

AI Roles Boost Salary For U.S. Tech Leaders

Chief information officers’ base pay at U.S. companies rises by at least 20%

By Belle Lin

Top technology leaders at U.S. companies are getting bigger paychecks as artificial intelligence is expanding the scope of their leadership and responsibilities.

While many of the highest paid technology leaders are chief technology officers, there is also a growing cohort of well-compensated chief information officers at public companies, according to data from C-Suite Comp, an executive and board pay analytics firm.

The median pay for CTOs rose 30.81% in 2024 from the previous year, to roughly \$2.4 million, according to the firm’s review of 3,930 public companies.

The base compensation for CIOs, meanwhile, is growing by roughly 20% to 30% according to Martha Heller, chief executive of IT executive recruiting firm Heller Search Associates. That is similar to findings from executive recruiter and consulting firm

Korn Ferry, which said total compensation for CIOs is increasing by 15% to 25%.

The 10 top-paid, currently employed IT executives, according to C-Suite Comp’s data, are from a variety of sectors, including financial services, retail, healthcare and logistics.

Some of the companies making the biggest payouts include financial services giants **Wells Fargo** and **Visa**, the warehouse-club chain **Costco Wholesale**, and healthcare products seller **Solventum**. Four of the CIOs are women. All but two of the companies—healthcare staffing firm **AMN Healthcare Services** and Linage, the world’s largest refrigerated-warehousing provider—are in the S&P 500.

One factor driving higher CIO and other tech execs’ pay is the importance of AI for businesses—whether using the technology inside their organizations or deploying it to transform their products and services for customers.

And there has been mounting pressure on technology leaders to show AI can produce business results.

“The reason total compensation is rising is because fear, uncertainty, doubt and desper-

ation has entered the board and executive suite,” Heller said. “They finally, with a push in AI, understand that this CIO role is important.”

Another reason CIO compensation is going up: These technology executives are simply taking on more work, and with it, adding more titles.

CIOs, traditionally relegated to managing back-office information-technology systems like data centers, cloud computing and business software, continue to take an increasing share of responsibility for business leadership.

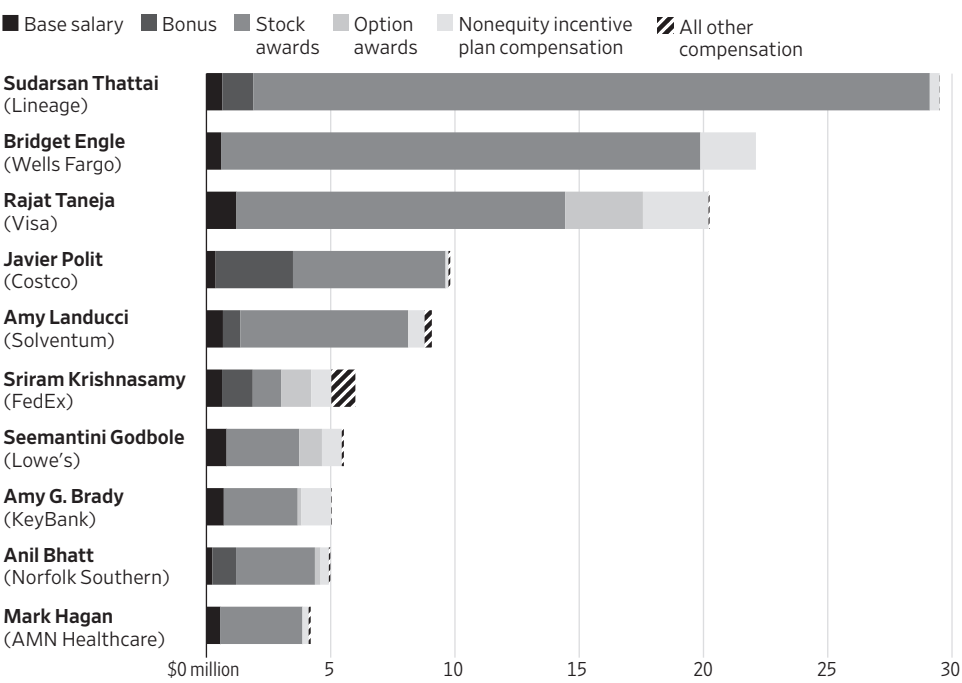
“Technology leaders have wised up,” said Alyse Egol, a senior client partner of Korn Ferry’s digital, technology and security officers practice. “They’re saying, ‘My value is above and beyond just keeping the machine running.’”

For the CIOs taking home the biggest paychecks, that comes with an increase in the number of titles they hold.

Seven of the 10 top-paid CIOs have more than one title, with six holding the dual titles of CIO and chief digital officer. Two of the top-paid CIOs also hold the title chief transformation officer.

FedEx’s **Sriram Krishnasamy** holds the titles of chief

Top CIOs’ total compensation for 2024



Source: C-Suite Comp

digital and information officer, and chief transformation officer. AMN Healthcare’s **Mark Hagan** holds the titles of chief information officer and chief digital officer, and in 2024, held additional responsibilities for operations before the arrival of its CFO and COO in November 2024, the company said.

Those roles tend to be more wide-ranging than traditional CIO roles, with added responsibility for business outcomes as a result of setting tech strategy, executive headhunters say.

“From a budget perspec-

tive, it’s two functional leaderships for the price of one,” said Heller. “When somebody reports to a CEO and they have a bunch of different titles, it means the CEO is considering them to be a partner.”

At the same time, not all tech roles at large enterprises are always held by one person.

Half of the over 600 senior-level U.S. technology leaders recently surveyed by Deloitte said they have four or more tech C-suite leaders at their organization. Deloitte is a sponsor of CIO Journal.

And the companies that do employ several tech execs tend

to spread out their paychecks between technology leaders, putting a damper on those executives’ compensation, said Victor Janulaitis, CEO of consulting firm Janco Associates.

While AI has boosted the paychecks of some CIOs, Korn Ferry’s Egol said it isn’t yet clear for every company how to tie AI projects with tech execs’ compensation.

“Companies are still trying to figure out what to do with it, and who has the real experience,” she said. “The jury’s still out about how it’s really going to tie into compensation in the long run.”

Hollywood, Tech Firms Fight on AI

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aren’t sure whether they will take any action because of the legal complexities and political downside of favoring one over the other, people familiar with the matter said. The action plan is expected to come out this month.

Judges sided with **Meta Platforms** and **Anthropic** in parts of two separate cases last week, finding that using copyright material to train AI models is fair use in some cases when the material is transformed into something dramatically different.

“It’s very important that we end up with a sensible fair use definition like the one the judge has come up with in this Anthropic case because otherwise we will lose the AI race to China,” White House AI Czar David Sacks said on the podcast he co-hosts.

Other aspects of the rulings

favored the copyright holders. Anthropic must face a separate trial about whether training on pirated content is legal. The judge in the Meta case said similar lawsuits could get a different result, particularly if creators show their sector was harmed by the AI training.

There are dozens more cases, and appeals are expected. So far, there hasn’t been a ruling on how artists and creators should be compensated for the outputs of AI systems.

Keith Kupferschmid, CEO of the Copyright Alliance, a non-

profit that advocates for creative industries and individuals, said the cases represented a mixed bag and “may create this copyright chaos for AI companies and copyright owners.”

AI Progress, a group of tech companies including **Meta**, **Google** and **Microsoft**, is expected to meet with administration officials on the topic in the coming weeks, people familiar with the meeting said.

During a recent meeting with the Motion Picture Association, **Sriram Krishnan**, the senior White House policy adviser on AI, characterized a

big part of his role as making sure the U.S. beats China in the AI race, according to people familiar with the meeting.

U.S. security officials met with tech companies including **Meta** this spring and convened discussions with the White House.

The security officials see copyright uncertainty as an issue that could slow the advancement of models or the deployment of the technology in the intelligence community, some administration officials said.

In May, President Trump

adired the librarian of Congress, who oversees the Copyright Office, in part because of worries that a report on AI and copyrights set to be published soon would favor copyright holders, people familiar with the matter said.

The following day, a draft of the report was published. Such reports aren’t legally binding but are often cited by judges.

The report said the legality of AI training depends on whether the models generate outputs substantially similar to the copyright material and if companies use pirated material.

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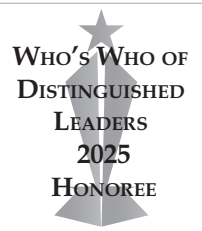
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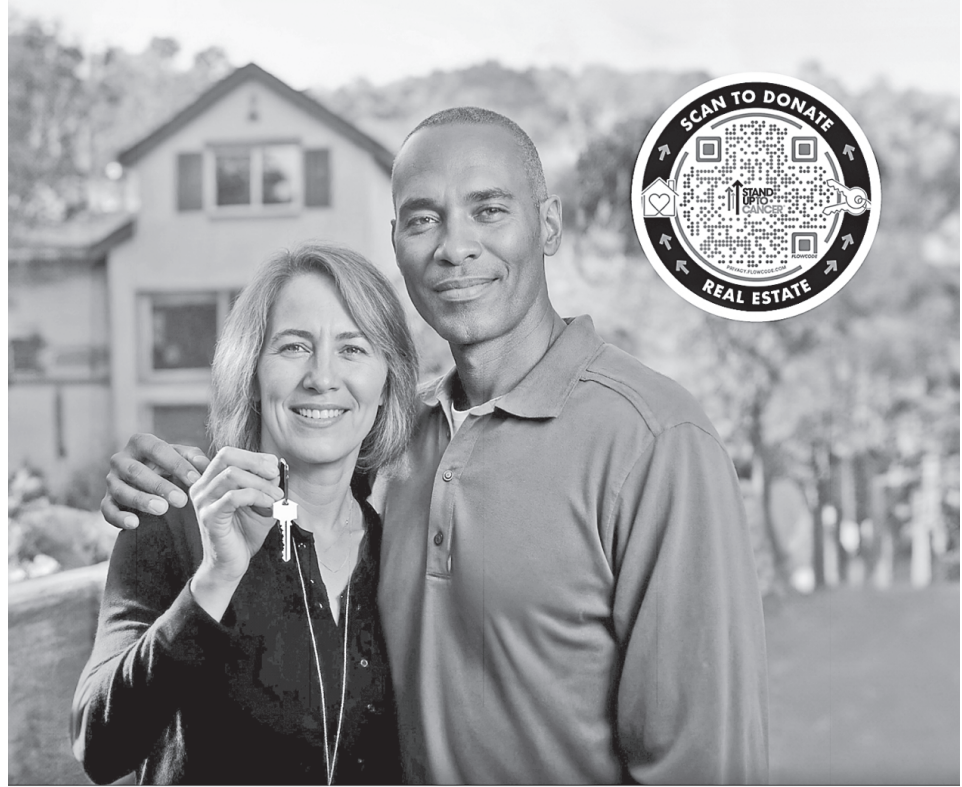
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