QualityClouds

QUALITY BENCHMARK REPORT



2025

THE SERVICENOW QUALITY BENCHMARK

Patterns, Risks & Best Practices

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Quality Clouds

About Quality Clouds for ServiceNow

Quality Clouds is a SaaS platform for automated governance in ServiceNow and other low-code environments.

Trusted by global enterprises and consulting partners, Quality Clouds offers a portal to platform teams to track quality, compliance, and technical debt across the full development lifecycle - reporting clearly on cost and efficiency to C-level leaders.

It also provides tools for developers to follow these rules in-app and in their IDEs with instant feedback, stopping bad code, risky config, and AI logic before production- so enterprises can scale safely and stay compliant.

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The Problem We Address

Technical Debt Accumulation

Costly and Delayed Upgrades

Security Exposure

Inconsistent Developer Practices

With the rise of AI-assisted development tools such as GitHub Copilot and ServiceNow's own Generative AI features, organizations are rapidly increasing the volume of generated code being deployed to production.

While these tools enhance developer productivity, they can also introduce poor patterns, security risks, or non-compliant logic without visibility.

As ServiceNow becomes more deeply embedded in enterprise operations, platforms often drift from out-of-the-box standards.

Manual code reviews and audit-based governance are too slow to scale, especially in hybrid teams with varied skill levels.



How We Solve the Problem



Quality Clouds solves common platform challenges by providing:

- Continuous analysis of code and configuration generated by AI assistants and developers, ensuring alignment with organizational best practices before it's deployed
- Real-time feedback via IDE and in-platform plugins
- Historical dashboards and quality KPIs
- Automated enforcement of organizational rules

Key Concepts in This Report

Quality Gates
Governance checkpoints that evaluate configuration elements or update sets before promotion. Violations are flagged in real time, allowing teams to justify, fix, or write off issues.

OOTB Modifications
Changes made to out-of-the-box ServiceNow components. Excessive changes here can increase upgrade friction and long-term costs.

Technical Debt
Effort required to fix quality issues introduced during development. This report estimates debt based on severity and time-to-fix for each issue.

Scope of Analysis



This report provides an anonymized, data-driven analysis of ServiceNow configuration and issue patterns across four large enterprise instances.

The findings offer insights into platform health, governance maturity, technical debt, and the evolving trade-offs between customization and configuration. It is intended for platform owners, enterprise architects, and governance leads who want to benchmark their own ServiceNow footprint and quality posture against anonymized industry peers.

The analysis was powered by the Quality Clouds Portal and toolset which offers several specialized views that analyze customizations, configurations, usage, and trends.

At the end of this report, you will find more information on the capabilities behind this report.

If you have any questions about the report or need further details, please feel free to contact us here.

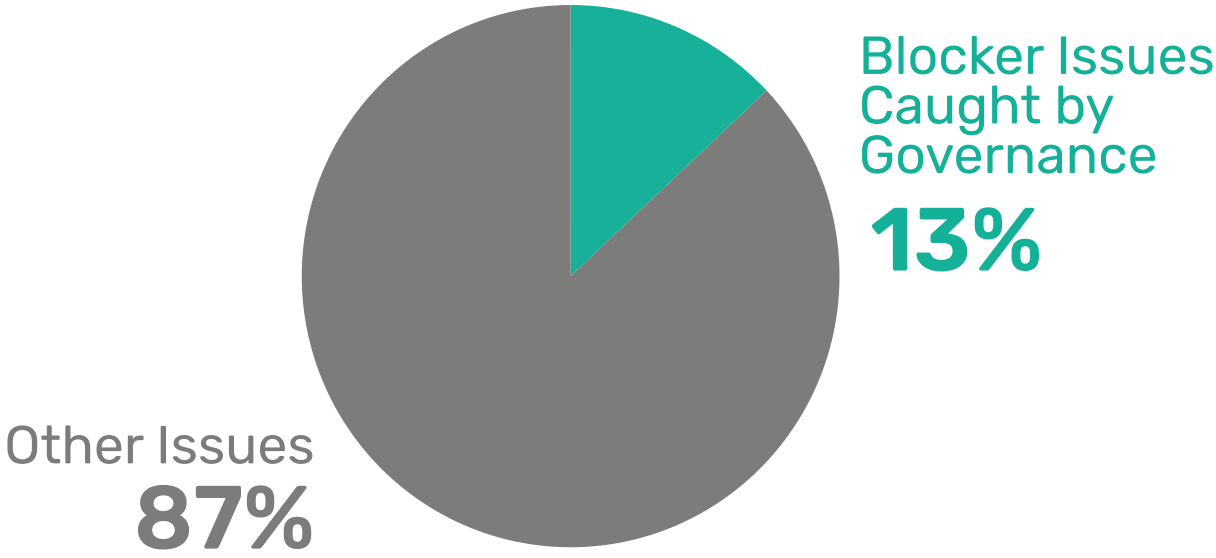
1. GOVERNANCE MATURITY & RISK EXPOSURE

Shift to Active Governance

Custom Rule Adoption

Governance **Gaps**

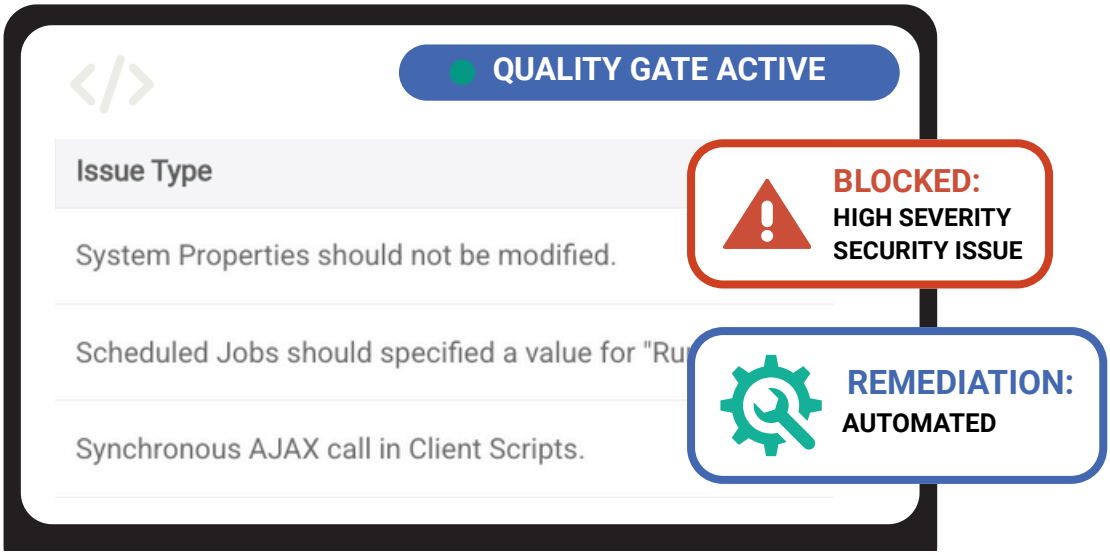
Shift to Active Governance



Quality Clouds' Portal, with its own Quality Gates working across more than 1,000 rules validated by Fortune 500 input, indicates a clear move from after-the-fact audits toward real-time governance.

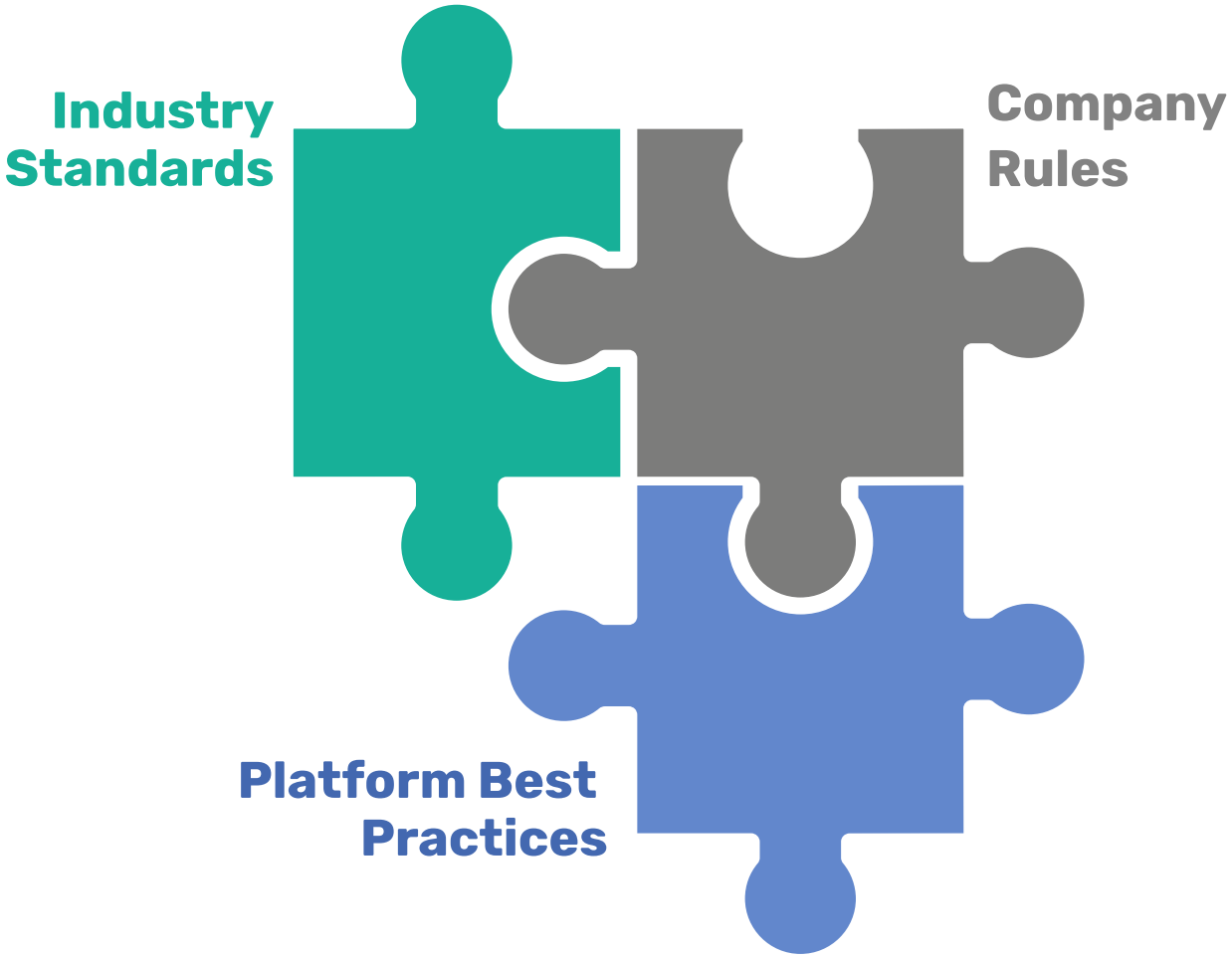
In several large ServiceNow environments, around 13% of all flagged issues were stopped before reaching production because they were identified as "blockers" by the Quality Gate**.**

This illustrates how **governance is increasingly being built directly into the development process,** reducing the chance of errors and rework.



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Custom Rule Adoption



We see growing use of the custom rule creation ability in the Quality Clouds Portal, with organizations moving beyond out-of-the-box checks to align governance with their industry and company KPIs rather than only following vendor defaults.

Examples range from simple naming conventions to advanced rulesets that maintain alignment across shifting development teams.

This trend shows that ServiceNow teams are not just following generic guidelines, but are starting to **institutionalize their own best practices so that every developer, across multiple teams and geographies, works to the same quality bar.**

Governance Gaps



The Code Monitor in the Quality Clouds Portal shows that, despite these improvements, the data also highlights areas for continued attention.

Some large enterprises show a high number of issues compared to the number of changes they release, which points to less disciplined processes.

Others make only a few changes but still carry a backlog of existing problems, showing that legacy technical debt is being surfaced but not yet consistently prioritized for remediation.

This reflects a broader industry trend:

Visibility is improving, but the next maturity step is to translate that visibility into systematic action with tools in place.

2. TECHNICAL DEBT & ISSUE LANDSCAPE

The Cost of Hidden Issues

Moving From Discovery to **Prevention**

Where **Issues** Cluster

Impact Areas

The Cost of Hidden Issues

5,300
Issues
(Per Instance)

700
Hours
(To Fix)

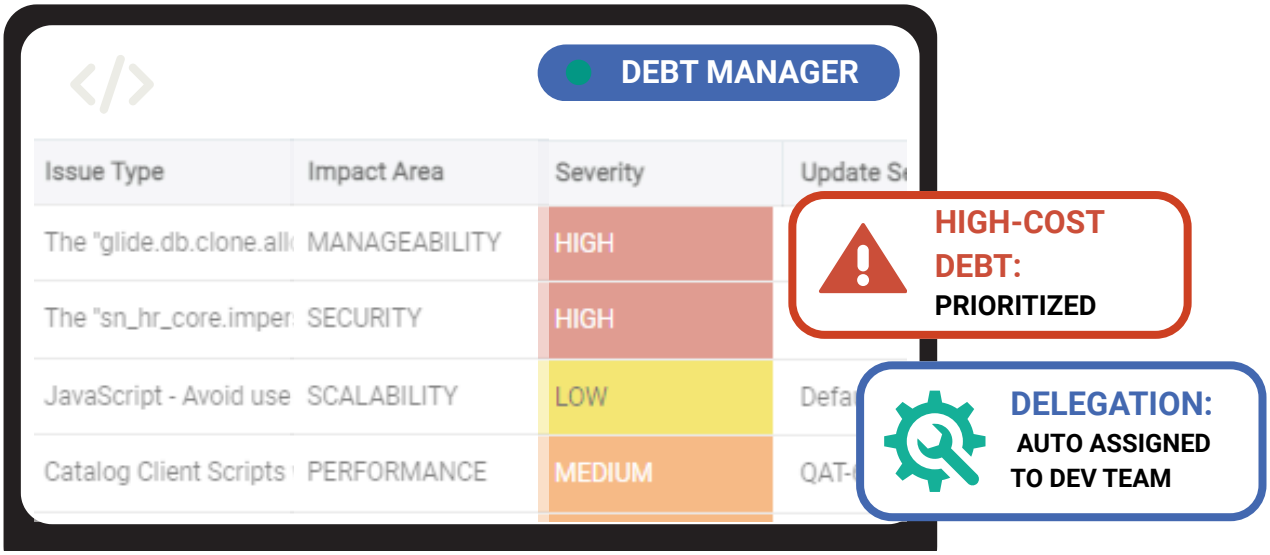
$35,000
Technical Debt
(Per Environment)

Min 4× higher if fixed after production

The data from our Debt Manager analysis, designed to help platform leaders understand the scale and cost of technical debt, shows that on average, large ServiceNow instances contain around 5,300 open issues each, with a remediation effort equivalent to ~700 hours per instance.

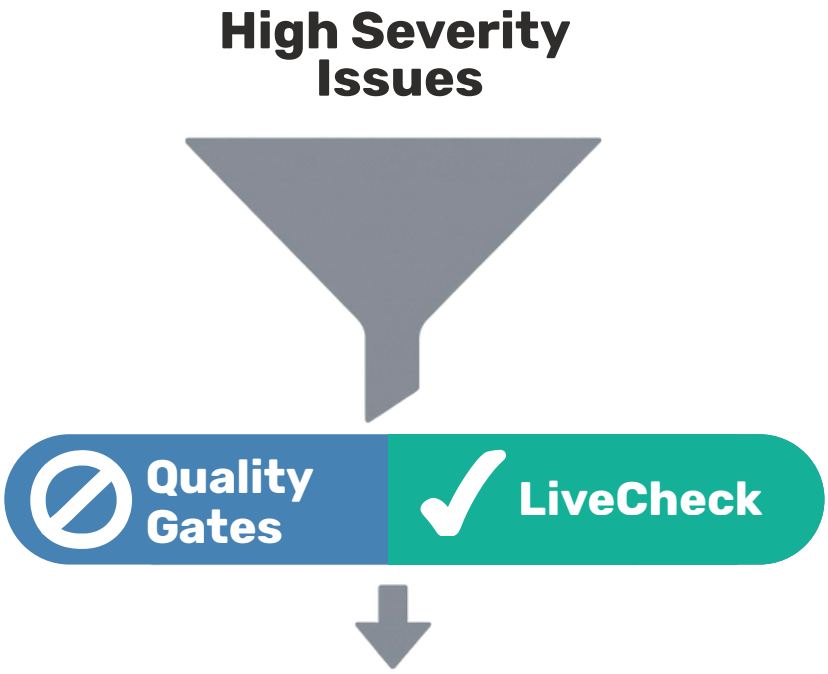
At typical resource costs ($50/hour), this translates to an average of $35,000 of technical debt per environment, and potentially four times that across a full development lifecycle.

This means that **even seemingly small quality issues, if not addressed early, can quickly compound into significant time and financial overhead for enterprises running large ServiceNow platforms.**



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Moving From Discovery to Prevention



Analysis shows that many high-severity issues could have been prevented earlier.

For example, a high-severity issue takes only ~20 minutes to fix if caught during development, but can cost hours or even days to resolve once it reaches production.

By using Quality Clouds' LiveCheck feedback and Quality Gates, teams that act early are reducing the number of issues that escape into live environments.

The takeaway is simple: most of these problems are easy to deal with if they are spotted, blocked, and fixed on the spot — but the real maturity comes from **knowing which issues to block and which to safely ignore, guided by a set of trusted best practices tailored to each enterprise**.

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Where Issues Cluster

Scans from the Quality Clouds Portal and Quality Center for developers reveal the most frequent issue types across large ServiceNow instances, from leftover metadata to brittle code patterns. The most common issue types include:

Dictionary Entries for Non-Existent Tables

These occur when metadata references are left behind after a table is removed. They clutter the instance and break manageability assumptions.

DOM Manipulation in Client-Side Scripts

Direct changes to the Document Object Model (DOM) bypass the ServiceNow rendering engine, risking UI instability and upgrade failures.



Debugging Statements in Production Code

Usage of console.log, gs.print, or similar logging functions bloats logs, exposes internal logic, and is a hallmark of unrefined code.

Hard-Coded Sys_IDs in Scripts and Widgets

Embedding sys_ids directly creates brittle dependencies that break across environments and violate modularity principles.

Impact Areas

The same analysis highlights how these issues manifest in practice, with clear effects on security, performance, and overall manageability.

Security

Hard-coded credentials, outdated JS libraries, and public reports increase exposure to unauthorized access and compliance violations.

Performance

Poor GlideRecord API usage, excessive DOM manipulation, and inefficient scheduled jobs degrade response times and overall user experience.

Manageability

Orphaned CEs, poor naming

3. CUSTOMIZATION VS CONFIGURATION

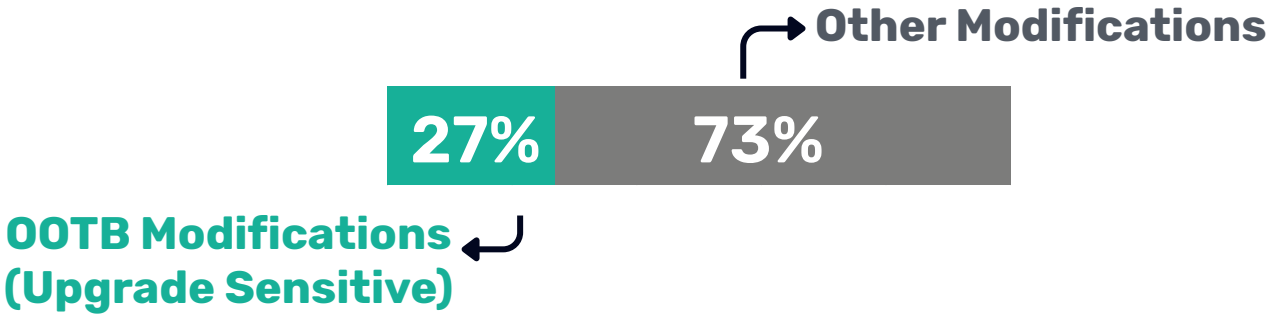
Managing **Platform Drift**

Shift Toward **Configuration First**

Where Configuration Is Most **Active**

Trend Insight

Managing Platform Drift



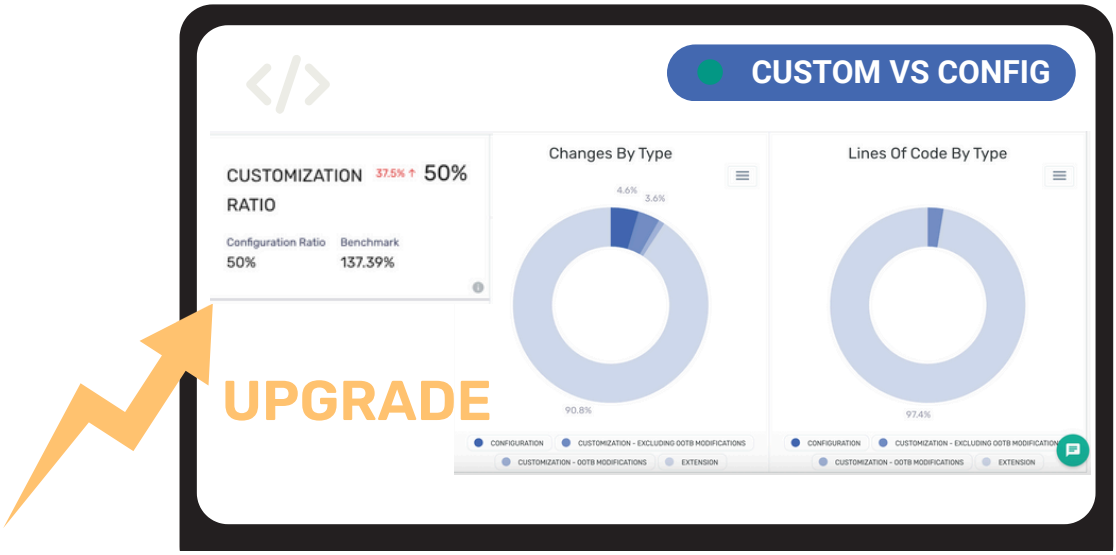
Data from Custom vs. Config view in our portal highlights. One of the clearest signals from the data is the risk of over-customization.

In some large instances, as many as 27% of modified elements came directly from out-of-the-box (OOTB) code.

These changes are highly upgrade-sensitive and can block or delay migrations to new ServiceNow releases.

CUSTOMIZATION VS CONFIGURATION

For many large enterprises, some level of cu[illegible]rt of how they make the platform fit their need[illegible] **he challenge is keeping the amount in check, so extensions add value without creating upgrade hurdles or slowing delivery.**



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Shift Toward Configuration First

The dataset from our Multi Instance Comparison scans in Quality Couds Portal shows how enterprises are scaling ServiceNow in different ways.

INSTANCE 1

181,000

Configured Elements in Custom Apps in Global Scope

INSTANCE 2

95%

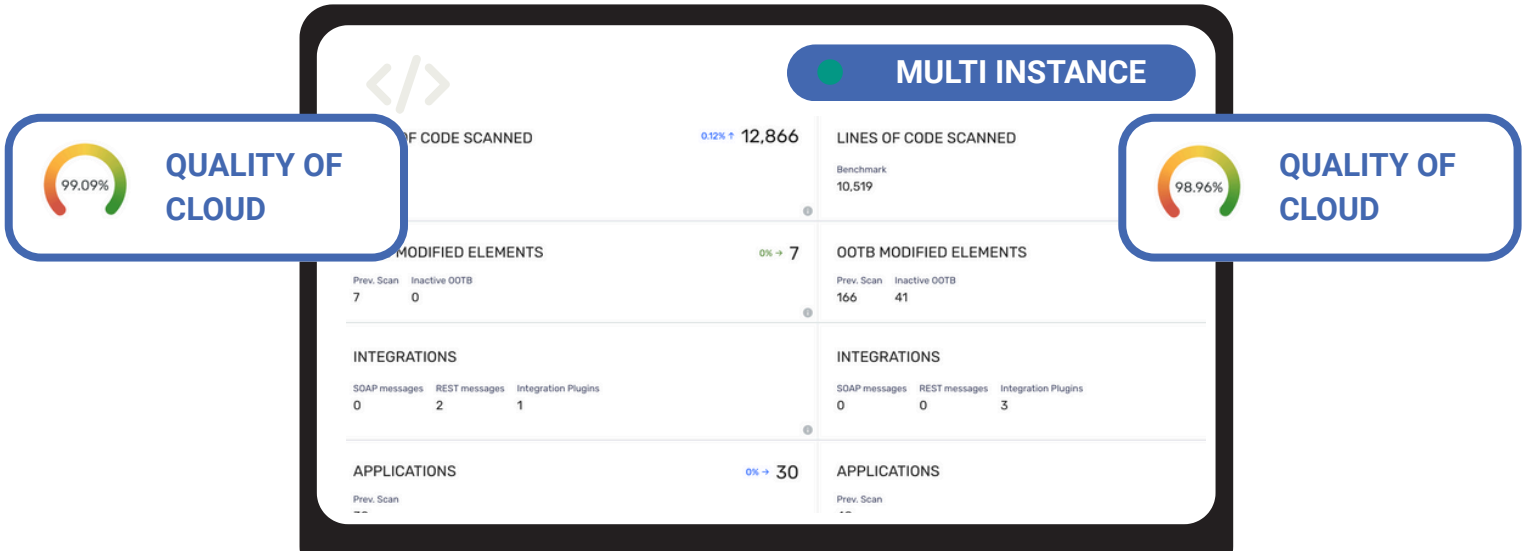
Changes in Scoped Apps or Non-code Configurations

In one instance, we observed over 181,000 configured elements built into custom applications in Global Scope, evidence of large-scale extension through custom development.

Upgrade sensitivity rises because core behavior is touched indirectly. **Strong rules, naming standards, and peer review are needed to avoid drift and slow releases.**

In contrast, another enterprise kept more than 95% of its changes in scoped apps or non-code configurations, reflecting a configuration-first approach.

This configuration-led model is a sign of governance maturity, where **teams rely on configuration and extensions instead of altering core code**, making upgrades faster and reducing long-term maintenance overhead.



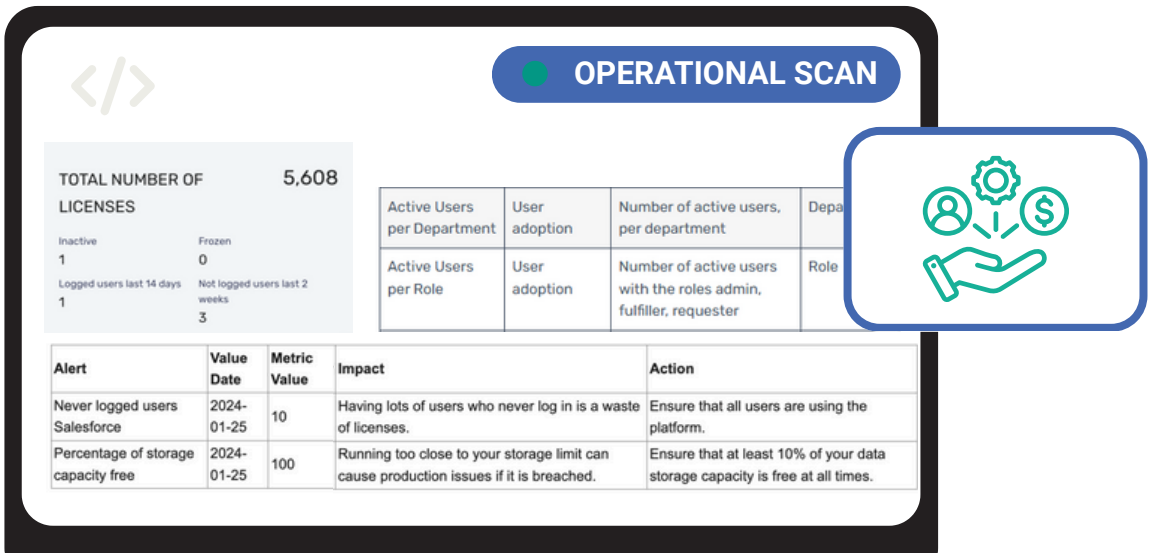
Where Configuration Is Most Active

Operational scans from the Quality Clouds Portal highlight how business functions extend the platform, helping leaders anticipate governance needs and upgrade impact.

The data shows uneven growth across workloads, with HR and GRC carrying the heaviest volumes with 15,000+ HR elements and 8,600+ in GRC in some instances.

This indicates how ServiceNow is being embedded deeply into business operations, beyond IT service management.

Application	#CEs
IT Service Management	4,982
Customer Service Management	3,740
Human Resources	15,145
GRC (Profiles + Policy)	8,606



Trend Insight



Large enterprises are not following a single path:

Some are expanding ServiceNow through massive custom app development in Global Scope, while others are aligning with a configuration-first model.

Independent governance and standardized, customizable rulesets are helping organizations strike the right balance — favoring configuration over heavy customization where it matters.

The trend shows closer attention to technical debt and a shift toward conscious, controlled growth, where productivity and budgets are managed in tandem. **The overall direction points to configuration as the more sustainable strategy for reducing technical debt, minimizing upgrade risk, and enabling innovation with less remediation.**

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Enforce **Quality Gates** Consistently

Educate Developers on Top Violations

Invest in **Rule Customization**

Track Debt Over Time

Monitor **OOTB Modifications**

Recommendations

With stronger visibility now available, the real opportunity lies in taking timely action. Enterprises can cut debt, reduce risk, and eliminate waste by embedding governance into daily work. The following practices stand out from the analysis:

1

Enforce Quality Gates Consistently

Move beyond code or static analysis by introducing governance checkpoints that not only find issues but also help teams fix and prevent them - guided by your own KPIs before changes reach production. This reduces rework, lowers the cost of fixing errors, and protects the stability of live environments

2

Educate Developers on Top violations

Most frequent issues, like leftover debugging code or inefficient queries, are preventable. Giving developers timely feedback in their day-to-day tools, for example, by leveraging Quality Clouds Quality Center for Developers, reinforces best practices, reduces rework, and builds stronger. development skills over time.

3

Invest in Rule Customization

Establish central rules -blending built-in industry standards with your own company-specific conventions. Automated alignment on naming and coding standards helps large, distributed teams work consistently and accelerates adoption of governance practices.

4

Track Debt Over Time

Use dashboards for debt management to monitor cumulative issue counts and estimated fix costs. An independent view of technical debt - free from vendor bias - enables leaders to prioritize resources, manage long-term risk, and demonstrate efficiency gains.

5

Monitor OOTB Modifications

Control the balance between customization and configuration, and apply hard stops on critical changes to out-of-the-box elements. This reduces platform complexity and helps keep upgrades fast and predictable.

CLOSING & NEXT STEPS

Closing Note

This benchmarking study shows that ServiceNow governance is advancing, with more teams embedding real-time controls and moving toward configuration-first approaches. Yet technical debt and unmanaged customizations remain costly challenges.

By acting on these recommendations, enterprises can reduce risk, control costs, and scale ServiceNow with greater confidence and speed, while also ensuring their platforms are ready for the next wave of AI-driven development and automation.

Next Steps

For further insight or to see how your ServiceNow instance compares to this dataset, **connect with Quality Clouds.** Our team can provide your first platform scan and help you build a clear roadmap to reduce risk, cut debt, and prepare for AI-driven growth.

> "We created this benchmark to show how large enterprises are really using ServiceNow - where they are maturing, and where risks remain.
> Our goal is to give platform leaders the visibility they need to scale with confidence, reduce technical debt, and prepare their environments for the AI-driven future."
>
> *Adrian Serle, CEO,* ***Quality Clouds***

CAPABILITIES BEHIND THIS REPORT

Quality Insights **Portal**

Technical **Debt & Instance Monitoring**

Metadata Insight & Standards

Governance Setup & Exception Handling

Quality Center **for Developers**

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Quality Clouds Capabilities Behind This Report

Quality Insights Portal

For platform owners and architects to assess health, risk, and compliance.



- **Platform Scans & Health Overview** - Real-time baseline of platform condition.
- **Scheduling** - Routine scans across live, logic, and development branches.
- **Executive View** - C-level dashboards for KPIs and compliance.
- **Profiling** - Platform readiness summaries for cross-team visibility.
- **Upgradeability** - Simulates release impact and upgrade readiness.
- **Rule Customization** - Configure or customize rules by enterprise.

Technical Debt & Instance Monitoring



For platform teams managing complexity across environments.

- **Debt Manager** - Tracks, prioritizes and assigns remediation of technical debt.
- **Multi-Instance Comparison** - Aligns environments side by side.

Metadata Insight & Standards

For architects and governance leads to ensure consistency.

- **Code Duplication** - Detects copy-paste risks and poor practices.
- **Custom vs Config** - Highlights where customizations diverge from standards.
- **Code Monitor** - Tracks volume of changes across environments.
- **Field Analysis** - Identifies unused or inconsistent fields.



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Quality Clouds Capabilities Behind This Report

Governance Setup & Exception Handling

For governance leads defining and enforcing standards.



- **Best Practice Configuration** - Tailors rules to platform maturity.
- **Quality Gates** - Blocks or allows issues based on in built or custom rules and severity
- **Write-Off & Peer Review** - Manages exceptions with full audit trail.

Quality Center for Developers

For developers to act on issues directly in their workspace.

- **Focused Workspace** - Surfaces only relevant issues per change.
- **Inline Visibility** - Instant alerts on compliance and best practices.
- **LiveCheck** - Real-time scans in IDE or UI with direct guidance.
- Issue Tracker - Sorts issues by severity, type, or sprint.
- **QC Copilot** (AI Fixes) - Provides validated fixes and copy-ready snippets.
- **Peer Reviews** - Streamlines blocker approval and traceability.
- **Team KPIs** - Tracks blocker coverage, fix times, and progress.



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