



Forrester's Top 10 Emerging Technologies For 2026: AI Is No Longer Confined To Digital Workflows

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AI's move into the physical world is already delivering tangible impact for consumers

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Apr. 15, 2026-- Forrester (Nasdaq: FORR) today released its [The Top 10 Emerging Technologies In 2026](#) report, which highlights a pivotal shift in AI from digital experimentation to real-world transformation. AI is moving beyond software into physical environments — powering robots, vehicles, and ambient experiences that are already changing how consumers communicate, work, and buy.

As the pace of AI innovation continues, agentic software and physical AI will shape what consumers experience next, while technologies such as frontier models and AI security will be foundational to fueling future innovation. The research categorizes the top 10 emerging technologies by their impacts over short-term, medium-term, and long-term benefit horizons to help enterprises and leaders prioritize their investments. Key findings include:

Short-term emerging technologies that are quickly moving from trial to real use, delivering benefits to early adopters with solid business cases within the next two years:

- [Agentic commerce](#). Businesses will soon see ROI in owned environments such as apps or websites, where brands can leverage agentic commerce and personalization to lower friction and improve sales. Uptake in non-owned environments will take up to three years more as ecosystems develop and the underlying technology matures.
- [AI security and trust technologies](#). As generative and agentic AI scale across enterprises, integrated security, governance, and trust controls are becoming essential. Sectors that depend on predictive models and high-stakes decisioning systems, such as financial services, healthcare, and the public sector, will see impact first.

Medium-term emerging technologies that require discipline, vision, and a substantial tolerance for risk in return for a larger reward in the next two to five years:

- [Agentic software development](#). ASD will unlock software development lifecycle acceleration as agents generate and refine software artifacts, but the technology will take a few more years to deliver significant benefits as agent coordination improves and stronger guardrails are implemented.
- [Humanoid robots](#). Physical AI and robotics will eliminate labor bottlenecks in every industry and make way for systems to adapt on the fly, but the technology will deliver limited near-term value until organizations overcome integration, scaling, safety, data, and workforce challenges.

A long-term emerging technology that will take longer to deliver tangible value for enterprises:

- [Quantum computing](#). Advances in quantum hardware, algorithms, and hybrid architectures point toward future breakthroughs in optimization, simulation, cryptography, and materials science, but broad commercial value remains years away. Financial services, pharmaceuticals, and manufacturing will benefit from quantum first.

"With new technologies constantly emerging, business and technology leaders need to plan their tech investments based on value, risk, and potential payout timelines," said Sharyn Leaver, chief research officer at Forrester. "While AI continues to dominate the top emerging technologies list for 2026, AI technologies vary widely in capability and impact. Our research is designed to help business and technology leaders spread their investments out by identifying shorter-term technologies that can deliver quick returns and longer-term bets that require more effort, more foundational investment, and the capacity to manage more risk."

Resources:

- Learn more about this year's top 10 emerging technologies in this [blog](#).
- Download [The Top 10 Emerging Technologies In 2026](#) report (client access).

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