



LATEVAIA RESEARCH · STUDY 01 · OCTOBER 2026

AI adoption in business: Spain vs. the United States

A like-for-like reading of official statistics for the first quarter of 2026
INE (Spain) · U.S. Census Bureau Business Trends and Outlook Survey

33.6%

of Spanish enterprises with 10+
employees used AI in Q1 2026

18.5%

of U.S. employer businesses used
AI in Q1 2026 (average of six
biweekly readings)

×1.2 – ×2.4

Spain's reported rate is higher than
the U.S. rate in every size band; the
margin grows with firm size

What the official numbers say when you compare only what is comparable

Both Spain and the United States publish official, probability-sample statistics on whether businesses use artificial intelligence. For the first time, both series cover the same calendar window: the first quarter of 2026. This study puts them side by side, aligns them by firm size, and states plainly where they can and cannot be compared.

- 1 **Spain's SMEs report higher AI use than U.S. businesses of the same size.** Spanish enterprises with 10–49 employees: 29.1%. U.S. firms with 10–19 and 20–49 employees: 17.2% and 18.5%. The gap holds at every band and widens with size: 48.9% vs. 21–25% for mid-sized firms, 74.4% vs. 30.6% for firms with 250 or more employees.
- 2 **Even Spain's micro-enterprises are ahead.** 21.4% of Spanish businesses with fewer than 10 employees used AI, against 17.6% (1–4 employees) and 17.0% (5–9) in the United States. This is the narrowest margin and the one most exposed to the recall-window difference (see 4.8).
- 3 **Size matters more in Spain.** A large Spanish enterprise is 2.6 times as likely to use AI as a small one; in the United States the ratio is 1.7. Spain's adoption curve is steeper, with most of the lift concentrated above 50 employees.
- 4 **The United States is catching up fast, but from a lower base.** The Census biweekly series rose from 17.3% in mid-November 2025 to 22.4% by 9 August 2026 (23.8% in the September release, as reported). Spain's rate for enterprises with 10+ employees rose 12.5 points year on year, though a classification change means the two Spanish years are not strictly comparable.
- 5 **The reasons for not adopting differ in kind.** In Spain, 8 in 10 non-adopters that considered AI cite a lack of in-house skills. In the United States, 6 in 10 of the smallest non-adopters say AI is simply not applicable to their business.

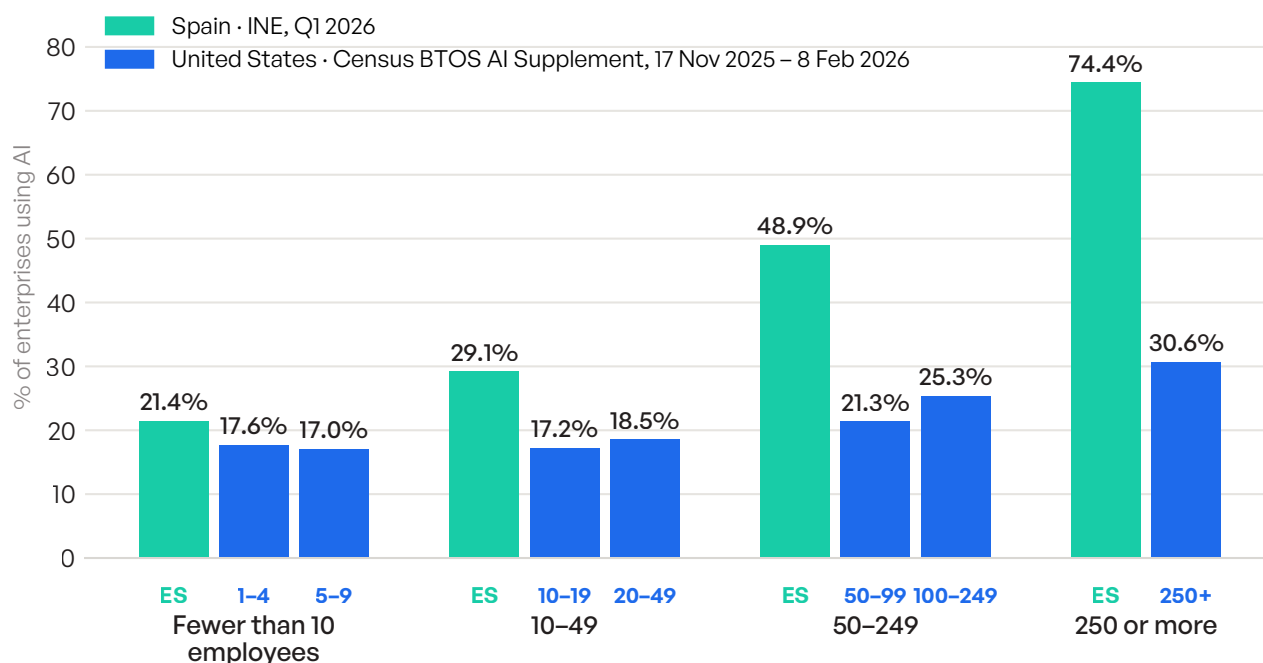


Figure 1. Share of enterprises using AI, by employment size band. Spain: INE, Q1 2026, enterprises with 10+ employees (micro band: enterprises with internet connection). United States: Census Bureau BTOS AI Supplement, single-period tabulation 17 Nov 2025 – 8 Feb 2026, all employer businesses. The U.S. bands are narrower than Spain’s; each Spanish band is shown against the U.S. bands it contains.

How to read this study. Every comparison is made between official statistical agencies, for overlapping reference periods, and within employment-size bands. Where the two surveys differ in population, question wording or recall window, the difference is stated next to the number, not in a footnote. The biggest difference is the recall window: INE asks about use during the first quarter, the Census Bureau about use in the last two weeks. That makes the U.S. rate conservative relative to Spain’s, so the size of the gap should be read as an upper bound; Section 4.8 tests how much the U.S. rate would have to rise for the ordering to change. Section 03 lists what is aligned and what is not; Section 05 lists what the data cannot tell us.

02 — SCOPE

Why Spain vs. the United States, and why now

Most published “AI adoption” figures come from vendor or consultancy surveys with opt-in samples, large-company skews and definitions that change from one report to the next. Numbers of 70% or 80% adoption circulate alongside numbers of 10% or 20%, and both can be “right” for the population and question they describe. They cannot be compared.

Two sources escape that problem. Spain’s Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE) runs the EU-harmonised survey on ICT use in enterprises, with a dedicated artificial-intelligence module. The U.S. Census Bureau runs the Business Trends and Outlook Survey (BTOS), a biweekly, nationally representative survey of employer businesses that has asked about AI since September 2023. Both are probability samples, both publish standard errors or quality reports, and both are free to reuse.

What makes this edition possible is timing. INE published its 2026 edition on 22 October 2026 with reference period Q1 2026. The Census Bureau’s biweekly series covers the same quarter, and its one-off AI Supplement (17 November 2025 – 8 February 2026) provides a size-class breakdown with published standard errors that overlaps the Spanish window.

Why not the European Union as a whole? Eurostat's harmonised EU-27 figures for reference year 2026 are not due until December 2026; the latest available refer to 2025 (collected in spring 2025), a year earlier than the Census data used here. Mixing them would break the rule this study sets for itself. An EU-27 edition is planned once Eurostat publishes (see Section 06).

What this study is not. It is not an explanation of why adoption differs. Sector mix, firm demographics, the cost of labour, public digitalisation programmes and the way each survey phrases its question all plausibly contribute, and aggregate tabulations cannot separate them. We report associations and flag them as such.

The two surveys, side by side

	Spain — INE	United States — U.S. Census Bureau
Survey	Encuesta sobre el uso de TIC y del comercio electrónico en las empresas (ETICCE), 2025 – Q1 2026 edition	Business Trends and Outlook Survey (BTOS): core biweekly questions and the AI Supplement (second supplement)
Published	22 October 2026 (final data)	Biweekly releases; AI Supplement tabulation released spring 2026; America Counts story 26 May 2026
Reference period used here	First quarter of 2026 (ICT-use variables refer to Q1 of the survey year)	Biweekly periods ending 11 Jan – 22 Mar 2026 (national series); 17 Nov 2025 – 8 Feb 2026 (size and sector tabulation with standard errors); period ending 3 May 2026 (Census size chart)
Population	Enterprises in CNAE-2025 sections C to O (with exclusions) and group 95.1; from this edition includes food-and-beverage services (division 56). Two strata: 10+ employees, and fewer than 10	All non-farm employer businesses in the 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico, all sizes from 1 employee, all sectors except a short out-of-scope list
Sample	about 15,000 enterprises with 10+ employees and about 10,000 with fewer than 10; stratified by size, activity and region; web and postal collection	about 1.2 million employer businesses sampled per year, about 200,000 invited every two weeks; six rotating panels, each reporting once every 12 weeks; voluntary; survey-weighted with non-response adjustment
AI question	Whether the enterprise uses any of eight listed AI technologies (text mining, speech-to-text, text/speech/code generation, image/video/audio generation, image recognition, machine learning for data analysis, workflow automation or decision support, autonomous machines)	“In the last two weeks, did this business use Artificial Intelligence (AI) in any of its business functions?” (wording in force since 17 November 2025; previously “in producing goods or services”)
Recall window	The quarter	The last two weeks
Size classes	<10 · 10–49 · 50–249 · 250+	1–4 · 5–9 · 10–19 · 20–49 · 50–99 · 100–249 · 250+
Precision	INE quality report; press release figures published to one decimal	Standard errors published per cell; 95% CI = $\pm 1.96 \times SE$
Licence	CC BY 4.0	Public domain (U.S. federal statistics)

Comparability rules applied

Dimension	Status	How it is handled
Reference period	Aligned	Only 2026 data are compared. The U.S. national figure is the arithmetic mean of the six biweekly readings whose reference periods fall inside Q1 2026. The size and sector breakdown with standard errors comes from the AI Supplement window, which overlaps the Spanish quarter; the May 2026 Census chart is shown as a second, later reading.
Firm size	Aligned by band	

Headline national rates are never compared directly: INE's headline covers enterprises with 10+ employees, BTOS covers all employer businesses including the 1–9 band that dominates the U.S. count. Comparisons are made band by band. U.S. bands are narrower; each Spanish band is shown against the U.S. bands it contains, without re-weighting (firm counts per band were not used).

Definition of “using AI”	Partially aligned	Spain asks about a checklist of eight technologies; the United States asks an open “any business function” question. Both capture generative tools and embedded AI. The U.S. two-week recall is stricter than Spain's quarter; this would, if anything, understate U.S. use relative to Spain. The direction of this bias is reported; its size is unknown.
Sector coverage	Partially aligned	INE excludes agriculture, education, health and public administration and until this edition excluded food services; BTOS includes them. Low-adoption U.S. sectors (agriculture 5.1%, accommodation and food 8.0%) pull the U.S. average down. Sector-level comparisons are made only where categories match (construction, manufacturing) and are flagged as descriptive.
Year-on-year change	Not strictly comparable (Spain)	INE moved to CNAE-2025 and added two activity groups in this edition, and states that results are not strictly comparable with 2025. The 12.5-point rise is reported with that caveat. The U.S. series is compared only within the post-November-2025 wording.
Regions and states	Descriptive only	Spanish regions refer to enterprises with 10+ employees; U.S. states to all sizes. Shown side by side for orientation, not as a ranking across countries.
Purpose and barriers	Not comparable	Different answer lists and denominators. Reported separately for each country; no cross-country claim is made.

4.1 Headline rates, with their scope

In the first quarter of 2026, **33.6%** of Spanish enterprises with 10 or more employees used at least one AI technology, and **21.4%** of those with fewer than 10 employees did. Over the same quarter, the Census Bureau’s biweekly readings for all U.S. employer businesses ranged from 17.5% to 19.1%, an average of **18.5%**.

These three numbers describe different populations. The U.S. figure is dominated by firms with fewer than 10 employees, which make up the large majority of U.S. employer businesses; the Spanish headline excludes them. The only safe reading of Figure 2 is that the U.S. all-business rate sits below Spain’s micro-enterprise rate and well below Spain’s 10+ rate. The size-aligned view in 4.2 is the one to quote.

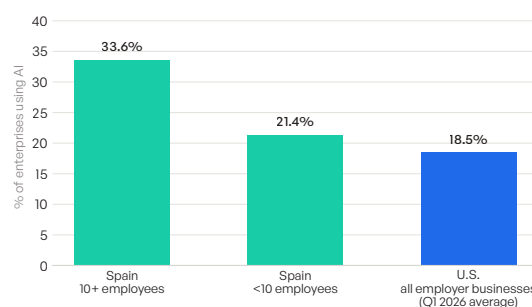


Figure 2. Headline rates, Q1 2026. Populations differ; see text.

4.2 By firm size: Spain ahead in every band

Aligning by employment band removes the population mismatch. The pattern is consistent: Spanish enterprises report higher AI use than U.S. businesses of the same size, and the margin grows with size.

Employment band	Spain · Q1 2026	U.S. · Nov 2025 – Feb 2026 (SE)	U.S. · period ending 3 May 2026	Ratio ES / US (earlier U.S. reading)
Fewer than 10 employees	21.4%	1–4: 17.6% (0.17) · 5–9: 17.0% (0.33)	1–4: 18%	×1.2
10–49	29.1%	10–19: 17.2% (0.36) · 20–49: 18.5% (0.32)	5–19: 22% · 20–99: 27%	×1.6
50–249	48.9%	50–99: 21.3% (0.37) · 100–249: 25.3% (0.72)	100–249: 32%	×2.1
250 or more	74.4%	30.6% (0.87)	37%	×2.4

Ratios use the simple mean of the U.S. sub-bands contained in each Spanish band (10–49: 17.9%; 50–249: 23.3%). Standard errors in percentage points as published by the Census Bureau. The May 2026 Census chart uses different groupings (5–19, 20–99) and rounds to whole numbers; the 37% and 32% figures are stated in the Census text, the others are read from the Census chart. Even against the later, higher U.S. reading, Spain leads every band.

Two observations stand out. First, the gap is not a small-firm phenomenon. The largest Spanish enterprises (74.4%) are far ahead of the largest U.S. firms (30.6% in the supplement window; 37% by early May). Second, within the United States, adoption is nearly flat below 20 employees (17.0%–17.6%) and only starts to rise from the 20–49 band; the Census Bureau reports that between December 2025 and May 2026 use grew among firms with at least 20 employees but did not change significantly among smaller ones. In Spain the step up happens between the 10–49 and 50–249 bands.

4.3 The size gradient is steeper in Spain

Expressed relative to the 10–49 band, Spanish adoption rises to $\times 1.7$ for mid-sized enterprises and $\times 2.6$ for large ones. The equivalent U.S. ratios are $\times 1.3$ and $\times 1.7$. In both countries size predicts AI use; in Spain it predicts it more strongly.

This has a practical reading for the segment this study is about. A Spanish company with 10–49 employees sits at 29% adoption, roughly where a U.S. company with 100–249 employees sat in spring 2026 (32%). The “catch-up” conversation for Spanish small businesses is with their larger domestic peers, not with the United States.

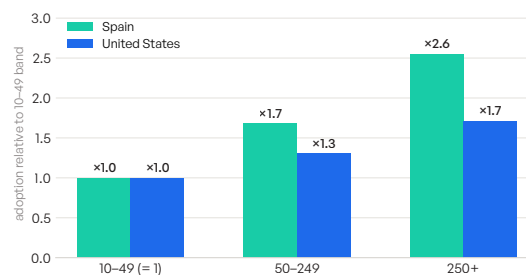


Figure 3. Adoption relative to the 10–49 band. U.S. 50–249 is the mean of 50–99 and 100–249; U.S. 10–49 is the mean of 10–19 and 20–49.

4.4 Trajectory: a rising U.S. series, a jump in Spain with a caveat

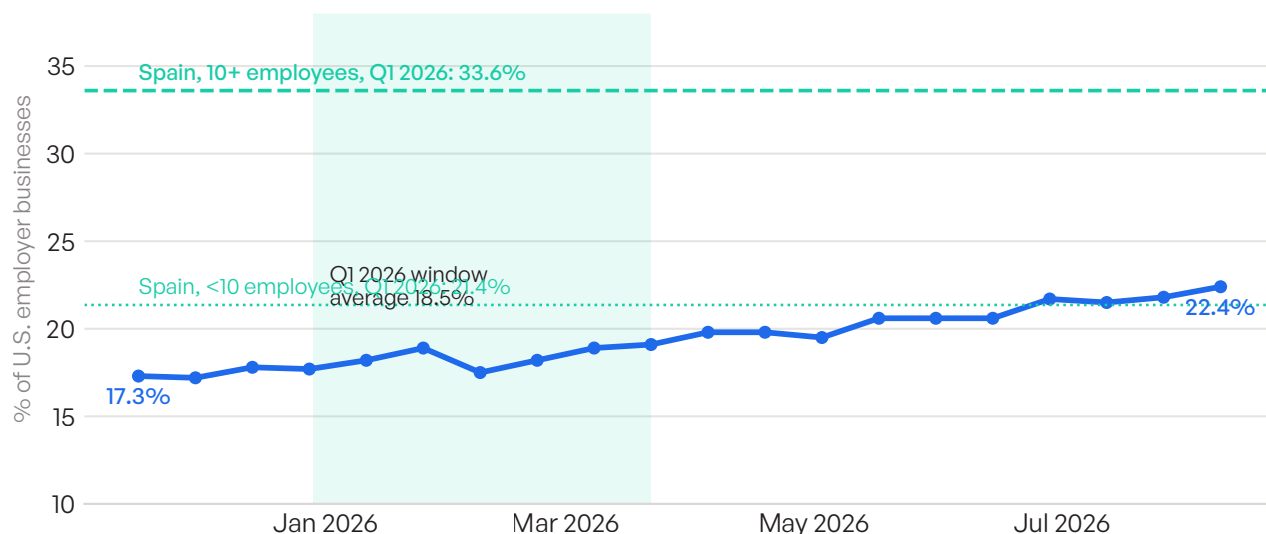


Figure 4. U.S. employer businesses using AI in any business function in the last two weeks, biweekly, new series since 17 Nov 2025 (Census BTOS National file). Dashed lines: Spanish rates for Q1 2026. The two Spanish values are single-quarter readings, not a series.

The U.S. series under the current wording moved from 17.3% (period ending 16 November 2025) to 22.4% (9 August 2026), a gain of five points in nine months; the September release was reported at 23.8%. Under the earlier, narrower wording (“in producing goods or services”) the series had crawled from 3.7% in September 2023 to 10.0% in September 2025. The Census Bureau treats the two as separate series, and so does this study.

Spain’s 10+ rate was 21.1% in Q1 2025 and 33.6% in Q1 2026, and the micro-enterprise rate rose from 13.4% to 21.4%. INE warns that the move to CNAE-2025 and the addition of food-and-beverage services and ICT-equipment repair mean the two editions are not strictly comparable. Part of the rise is therefore classification, and the true change is unknown; the direction is nonetheless consistent with the 8.7-point rise recorded the year before under a stable classification.

4.5 Sectors: compare only like with like

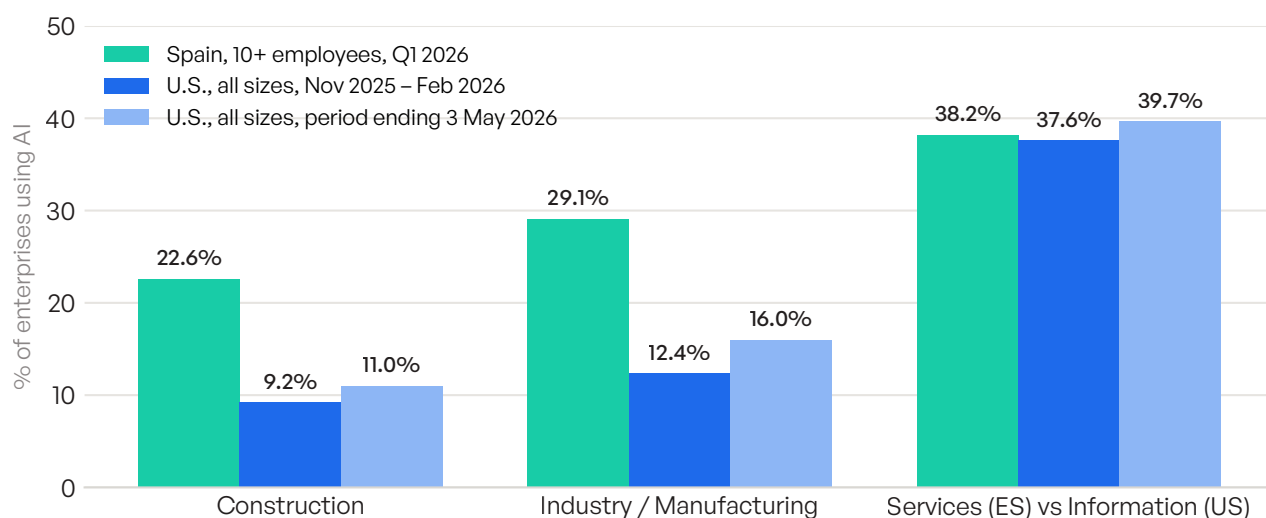


Figure 5. Sector rates. Spain: enterprises with 10+ employees. United States: all sizes; two readings. The third pair is not a like-for-like match and is shown only to bound the comparison.

Where sector categories match, the Spanish lead persists. Construction: 22.6% in Spain against 9.2% (Nov–Feb) and 11% (May) in the United States. Industry/manufacturing: 29.1% against 12.4% and 16%. The U.S. figures include very small firms that the Spanish ones exclude, which explains part of the difference; the size-aligned evidence in 4.2 suggests it does not explain all of it. Spain’s services aggregate (38.2%) cannot be matched to a single U.S. sector; the closest U.S. categories are information (37.6% / 39.7%), professional and technical services (34.2%) and finance (30.4%).

4.6 Territories: orientation, not a league table

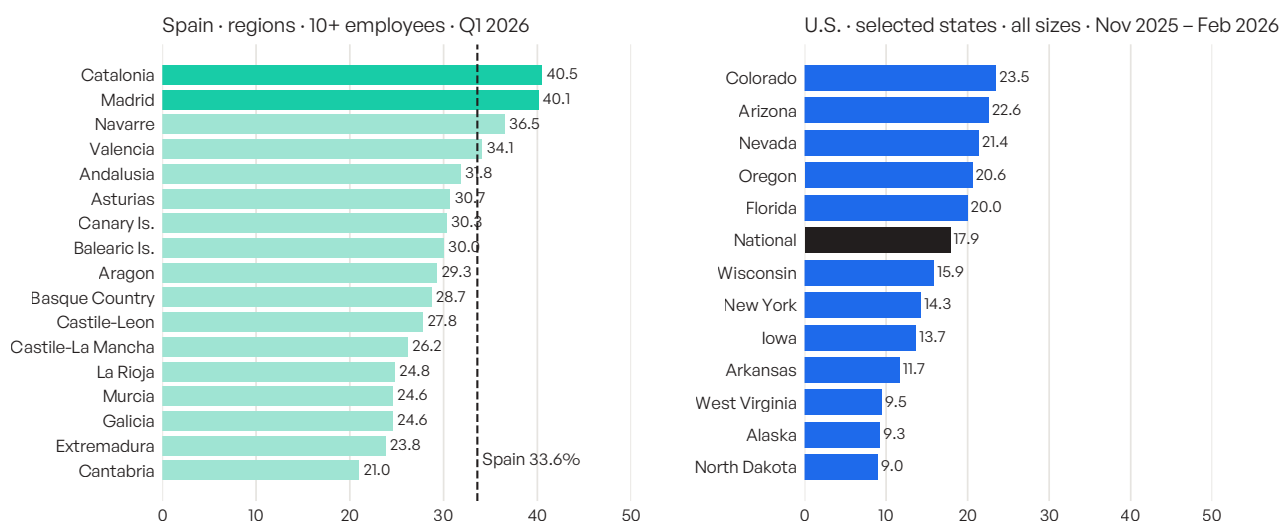


Figure 6. Left: Spanish regions, enterprises with 10+ employees, percentage of enterprises with internet connection (INE press release table). Right: selected U.S. states, all employer businesses, AI Supplement window. Different populations; not a cross-country ranking.

Catalonia (40.5%) and Madrid (40.1%) lead Spain, followed by Navarre (36.5%) and the Valencian Community (34.1%). In the United States, Colorado (23.5%), Arizona (22.6%) and Nevada (21.4%) lead, with New York (14.3%) below the national average. A note on reporting: several Spanish media quoted 48.7% for Catalonia on 22 October; in INE’s regional table that figure is the paid cloud-computing column, and the AI column reads 40.5%. We checked the column order against the national totals (AI 33.6%, cloud 39.4%).

4.7 What AI is used for, and why it is not

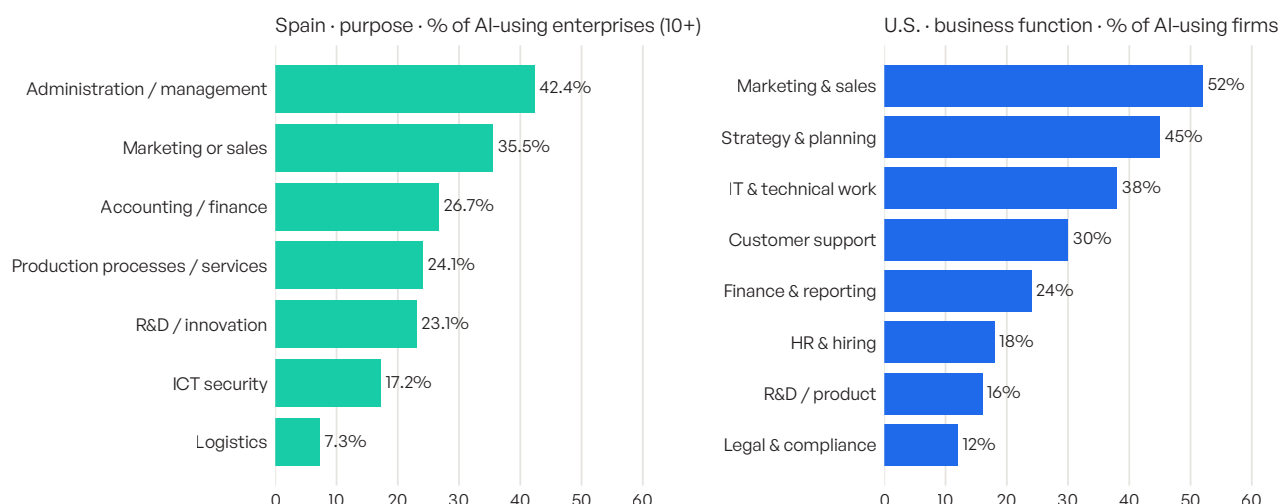


Figure 7. Among AI users. Spain: purpose categories, INE module D.2. United States: business functions, Bonney et al. (2026) from the BTOS supplement. Different answer lists; shown separately.

In both countries, customer-facing and administrative uses lead. Among Spanish AI users, administration and management (42.4%) and marketing or sales (35.5%) are the most common purposes; among U.S. AI users, marketing and sales (52%) and strategy and planning (45%). The most used technologies in Spain are generation of images, video or audio (62.7% of users), text analysis (57.3%) and text, speech or code generation (49.0%): generative, off-the-shelf tools rather than bespoke systems. Three quarters of Spanish users (75.2%) rely on closed-source AI software, free or paid.

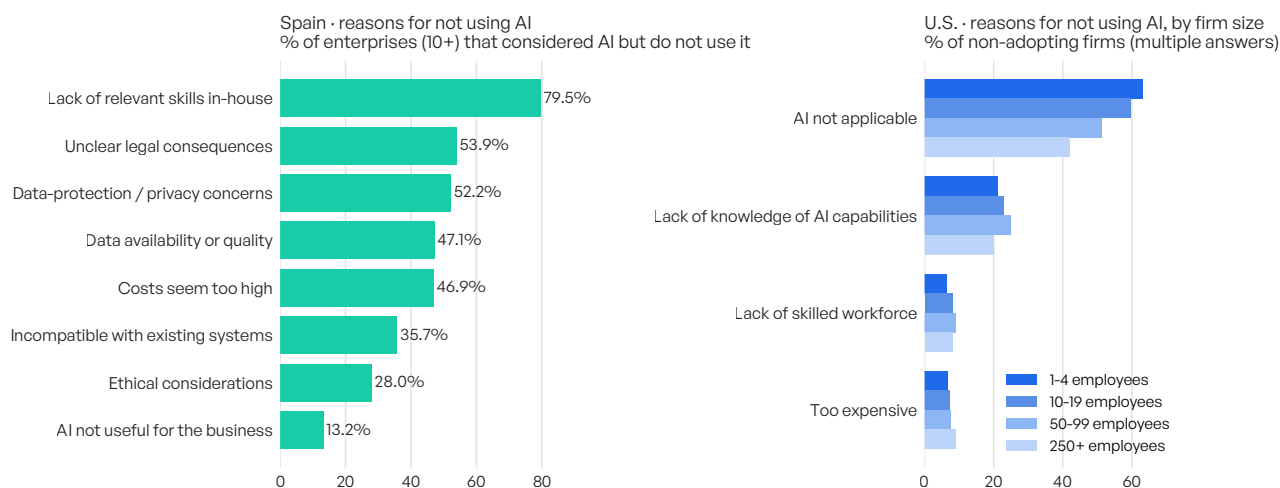


Figure 8. Reasons for not using AI. Spain: enterprises (10+) that considered AI and do not use it, INE module D.7 (multiple answers). United States: non-adopting firms by size, BTOS AI Supplement (multiple answers; no standard errors published). Different denominators and lists; no cross-country claim.

The barrier profiles differ in kind. Among Spanish enterprises that looked at AI and did not adopt, the dominant reason is a lack of relevant skills in-house (79.6%), followed by legal uncertainty (53.9%), privacy concerns (52.2%), data availability (47.1%) and cost (46.9%); only 13.2% say AI is not useful for the business. Among U.S. non-adopters the picture inverts: 63.3% of the smallest firms say AI is not applicable to their business, a share that falls steadily to 42.2% among the largest, while lack of knowledge (20–25%) and lack of skilled staff (6–9%) are cited far less. Spanish non-adopters, in other words, tend to see the relevance and lack the capability; the smallest U.S. non-adopters tend not to see the relevance.

For readers weighing a first use case, latevalA publishes its method and [worked examples](#) on its website.

4.8 How robust is the gap to the recall window?

INE's ICT-use variables refer to the first quarter of the year; the Census Bureau asks whether the business used AI in the last two weeks. A company that used an AI tool a few times in January but not in the final fortnight counts as a user in Spain and may not count in the United States. The U.S. rates are therefore conservative relative to the Spanish ones, and the gaps in 4.2 are best read as upper bounds.

The size of that effect is not published, so we cannot correct for it. What we can do is ask the reverse question: how much higher would the U.S. rate have to be, on a quarterly window, for a band to reach the Spanish level?

Employment band	Spain · Q1 2026	U.S. (mean of sub-bands, Nov 2025 – Feb 2026)	U.S. uplift needed to match Spain
Fewer than 10 employees	21.4%	17.3%	+4.1 points (×1.24)
10–49	29.1%	17.9%	+11.3 points (×1.63)
50–249	48.9%	23.3%	+25.6 points (×2.10)
250 or more	74.4%	30.6%	+43.8 points (×2.43)

Reading: in the micro band, a modest quarterly-window effect could close the gap, so the conclusion “Spain ahead” is fragile there. In the 10–49 band the U.S. rate would have to rise by more than half, and in the two larger bands it would have to double or more. A fortnight-versus-quarter difference of that magnitude would be surprising given how little the U.S. biweekly readings move (17.5%–19.1% across the six periods of Q1 2026), which suggests most U.S. users are regular rather than occasional. That is an inference from stability, not a measurement, and we flag it as such. The robust statement is that Spain leads at 10 or more employees; the statement that it leads among micro-enterprises is directional.

What these data cannot tell us

- **Question wording is not identical.** A technology checklist (Spain) and an open “any business function” question (United States) can be answered differently by the same firm. The U.S. two-week recall is stricter than Spain’s quarterly reference. Both effects would tend to understate U.S. use relative to Spain; neither can be quantified from published tables. Section 4.8 shows how large the correction would need to be to change each conclusion.
- **Bands are not identical.** U.S. size classes are narrower. We show each Spanish band against the U.S. classes it contains and compute ratios on simple means, not firm-weighted means. A firm-weighted mean would sit closer to the smaller sub-band in each pair, which would widen, not narrow, the reported gaps.
- **Sector scope differs.** INE excludes agriculture, education, health and public administration; BTOS includes them. Sector mix accounts for part of the national difference and an unknown part of the within-band differences.
- **The Spanish time series has a break.** INE’s 2026 edition changed classification and scope; year-on-year change is indicative only.
- **U.S. size and sector figures with standard errors come from a supplement window** (17 Nov 2025 – 8 Feb 2026) that overlaps but does not equal Q1 2026. The later Census chart (period ending 3 May 2026) shows higher U.S. rates; Spain still leads each band against it.
- **Secondary transcription.** The U.S. size-class table with standard errors was transcribed from a peer-reviewed secondary analysis of the Census workbooks (Oni, 2026) and cross-checked against the figures the Census Bureau states in its own publications (37% and 32% for the two largest classes in May; “less than 20%” for 1–4 employees). The 23.8% September 2026 reading is as reported by third parties from the Census release. Readers can verify every U.S. figure in the BTOS download files listed in the annex.
- **Association, not cause.** Nothing here isolates the effect of country, size or sector from the others, nor says anything about the depth or business value of the AI use reported.

Planned updates

New editions are announced in the [latevalA Insights](#) section.

Edition 1.1 (November 2026). Re-base U.S. size figures on the Census Employment_Size_Class workbook for the exact Q1 2026 cycles, replacing the supplement window; add firm-count weights from County Business Patterns to compute true 10–49 and 50–249 U.S. aggregates.

Edition 2.0 (December 2026). EU-27 comparison once Eurostat publishes the 2026 reference-year results (dataset isoc_eb_ai): all 27 member states against the United States on the same year, by size band, plus Germany, France and Italy individually.

Edition 2.1 (Q1 2027). Spain Q1 2027 vs. United States Q1 2027, with the first within-classification Spanish year-on-year change.

Spain, INE, Q1 2026

Enterprises using AI, by size	%
Total, 10+ employees	33.60
10-49	29.14
50-249	48.92
250+	74.39
Fewer than 10 employees (of those with internet)	21.36
Q1 2025, 10+ (previous classification)	21.14
Q1 2025, fewer than 10	13.39
By sector, 10+ employees	%
Industry	29.1
Construction	22.6
Services	38.2
Regions, 10+ employees, of enterprises with internet	%
Catalonia	40.5
Madrid	40.1
Navarre	36.5
Valencia	34.1
Andalusia	31.8
Asturias	30.7
Canary Is.	30.3
Balearic Is.	30.0
Aragon	29.3
Basque Country	28.7
Castile-Leon	27.8
Castile-La Mancha	26.2
La Rioja	24.8
Galicia	24.6
Murcia	24.6
Extremadura	23.8
Cantabria	21.0
Technology used, % of AI users (10+)	%
Image / video / audio generation	62.73
Written-language analysis (text mining)	57.27
Text / speech / code generation	49.03

Technology used, % of AI users (10+)	%
Speech-to-text	37.80
Workflow automation / decision support	34.17
Machine learning for data analysis	26.92
Image / object recognition	26.20
Autonomous physical machines	7.07
Purpose, % of AI users (10+)	%
Administration / management	42.35
Marketing or sales	35.54
Accounting / finance	26.72
Production processes / services	24.10
R&D / innovation	23.09
ICT security	17.25
Logistics	7.30
Reason for not using, % of those that considered AI (10+)	%
Lack of relevant skills in-house	79.55
Unclear legal consequences	53.89
Data-protection / privacy concerns	52.18
Data availability or quality	47.08
Costs seem too high	46.91
Incompatible with existing systems	35.72
Ethical considerations	27.98
AI not useful for the business	13.17

United States, U.S. Census Bureau BTOS

National series, period end	%
2025-11-16	17.3
2025-11-30	17.2
2025-12-14	17.8
2025-12-28	17.7
2026-01-11	18.2
2026-01-25	18.9
2026-02-08	17.5
2026-02-22	18.2
2026-03-08	18.9
2026-03-22	19.1
2026-04-05	19.8
2026-04-19	19.8
2026-05-03	19.5
2026-05-17	20.6
2026-05-31	20.6
2026-06-14	20.6
2026-06-28	21.7
2026-07-12	21.5
2026-07-26	21.8
2026-08-09	22.4

Share of employer businesses using AI in any business function in the last two weeks. Q1 2026 average (six periods, 11 Jan – 22 Mar): 18.5%. A further reading of 23.8% for the period ending 6 Sep 2026 has been reported from the Census release and is not yet in our parsed file.

AI Supplement, by size class	%	SE
1-4	17.6	0.17
5-9	17.0	0.33
10-19	17.2	0.36
20-49	18.5	0.32
50-99	21.3	0.37
100-249	25.3	0.72
250+	30.6	0.87
National	17.9	—

AI Supplement, by sector	%	SE
Information	37.6	0.95
Professional, scientific & technical	34.2	0.23
Finance & insurance	30.4	0.78

AI Supplement, by sector	%	SE
Retail trade	12.6	0.18
Manufacturing	12.4	0.32
Other services	9.8	0.38
Construction	9.2	0.29
Accommodation & food	8.0	0.30
Agriculture	5.1	0.82

Core BTOS, period ending 3 May 2026, by size	%
1-4	18
5-19	22
20-99	27
100-249	32
250+	37

Selected states, AI Supplement	%
Colorado	23.5
Arizona	22.6
Nevada	21.4
Oregon	20.6
Florida	20.0
National	17.9
Wisconsin	15.9
New York	14.3
Iowa	13.7
Arkansas	11.7
West Virginia	9.5
Alaska	9.3
North Dakota	9.0

ANNEX B – SOURCES, ACCESS DATES AND REPRODUCIBILITY

Primary sources

1. INE. *Encuesta sobre el uso de TIC y del comercio electrónico en las empresas. Año 2025 – Primer trimestre 2026. Datos definitivos*. Press release, 22 Oct 2026. <https://www.ine.es/dyngs/Prensa/ETICCE2025iT2026.htm> — accessed 24 Oct 2026.
2. INE. Table “Inteligencia Artificial”, enterprises with 10+ employees by activity and size (tpx 82382), CSV export https://www.ine.es/jaxi/files/tpx/es/csv_bdsc/82382.csv — accessed 24 Oct 2026. Licence CC BY 4.0.
3. INE. *Encuesta sobre el uso de TIC... Año 2024 – Primer trimestre 2025*, press release 22 Oct 2025, for the 2025 comparison values.

4. U.S. Census Bureau. Business Trends and Outlook Survey, National workbook (National.xlsx) and AI Core Questions workbook, <https://www.census.gov/hfp/btos/data> — biweekly values parsed from the workbook as distributed on 24 Oct 2026 (coverage through period ending 9 Aug 2026).
5. U.S. Census Bureau. BTOS methodology, <https://www.census.gov/hfp/btos/methodology>; BTOS API reference documentation (size-class definitions).
6. Grundy, A., Breaux, C. & Khatiwoda, D. (2026). “Large Firms With at Least 20 Employees Biggest AI Users.” *America Counts*, U.S. Census Bureau, 26 May 2026. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2026/05/ai-use-businesses.html>
7. Bonney, K., Breaux, C., Dinlersoz, E., Foster, L., Haltiwanger, J. & Pande, A. (2026). *The Microstructure of AI Diffusion: Evidence from Firms, Business Functions, and Worker Tasks*. CES Working Paper CES-WP-26-25 / NBER WP 35141.
8. Oni, O. O. (2026). “The Firm-Size Digital Adoption Gap in the U.S. Small-Business Sector: Evidence from the Census Bureau’s BTOS Artificial Intelligence Supplement.” *IJRISS X(IX)*, 781–800. Source of the transcribed size-class, sector, state and barrier tabulations with Census-published standard errors.
9. Eurostat. *Use of artificial intelligence in enterprises*, dataset isoc_eb_ai, 2025 reference year (released Dec 2025) — context only, not used in the comparison.

Reproducibility

All figures in this document are generated from a single data file that records each value with its source. The U.S. Q1 2026 average is the unweighted mean of the six biweekly estimates listed in Annex A. Ratios are computed as described under Table 4.2. Charts were produced with Matplotlib; the document was typeset with WeasyPrint. The data file and chart code are available on request at info@latevaia.ai.

How to cite

latevalA Research (2026). *AI adoption in business: Spain vs. the United States, Q1 2026. A like-for-like reading of official statistics*. Version 1.0, Barcelona, October 2026. <https://latevaia.ai/en/>

This study is published under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 licence. Charts and tables may be reproduced with attribution to latevalA Research and to the underlying agencies (INE; U.S. Census Bureau).

About latevalA

[latevalA](#) is the AI agency of [La Teva Web](#), based in Barcelona. It puts artificial intelligence to work for small and mid-sized companies, with business sense and people at the centre. It builds on 25 years of experience, more than 35 professionals and over 1,200 projects in digital strategy, marketing, design and development. The approach is the same across every project: understand the business first, then decide whether AI is the right tool, with human oversight at each stage.

Its work is organised in four lines:

AI search visibility	Improving a brand's presence in the answers given by ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity and other assistants, through content, website structure and authority signals. This discipline is known as GEO (generative engine optimisation) and also as AEO (answer engine optimisation).
Sell with AI	Assistants and agents that serve, recommend, qualify and capture opportunities 24/7, connected to the client's website, e-commerce, catalogue or CRM.
Build with AI	Corporate websites, e-commerce and landing pages built with AI support: it speeds up production while the team leads architecture, content, design and development.
Automate with AI	Connecting a company's tools to remove manual tasks: CRM, invoicing, customer service, forms, reporting, sales follow-up and content management.

See the work in practice in the [case studies](#) (AI agents for e-commerce, product-listing automation, AI translation, SEO and GEO), or read the [latevalA Insights](#) articles. For a conversation about where AI could help your business, [get in touch](#).

Contact: info@latevaia.ai · +34 932 50 35 86 · C/ d'Entença 95, Principal, 08015 Barcelona · latevaia.ai