// STATUS · MAY 2026

STATUS	LAG (L)	PEAK	CURRENT	MONTHS ABOVE
■ STRUCTURAL	91 mo	48/100	35/100	14

ZORTHEX SIGNAL REPORT #002

Post-Quantum Cryptography

May 2026 · Measuring the delay between reality and public awareness

Renato Santi · zorthex.com · doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20072999

// 1. WHAT HAPPENED

From 2017 to 2024, Post-Quantum Cryptography existed in near-total public obscurity. The NIST final standard publication in August 2024 was the trigger — not a quantum attack, not a product launch. A regulatory act converted latent technical awareness into structural public attention in weeks. 91 months of lag closed in days.

This is the clearest documented case of regulation as an attention trigger in the Zorthex dataset. The pattern differs from Bitcoin (speculation), CRISPR (ethical controversy), and mRNA vaccines (health emergency). PQC attention was created by institutional mandate — and that changes how it should be acted upon.

// 2. WHAT IT MEANS — THREE AUDIENCES

2.1 Investors & Venture Capital

"Being too early is functionally identical to being wrong."

Investing in PQC startups between 2017 and 2023 meant burning capital ahead of market readiness. The structural window opened in August 2024. Enterprise adoption driven by compliance is now underway. The attention curve says: the market is ready. The lag is closed.

2.2 Cybersecurity Companies & Cloud Providers

"Stop explaining. Start selling."

14 months above threshold confirm the public no longer needs to be told what PQC is — it needs solutions and migration paths. Budget should shift from awareness content to deployment tools. Current score 35/100: stable, institutional, compliance-driven.

2.3 Policy Makers & Think Tanks

"91 months is how long a national security threat can exist before the public notices."

The Zorthex lag does not measure the threat — it measures the institutional delay. Post-Quantum Cryptography was a documented risk from 2017. It took over 7 years for public attention to structurally consolidate. Zorthex quantifies this delay for any phenomenon.

// 3. THE SIGNAL — MAY 2026

PQC attention is stable at 35/100 — above threshold, below peak. This is the absorption phase: organizations are responding to compliance frameworks, not novelty.

Source	Status	Note

Google Trends	35/100	Above threshold. Stable institutional demand.
Wikipedia Pageviews	Elevated	Sustained above 2023 baseline. Professional reads.
Reddit	Active	r/netsec, r/crypto — implementation discussions dominant.

The next trigger will be either a quantum computing milestone or a legislative mandate with hard deadlines.

Watch for: enterprise migration announcements, NIST implementation deadlines, and PQC job posting frequency as a leading indicator.

// 4. LAG TIMELINE

Period	Event	Attention
2017	NIST PQC competition launched	Near zero — technical community only
2017–2023	6 years of development	Flat — below 25/100 globally
Aug 2024	NIST final standards published	Breakout — structural threshold crossed
Aug 2024–May 2026	14 months above threshold	STRUCTURAL confirmed
May 2026	Current status	35/100 — stable, compliance-driven

// 5. METHODOLOGY & REPLICATION

This report applies the Zorthex Public Attention Diffusion Lag framework v1.1. All data, definitions, and pipeline steps are publicly available.

Framework: doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20072999 (v1.1, May 2026)

Code and data: github.com/zorthex2026/zorthex-diffusion-lag

Google Trends query: "post-quantum cryptography" — Worldwide — 2017-01-01 to 2026-05-01

Threshold: ≥25/100, 12 consecutive months (v1.1 definition)

t_start: August 2017 — NIST PQC competition launch

t_peak: August 2024 — NIST final standard publication

L: 91 months

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If you follow this pipeline and obtain different results — that is a contribution, not a problem.

Contact: zorthex.official@gmail.com