Cellebrite's 2026 Industry Trends Report Reveals Smartphones as the Leading Source of Digital Evidence in Investigations at 97%

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- *97% cite smartphones as top evidence source, up 24 points from 2024*
- *95% agree digital evidence increases solvability, yet 94% say complexity strains caseloads*
- *65% believe AI can accelerate investigations, but one-third say policies prevent its use*
- *Cloud receptiveness hit 42%, yet two-thirds still rely on physical media*

TYSONS CORNER, Va. and PETAH TIKVA, Israel, Feb. 5, 2026 /PRNewswire/ -- Cellebrite (NASDAQ: CLBT), a global leader in AI-powered Digital Investigative and Intelligence solutions for the public and private sectors, today unveiled its 2026 Industry Trends Report, which surveyed 1,200 practitioners across 63 countries, marking the company's seventh annual report on how organizations collect, manage and analyze digital evidence.

Smartphones: Critical to Investigations

Smartphones are more relevant to investigations than ever before, with 97% of investigators citing them as the top source of digital evidence, up 24 points from 73% in 2024. This increase mirrors public expectations, as 97% of agency managers say communities expect digital evidence to be used in most cases.

AI Adoption: Strong Interest, Uneven Policy Support

Artificial intelligence (AI) is an increasingly important technology for enhancing the speed and efficiency of investigations. Sixty-five percent of public safety respondents believe AI can accelerate investigations, yet nearly a third of these respondents report their agency's policies prevent AI's use. Two-thirds of respondents cite review time as the biggest barrier to moving cases, yet AI can solve this, with respondents agreeing one of its best features is quickly analyzing communications to identify links between people.

Public Safety: Capacity Strained as Digital Evidence Becomes Universal

Public safety findings show 95% agree digital evidence increases case solvability, while 94% say complexity is straining caseloads. However, only 62% of agency leaders are shifting resources from legacy to digital methods. This gap between recognition and action underscores the modernization challenge agencies face.

"The relationship between the public and the police is fundamental," stated Matt Scott, a U.K. Police and Crime Commissioner. "As new technology is introduced, it is important that the public's consent is sought and that appropriate safeguards are put in place to ensure that decision making remains in the hands of officers and staff. The relationship between the public and the police is fundamental. Any use of AI or automation in policing should follow consultation with the public and be applied only where appropriate and where it can responsibly support productivity."

"Digital evidence is increasingly where our investigations begin," said James Howe, Detective, Columbus, Ohio, Division of Police. "This modern reality has us rethinking our workflows across the agency, not just in the lab. Digital evidence shapes how our cases are built from day one."

"It's clear digital evidence is the backbone of modern justice," said David Gee, Chief Marketing Officer of Cellebrite. "Today's investigations involve an

exponential explosion of devices, data and complexity that agencies must manage. Their only choice to evolve is to mobilize and leverage technology that will help them process evidence efficiently, while preserving the accuracy and ensuring the defensibility of evidence on which the justice system relies."

Cloud Adoption Grows as Evidence-Sharing Risks Persist

Using the cloud to store and share digital evidence is steadily becoming essential for agencies of all sizes. Cloud receptiveness for digital evidence management reached 42% in 2026, up from 38% in 2025. Yet physical media remains the default option with two-thirds of respondents still sharing evidence via portable hard drives and USB sticks, creating chain of custody risks and slowing cross-agency collaboration.

Private Sector: Digital Investigations are Business-Critical

Private sector findings show investigations embedded across business operations, with a clear shift in AI adoption from strategic intent to practical application.

- Top use cases: eDiscovery (54%), data theft (46%) and network exploits (44%)
- Mobile data appears in 66% of investigations; computer storage and cloud data each appear in 46%
- 57% say AI-assisted communication analysis accelerates outcomes

"Organizations want to be better prepared, so investigations are no longer just about reacting after something happens," said Colin Duncan, eDiscovery Technologist at Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough, LLP. "Gaining a clear understanding of data across systems, devices, and applications in a consistent and defensible manner is essential. When used responsibly, AI enables teams to accelerate their work without compromising control or accountability."

Implications for Cellebrite

These trends have underpinned strong adoption of Cellebrite's evidence and case management investigative platform, Guardian, primarily among state and local law enforcement agencies in the United States, as well as in Latin America and the United Kingdom. In 2025, Guardian delivered triple-digit year-over-year growth across customers, users and data stored on the platform and was also recently made available to enterprise customers.

For more information, read Cellebrite's 2026 Industry Trends Reports for Public Safety and the Private Sector.

References to Websites and Social Media Platforms

References to information included on, or accessible through, websites and social media platforms do not constitute incorporation by reference of the information contained at or available through such websites or social media platforms, and you should not consider such information to be part of this press release.

About Cellebrite

Cellebrite's (Nasdaq: CLBT) mission is to protect communities, nations and businesses as a global leader in digital investigative and intelligence solutions. More than 7,000 global law enforcement agencies, defense and intelligence organizations and enterprises trust Cellebrite's AI-powered software portfolio to make forensically sound digital data more accessible and actionable. Cellebrite technology allows customers to accelerate more than 1.5 million legally sanctioned investigations annually, enhance sovereign security, elevate operational efficacy and efficiency and enable advanced mobile research and application security. Available via cloud, on-premises and hybrid deployments, Cellebrite's technology enables its customers around the globe to advance their missions, elevate public safety and safeguard data privacy. To learn more, visit us at www.cellebrite.com.

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