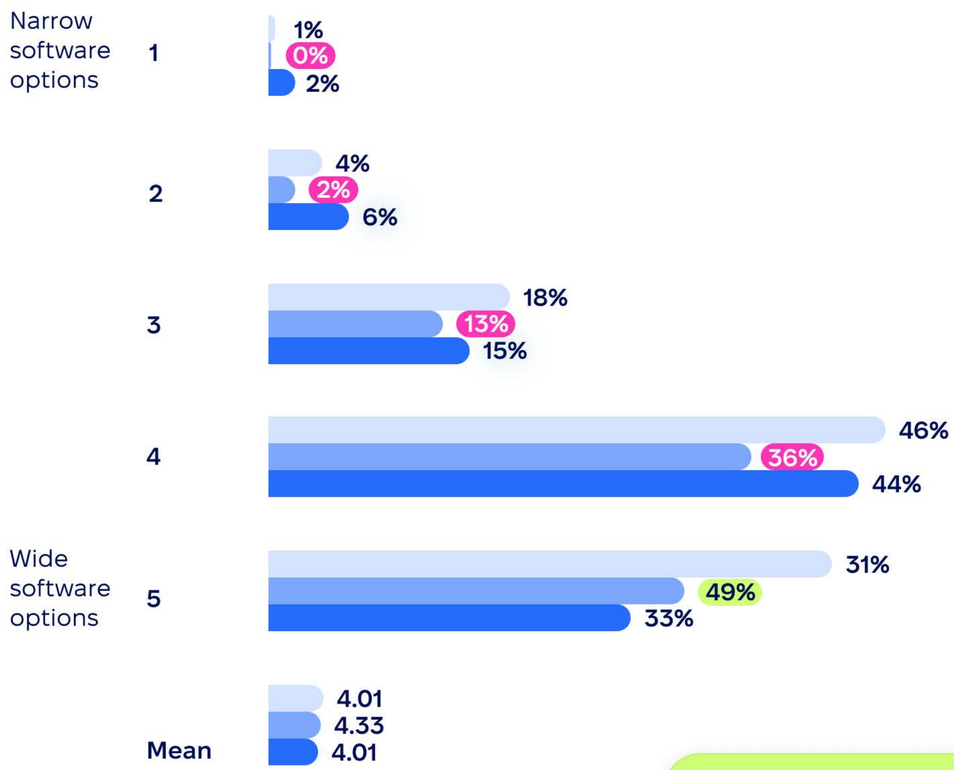


Windows plays nicest with business systems.

System Comparisons

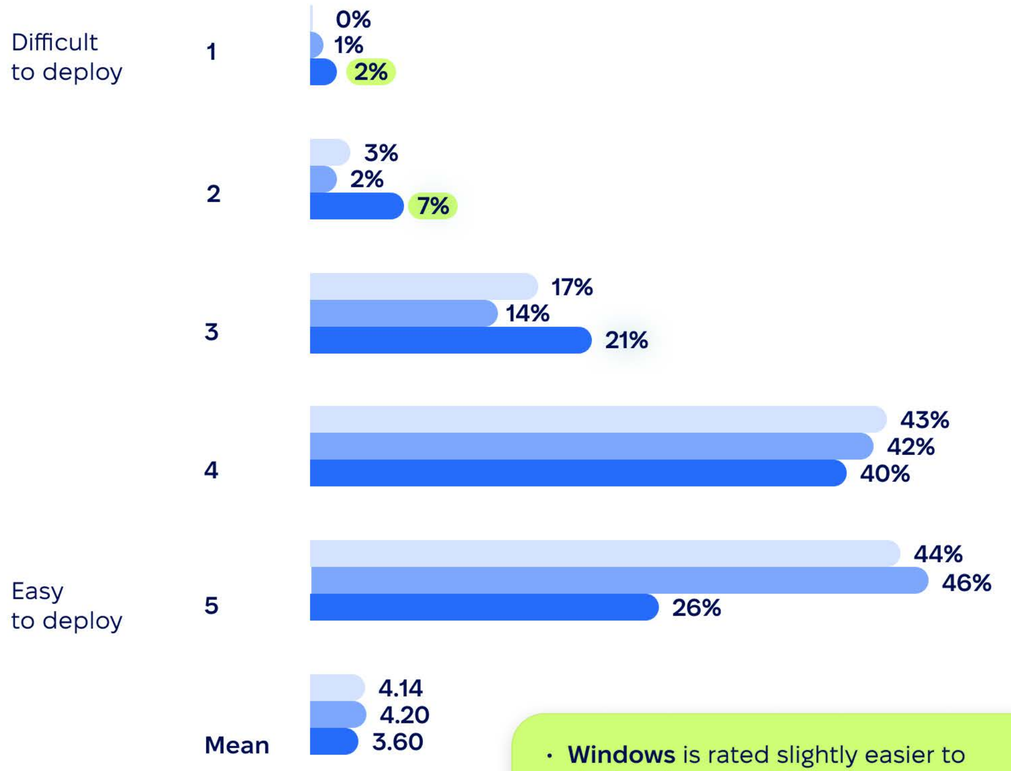
macOS (N=396) Windows (N=381) Linux (N=259)

Variety



If app choice matters, **Windows** has a lot to offer.

Deployability



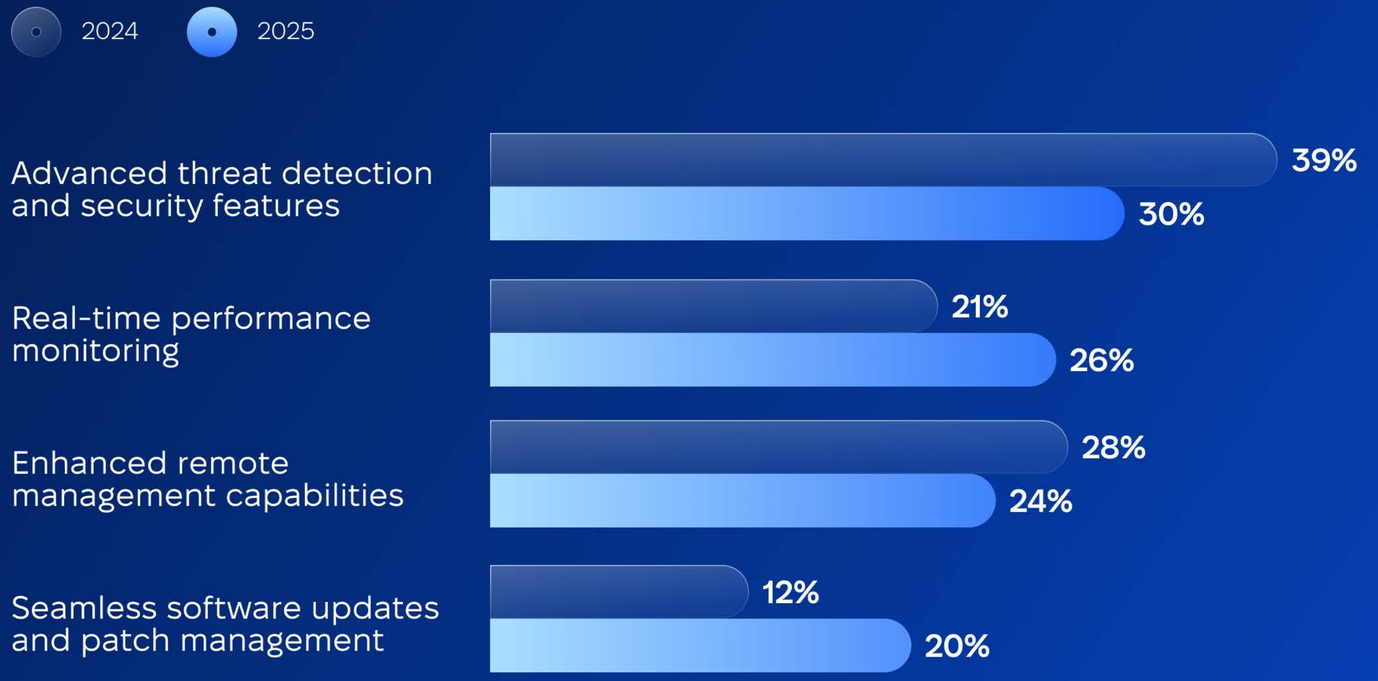
- **Windows** is rated slightly easier to deploy than macOS.
- **Linux** is the hardest to deploy.
- **macOS** sits comfortably in the middle.

Future Feature Priorities

Admins are increasingly interested in simplified maintenance alongside robust security.

- Advanced threat detection and security remains the top future feature for Mac maintenance tools **(30%)**, though interest fell **9%** since last year.
- Meanwhile, seamless software updates and patch management ranks fourth, with demand up **8%**, signaling growing interest in simplifying routine maintenance.

What future features or capabilities would you like to see in Mac maintenance tools?



Final Notes

Thank you for exploring the second edition of the **MacPaw's Mac Admins Survey**!

We hope these findings help IT leaders make informed decisions and support proactive, efficient, and secure Mac environments. MacPaw remains committed to providing solutions that are powerful, approachable, and aligned with admins' real-world needs.

Let's stay in touch:

Discord LinkedIn Twitter/X

CleanMyMac Business