

Wi-SUN Alliance research shows half of organisations undertaking IoT projects have fully implemented strategy – but concerns over security, lack of funding and commitment

Submitted by: Origin Comms Ltd

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- Enabling Internet of Things one of top IT priorities for next 12 months –

A new report (<https://www.wi-sun.org/index.php/vb-iot-rpt/file>) by the Wi-SUN Alliance (<https://www.wi-sun.org>), a global member-based association driving the proliferation of interoperable wireless solutions for use in smart cities, smart utilities and other Internet of Things (IoT) applications, shows that half of organisations investing in IoT initiatives already have a fully implemented strategy in place, while more than a third (36%) have a partially implemented strategy. Companies are most advanced in the Oil & Gas industry, with 75% having a fully implemented strategy, followed by Technology (59%) and Energy and Utilities (57%).

A survey of 350 IT decision makers in the UK, US, Sweden and Denmark examining attitudes to IoT, including the drivers, barriers, challenges and benefits, the research highlights the growing number of smart utilities, smart cities and broader IoT projects in progress. While respondents report that enabling IoT is the second most important IT priority for the next 12 months, just behind improving security, almost all (90%) of those with an IoT plan at various stages of implementation have struggled to implement this, with over a third (36%) saying they find it “very or extremely difficult”.

When it comes to the key drivers for IoT implementation, around half (47%) of those surveyed report it will improve ‘network intelligence and connectivity for citizen safety and quality of life’, followed by ‘creating business efficiencies’ (42%) and ‘improving reliability of systems and services’ (41%). Two-thirds of respondents’ organisations with an IoT strategy report that it covers how IoT can be used to improve the customer experience, while six in ten say it includes a plan for continuous IoT improvement.

Benefits, barriers, and challenges when delivering IoT initiatives:

- 99% have enjoyed benefits as a result of IoT implementations, including better business efficiency (54%), an improved customer experience (49%) and better collaboration (48%). Additional benefits include reduced costs (45%) and faster time to market (40%).
- Respondents highlight security as a barrier to IoT adoption. 59% of them cite security concerns, with the US (65%) and UK (64%) far more concerned than those in Denmark or Sweden. Nearly a third (32%) see funding, as well as a lack of commitment from leadership, as barriers, while 30% view leadership’s lack of understanding of the benefits of IoT as a challenge.
- The technical challenges when delivering IoT are security and safety (63%), data management (46%), network configuration (41%), recruiting IoT talent (39%) and Wi-Fi connectivity (39%).

When asked what their organisation looks for when evaluating IoT technologies, 58% of respondents look for network topology and coverage, followed by communications performance in terms of latency, bandwidth and bi-directional communication (53%). Other characteristics include support for industry standards (52%), while standardisation is also important when it comes to choosing IoT in specific applications –

45% of respondents demand that smart city IoT solutions be built using industry-wide open standards, while 43% say it is absolutely crucial in a smart utilities.

As for network technologies, respondents are most likely to be familiar with Wi-SUN (56%), SigFox (49%), or NB-IoT (45%).

“While all organisations taking part had IoT initiatives underway, it’s very encouraging to see that over half have an IoT strategy fully implemented, with the vast majority of those in sectors you’d most closely associate with smart city and smart utility initiatives, such as Energy and Utilities, as well as Oil and Gas companies,” according to Phil Beecher, President and CEO, Wi-SUN Alliance. “It’s also encouraging to see Wi-SUN supported by so many products and solutions out there and leading the pack in terms of networking technologies.

“However, there’s a lot of education still to be done for those looking to implement IoT, smart cities and other IoT initiatives, especially when selecting the right technology. For example, there are some fundamental advantages of Wi-SUN, including support for higher data rates delivering lower latency, mesh network configuration, increasing network resilience – and importantly, extremely robust security. Our advice for those developing, designing or procuring IoT, now or in the future, is to look closely at the reliability they need, the latency, and the security – and to make sure that these match up with the needs and goals of the organisation.”

Additional findings:

- Between a third and half of respondents’ organisations (already investing in an IoT initiative) have already implemented industrial IoT (45%), smart cities (41%), or smart utilities’ (34%) initiatives. If not already implemented, around half are likely to be either piloting/testing or planning to implement smart initiatives.
- For smart city solutions, proven security with multi-layer protection and continuous monitoring is ‘absolutely crucial’ for half of respondents, while industry-wide open standards (45%) and seamless integration between devices and applications (40%) are also crucial.
- For smart utility solutions, proven security (44%) is considered absolutely crucial, followed by industry-wide open standards (43%) and speed and latency (40%).
- For organisations who have an IoT strategy at some level, 76% will likely or definitely roll out security & surveillance, 72% water & gas metering, 64% electric vehicle charging, 57% street lights, 56% smart parking and 63% advanced meter infrastructure in the next 12 to 18 months.

To access the report findings, please visit: <https://www.wi-sun.org/index.php/vb-iot-rpt/file>.

To download the infographic, please visit: <https://www.wi-sun.org/index.php/vb-iot-info/file>.

Notes for editors:

Key findings by country:

- The US is ahead of the other three countries when it comes to having a fully implemented IoT strategy

- US (65%), UK (47%), Sweden (44%) and Denmark (24%).
- The US is also ahead of the other countries when prioritizing IoT enablement – US (73%), UK (64%), Sweden (62%) and Denmark (58%).
- 15% of US respondents with an IoT strategy are finding it ‘extremely difficult’ and struggling with some of the challenges when implementing IoT, followed by the UK (14%), Denmark (11%) and Sweden (4%).

About the research

Commissioned by the Wi-SUN Alliance, the research was carried out by Vanson Bourne, an independent specialist in market research for the technology sector, in October and early November 2017. Interviews were done online and via telephone among 350 people in the UK, US, Sweden and Denmark. Respondents came from organisations that were at some stage of implementing at least one IoT initiative; specifically smart cities, smart utilities, or industrial IoT. Respondents were IT decision makers within their organisations and have some level of involvement with their organisation’s IoT initiatives.

About the Wi-SUN Alliance (<https://www.wi-sun.org>)

The Wi-SUN Alliance is a global non-profit member-based association comprised of industry leading companies. Its mission is to drive the global proliferation of interoperable wireless solutions for use in smart cities, smart grids and other Internet of Things (IoT) applications using open global standards from international standards organisations, such as IEEE 802, IETF, TIA, TTC and ETSI. With more than 170 members worldwide, membership of the Wi-SUN Alliance is open to all industry stakeholders and includes silicon vendors, product vendors, services providers, utilities, universities, enterprises and municipalities and local government organisations.

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