BairesDev

Dev Barometer

A quarterly look inside the minds of senior software engineers. Q2 - 2026

In April 2026, the Q2 edition surveyed 1,569 software developers across 77 countries, including 1,059 junior and 510 senior engineers responding simultaneously, to examine a question now central to the industry's media and hiring agenda: what actually makes a junior developer hireable in the AI era? The answer is redefining what early-career engineers are expected to know, do, and own.

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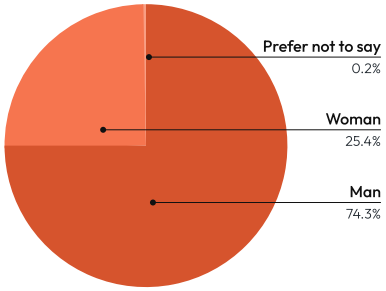
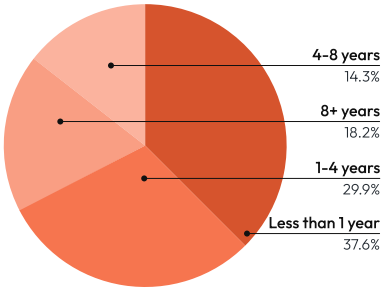
Demographics & Respondent Profile

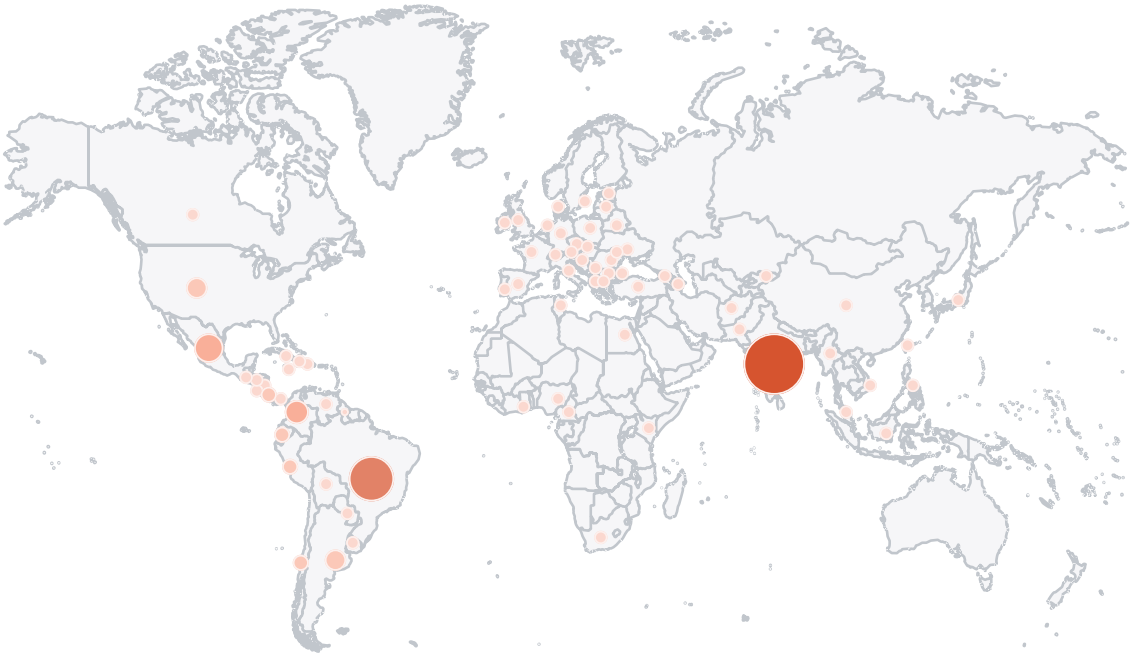
Total Respondents - 1,329

Gender



Years of Professional Experience

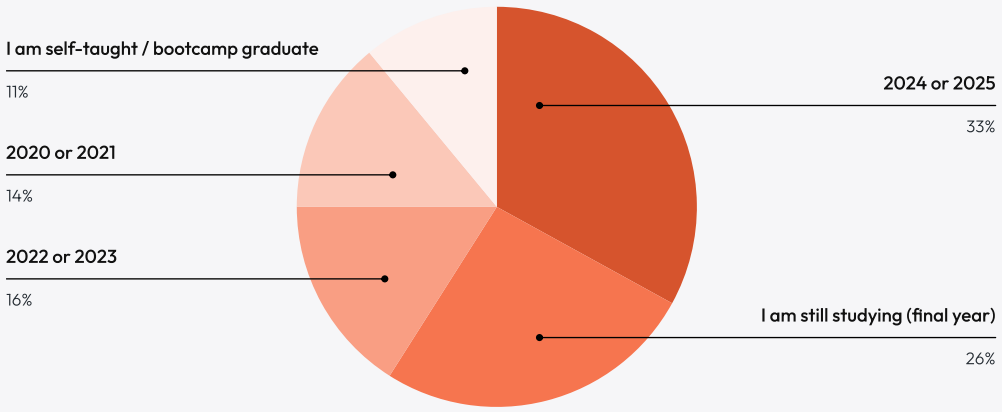




Afghanistan
Albania
Algeria
Argentina
Austria
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Bolivia
Brazil
Bulgaria
Cameroon
Canada
Chile
Colombia
Costa Rica
Croatia
Cuba
Czech Republic
Denmark
Dominican Republic
Ecuador
Egypt
El Salvador
Estonia
France
Georgia
Germany
Ghana
Greece
Guatemala
Guyana
Haiti
Honduras
Hungary
India
Indonesia
Ireland
Italy
Jamaica
Japan
Kenya
Kosovo
Kyrgyzstan
Latvia
Malaysia
Mexico
Moldova
Morocco
Myanmar
Netherlands
Nicaragua
Nigeria
North Macedonia
Pakistan
Panama
Paraguay
Peru
Philippines
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Saint Lucia
Serbia
Slovakia
South Africa
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Taiwan
Tunisia
Turkey
Ukraine
United Kingdom
United States
Uruguay
Venezuela

Graduation Date

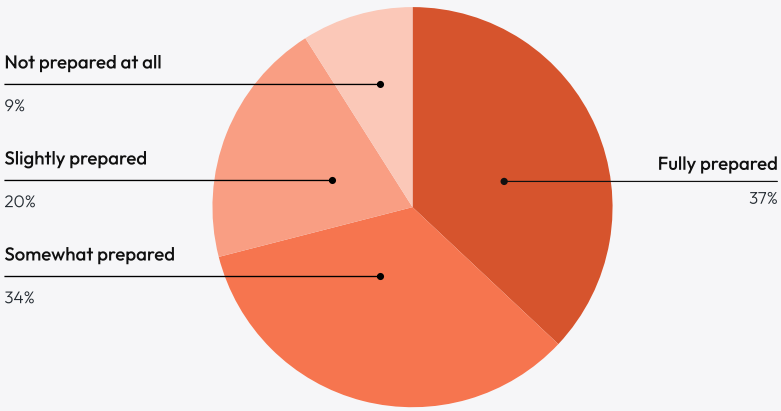
When did you graduate, or what is your current academic status?



33% of juniors graduated between 2024 and 2025.

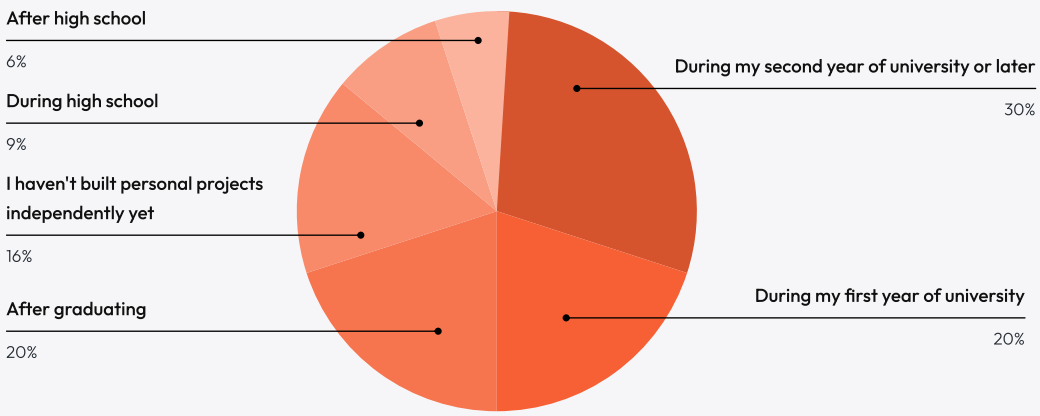
Level of University Preparation for First Job

How well did your university education prepare you to get a job as a software developer?



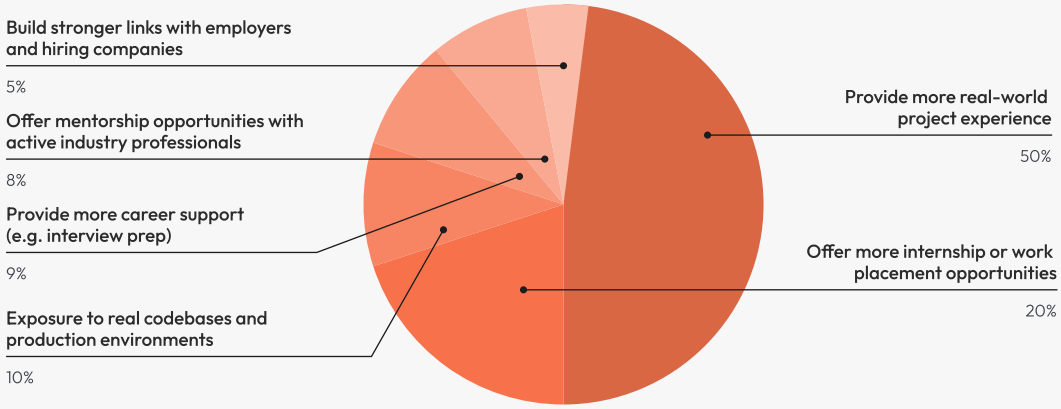
37% of junior respondents believe their university education fully prepared them to get a job as a software developer.

When did you first start building your own software projects outside of school assignments?



30% of juniors started building their own software projects during their second year of university or later.

What should education focus on more to prepare people to get a job in tech?



50% of juniors believe education should focus more on real-world project experience to better prepare graduates.

Education Preparation by Skill Area

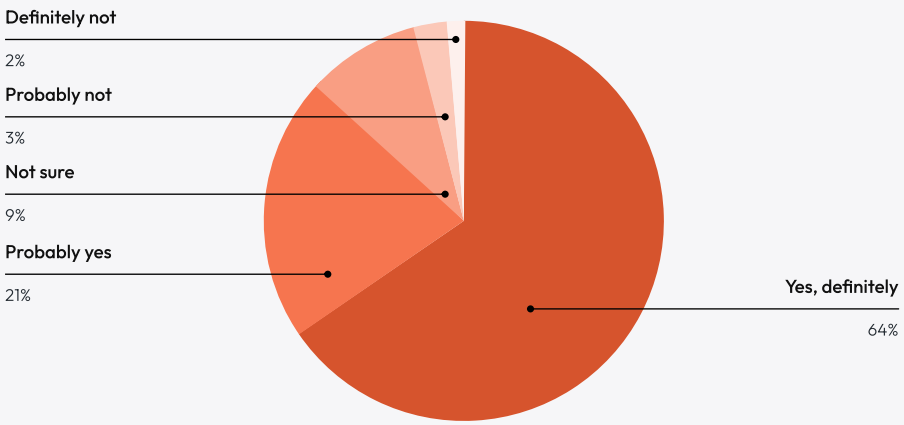
Rate how well your education prepared you in each of the following skill areas.

	1 - Not Prepared	2 - Slightly Unprepared	3 - Neutral	4 - Prepared	5 - Very Well Prepared
Algorithms & data structures	8%	12%	27%	39%	14%
System design & architecture	10%	16%	32%	31%	11%
Debugging & problem diagnosis	9%	14%	27%	35%	15%
Code readability & documentation	8%	11%	23%	36%	22%
Security & privacy fundamentals	10%	17%	30%	32%	11%
Prompt engineering & AI tool fluency	13%	14%	24%	28%	20%
Cross-functional communication	7%	11%	26%	37%	18%
Critical thinking & problem solving	4%	6%	15%	38%	37%
Product thinking & business context	6%	12%	25%	34%	22%
Adaptability & learning agility	4%	7%	14%	34%	42%
Business & market awareness	8%	14%	26%	33%	19%

Graduates feel most prepared in adaptability and learning agility (42%) and critical thinking and problem-solving (37%).

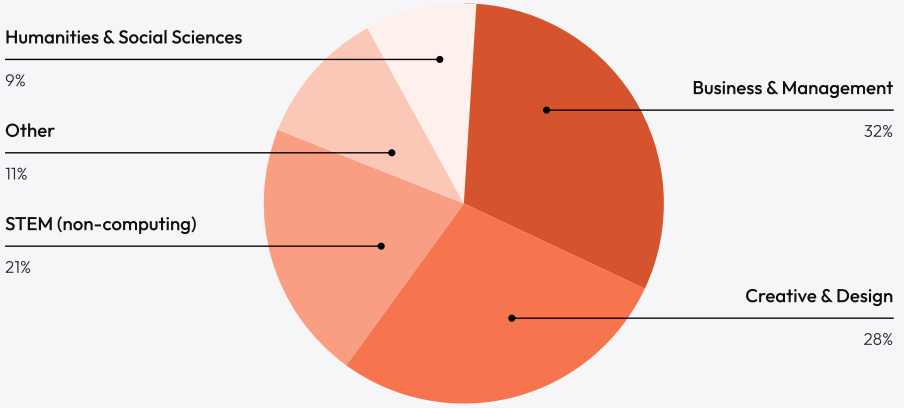
Educational Paths in the AI Era

If you were starting today, would you still pursue a degree in computer science or a related field?



64% of junior respondents would still pursue a degree in computer science or a related field. Only 2% said they definitely would not.

If not, what would you study instead?



Of those who wouldn't pursue a degree in computer science, 32% would choose business and management, followed by creative & design (28%).

Skill Gap That Surprised Juniors the Most

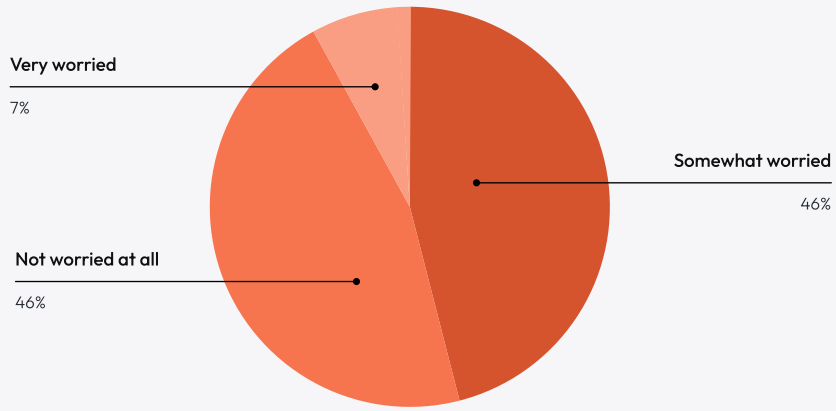
What skill gap surprised you most after entering the workforce — something your education did not prepare you for?

The top 3 most surprising skills gaps identified by juniors:

1. Working on large, legacy, or undocumented codebases| 20%
2. System design and architectural thinking at scale | 19%
3. Evaluating and reviewing AI-generated code critically | 12%

Concern About AI Reducing Chances of Getting a Job

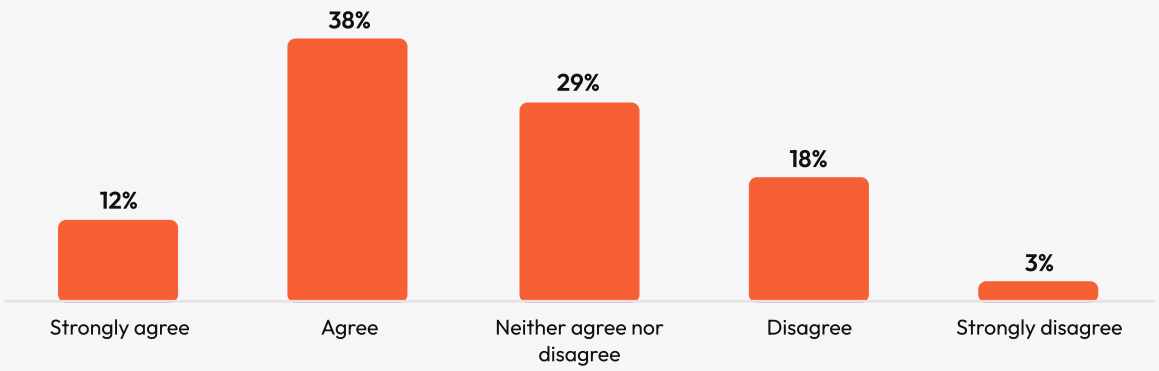
Are you worried that AI will reduce your chances of getting a job?



46% of junior developers are somewhat worried about AI reducing their chances of getting a job, followed by 46% that aren't worried at all.

Perceived Relevance of the Junior Developer Role

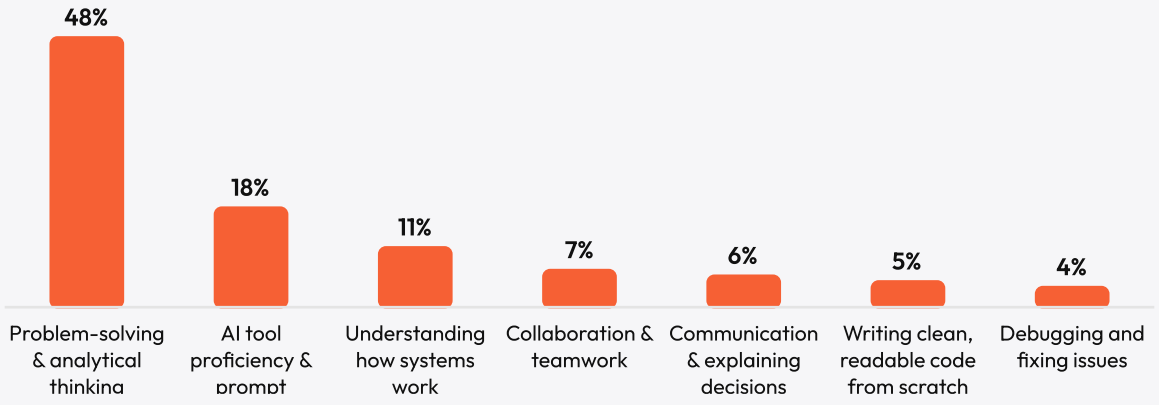
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement: AI is making the junior developer role less relevant by taking over many entry-level tasks?



50% of junior developers agree or strongly agree that AI is making the junior developer role less relevant.

Critical Skills for Getting Hired

What skill do you believe matters most for getting hired as a developer today?

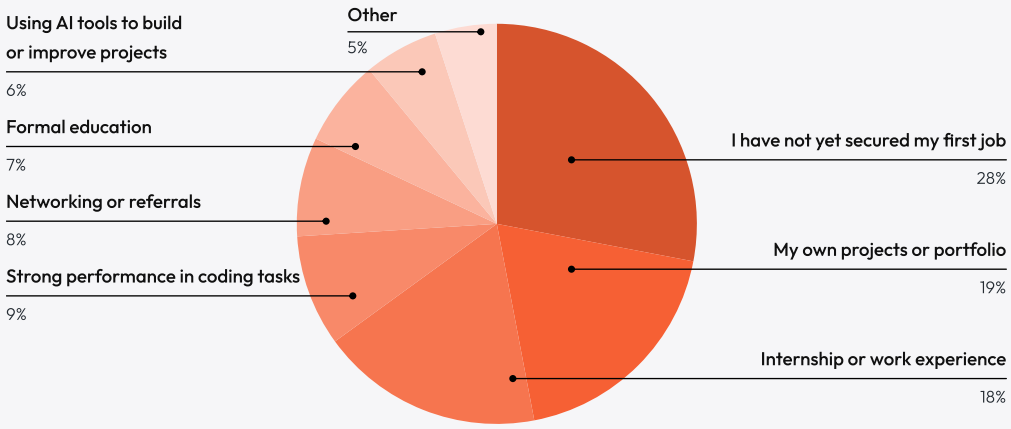


Top 3 Skills for Getting Hired According to Juniors:

1. Problem-solving & analytical thinking | 48%
2. AI tool proficiency & prompt engineering | 18%
3. Understanding how systems work | 11%

Landing Their First Job

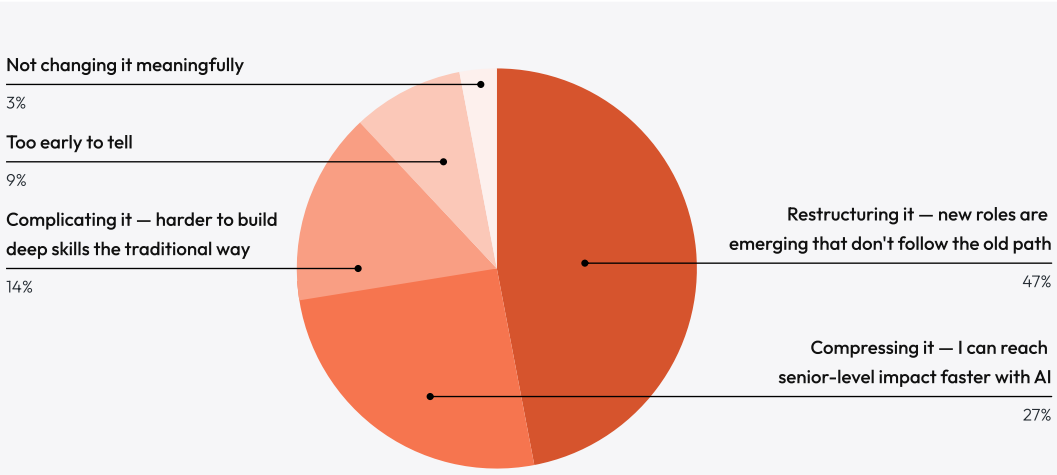
What played the biggest role in helping you land your first developer job?



Juniors who have landed a job say having their own projects or a portfolio helped them significantly.

Changes to the Traditional Career Path for Engineers

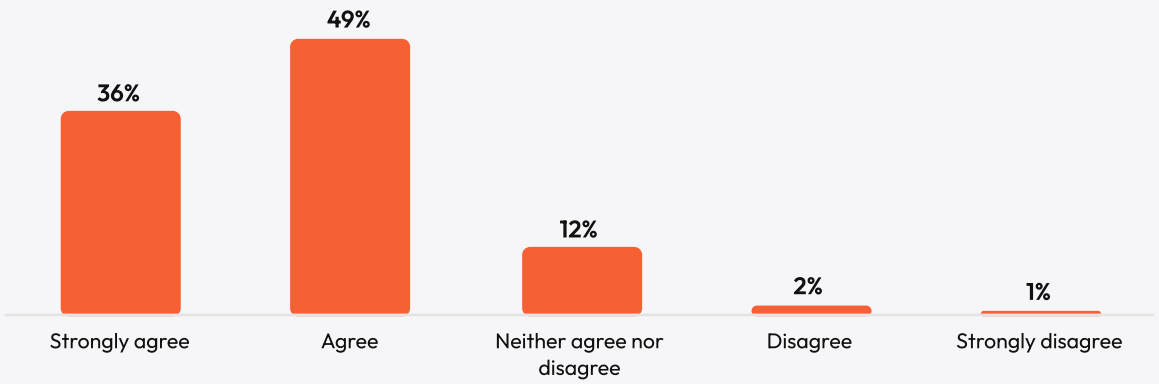
In your view, how is AI changing the traditional career path for engineers like you?



47% of juniors believe AI is restructuring the traditional career path for engineers.

AI and Understanding of Software Development

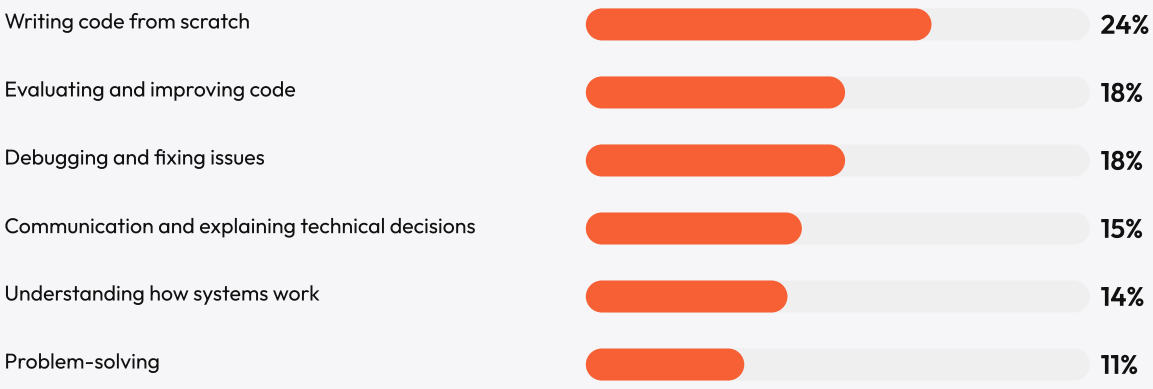
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement: Using AI tools has improved my understanding of software development.



85% agree to some extent that AI tools have improved their understanding of software development.

Activities Engineers Feel the Least Confident Doing Without AI

Which of the following do you feel least confident doing without AI?

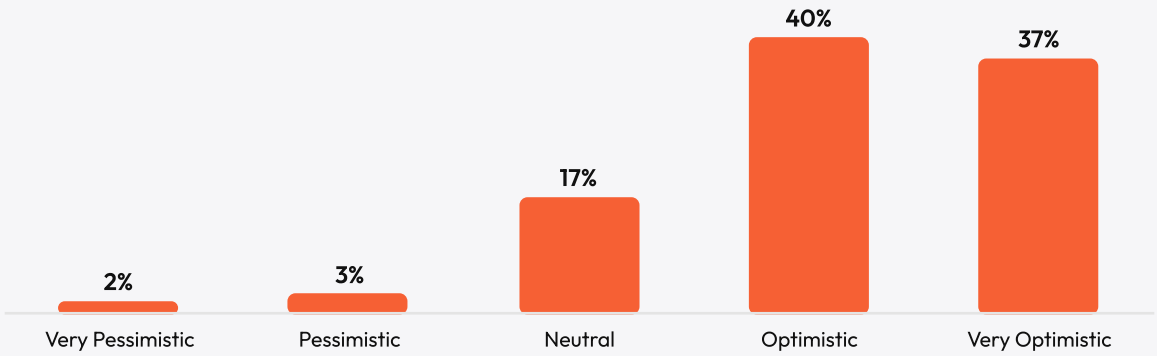


Top 3 Tasks Junior Developers Feel Least Confident Doing Without AI:

1. Writing code from scratch | 24%
2. Evaluating and improving code | 18%
3. Debugging and fixing issues | 18%

Level of Optimism in Their Career as Software Engineer in an AI-shaped Future

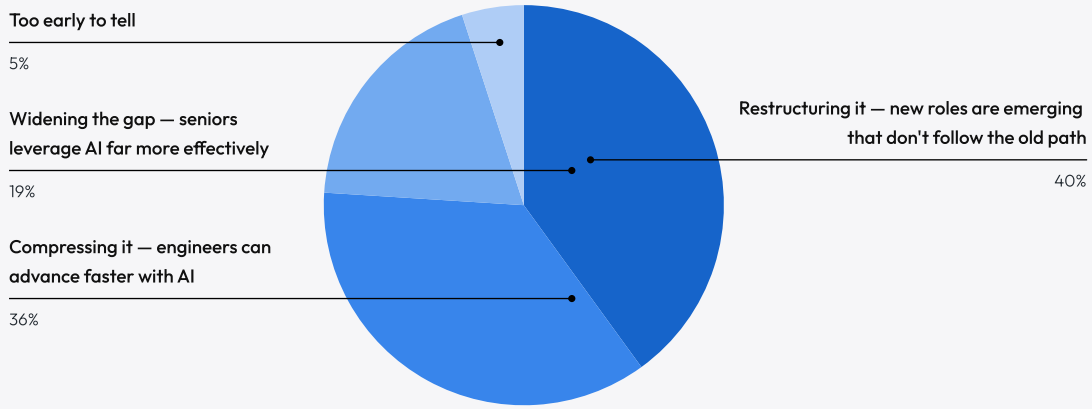
Overall, how optimistic are you about your career as a software engineer in an AI-shaped future?



77% of junior developers are optimistic or very optimistic about their careers in an AI-shaped future.

Changes to the Traditional Career Path for Engineers

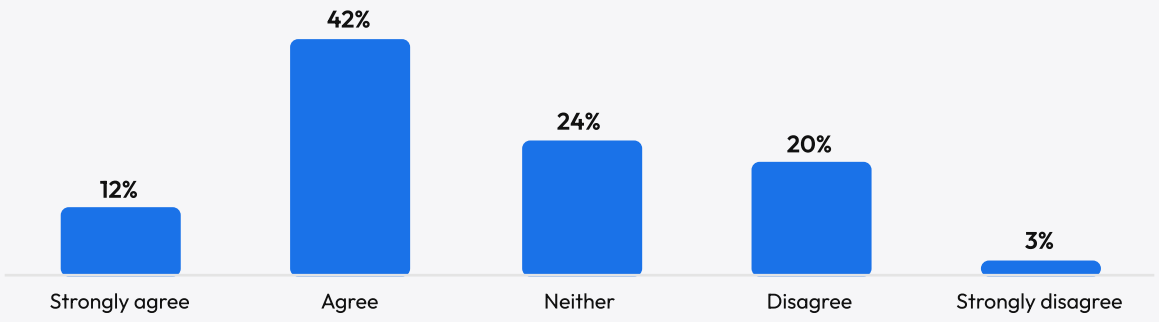
In your view, how is AI changing the traditional junior-to-mid-to-senior career path?



40% of senior developers believe AI is restructuring the career path, followed by 36% who believe it is compressing it.

Perceived Relevance of the Junior Developer Role

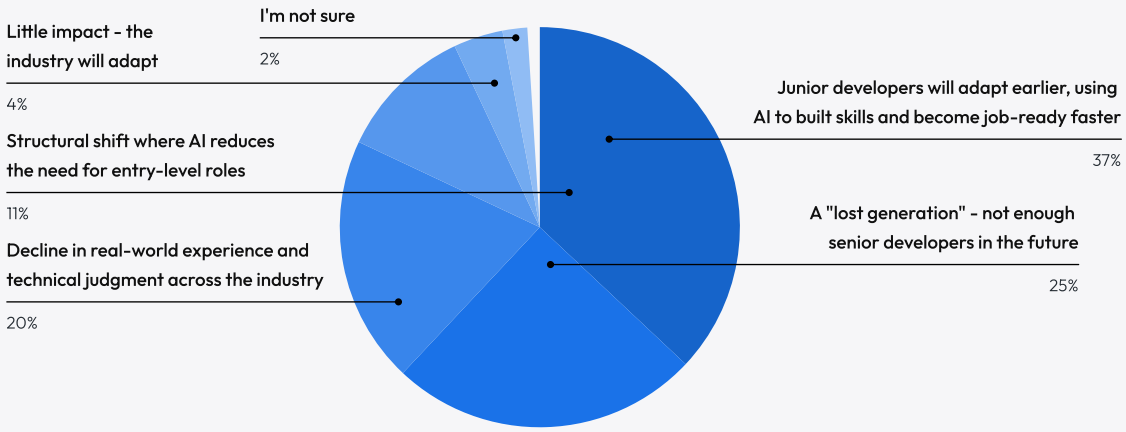
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement: AI is making the junior developer role less relevant by taking over many entry-level tasks.



54% of seniors agree or strongly agree that AI is making the junior developer role less relevant.

Long-Term Impact of Hiring Less Junior Developers

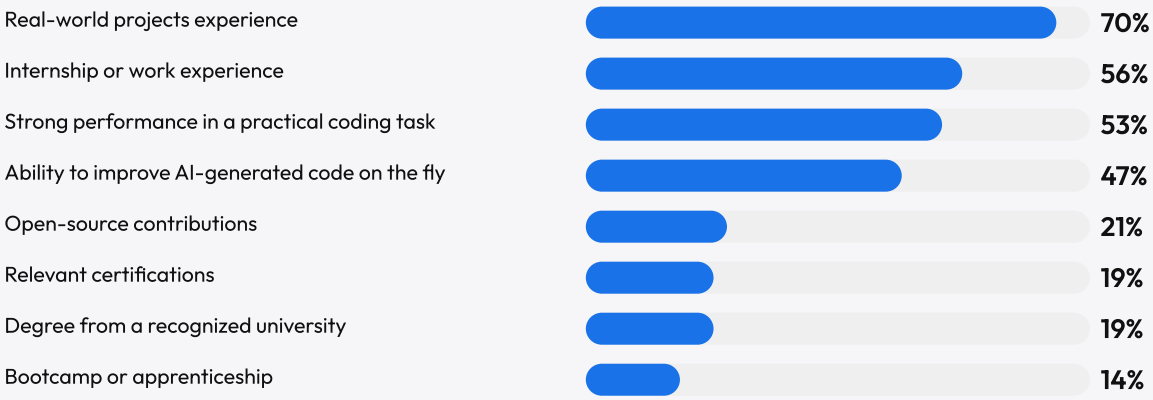
If organizations reduce junior developer hiring because of AI, what will be the long-term impact?



37% of seniors believe junior developers will adapt earlier, using AI to build skills and become job-ready faster.

Reliable Indicators that Juniors are Job-Ready

Which of the following are the most reliable indicators that a junior developer is job-ready today?

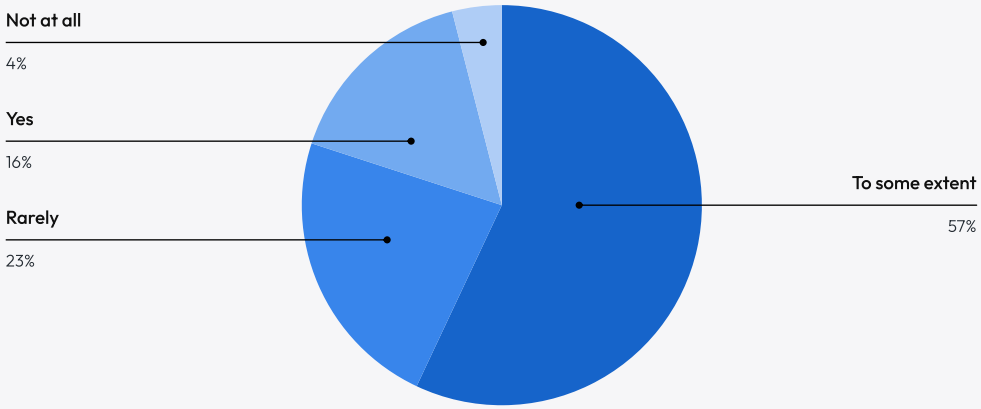


Top 3 Indicators That a Junior is Job-Ready:

1. Real-world projects experience | 70%
2. Internship or work experience | 56%
3. Strong performance in a practical coding task | 53%

Understanding of AI-Generated Code

Do you think junior developers understand the code they generate using AI tools?



Only 16% of senior respondents believe juniors fully understand the code they generate using AI tools.

Most Common Mistakes by Graduates

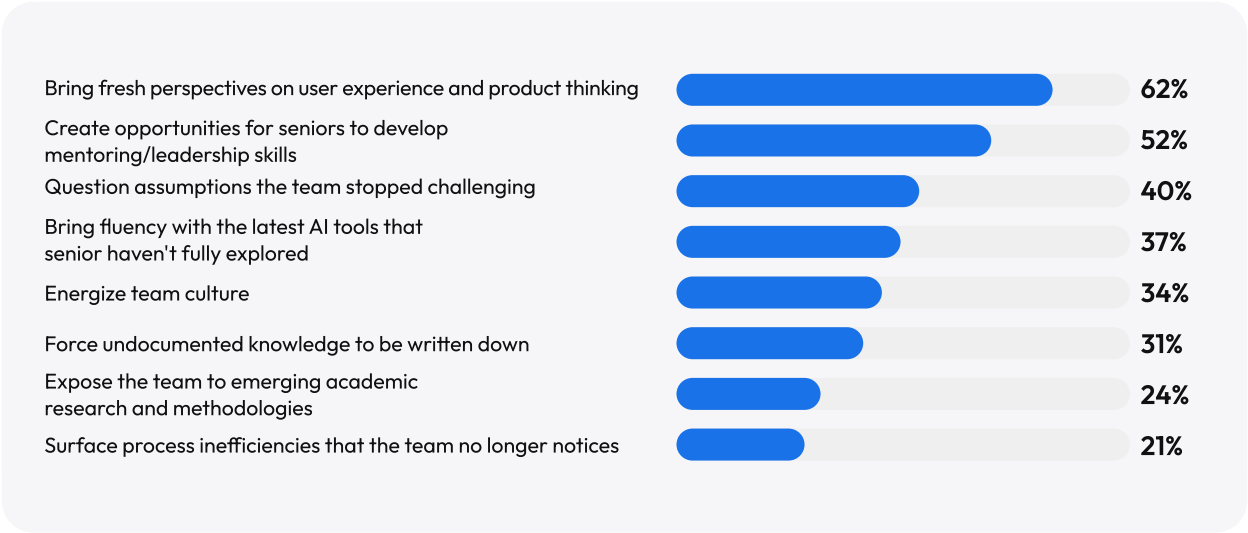
What are the most common mistakes graduates make when they first join a software engineering team?

Top 3 Most Common Mistakes by Graduates:

1. Over-reliance on AI without understanding | 64%
2. Weak debugging skills | 50%
3. Difficulty breaking down problems | 49%

Non-technical Contributions Made by Junior Engineers

Beyond their technical output, what do junior engineers genuinely contribute to the team?



Top 3 Non-Technical Contributions by Junior Engineers:

1. Bring fresh perspectives on user experience and product thinking | 62%
2. Create opportunities for seniors to develop mentoring and leadership skills | 52%
3. Question assumptions the team stopped challenging | 40%

Skills Often Missing in Junior Devs

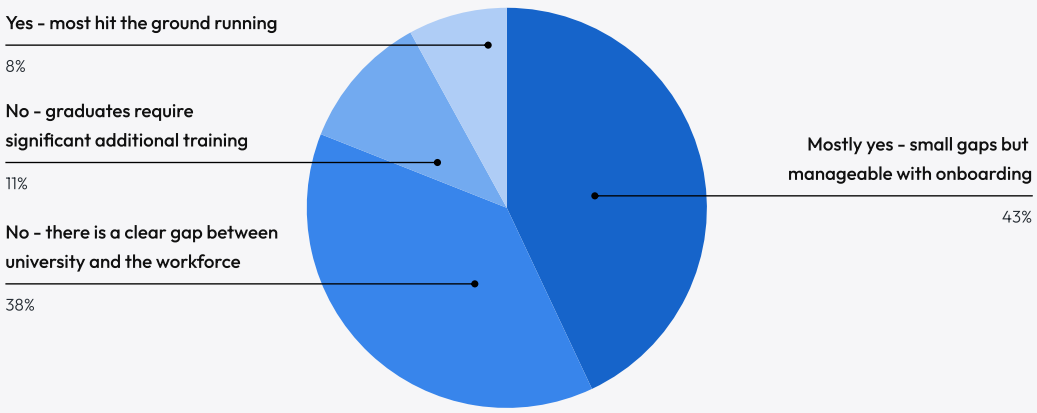
Which key skill is most often missing in junior developers?

Top 3 Skills Most Often Missing in Junior Developers:

1. Understanding how systems work end-to-end | 25%
2. Breaking down problems independently | 24%
3. Debugging without relying on AI | 16%

Graduates' Contribution to Teams

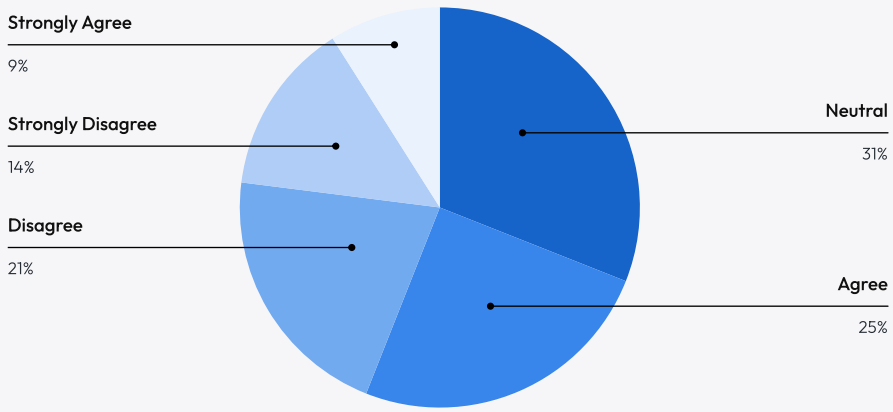
Are most graduates ready to contribute effectively to a software team from day one?



43% of seniors believe that most of graduates have small gaps but manageable with onboarding.

AI and Programming Languages

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement: AI tools are making deep knowledge of programming languages less important for software engineers.



34% of seniors agree at some level that AI tools are making deep knowledge of programming languages less important for software engineers.

Skills Essential for Engineers Three Years From Now

Rate how essential you believe the following skills will remain for engineers three years from now, regardless of AI advancement.

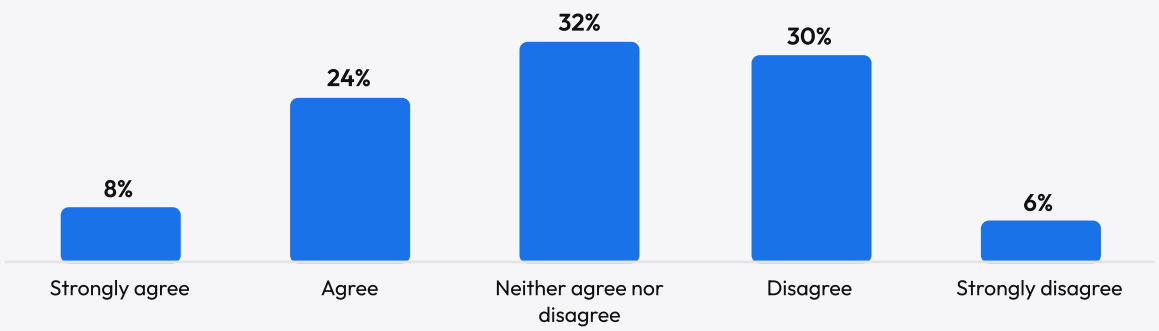
	1 - Replaceable	2	3 - Neutral	4	5 - Irreplaceable
Algorithms & data structures	4%	13%	27%	27%	30%
System design & architecture	4%	7%	23%	27%	38%
Debugging & problem diagnosis	5%	16%	21%	23%	36%
Code readability & documentation	8%	20%	29%	25%	17%
Security & privacy fundamentals	2%	9%	19%	24%	46%
Prompt engineering & AI tool fluency	4%	10%	27%	33%	26%
Cross-functional communication	2%	11%	23%	32%	32%
Critical thinking & analytical reasoning	2%	8%	18%	20%	52%
Product thinking & business context	3%	9%	22%	33%	33%
Adaptability & learning agility	3%	10%	24%	25%	37%
Business & market awareness	3%	14%	31%	29%	23%

Top 3 Irreplaceable Skills:

1. Critical thinking & analytical reasoning
2. Security & privacy fundamentals
3. System design & architecture

University Education in the AI Era

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement: Universities adequately prepare graduates for real-world software engineering jobs in the AI era.



32% of seniors neither agree nor disagree that universities adequately prepare graduates for real-world software engineering jobs in the AI era.

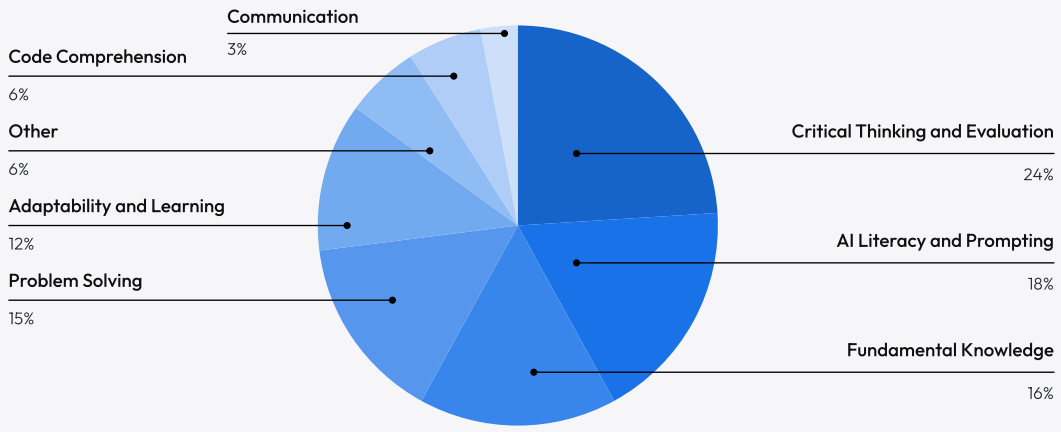
What is the biggest gap in how universities prepare computer science graduates for today's tech jobs?

Top 3 Biggest Gap in University Preparation:

1. Working on real, large, or legacy codebases | 20%
2. Applying CS theory to real-world, ambiguous problems| 18%
3. Professional tooling and engineering workflows | 13%

Most Important Skills for Junior Developers

What is the most important skill a junior developer should have in the AI era?

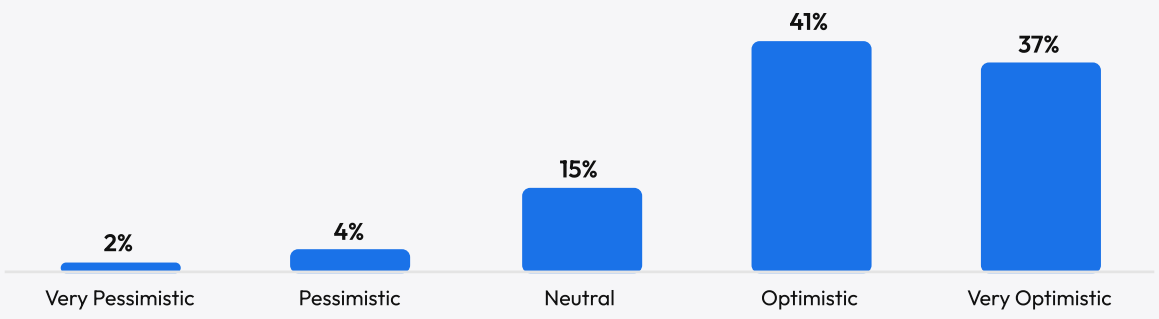


Top 3 Skills for Juniors to Have in the AI Era:

1. Critical Thinking and Evaluation | 24%
2. AI Literacy and Prompting | 18%
3. Fundamental Knowledgel | 16%

Level of Optimism in Their Career as Software Engineer in an AI-shaped Future

Overall, how optimistic are you about the future of the software engineering profession as AI advances?



77% of senior developers are optimistic or very optimistic about their careers in an AI-shaped future.