



Best of the Best IT Network Resources & Communities

As voted on by IT network professionals.



CONTENTS

- 3** | Executive Summary
- 4** | Industry Topics of Interest
- 5** | Where IT Network Pros Go for Information & Advice
 - 5** | Blogs / Websites
 - 5** | Newsletters
 - 5** | Conferences
 - 5** | Podcasts
 - 6** | Thought Leaders
- 8** | Social Media Usage & Top Industry-Related Social Media Groups
- 10** | Most Valuable IT Certifications
- 11** | Study Methodology: What We Did
- 11** | Study Respondents: Who They Are
- 18** | Appendix

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

When it's your job to keep your organization's network secure and stable, staying on top of the latest industry news, know-how, and best practices is critical to your success.

With so much information circling the web these days, how do you know what's credible and what's not? Who are your peers turning to for advice? What communities are they relying on for candid conversation and honest recommendations? What kind of training do they value most?

These are just a few of the questions we sought out to answer in the *Best of the Best IT Network Resources & Communities Survey*. This report presents the findings from the 2020 survey, highlighting a range of industry resources—from online communities, events, and podcasts, to the most valued certifications and thought leaders in the space—as voted on by IT network professionals.

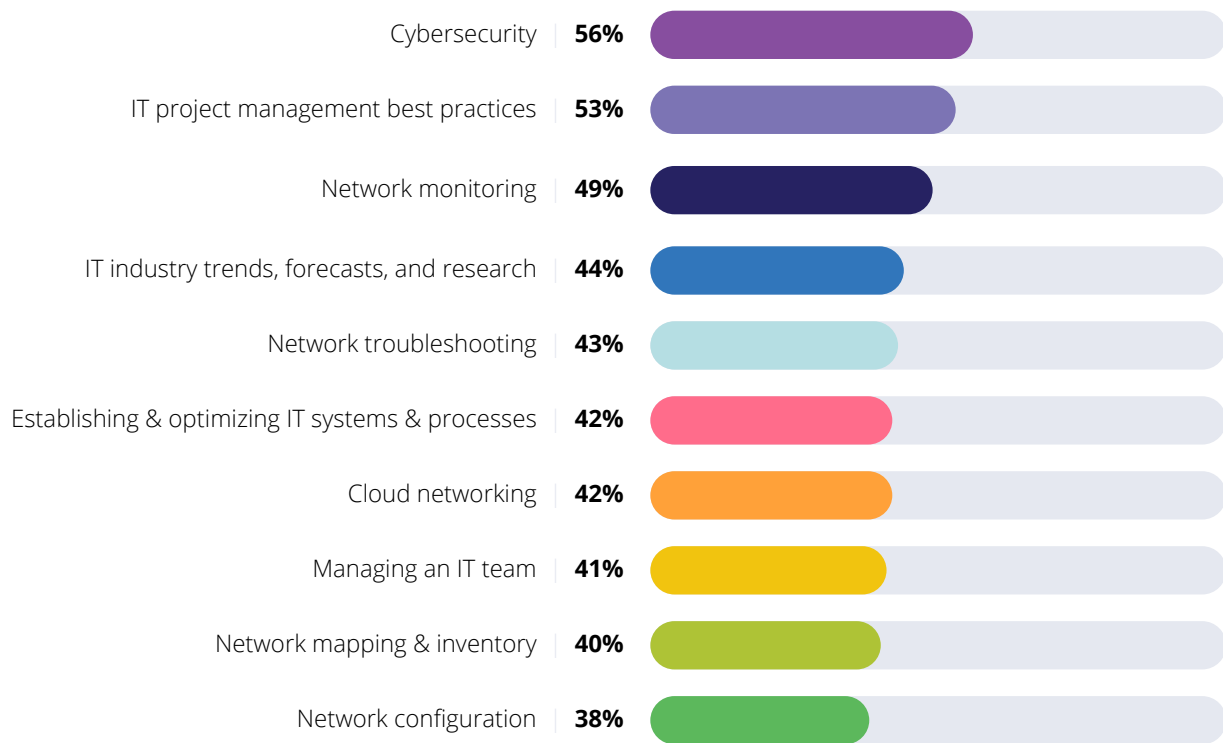
Responses from 100 network administrators and IT pros indicate they're particularly eager to learn more about cybersecurity and IT project management best practices. They get their information from a variety of industry blogs / websites, newsletters, podcasts, conferences, and thought leaders, and gravitate toward sources that provide feedback from others in the industry. User feedback (through product review sites and Reddit in particular) play a significant role in helping IT network pros assess new technology products. They also look to social media for information—LinkedIn is recognized as the top platform for gaining industry-specific knowledge and connecting with industry groups and communities. Obtaining IT certifications is also recognized as an important step for gaining expertise in the field.

Continue reading for a deeper look at the top-rated industry resources. Maybe you'll recognize some favorites. Maybe you'll discover some new ones. Either way, we hope this information helps you to be the best of the best in your work.

INDUSTRY TOPICS OF INTEREST

IT network pros are generally most interested in learning more about cybersecurity and IT project management best practices.

Respondents were given a list of industry topics and asked to select which ones they were interested in learning more about. The top 10 are presented here, showing the strongest interest in **cybersecurity** (56%) and **IT project management best practices** (53%).



Most of this interest is coming from people with 6+ years of IT experience who self-assess as having advanced or expert IT skills and work at companies with less than 500 employees.

In addition, very experienced IT pros (those with 15+ years of IT experience and self-assess as advanced) are also particularly interested in learning about network monitoring and cloud networking.

On the other hand, those who are less experienced (less than 5 years of IT experience and who self-assess as intermediate) are interested in learning more about managing an IT team.

SO WHERE DO IT NETWORK PROS GO FOR INFORMATION & ADVICE ON THESE TOPICS OF INTEREST?

Among the list of industry blogs / websites, newsletters, podcasts, and conferences respondents said they frequent and find most useful, these resources topped the ranks. If you spot a few you haven't heard of, now's the perfect time to check them out.

TOP 10 RECOMMENDED BLOGS / WEBSITES



- 1 Spiceworks
- 2 Cisco
- 3 Microsoft / MSDN / TechNet
- 4 Stackoverflow
- 5 Frankly IT (Auvik)
- 6 CNET
- 7 CIO / ITWorld
- 8 Engadget
- 9 Krebs on Security
- 10 Packet Pushers

TOP 10 RECOMMENDED NEWSLETTERS



- 1 Microsoft / Azure
- 2 Frankly IT (Auvik)
- 3 Reddit
- 4 SANS / SANS at Risk
- 5 CIO
- 6 Network World
- 7 Spiceworks
- 8 BetterCloud
- 9 Cisco
- 10 Tech Republic

TOP 10 RECOMMENDED CONFERENCES



- 1 Cisco / Cisco Live
- 2 VMware events / VMworld / VMUG
- 3 Microsoft / Azure / MS Techdays / MS Insight / MS Summit / MS Ignite / MS Inspire
- 4 Black Hat events
- 5 Amazon / AWS / AWS Re-Invent / AWS Summit / AWS Re:inforce
- 6 SpiceWorld
- 7 Consumer Electronics Show (CES)
- 8 ConnectWise / IT Nation events
- 9 RSA / Elastic
- 10 Auvik webinars / events

TOP 5 RECOMMENDED PODCASTS



- 1 Frankly IT
- 2 Heavy Networking from Packet Pushers
- 3 Darknet Diaries
- 4 TechTarget / SearchCIO
- 5 This Week in Tech (TWiT)



See the [appendix](#) for other notable mentions.

THEY'RE ALSO PAYING ATTENTION TO A RANGE OF INDUSTRY THOUGHT LEADERS

When asked who in the industry they follow online or look to for thought leadership and recommendations, IT network pros responded with a broad range of influential organizations and people—some names you may be quite familiar with, and others you'll be glad to discover.

ORGANIZATIONS

Apple
Adobe
Cisco
Cybrary
Facebook
Gartner
Google
HP
IEEE
IT Central Station
Microsoft
Rohde & Schwarz
VMware

PEOPLE

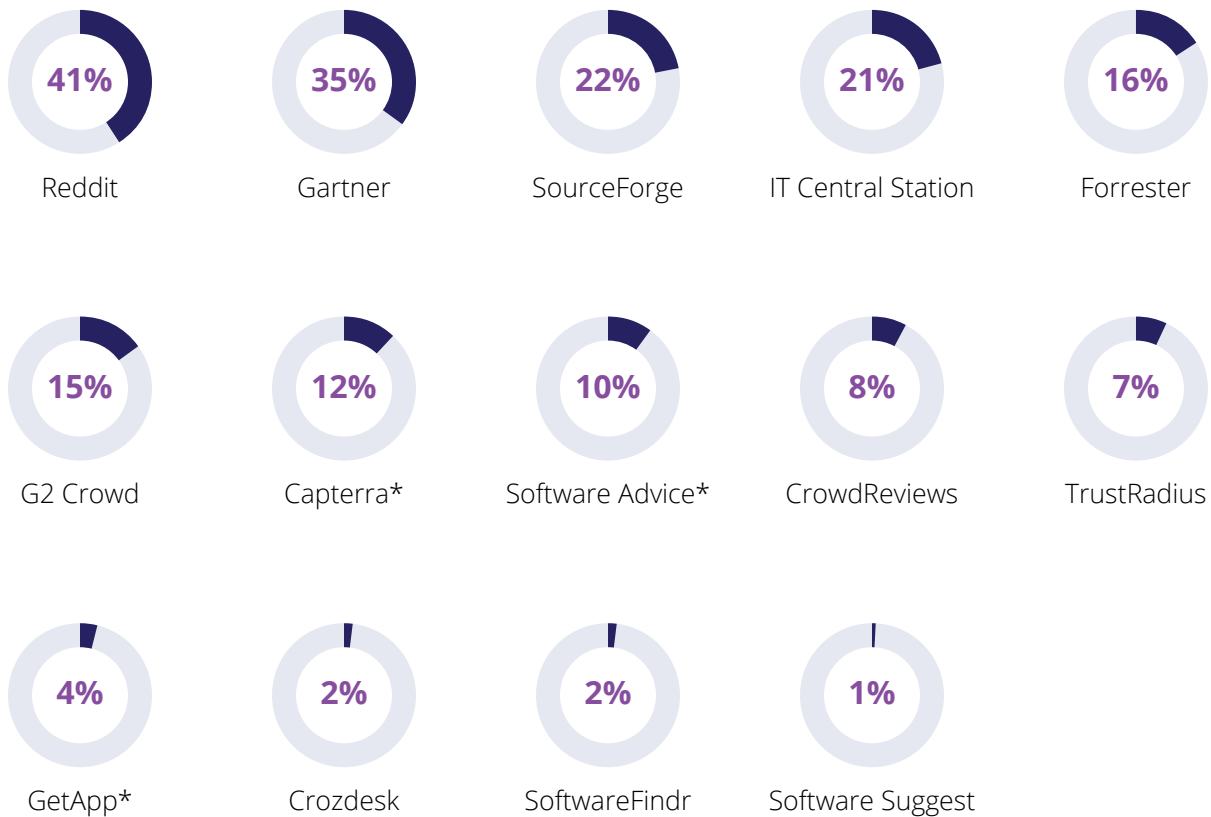
Andy Greenberg	Jennifer Tribe	Nick Dyer-Witthford
Anton Chuvakin	Jeremy Cioara	Nick Russo
Bill Gates	John Strand	Patrick Gray
Brian Krebs	Jonathan Nguyen-Duy	Paul Allen
Chris Sacca	Justin Henderson	Phil Gervasi
Dave Kennedy	Karl Palachuk	Richard Branson
Doug Burks	Keith Townsend	Robert Metcalf
Edward Snowden	Kevin Mitnick	Robin Robins
Elon Musk	Kirk Byers	Russ White
Gabriel Blanchard	Leo Laporte	Simon Sinek
Harry Brelsford	Lesley Carhart	Todd Fitzgerald
Ivan Pepelnjak	Linus Sebastian	Tom Rutledge
Jason Edelman	Louis Rossmann	Troy Hunt
Jeff Bezos	Michael Hayden	

THEY'RE RELYING HEAVILY ON PEERS & USER FEEDBACK TO LEARN ABOUT NEW TECHNOLOGY

Reddit, Gartner, SourceForge, and IT Central Station are used most by IT network pros to discover and evaluate new technology for their companies.

With the majority of responses identifying product review sites or Reddit, it's clear that user feedback plays a critical role in the evaluation of new technology products. It should come as no surprise then to see industry analysts like Gartner staking claim over multiple review sites, recognizing the power of peer insights in the purchasing process.

Where do you go to discover and evaluate new technology for your company?



* Owned by Gartner

SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

IT network pros most frequently use YouTube, followed by Facebook and Reddit, but they identify LinkedIn as the best platform for industry networking.

Respondents were asked how often they use Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Reddit, Twitter, and YouTube. The most frequent usage was reported for Twitter (40% of respondents use this platform regularly), followed by Facebook (36% use regularly) and Reddit (28%).

Interestingly, we see a bimodal pattern of usage for Facebook—in addition to the 40% who use it regularly, over one-quarter (27%) say they never use it. Facebook is used most by those with 6 to 15 years of IT experience and least by those with less than 5 years of IT experience.

Twitter and LinkedIn are used most frequently by those with more years of IT experience, while Instagram, Reddit, and YouTube are used more by those with less IT experience.

LinkedIn is seen by the highest number of respondents (45%) as the best platform for connecting with industry groups / communities.

Social Media Channel Usage	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	LinkedIn	Reddit	YouTube	Other
Regularly	36%	16%	22%	19%	28%	40%	13%
1-2 times / week	13%	12%	13%	27%	14%	25%	6%
1-2 times / month	9%	10%	7%	28%	18%	11%	7%
Rarely	15%	18%	27%	20%	12%	17%	21%
Never	27%	44%	31%	6%	28%	7%	53%

SO WHERE ARE IT NETWORK PROS CONNECTING WITH PEERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA?

These social media groups are popular among IT network pros who were asked what social media groups they engage with most. If you're on the hunt for new ways to connect with your peers in the industry, give some of these a try.

FACEBOOK GROUPS



This is an IT support group

Cyber Security

Information Technology (IT)

Women in Tech

Microsoft Azure

LINKEDIN GROUPS



Information Technology Managers (IT)

Information Security Network

Global Information Technology Professionals Association

Frankly IT Community

VMware Certified Professional

REDDIT GROUPS



r/sysadmin

r/networking

r/netsec

r/techsupport

r/programming

SLACK CHANNELS



Internal channels

Vendor channels

Peer group channels

BetterIT

tabGeeks



Check out the lists of other notable mentions in the [appendix](#).

AND LASTLY...THERE'S STRONG ALIGNMENT ON WHAT'S CONSIDERED TO BE THE MOST VALUABLE CERTIFICATION

Cisco certifications are recognized as particularly valuable.

Respondents were also asked to identify the most valuable IT certification to obtain for someone who's accountable for network management.

Cisco certifications (especially CCNA) are clearly recognized as most valuable among the IT network pro community, with CompTIA and Microsoft certifications also ranking high on the list.

Cisco	50%	28%	CCNA
		9%	CCIE
		8%	CCNP
		3%	Cisco
		1%	CCDP
		1%	CCNE
CompTIA	16%	10%	Network+
		3%	A+
		2%	CompTIA
		1%	Security+
Microsoft	13%	11%	MCSE
		1%	MCSA
		1%	Microsoft
CISSP	4%		

STUDY METHODOLOGY: WHAT WE DID

This report presents the results from an online survey that was conducted by Auvik Networks and completed by IT professionals who are responsible for supporting and maintaining their organization's network. The survey fielded from Jul 27 through Aug 21, 2020. The objective of this survey was to better understand what industry resources, communities, events, podcasts, and certifications are considered to be the best of the best by network administrators and IT pros involved in the care and management of their company's network.

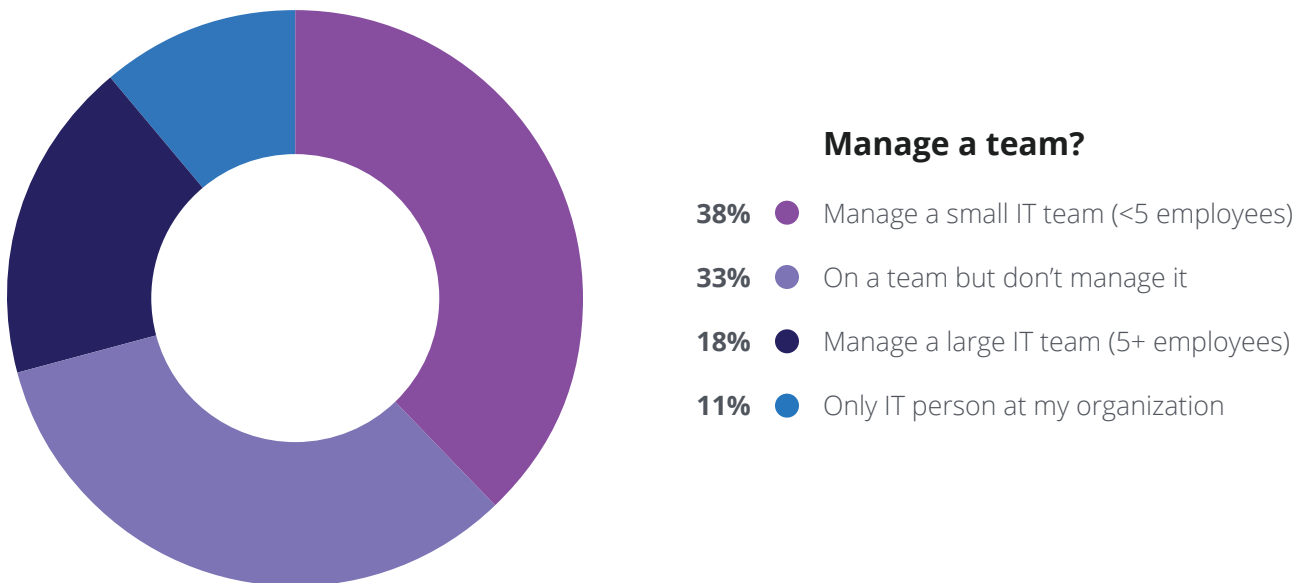
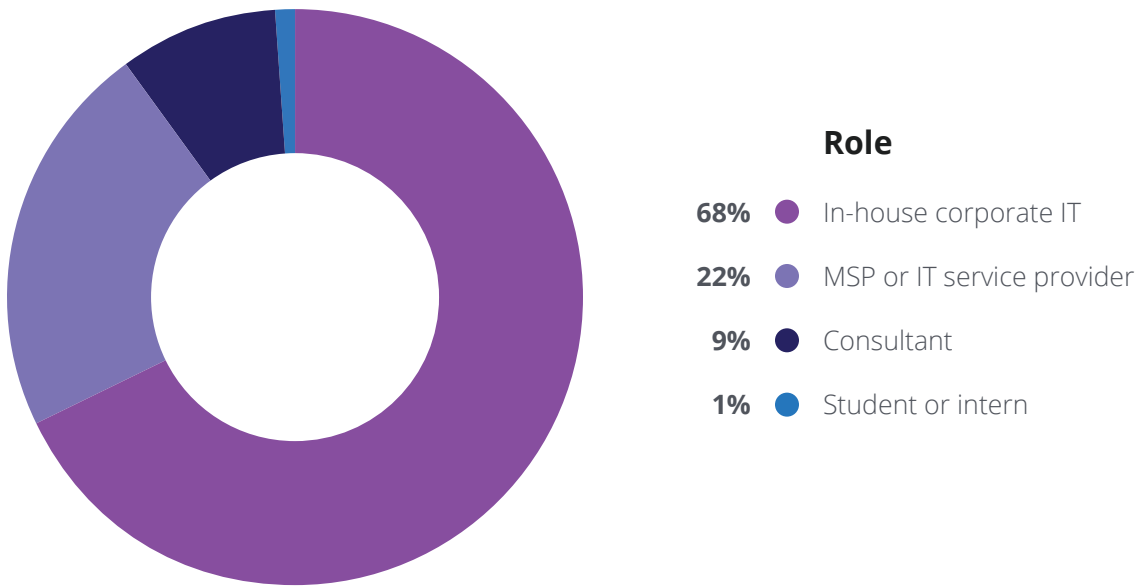
STUDY RESPONDENTS: WHO THEY ARE AND WHAT THEY DO

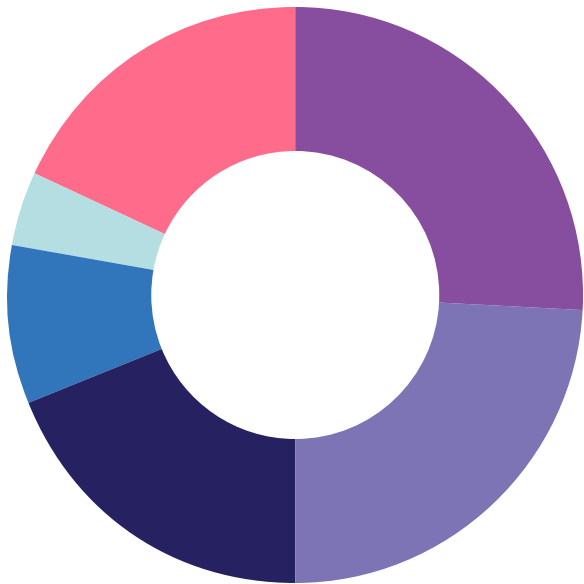
A total of 100 IT network professionals completed the survey. Study respondents represent a wide variety of industries, with just over one-quarter (28%) from the Computers Systems Design and Related Services industry and 20% from Manufacturing.

Industry	Frequency
Computers Systems Design and Related Services	28%
Manufacturing	20%
Telecommunications	14%
Information	11%
Administrative and Support	8%
Educational Services	7%
Health Care and Social Assistance	7%
Management, Scientific, and Technical Consulting Services	7%
Construction	6%
Legal	6%
Accounting	5%
Advertising, Public Relations, and Related Services	5%
Real Estate Rental and Leasing	5%

Industry	Frequency
Scientific Research and Development Services	5%
Software publishers	4%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3%
Transportation and Warehousing	3%
Design Services	2%
Insurance	2%
Mining	2%
Public Administration	2%
Retail Trade	2%
Wholesale Trade	2%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1%
Architectural, Engineering, and Related Services	1%
Food Services	1%

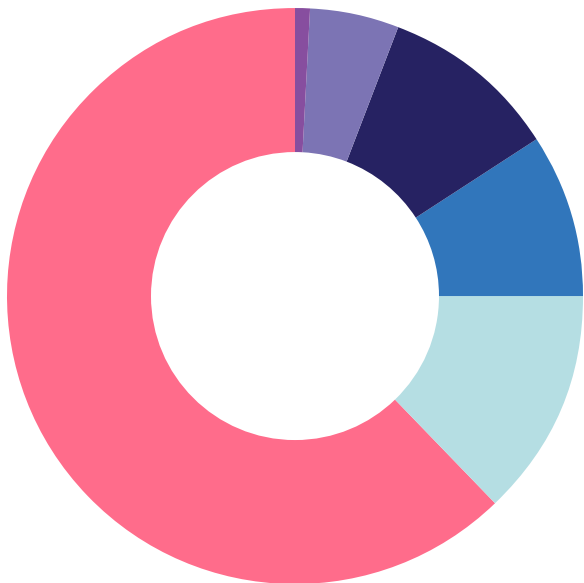
Most are in-house corporate IT professionals (68%) who work in management (56%) and report to an IT Manager, the President / CEO, or an IT Director (69%). Participants are a very experienced group: nearly two-thirds (62%) have more than 15 years of IT experience, and three-quarters (75%) have more than 11 years of experience. Not surprisingly, given the experience of the sample, participants' self-assessments of their network management skills are high: nearly half (47%) say that they are advanced and nearly 1 in 5 (18%) report that they're experts.





Who they report to

- 26% IT Manager
- 24% President or CEO
- 19% IT Director
- 9% VP / SVP / EVP
- 4% CIO or CTO
- 18% Other



Years of IT experience

- 1% Less than 1 year
- 5% 1-2 years
- 10% 3-5 years
- 9% 6-10 years
- 13% 11-15 years
- 62% More than 15 years

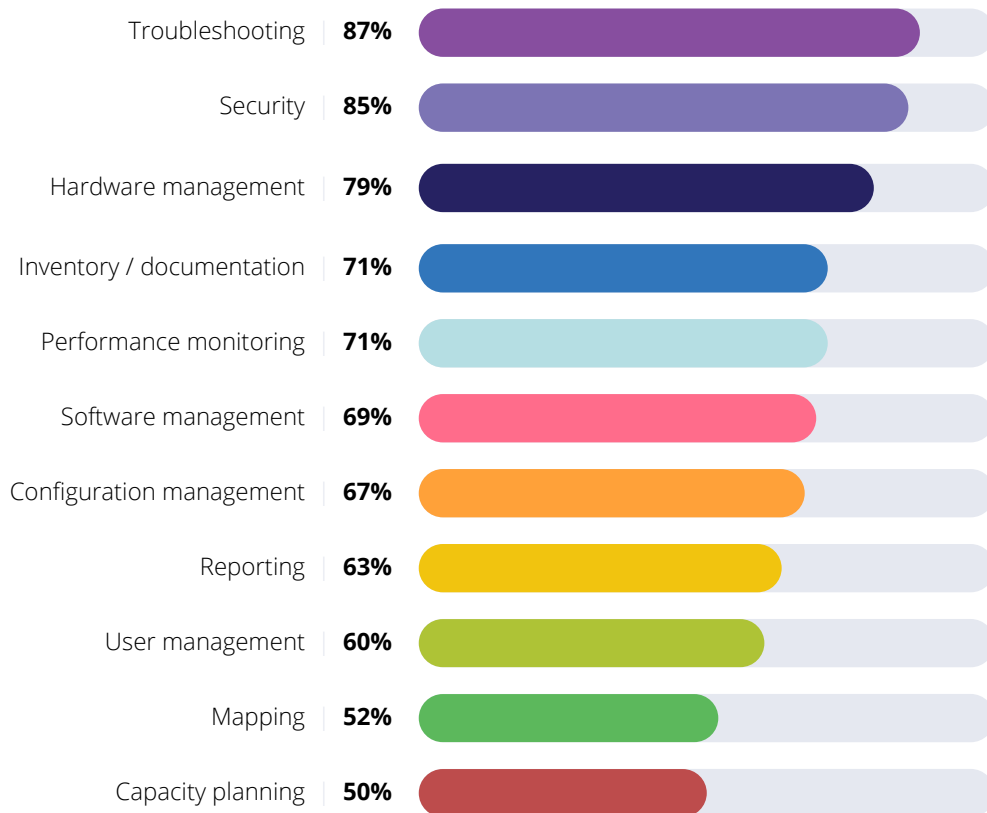


Self-assessment of network management skills

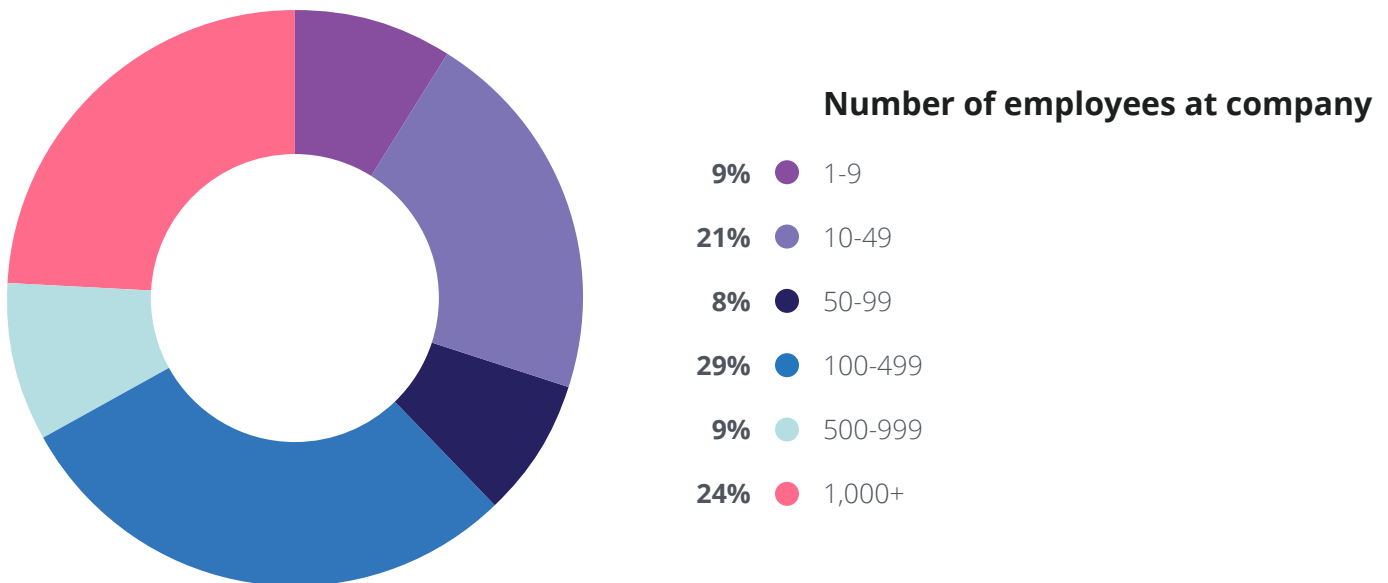
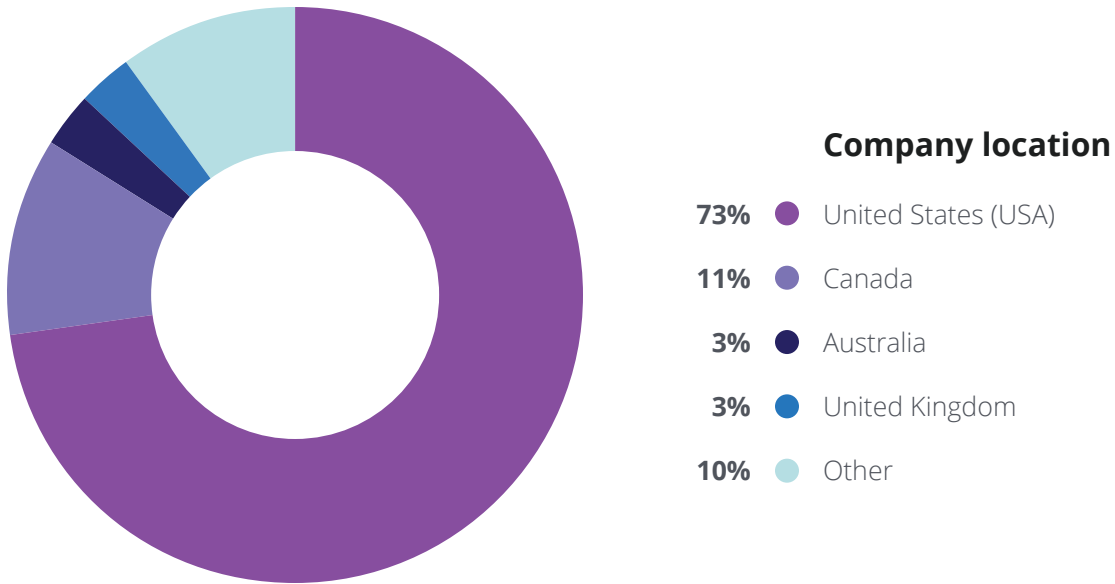
- 7% ● Beginner
- 28% ● Intermediate
- 47% ● Advanced
- 18% ● Expert

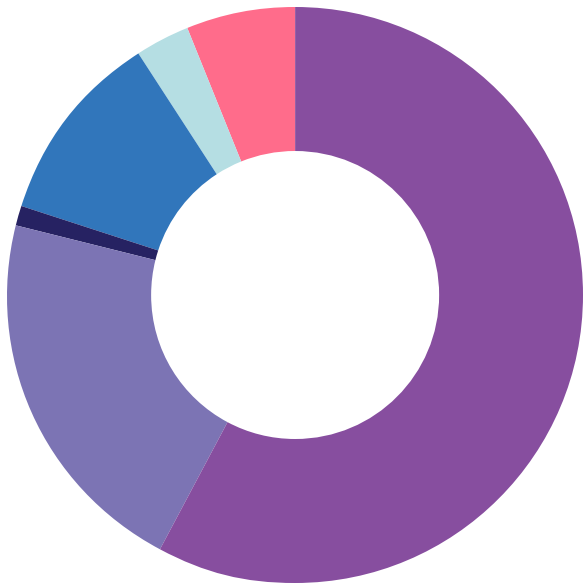
Respondents are responsible for many of the network management activities at their organizations—at least half are responsible for all activities included in the survey. Notably, a strong majority of the respondents say that they work on troubleshooting (87%) and security (85%).

Network management activities they're responsible for



Most respondents work at US-based organizations that are pretty evenly split in terms of size: about one-quarter work at mid-sized companies (100-499 employees; 29%), large companies (1000+ employees; 24%), and small companies (10-49 employees; 21%). The majority of the sample (58%) work at companies with only 1-9 IT employees.



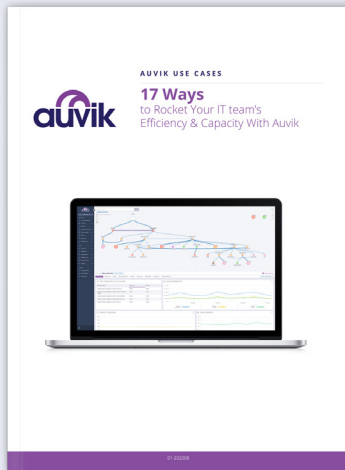


Number of employees that work in IT at company

- 58% ● 1-9
- 21% ● 10-49
- 1% ● 50-99
- 11% ● 100-499
- 3% ● 500-999
- 6% ● 1,000+

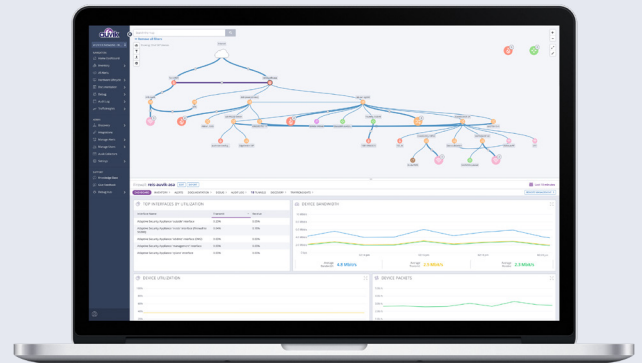
ABOUT AUVIK NETWORKS

Auvik's cloud-based network management software keeps IT networks around the world running optimally. By automating and simplifying network management, Auvik helps rocket an IT team's efficiency and capacity, while protecting the business from network risk.



IT teams around the world use Auvik to gain true network visibility and control. Learn how Auvik can help you do the same—with these [15+ use cases from real IT teams](#).

[GET USE CASES](#)



Or maybe you'd like to see Auvik on your own network—for free!

[USE FREE FOR 14 DAYS](#)

Connect with us online:



APPENDIX

Recommended Blogs / Websites: Top Picks and Notable Mentions

Top Picks:

CIO / ITWorld
Cisco
CNET
Engadget
Frankly IT (Auvik)
Krebs on Security
Microsoft / MSDN / TechNet
Packet Pushers
Spiceworks
Stackoverflow

Notable Mentions:

Ars Technica
BBC
BetterCloud
BrightTALK
Carl Stalhood
ChannelE2E
ConnectWise
Coursera
CRN
CrowdStrike
Cybrary
Dark Reading
DataBreachToday
ExpertsExchange
Fingent
Fortinet
Gartner
Gestalt IT
Gigamon
Github
Gizmodo
INE
InformationWeek
InfoWorld
Internet2
ISACA
ITCentral
ITOps Talk
Juniper Networks
KnowBe4 Webinars
Linus Tech Tips
ManageEngine
Medium
Mikrotik
MSP Success Magazine
MSPGeek
Naked Security (Sophos)
Network Collective
Network To Code
Network World
Pete's NetLive
Preferred Communications Systems
Proofpoint
SANS
SC Magazine
Sector
Securityweek
Slashdot
Stack Exchange
Tech Today
TechCrunch
Techdirt
Techradar
Tech Republic
TechTarget
Techzine
The Channel Company
The Register
The Hacker News
The Verge
Ubiquiti
Udemy
VMware
Wall Street Journal
Wired
ZDNet
Zscaler

Recommended Newsletters: Top Picks and Notable Mentions

Top Picks:

BetterCloud
CIO
Cisco
Frankly IT (Auvik)
Microsoft / Azure
Network World
Reddit
SANS / SANS at Risk
Spiceworks
Tech Republic

Notable Mentions:

ACC SmartBrief
ASME
AWS
BBC
Campus Technology
CompTIA SmartBrief
CSO
CTA Smartbrief
CyberHeist
Cybersecurity 360
Cybrary
Data Breach Today
Engadget
Ethereal Mind

Gartner
Google / Google News
Graham Cluley
IDG Top Enterprise Stories
IEEE
Infosec Mag
Intel
IT Central
iNews
MSP Success Magazine
Network World
Packet Pushers
Preferred Communications Systems
Redmond

Sector
SecureWorld News
Security Week
Silobreaker
SMB Nation / Harry Brelsford
Sophos Naked Security
SQL Server Central
TechTarget
TechNewsWorld
The Channel Company / CRN
The Download
The Hacker News
TLDR
ZDNet Tech Today

Recommended Podcasts: Top Picks and Notable Mentions

Top Picks:

Darknet Diaries
Frankly IT
Heavy Networking from Packet Pushers
TechTarget / SearchCIO
This Week in Tech (TWiT)

Notable Mentions:

9to5Google
Cisco
Cloud n Clear
FortiCast
Hak5
IDC TechTalk
Intel Chip Chat
IT Pro Show
Level1 Techs
Malicious Life

Microsoft
Modern CTO with Joel Beasley
Network Collective
Phish Fryday
SearchCIO
Security Now
Supporting I.T. Support
Swift Unwrapped
The Cloudcast
The CyberWire Daily

The Cybrary Podcast
The On-Premise IT Roundtable
The WAN Show Podcast
This Week in Enterprise Tech
Unsecurity
VMWare
What the Tech
Wired

Recommended Conferences: Top Picks and Notable Mentions

Top Picks:

Amazon / AWS /
AWS Re-Invent /
AWS Summit / AWS Re:inforce

Auvik webinars / events

Black Hat events

Cisco / Cisco Live

ConnectWise / IT Nation
events

Consumer Electronics Show
(CES)

Microsoft / Azure /
MS Techdays / MS Insight /
MS Summit / MS Ignite /
MS Inspire

RSA / Elastic

SpiceWorld

VMware events /
VMworld / VMUG

Notable Mentions:

AnsibleFest

Apple Worldwide
Developers Conference

ASME events

BSides

Cloud Expo

CNSM events

CompTIA events

CRN XChange

Data Connectors events

DattoCon

DEF CON

Dell Technologies World

Fla.Con Cybersecurity
Conference

Fortinet Accelerate

Gartner events

Google Cloud Next

HPE Discover

IBM Think

InfoSec World

Internet2 Technology
Exchange (TechEX)

Interop

ISC High Performance

iTech

LogRhythm events

NexGen

Oktane

RESNET

Robin Robins events

Rocky Mountain Information
Security Conference (RMISC)

SANS events

SAP events

SEAT

SecTor

StorageCraft events

Taylor Business Group Big Big

TechNet

TechTalk

VeeamON

WITI events

Recommended Groups: Top Picks and Notable Mentions

FACEBOOK GROUPS

Top Picks:

Cyber Security
Information Technology (IT)
Microsoft Azure
This is an IT support group
Women in Tech

Notable Mentions:

Get CISSP Certified
IT and MSP Business Owners
Linus Tech Tips
MSPAlliance
Saas Growth Hacks
TechNet Nation
Ubiquiti UniFi Amateurs
WITI - Women In Technology International (WITI)

LINKEDIN GROUPS

Top Picks:

Frankly IT Community
Global Information Technology Professionals Association
Information Security Network
Information Technology Managers (IT)
VMware Certified Professional

Notable Mentions:

AutoTask
AWS
Business Insider
Cisco
Datto
Dell
Dynamics World
HP
HPE / Aruba
Information Security Careers Network (ISCN)
Information Technology
iPad for Business
Lenovo
Microsoft / Azure / MSFT Dynamics 365
MSP 501
Qlik
Randstad
Raytheon
Robert Half Technology
Software & Technology
Software as a Service (SAAS)
Stanford
Trend Micro
Wired

REDDIT GROUPS

Top Picks:

r/netsec
r/networking
r/programming
r/sysadmin
r/techsupport

Notable Mentions:

r/arduino
r/AWS
r/Azure
r/CCNA
r/citrix
r/docker
r/homenetworking
r/iiiiiiiitttttttttt
r/Information_Assurance
r/InformationTechnology
r/Intel
r/itcareerquestions
r/LabTech
r/learnpython
r/meraki
r/MSP
r/Netsuite
r/NetworkSecurity
r/raspberry_pi
r/SCCM
r/security
r/SIEM
r/SmartThings
r/synology
r/talesfromtechsupport
r/Windows