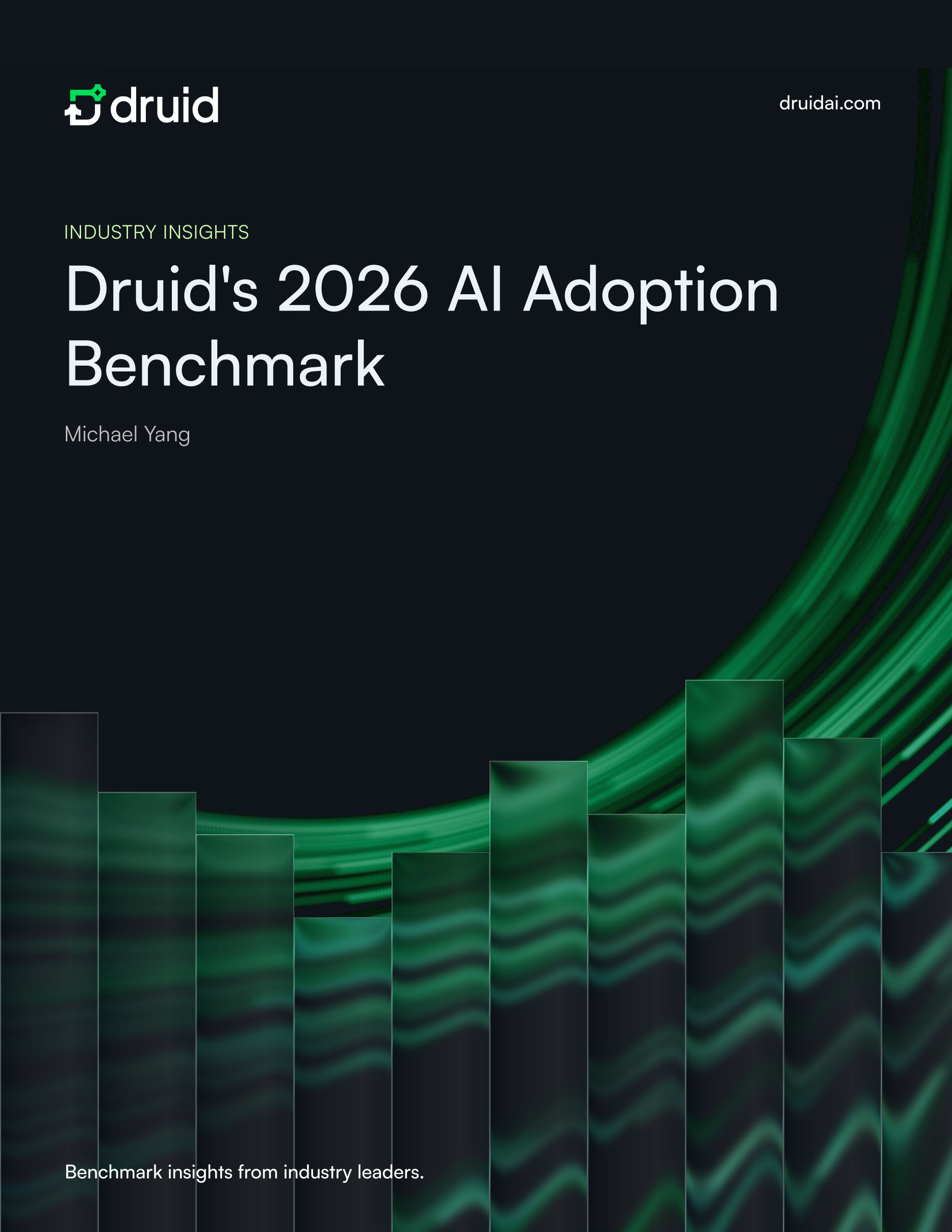


INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Druid's 2026 AI Adoption Benchmark

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Benchmark insights from industry leaders.

The 2026 AI Adoption Benchmark

Druid is launching the AI Adoption Benchmark as an annual series. The 2026 edition, the first installment, draws on 15 months of anonymized, aggregated production telemetry from Druid customers across Healthcare, Higher Education, Financial Services, and HR & IT. The data was collected through [Druid Analytics & Insights](#) and shows how AI is actually used once agents are live inside customer, student, patient, and employee service journeys.

Most published "State of AI" content captures executive sentiment, budget intent, and pilot plans. Druid's benchmark adds a different signal: production behavior. It shows where demand concentrates, which channels users choose, when conversations arrive, and how often AI resolves work before a human joins.

Use this overview to translate four production benchmarks into an AI service strategy:

- Build first where volume is already concentrated: front-door workflows, access, FAQs, account servicing, help desk, and workplace operations.
- Design channel strategy around how patients, students, customers, and employees already choose to engage.
- Separate the value of 24/7 service continuity from the value of absorbing workday peaks.
- Measure governed resolution: the right work contained, the right exceptions escalated, and every handoff carrying context.

The four industries at a glance

Pattern	Healthcare	Higher Ed	Banking	HR & IT
Top-3 workflow concentration	57%	92%	90%	64%
Dominant channel	Voice 54% / Chat 46%	Chat 95%	Chat 70% / Msg. App 30%	Chat 94%
Off-hours volume (outside 8 AM—5 PM)	29%	39%	31%	6%
Weekend share	14%	14%	17%	2%
Containment rate	87%	99.5%	80%	93%
Peak hour	10 AM (8%)	2 PM (8%)	12 PM (8%)	9 AM (12%)

Source: Druid 2026 State of AI in Production benchmarks (Jan 2025—Mar 2026 production usage).

BENCHMARK 1

Build from concentrated front-door workflows

AI adoption does not start with a long tail of speculative use cases. Across all four benchmarks, demand concentrates in a small set of high-frequency service workflows that already create volume, friction, and cost.

Higher Education is the sharpest example: student FAQs and general inquiries dominate the visible mix, with contact center assistance as the next meaningful layer. Financial Services is similarly concentrated around account inquiry and servicing, knowledge delivery, and assistance. Healthcare starts at the patient front door - identity, access, appointments, and FAQs - while HR & IT clusters in access, help desk, workplace operations, policies, benefits, and leave.

The strategic takeaway is not that AI should stop at FAQs. It is that leaders should use concentrated front-door demand as the entry point, then expand into deeper workflow orchestration where integrations, policy controls, and governed handoff create the next layer of value.

Production adoption does not begin with AI doing everything. It begins when leaders match AI to concentrated operational demand that already generates volume, friction, and service cost.

That doesn't mean you should ignore lower-volume journeys—specialized workflows can deliver outsized business impact, so balance front-door scale with targeted automation where the payoff is highest.

HOW DRUID CAN HELP

Druid pre-built AI agents across verticals give teams a faster starting point for the workflows that already dominate production volume. Pre-built intent libraries, dialog flows, and integrations connect to the systems behind the work — electronic health record systems, student information systems, digital banking platforms, ITSM, HRIS, and other systems of record. Druid Conversational AI recognizes intent and retrieves approved knowledge; Druid Agentic AI executes the multi-step workflows that follow.

BENCHMARK 2

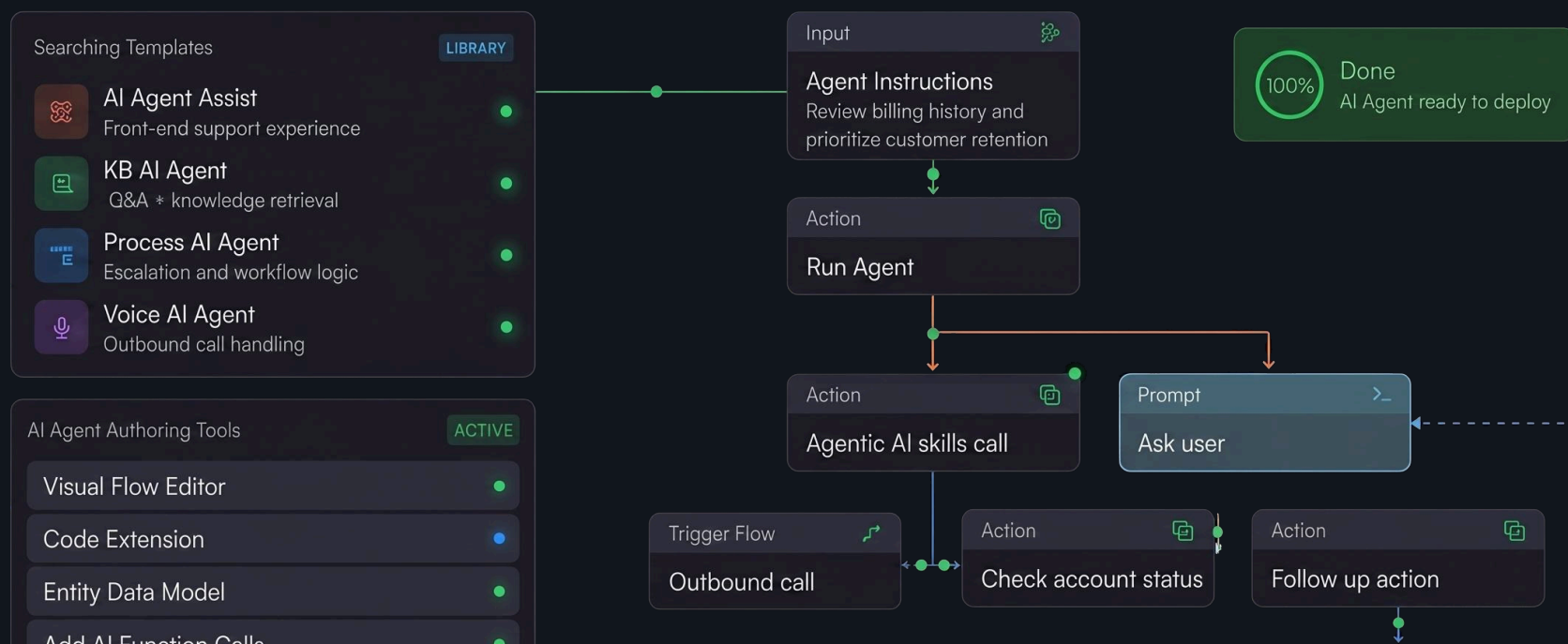
Match Conversational AI channel strategy to industry behavior

The channel data argues against a single AI deployment playbook. Healthcare is nearly balanced between voice and chat, so patient service leaders should not treat voice as legacy demand or chat as the only digital future. Financial Services is text-first, but 30% of engaged interactions arrive through messaging apps, especially in the EMEA region, making broader digital messaging a core service channel rather than a side experiment.

Higher Education and HR & IT show the opposite pattern: both are overwhelmingly chat-led. Students and employees prefer low-friction text interaction when they need answers, actions, or routing. The channel decision should therefore follow the audience: voice and chat for healthcare, chat and messaging for financial services, chat-first student service for higher education, and chat-led employee service for HR & IT.

HOW DRUID CAN HELP

Druid's Agent Studio lets you build an agent once and deploy it across web chat, messaging apps, and voice without rebuilding the agent for each surface. That means Healthcare's voice/chat split is served by a single agent definition with consistent intents, integrations, and governance. It also means HR & IT volume that lands in Microsoft Teams isn't a separate project from your web-chat deployment—it's the same agent reaching employees where they already work.



BENCHMARK 3

Separate service continuity from peak-hour capacity

The timing data shows two different AI value stories. In Higher Education, Financial Services, and Healthcare, a meaningful share of demand arrives outside 8 AM-5 PM. Higher Education leads at 39%, Financial Services follows at 31%, and Healthcare reaches 29%. Weekend usage also remains material in these customer- and student-facing environments.

HR & IT is different. Only 6% of HR & IT demand arrives after hours and 2% lands on weekends, but the workday peak is intense: 9 AM is the highest hour, and 9-10 AM together account for nearly a quarter of demand. That makes HR & IT AI a peak-hour capacity layer more than an after-hours continuity layer.

The planning implication is important: do not sell every AI program with the same always-on story. For patients, students, and financial services customers, AI protects service continuity when staffed coverage is thin. For employees, AI absorbs peak demand when people are trying to get work done..

HOW DRUID CAN HELP

Druid AI agents give organizations both always-on coverage and peak absorption, with no marginal staffing cost for the next conversation, whether it arrives at 2 AM Saturday or 9 AM Tuesday.

For customer-facing deployments, that converts the 14%—39% off-hours tail into served demand instead of dropped or deferred service. For HR & IT deployments, Druid absorbs the 9—10 AM authentication and access spike before it hits the service desk, so your human agents can spend their morning on higher-judgment work—approvals, exception handling, escalated incidents—rather than password resets.

BENCHMARK 4

Measure governed resolution, not deflection alone

Containment rates show that AI has moved beyond pilot behavior: Healthcare contains 87% of benchmarked events, Higher Education 99.5%, Financial Services 80%, and HR & IT 93%. But the more useful executive metric is not deflection alone. It is governed resolution.

Governed resolution means AI resolves repeatable work, follows approved business rules, and escalates the cases that require human judgment. Banking, that may involve policy review, identity-sensitive work, risk treatment, or higher value revenue opportunities.

In HR & IT, it may involve approvals, access review, security exceptions, employee relations, or complex troubleshooting. Escalation is not failure when it is designed, routed, and context-rich.

For leaders evaluating AI initiatives, that reframes the question. The right benchmark is not whether AI can eliminate human involvement. It is whether AI can contain the right share of repetitive demand while handing off the right cases with control, speed, and context.

HOW DRUID CAN HELP

Druid's AI agents treat handoff as a first-class workflow. The agent collects context, applies policy, and routes to a named queue or named human with the conversation transcript intact, so customers and employees don't have to repeat themselves.

Analytics then shows where work was contained, where escalations happened, and which intents, flows, or channels need optimization. Druid's governance, audit trails, and policy controls support the explainability and compliance requirements that make intentional handoff a safer design choice than over-extending automation into journeys it shouldn't own.

Turn AI-in-production patterns into your customer- and employee-service strategy

The first annual Druid AI Adoption Benchmark shows that production AI is becoming part of the operating model for customer, patient, student, and employee service. Workflow concentration tells leaders where to start. Channel mix tells them where to deploy. Timing patterns reveal whether the value case is service continuity, peak absorption, or both. Containment and escalation show how to govern the work.

Druid helps organizations turn those patterns into production systems: vertical accelerators for the workflows that already drive demand, omnichannel deployment for the surfaces users actually choose, agentic execution for multi-step service journeys, Analytics & Insights for performance visibility, and governed handoff for the cases that need human judgment. Read the full benchmark for your industry:

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AI Adoption in Healthcare Benchmark — Druid 2026 Report

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METHODOLOGY

- Anonymized aggregate usage data from Druid's global Healthcare, Higher Education, Banking, and HR & IT production deployments, January 2025 through March 2026.