Press Release

87% of Decision-Makers Are Less Confident in Network Investments Due to Macroeconomic Disruption, Reveals Arelion

Almost half (44%) cite technological change as being the most disruptive force impacting networking decisions.

Stockholm, June 11 2024 – According to a new report from [Arelion](#), macroeconomic disruption has led to 87% of decision-makers being a little or a lot less confident in the network investment decisions that they make. Confidence has been dented most in the US, where confidence levels has been significantly impacted for 40% of decision-makers. 44% of enterprise network decision-makers cite technological change as the most disruptive force on networking decisions, followed closely by rising costs (41%) and climate change (37%).

Entitled "***Doubt, delay and regret: How global disruptors are impacting enterprise networks***" and conducted in the US, UK, France and Germany, the report provides insights into the extraordinary change – and specifically, the key disruptive forces that enterprise leaders have seen impacting their organizations' networks in recent years. 67% of those surveyed say that the speed at which network technology is advancing is making it harder for them to make decisions about the hardware and services to deploy in the network. This lack of confidence and hesitation appears to have led to some poor decisions. Due to geopolitical events in the past three years, almost half of the respondents (49%) admit that they wish that they had not made the networking decisions that they did.

AI Leads the March

Not daunted by the rate of technological change, however, and the fact that 48% of leaders say that they struggle to get staff with suitable skills, an eye-catching 92% of decision-makers say that they will be using artificial Intelligence (AI)-based tools and/or systems to support their network management within the next 18 months - with half of these doing so within just six months. Geographically, the US has the highest number of AI early adopters (54% in the next six months), while in terms of industry sectors, the pioneers appear to be in financial services (67%).

Respondents see their chief use for AI as being to identify security threats – such as DDoS attacks. Its main impact will be to enable them to respond more quickly to this and other problems. On the other hand, a surprisingly significant number of decision-makers do not see AI having an impact – most notably in the manufacturing sector (56%).

Security Concerns Loom Large

When it comes to specific sabotage threats to the global network infrastructure, leaders are most concerned about data center or DDoS attacks, both of which are feared by 43% of respondents. A

further 42% fear state-sponsored cyber-attacks threaten their network operations more than any other force.

While a clear majority (79%) have documented contingency plans that address dealing with networking infrastructure impacted by geopolitical events, an alarming 19% (almost one in five) have no back-up plan – and, in manufacturing, the figure is a staggering 26%.

These leaders are generally confident about their own networks' current security measures – particularly in France and in IT services – but many (46%) worry about future threats that might evolve in the next couple of years, and a significant 30% of them admit that this causes them stress.

In Search of Sustainability

Macroeconomic disruption has slowed down the investment in sustainability for some 81% of leaders in the last two years, with the strongest agreement on this coming from the US (48%) and the IT services industry (50%). That said, 65% of decision-makers have managed to increase investments to make their network operations more energy efficient since 2022, and a resounding 84% think that the quest for sustainable networking (net zero emissions) is still realistic.

Commenting on the results of the survey, Mattias Fridström, Chief Evangelist at Arelion said: "The findings of our research suggests that, over the last three years, enterprise network decision-makers are reeling from the effects of excessive change and disruption. They admit they're feeling the heat. Their decision-making confidence has been undermined, doubt and indecision has crept in, and delays have ensued. Most strikingly of all, almost half regret networking decisions they've taken."

"However, constant change and disruption are a fact of business life," he concluded. "The goal for enterprise network operators must be to prepare for it by considering their network strategy and their choice of network provider. They should seek support that will enable them to make confident, timely decisions and implement effective efficient network management solutions – avoiding doubt, delay and, above all, regret."

Study Methodology

Research was conducted on behalf of Arelion by Savanta, a global leader in digital data collection. A survey was carried out online in the first half of 2024 with 545 industry representatives in the US, UK, Germany, and France.

All participants in the research work for enterprises with more than 2,000 people. They come from a range of industries, led by: IT services (105); Banking (104); Manufacturing/engineering (92); Finance/financial services (91). All participants are involved in decision-making regarding their company's network development strategy, with 60% having the last word and final sign-off responsibility for this area.

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