blancco

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2025 State of Data Sanitization Report

With 7 actionable strategies
for IT, compliance, and ESG leaders

What Secure Data Disposal Looks Like Now

In 2025, the pressures surrounding **data security**, **regulatory compliance**, **data disposal**, **AI deployment**, and **sustainability** have converged.

BASED ON INSIGHTS FROM

2,000

global IT and sustainability leaders,

we've highlighted how these key trends are affecting secure data disposal at data and asset end of life.

What follows are insights and strategies to ensure greater security at asset and data finish lines, including decisions that can benefit your organization's ESG goals.

Data regulations were the biggest driver of data disposition behavior changes in 2024.

Sustainability goals were second.

Sustainability reporting requirements

such as the EU's Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) are expected to have

international impact.

AS OF JANUARY 2025

144

countries + 20 U.S. states

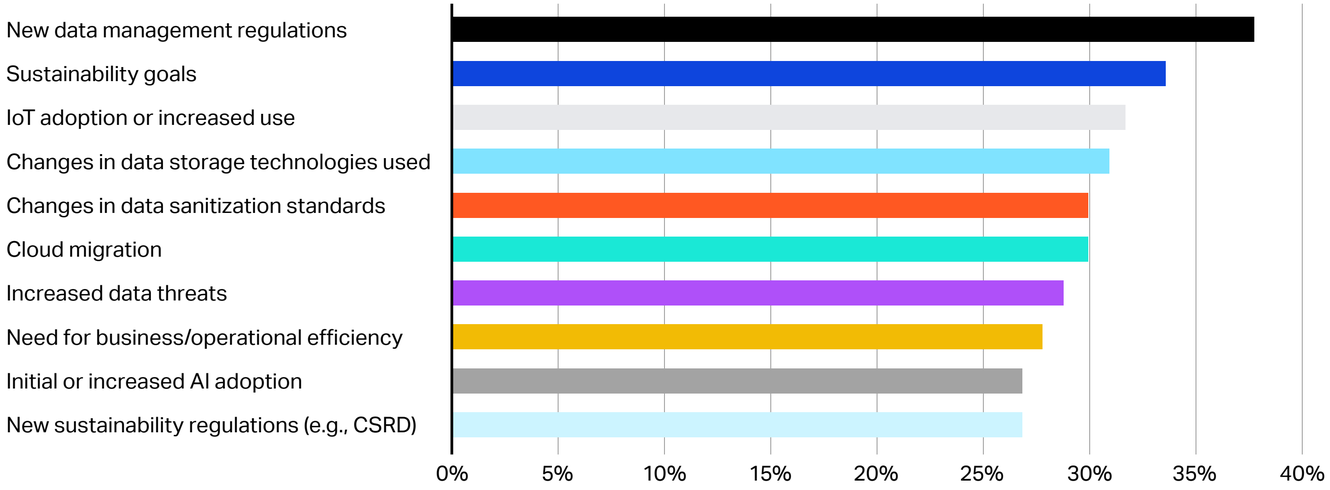
now have data privacy and protection regulations in place.

AI

regulations

are steadily being implemented.

Top 10 factors most impacting end-of-life data management changes over the past 12 months



Importantly, data sanitization also reinforces protection against data breaches.

54%
of respondents

whose organizations had experienced data breaches or leaks cited phishing attacks as the most prevalent cause.

Yet improper network configuration, typically a passive event leading to accidental data exposure, was involved

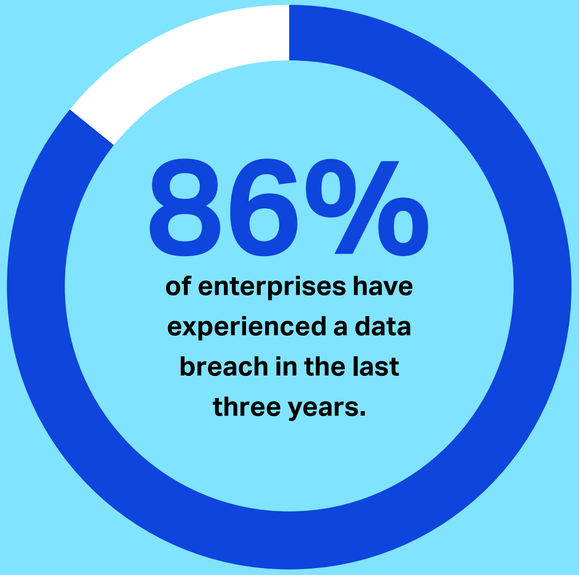
46%
of the time.

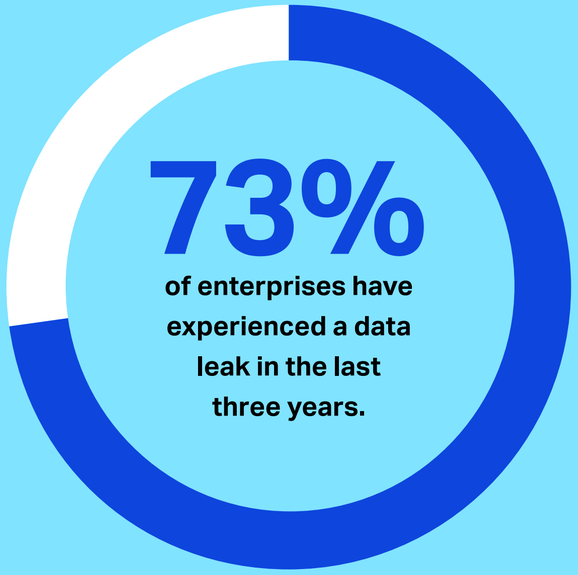
Both malicious and unintended data exposure is worsened if too much data is available.

RESOURCES

- Are Your 'Deleted' Files Truly Gone?
- Hyperscale Data Center Solutions for Confident Decommissioning
- Secure Data Disposal: Drive Destruction or Erasure?

How often do organizations suffer data compromise?





ACTION 01

Invest with Strategic Intent

Achieve greater returns and efficiencies by pairing your investment with updated policies, better hardware decisions, and aligned cross-functional teams.

58%

of enterprises

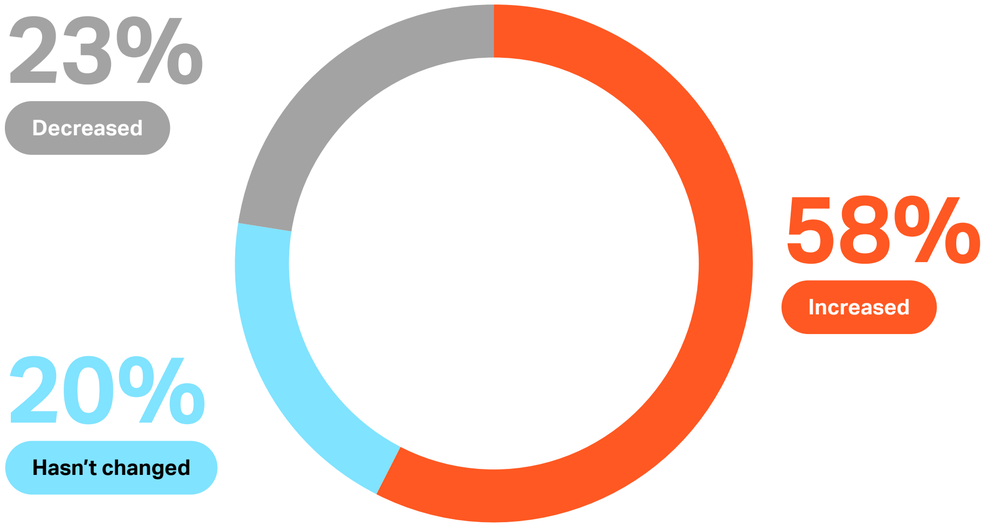
increased compliance-related investment in the past year by an average of 46%.

There's no single investment trigger.

For most, it's the accumulation of new rules, new technologies, and mounting expectations around responsible data and hardware disposal.

Compliance budgets are growing—but strategy must keep up.

Level of investment in data privacy and protection compliance compared to 12 months ago



ACTION 02

Sanitize Smarter, Not Harder

Reduce e-waste and get more out of your IT with verifiable erasure methods. Certified erasure delivers security and compliance without physical destruction.

The latest storage

sanitization standard,

IEEE-2883, discourages shredding, pulverizing, and crushing due to security concerns.

Nearly half of destroyed

data center devices

were functional at the time of destruction—for laptops and desktops, nearly a third were.

Across all device types,

lifespans were cut by roughly

50%

Secure data more effectively. Stop shredding good devices. Extract more value.

Hardware disposition snapshot

Smartphones/Tablets

34% Destroyed	37% Erased for reuse	42% Still functional at destruction

Laptops/Desktops

41% Destroyed	34% Erased for reuse	32% Still functional at destruction

Data Center Assets

49% Destroyed	32% Erased for reuse	47% Still functional at destruction

ACTION 03

Close Policy vs. Practice Gaps

Ensure your policies and practices are based on current technical standards like NIST 800-88 and IEEE 2883.

96%

have or are developing data destruction policies

—yet many still reference the outdated DoD 5220.22 standard.

Only

37%

of IT and ESG leaders were aware of NIST 800-88, the most globally accepted standard on end-of-life asset sanitization.

Only

36%

were aware of IEEE 2883-2022, which, together with ISO 27040, addresses newer technologies, such as those relevant to AI and IoT processing.

Even fewer are required to comply.

Policies are in place—but do they point to up-to-date practices?

Which of the following are you required to comply with?

COUNTRY	IEEE 2883	NIST SP 800-88	DoD 5220.22
US	12%	15%	6%
UK	22%	17%	13%
France	12%	13%	10%
Germany	16%	16%	15%
Japan	24%	36%	16%
Singapore	25%	20%	12%
Australia	27%	23%	18%
India	30%	31%	15%

Learn more about these critical data sanitization standards with our best practice, "DoD, NIST, or IEEE? Choosing the Most Secure Option from Modern Data Sanitization Standards," available on the Blancco website.

Learn more →

ACTION 04

Bring ESG Leaders to the Table

Increasing alignment on up-to-date asset and data sanitization methods advances corporate IT security and ESG goals.

RESOURCES

- 7 Global ESG Regulations & Frameworks You Should Know in 2025
- Cutting the Carbon Footprint of Enterprise Data Storage
- Research: Corporate Sustainability & End-of-Life Data

Sustainability was a

major catalyst

for end-of-life data management changes—second only to data regulations.

64%

of respondents

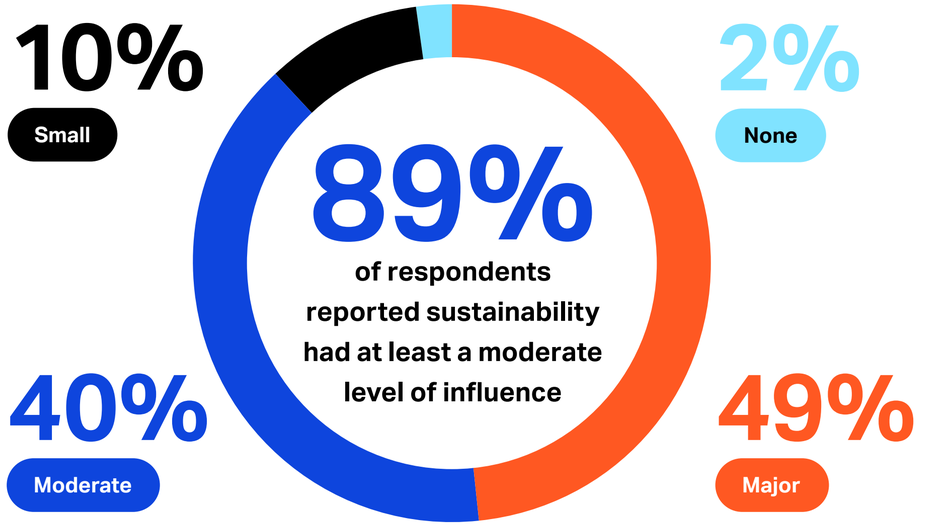
agree there's a shared understanding that data sanitization reduces IT's environmental footprint.

However, only

1 in 10

organizations involve sustainability roles in data or asset disposal decisions.

Environmental sustainability's influence on end-of-life data or device processing decisions



Collaborate early for win-win outcomes.

ACTION 05

Prioritize ROT Data Elimination

Reducing ROT data cuts risk and cost—
and improves AI data quality.

RESOURCES

→ Best practices for eliminating ROT data

The good news is, enterprises are being proactive about their data sanitization. The most common trigger for data destruction is when it is redundant, obsolete, or trivial (ROT), and retention periods and usefulness of data are also used.

Yet organizations still hold too much—respondents estimated that

24%

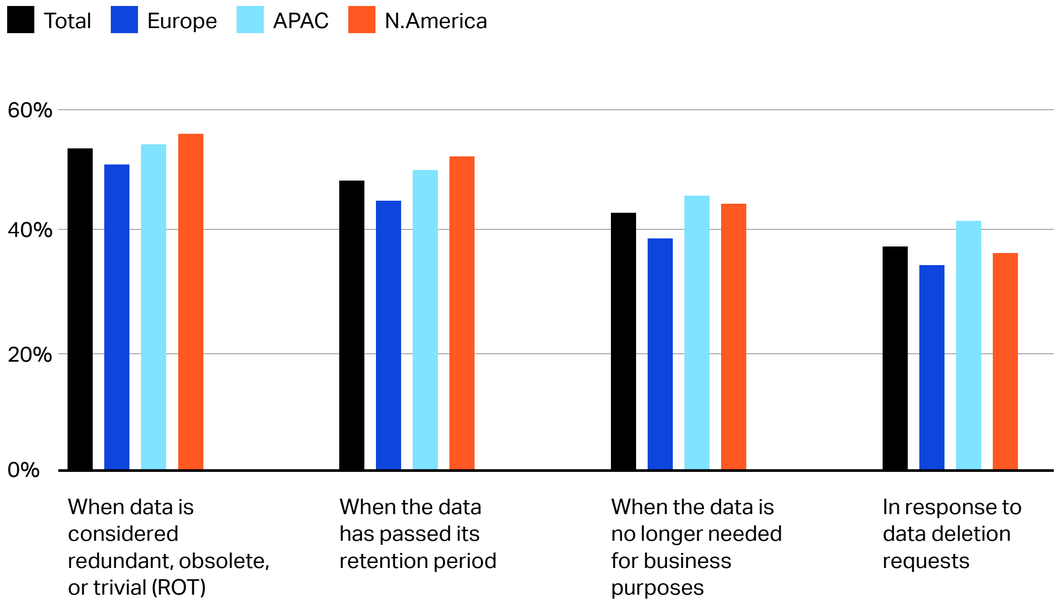
of stored data is ROT data.

Furthermore, only

21%

of data is tagged or classified, making it difficult to eliminate data efficiently.

When do you schedule data destruction in active environments?



Unclassified data is a risk—and a cost.

ACTION 06

Track AI's Impact on Data Practices

AI adds complexity and compliance risk.
Governance must evolve with usage.

Globally,

83%

of organizations have deployed some form of AI.

More than half

of respondents

said AI helped define retention rules.

Almost half

said AI reduced

redundant, obsolete, or trivial (ROT) data and improved compliance.

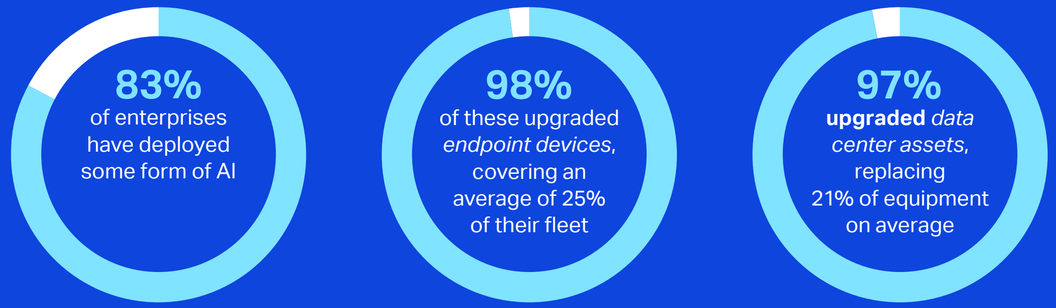
But

27%

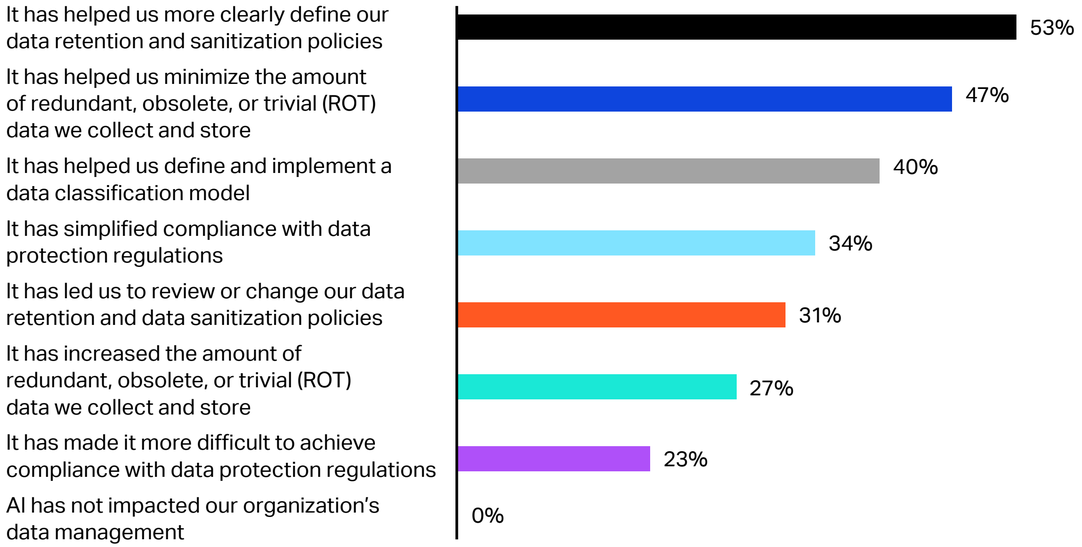
reported more ROT; 23% reported more compliance difficulty.

AI is reshaping data management—for better and worse.

Most large global enterprises upgraded their tech to accommodate AI deployment



How has the introduction of AI impacted your organization's data management?



ACTION 07

Insist on Verification & Certification

Verified, certified data erasure protects data, preserves device value, and supports ESG initiatives.

Certified erasure that aligns with modern standards like NIST 800-88, IEEE 2883 and ISO/IEC 27040 should be the default for all devices, but especially those that will be reused.

25% of laptops

and 19% of data center drives that are refurbished lack certified erasure—a major compliance and security gap.

For **17%**

of respondents who experienced data breaches or leaks, redeployed assets with left-behind sensitive data were involved.

Otherwise, reuse or resale can lead to unwanted data exposure.

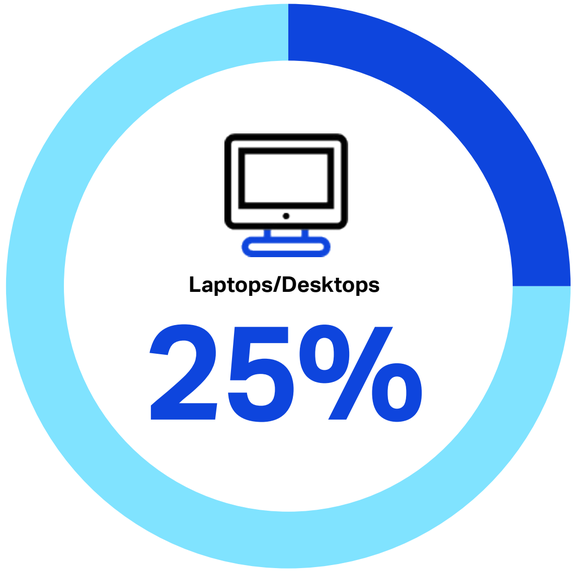
BLANCCO HAS

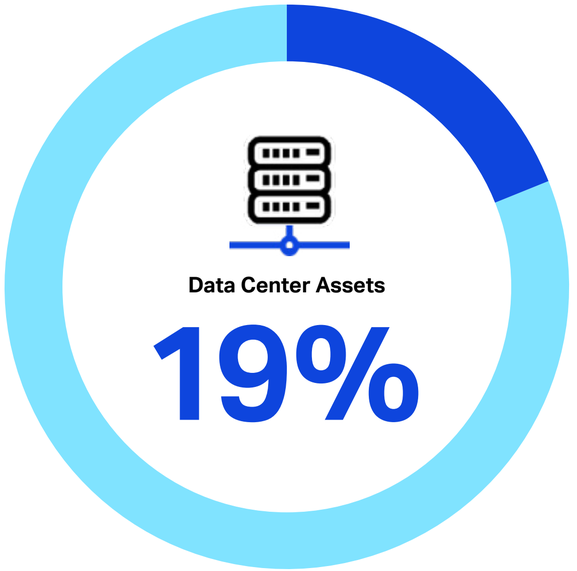
securely erased more than

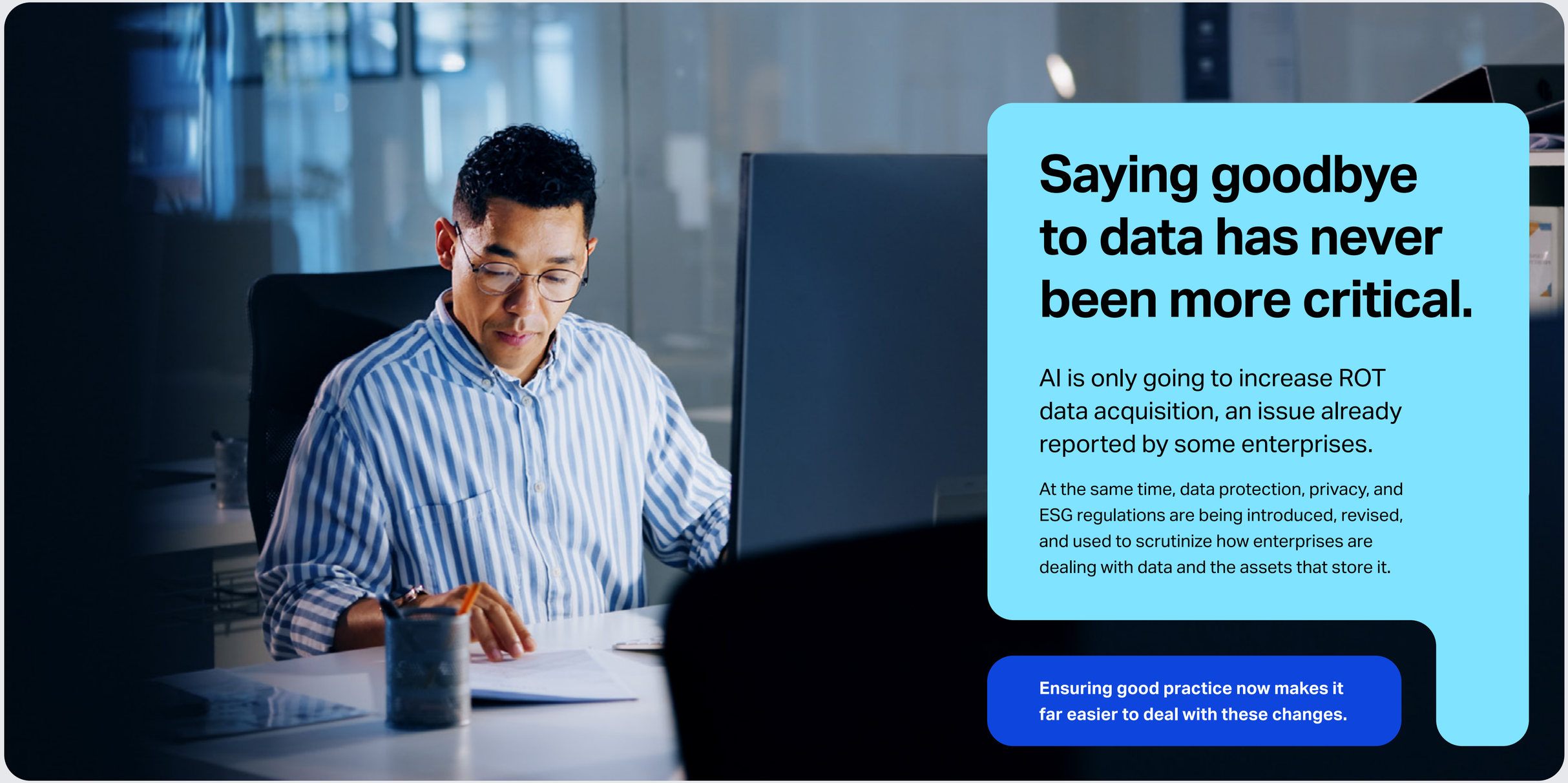
250 million

devices with 0 data breaches.

% of devices that are refurbished without certified erasure







Saying goodbye to data has never been more critical.

AI is only going to increase ROT data acquisition, an issue already reported by some enterprises.

At the same time, data protection, privacy, and ESG regulations are being introduced, revised, and used to scrutinize how enterprises are dealing with data and the assets that store it.

Ensuring good practice now makes it far easier to deal with these changes.

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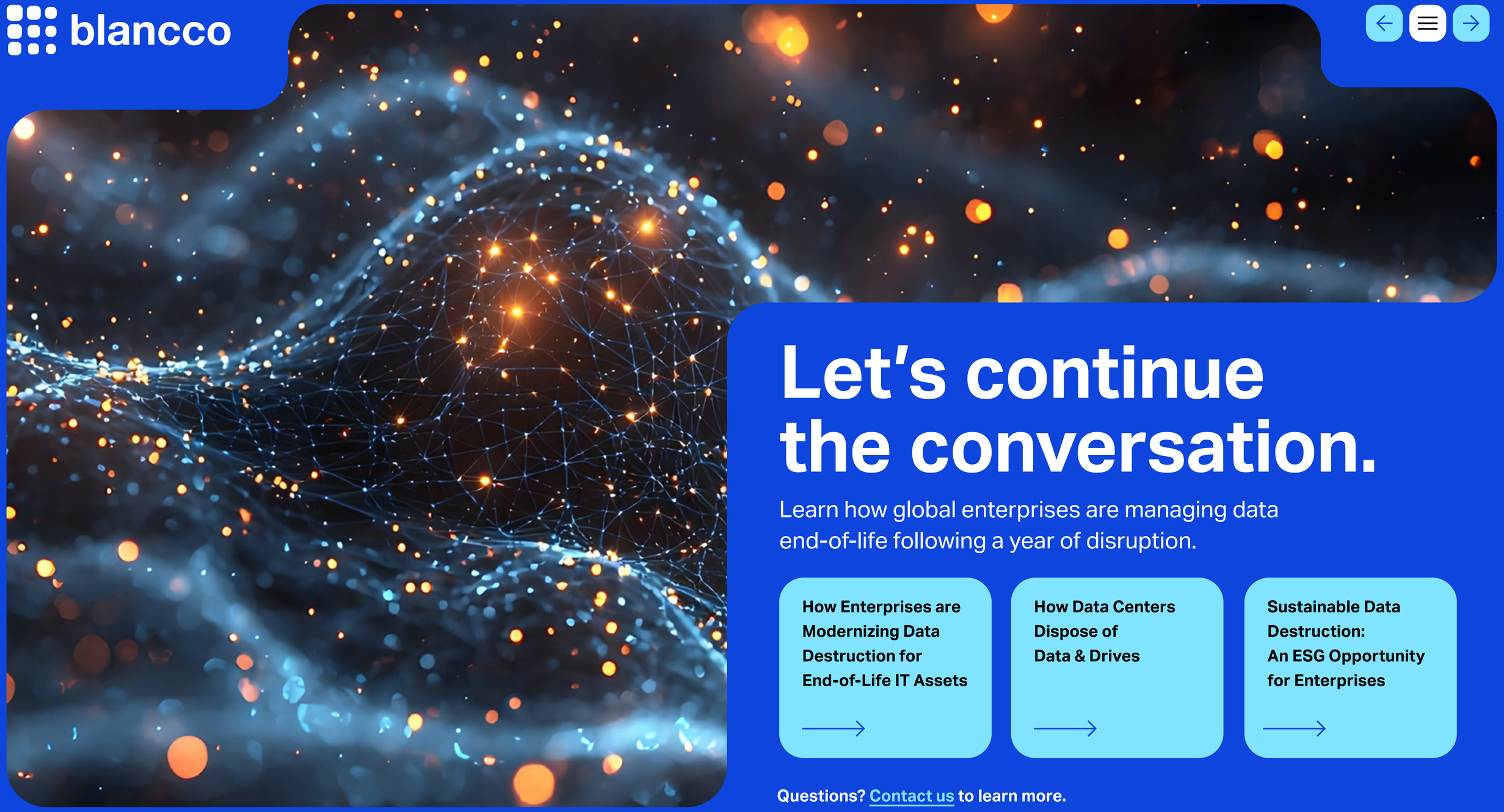

Let’s continue the conversation.

Learn how global enterprises are managing data end-of-life following a year of disruption.

How Enterprises are Modernizing Data Destruction for End-of-Life IT Assets →

How Data Centers Dispose of Data & Drives →

Sustainable Data Destruction: An ESG Opportunity for Enterprises →

Questions? Contact us to learn more.