

Are employees already using AI tools before our company has an official AI policy?

Short answer: Yes. Most organizations discover that employees, contractors, consultants, and vendors are already using AI tools in creative and unexpected ways long before any formal AI policy or governance project is finalized. Waiting for a "perfect" policy before addressing AI usage leaves a company blind to what is already happening.

The common assumption

Many leaders assume that AI adoption inside their organization is on hold until an official policy is written, approved, and rolled out. The thinking goes that employees will wait patiently for clear rules before experimenting with new tools. In practice, this assumption rarely holds up. People tend to look for ways to work more efficiently regardless of whether formal guidance exists yet.

What organizations actually find

When companies put monitoring or enforcement tools in place, such as Cyber Crucible's FortressAI, they often discover that AI usage is far more widespread and varied than expected. Staff members are resourceful by nature; that same creativity and problem-solving drive that makes them valuable employees also leads them to find new, unsanctioned ways to use AI tools to save time or improve their output. This isn't a sign of bad intent so much as human nature: people will use available tools to make their jobs easier, whether or not a policy officially permits it.

Why visibility matters more than perfect policy

The real risk isn't that a policy hasn't been finalized yet. It's that organizations often lack visibility into how AI is already being used across their environment. Without that visibility, security and compliance teams cannot assess exposure to data leakage, unauthorized tool usage, or other risks tied to AI adoption. Rather than waiting for a comprehensive AI governance framework to be completed, organizations benefit from gaining insight into current usage patterns first.

Understanding what is actually happening on the ground allows policies to be grounded in reality rather than assumptions about employee behavior.

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