



BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE REPORT

Stay ahead of the curve with our exclusive newsletter, delivering the latest insights on cybersecurity, emerging tech, financial trends, venture capital, private equity, and family office strategies. Whether you're an investor, entrepreneur, or industry professional, our expert analysis keeps you informed and empowered.

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KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Artificial intelligence is transforming finance and cybersecurity with applications in fraud detection, personalized financial advice, and customer service.
 - Global cyberattacks increased by 44% year-over-year, with organizations adopting Zero Trust Architecture to address remote work and hybrid cloud security challenges.
 - The Ashford Inc. data breach highlights the need for transparency and robust security measures.
 - Private equity focuses on technology, healthcare, and clean energy, with ESG metrics playing a central role.
 - Venture capital is increasingly targeting specialized areas like cybersecurity, generative AI, and green technology.
 - Embedded finance is gaining traction by integrating financial services into non-financial platforms, and expanding convenience and revenue streams.
 - Venture capital is prioritizing healthcare tech, climate tech, and blockchain, with continued interest in decentralized finance and supply chain applications.
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THE BUZZ

UAE tech industry poised for record growth in 2025 with \$3.8 billion revenue increase

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Meta to lay off 3,600 employees; have decided to raise the bar, say Mark Zuckerberg

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Asia markets mostly fall as investors assess U.S. inflation data, Japan business sentiment

Asia-Pacific markets mostly fell Wednesday, following a softer-than-expected inflation data from the U.S. that sent two key Wall Street benchmarks higher overnight.

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Microsoft Uncovers macOS Vulnerability CVE-2024-44243 Allowing Rootkit Installation

According to an analysis from Microsoft Threat Intelligence that was released this week. The vulnerability could allow adversaries to bypass the macOS System Integrity Protection (SIP) restrictions, which limit operations that are detrimental to a device's security.

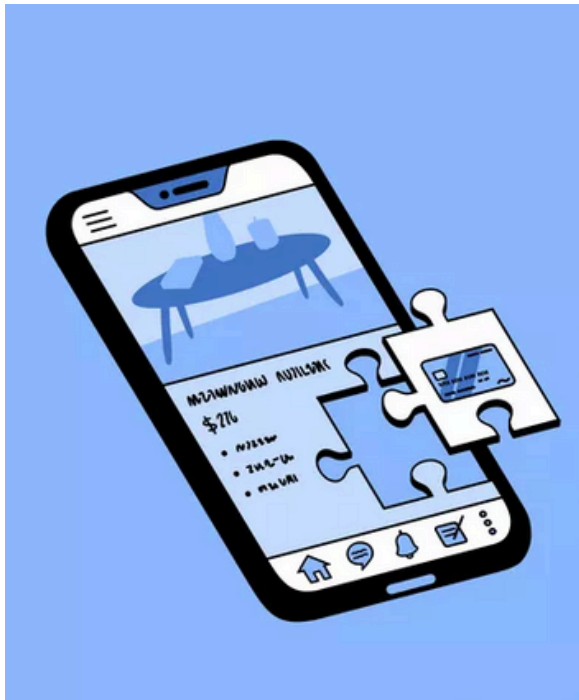
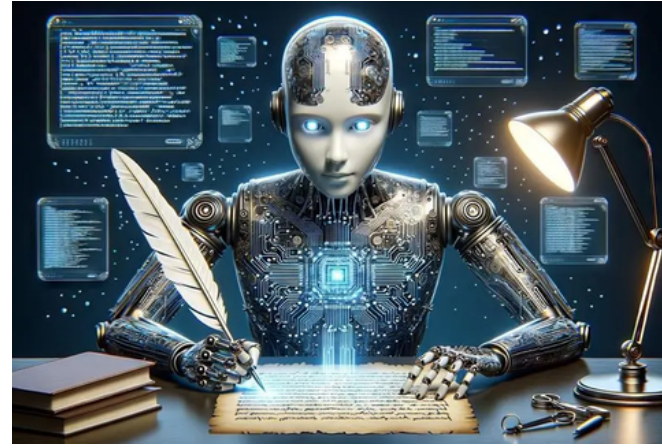
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FINANCIAL TRENDS

Trends For January 2025

The Rise of Generative AI: Generative AI rapidly transforms the financial landscape. Its applications range from creating personalized financial advice tailored to individual investor profiles and risk tolerances to automating complex tasks like fraud detection. AI algorithms can analyze vast datasets to identify patterns and anomalies, enabling more accurate risk assessments and proactive fraud prevention. Furthermore, AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants are revolutionizing customer service, providing instant answers to financial inquiries and offering personalized guidance on budgeting, saving, and investing. As AI technology continues to evolve, we can expect even more innovative applications in the financial sector, leading to increased efficiency, enhanced customer experiences, and new avenues for growth.



The Continued Growth of Embedded Finance: Embedded finance is gaining significant traction, blurring the lines between traditional financial institutions and other sectors. This trend involves seamlessly integrating financial services into non-financial platforms, making them readily accessible to consumers within their existing digital ecosystems. For example, e-commerce platforms may offer instant loans to customers at the point of purchase, while ride-sharing apps could provide micro-loans to drivers. This trend enhances convenience for consumers, expands access to financial services, and creates new revenue streams for businesses. As technology continues to advance, we can expect to see even more innovative examples of embedded finance, further transforming the way we interact with financial services.

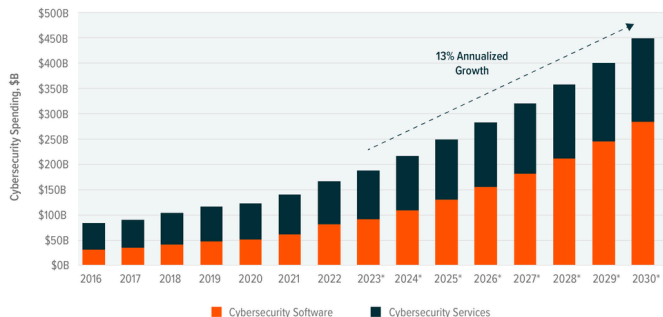
THE CYBER PULSE

The Changing Landscape of Cyber

Rise of Generative AI-Powered Cyberattacks:

Check Point Software Technologies Ltd., a pioneer and global leader in cyber security solutions, today released its annual report, The State of Global Cyber Security 2025. With an alarming 44% increase in global cyber-attacks year-over-year, the report unveils new cyber trends, emerging threat actor tactics, and actionable CISO guidance for navigating this changing landscape unscathed. These attacks include sophisticated phishing emails, deepfakes for social engineering, and even the creation of malware. Organisations are scrambling to adapt their defences to this new threat landscape.

GLOBAL CYBERSECURITY SPENDING FORECASTED TO GROW TO \$450 BILLION BY 2030
Sources: Global X estimates with data from Gartner (2023, Sep 28) Gartner Forecasts Global Security and Risk Management Spending to Grow 14% in 2024.



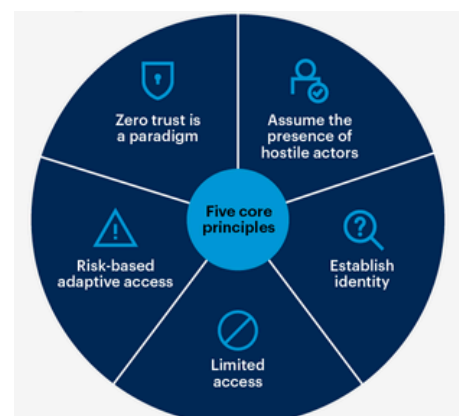
Most Recent Data Breach of 2025:

Ashford Inc. Data Breach: In 2023, asset manager Ashford Inc., serving the hospitality industry, experienced a cyberattack compromising the sensitive data of approximately 46,000 individuals, including identity card photos and bank details. A ransomware attack affected 22 hotels on September 20, 2023. The company initially indicated no customer information was breached; however, the SEC found otherwise, leading to Ashford altering its disclosures in later filings. In January 2025, Ashford settled SEC charges related to misleading disclosures about the breach, agreeing to a \$115,231 civil penalty without admitting guilt.



Zero Trust Architecture: This security model assumes no one or device should be trusted implicitly, regardless of their location or network access. It enforces strict access controls and continuous verification, enhancing security posture in today's increasingly distributed and remote work environments.

Zero Trust is a framework for securing infrastructure and data for today's modern digital transformation. It uniquely addresses the modern challenges of today's business, including securing remote workers, hybrid cloud environments, and ransomware threats. While many vendors have tried to create their definitions of Zero Trust, several standards from recognized organizations can help you align Zero Trust with your organisation.

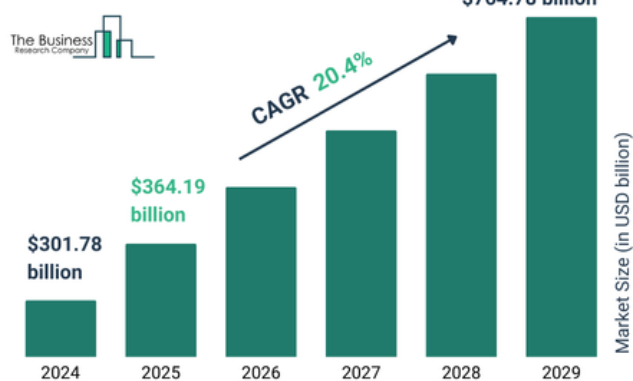


VENTURE CAPITAL SPOTLIGHT

Market Dynamics 2025

In 2025, the venture capital market is experiencing notable shifts that are redefining its dynamics. The era of frequent billion-dollar mega-deals is gradually giving way to a more cautious approach, with an emphasis on smaller, strategic funding rounds. These smaller investments allow VCs to focus on sustainable growth and more attainable valuations, reflecting a departure from the hypergrowth mindset of previous years. The IPO market, after a prolonged slowdown, is beginning to rebound, providing a renewed path for liquidity and exits. This resurgence is supported by advancements in sectors like artificial intelligence and climate technology, which continue to attract investor enthusiasm. Meanwhile, corporate spin-offs, such as Intel Capital becoming an independent entity, illustrate a trend toward operational specialization and external capital sourcing. These market dynamics collectively signal a more pragmatic and targeted approach to venture capital, balancing growth ambitions with the realities of a shifting economic environment.

Venture Capital Investment Global Market Report 2025



Shifts in Investment Focus:

- **Specialised Investments:** VCs are pivoting from general-purpose startups to niche, infrastructure-based ventures. Areas such as cybersecurity, generative AI, and green technology are particularly attractive.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI remains a dominant focus, with startups leveraging AI for healthcare, logistics, and financial services receiving significant funding.
- **Sustainable and Impact Investing:** VCs are increasingly emphasizing Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) metrics, aligning investments with sustainability and ethical practices.

Emerging Sectors in Venture Capital (2025)

In 2025, venture capital is focusing on high-impact sectors like healthcare technology, climate tech, and blockchain. Biotech and telemedicine continue to attract funding, while renewable energy and carbon capture gain traction amid growing sustainability priorities. Despite past volatility, blockchain and Web3 remain key areas, especially in decentralised finance and supply chains. These sectors highlight a shift toward investments with both financial and societal returns.

