

The numbers everyone quotes, *and where they fall apart*

Four things about digital twins can be verified at primary source. Four of the most-repeated statistics in this field cannot. Knowing which is which is worth more than any forecast — and it is the difference between a business case that survives a board meeting and one that does not.

EVERY ENTRY READ AT SOURCE · MEASURED RESULT AND PROJECTION NEVER BLENDED · NOTHING QUOTED WE CANNOT TRACE

Treat any confident industry-wide ROI number — including one pointed at you by us — as a forecast until someone shows you the method behind it.

WHAT IS ACTUALLY EVIDENCED

- **Four weeks to three days.** BMW Group, in its own press release, June 2025: collision checks in production planning cut from roughly four weeks to three days. The clearest published before-and-after we could verify at source. BMW separately states twins are in use across 30+ production sites. *Measured result.*
- **A factory commissioned before it existed.** BMW reached virtual start of production at its Debrecen plant roughly two years before real operations began. The whole factory was rehearsed in simulation first. *Measured result.*
- **A shared maturity language.** TM Forum defines Autonomous Networks on a six-level scale, L0 to L5 — the same shape as automotive autonomy. Useful because it gives operators a common vocabulary for where they actually are. TM Forum's Catalyst projects now pair digital twins with agentic AI specifically to reach the higher levels. *Framework.*
- **Policy is pointed here.** Web 4.0 and virtual worlds are the subject of a formal European Commission strategy, COM(2023) 442 final, 11 July 2023. Worth knowing mainly because it signals where regulation and funding go next. *Policy document.*

THE GAP NOBODY ADVERTISES

We went looking for an independent, non-vendor study measuring return across a population of digital-twin deployments. There is not one. Every credible measured result in this field is a single organisation reporting on itself — useful, but not a benchmark.

STATISTICS WE WILL NOT QUOTE AT YOU

- **"65% less downtime and \$52M in annual savings."** Quoted everywhere, always crediting the same 2019 vendor article. We fetched that article: it contains none of those numbers. Aggregator to aggregator, no traceable primary source.
- **"75% of organisations implementing IoT already use digital twins."** The underlying survey found 13% actually using them and 62% planning to. The 75% adds the intenders to the doers — a forecast wearing the clothes of a measurement.
- **"The market will reach \$X billion by 20XX."** One search returns four mutually contradictory forecasts. None of them tells you whether a twin is right for your plant.
- **"CDBB is building the UK National Digital Twin."** Out of date since September 2022 — that programme moved into government. Still repeated in current marketing.

If a supplier quotes you one of these, ask where it came from.

THE TREND THAT ACTUALLY MATTERS

AI needs a sandbox of your reality. Language models learned from a corpus of text that already existed. There is no equivalent corpus for your plant, your network or your organisation — so an AI that has to act in your physical world needs somewhere to practise on it.

The situations that matter — the failure at peak load, the reconfiguration nobody has tried, two systems that were never designed to meet — have mostly never happened, and you would not want them to happen for the first time in production. The data has to be manufactured. That is what a twin is for once AI is in the picture: not a visualisation, an environment.