BALANCING DIGITAL EXPERIENCE AND SECURITY:
ADAPTING YOUR COMPANY TO A CHANGING WORLD

This executive summary highlights key findings from a 2017 Forrester Consulting research project, Drop A Pin At The Intersection Of Digital Experience And Security, prepared in collaboration with Akamai.
Executive Summary: Prioritizing Customer Experience and Cloud Security

At the heart of today’s best customer experiences are the best digital experiences. Simply put, establishing trust through differentiated and secure digital experiences is key to competing in today’s marketplace. Research led by Akamai Technologies and Forrester Consulting revealed that the world’s leading businesses maximize value for their customers and brands by driving digital innovation.

THE QUESTION IS, WHAT DEFINES THE BEST DIGITAL EXPERIENCES IN TODAY’S WORLD?

Customers are unique: They are spread across the world, in regions of varying network connectivity, and utilize a plethora of devices and screen sizes. Yet they all expect fast, secure, personalized digital experiences. Delivering those experiences requires strict focus on understanding and proactively addressing the challenges presented by different regions, device types, and digital platforms.

As organizations seek to improve customer experiences, they must enable increasingly fast, streamlined, simple, and safe digital experiences. Trust – understanding it, establishing it, and maintaining it – makes the difference in how businesses think about and deliver digital experiences.

According to Forrester Consulting, the most digitally mature companies report growth rates that outpace their competitors, more frequently reporting double-digit revenue growth.
Akamai is the world’s largest and most trusted cloud delivery platform, delivering 95 exabytes of data a year across billions of devices, on behalf of top financial institutions, online retail leaders, media and entertainment providers, and government organizations. Based on this, we have seen firsthand the intersection of user experience and digital security, and how that impacts customer behavior. However, Akamai wanted to understand how digital businesses across the globe from various industries align user experience and security with their strategic priorities. To that end, we engaged Forrester Consulting to conduct research designed to examine how digital maturity shapes those views and perceptions.

The research addressed key questions such as:

• What is the connection between customer trust and sustained revenue growth?
• Are mature digital companies more mature in their security?
• What security/architecture challenges do organizations face as they seek to mature their digital experiences?
• What is the connection between digital experience and security?
• How do you develop and demonstrate trust through the digital experience?

Forrester Consulting’s survey of more than 350 IT executives around the world revealed that even industry leaders are struggling to achieve the necessary balance of digital innovation and security. Yet the research also underscored the tremendous value of achieving that equilibrium, with payoffs in the form of greater customer trust and higher revenues.

**INDUSTRY HIGHLIGHTS**

Manufacturers report some of the lowest revenue/customer growth rates of those surveyed.

70% of healthcare industry respondents cited “damage to brand/reputation” as a top challenge more than any other industry

More than any other industry, those in Commerce cited the complexity of their technology environment as a top challenge when maturing digital experiences.

**KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE SURVEY INCLUDE:**

Customer trust is at an all-time low, and it’s hurting growth.

• Mere negative suspicion of a company’s data use practices can cut revenues by up to 25%.
• More than one third of executives feel they have only a moderate level of trust from their customers.

Executives are aware that customer trust is becoming critical to success.

• While 69% of executives already feel trust is critically important today, 75% feel this will be critical in two years.

When firms fail to deliver on security, the damage is threefold, impacting brand reputation, customer trust, and revenues.

• Customers share more data with companies they trust.

Companies struggle to balance security with digital experience.

• Most executives report their firm is strongest in security and trust, and weakest in digital experience maturity.
UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL MATURITY DISTINCTIONS:

To fully understand those who are able to balance high levels of security with a sophisticated digital experience, Forrester Consulting segmented survey respondents on a spectrum from low-maturity skeptics to high-maturity differentiators:

1. **Skeptics**: Just beginning the digital journey and finding themselves relatively unaware of the evolving expectations of customers.

2. **Adopters**: Investing in skills and infrastructure.

3. **Collaborators**: Breaking down traditional silos.

4. **Differentiators**: Striving to meet evolving customer expectations and backing this with needed budget.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

- **The U.K.** – 54% and **Japan** – 51% lag significantly when it comes to customer trust.

- **Japan** is the least likely of the countries surveyed to completely secure data using cloud security software, services, and process automation — just 15%.

- **The U.K.** is the least likely of countries surveyed to tailor their SLAs for cloud services on the actual experience the customer receives — just 10%.

- Of all countries surveyed, **Germany** grapples with significantly greater issues related to the complexity of its environment and number of vendors to manage.
GET STARTED DELIVERING WORLD-CLASS DIGITAL EXPERIENCES

To learn more about what sets these groups apart and how industry leaders around the world balance digital experience with customer trust, download the full report for further insights into the research findings.

And to jumpstart your digital maturity initiative, take this self-assessment to determine how well your company balances digital experience delivery with digital security. The customized results and recommendations will provide insights into your organization’s readiness for digital business overall.

Once you are ready to move up the maturity scale, you can take advantage of Akamai’s cloud delivery platform to quickly, reliably, and securely deliver the digital experiences you create.

As the world’s largest and most trusted cloud delivery platform, Akamai makes it easier for its customers to provide the best and most secure digital experiences on any device, anytime, anywhere. Akamai’s massively distributed platform is unparalleled in scale with over 200,000 servers across 130 countries, giving customers superior performance and threat protection. Akamai’s portfolio of web and mobile performance, cloud security, enterprise access, and video delivery solutions are supported by exceptional customer service and 24/7 monitoring. To learn why the top financial institutions, e-commerce leaders, media & entertainment providers, and government organizations trust Akamai please visit www.akamai.com, blogs.akamai.com, or @Akamai on Twitter. You can find our global contact information at www.akamai.com/locations. Published 03/18.