



International Council of Women  
Conseil International des Femmes



## **A Practical Introduction to AI for Women**

## **A Practical AI Companion**

**Prepared for the WSIS Forum 2026 – Women and Girls Track**

**International Council of Women**

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## About the International Council of Women

- **Founded in 1888, the International Council of Women (ICW)** is one of the world's oldest international women's organisations. Through its network of National Councils of Women and affiliated organisations, ICW works to promote women's rights, equality, education, peace, sustainable development and the full involvement of women in all aspects of society.
- ICW is committed to ensuring that women and girls are able to participate meaningfully in the opportunities created by digital technologies, while recognising the importance of addressing the challenges that accompany rapid technological change.
- Website: <https://www.icw-cif.com/>

## About the Author

- **Dr Mohinder Watson** is a social scientist, public health researcher and international advocate with more than a decade of experience working on women's rights and empowerment, including violence against women, child marriage and girls' education.
- She currently serves as the Main Geneva Representative of the International Council of Women (ICW), where she engages with United Nations processes and international policy discussions.
- As artificial intelligence (AI) has become increasingly embedded across society—including in education, healthcare, work, public services, communication and many other aspects of everyday life—her interests have expanded to explore both the opportunities and the challenges that AI presents for women and girls, and for society more broadly.
- Drawing on her own experience of discovering AI as a non-technical professional, she aims to help experienced professionals engage with AI in accessible, responsible and meaningful ways.

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## Welcome

- Welcome to this AI Practical Companion, created for the International Council of Women's workshop at the WSIS Forum 2026: "I Thought AI Was for Experts" – A Practical Introduction to AI for Women.
- Artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming part of everyday life across governments, international organisations, businesses, education, healthcare and civil society. New tools are emerging quickly, bringing both opportunities and challenges.
- Yet for many people, AI still feels unfamiliar or intimidating. The technical language, fast moving developments and media headlines can make it seem like a space reserved for specialists. This Companion takes a different approach. It focuses on the practical tasks professionals already do—and how AI can support them.
- It is written for experienced women across civil society, education, healthcare, government, international organisations, research and community development who are curious about AI and want a grounded, accessible starting point rather than a technical manual.
- Inside, you'll find simple explanations, practical examples, sample prompts, guidance on responsible use and suggestions for further learning. Our aim is to help you explore AI thoughtfully and confidently, recognising that your professional judgement and experience remain your greatest strengths.

## Why This Companion?

- Artificial intelligence is now shaping how we learn, work and participate in society. Understanding this societal shift is increasingly important for professionals across every field—not just those in technology.
- Women, however, remain under represented in AI. Building confidence and capability in this space is essential for a more inclusive digital future.
- Many readers of this Companion are already experienced leaders, researchers, practitioners and advocates. Your expertise is invaluable, and AI can become another practical tool to support the work you already do.
- This Companion offers a beginner friendly introduction to AI: where it can help, where to be cautious and how to start using these tools responsibly. No technical background is required—only curiosity and a willingness to explore.
- Learning to use AI takes practice, and everyone will use it differently. This Companion is simply a practical starting point for your journey. As you begin exploring AI, it helps to start with a clear, practical understanding of what AI actually is — not in technical terms, but in ways that relate directly to your everyday work.

## What Is Artificial Intelligence?

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly woven into everyday life—often without us noticing. Tools like translation apps, navigation systems, personalised recommendations, voice assistants and writing support all rely on AI.
- At its simplest, AI refers to computer systems that perform tasks that normally require human intelligence: understanding language, recognising patterns, summarising information, generating text or answering questions. Modern AI allows computers to work with language in ways that feel conversational.
- You do not need technical knowledge to begin using AI. Just as people drive cars without understanding the workings of the engine, you can start using AI tools without knowing the underlying computer science. Practical experience is an excellent first step.
- AI is now used across education, healthcare, government, business, research, international organisations and community work. As its use expands, understanding how AI can support professional tasks—and where caution is needed—has become a valuable skill.
- Once the basics are clear, the next step is understanding how AI can support the tasks you already do. This is where AI can become genuinely useful.

## How AI Can Support Everyday Work

- AI tools are increasingly used to help with tasks such as:
  - **drafting emails**
  - **summarising reports**
  - **preparing presentations**
  - **translating documents**
  - **brainstorming ideas**
  - **explaining unfamiliar concepts**
  - **reviewing written work**
  - **creating first drafts of policies or briefings**
- AI can save time, spark ideas and reduce routine workload. But it also has limitations: it can make mistakes, reflect bias or present inaccurate information confidently. Therefore it should be treated as a helpful assistant, not an expert authority. You remain responsible for checking accuracy, applying judgement and deciding how the final work is used.
- As AI becomes more common, organisations are exploring how it can support their work while

considering ethics, transparency, privacy, inclusion and accountability.

- For experienced professionals, the key question is shifting from **“What is AI?”** to **“How can AI support my work—and how do I use it responsibly?”** That is the purpose of this Companion.
- You do not need to become an AI expert or use AI for every task. Begin with one or two everyday activities where AI may genuinely save time or help you think differently. Small, regular steps often lead to the most meaningful learning.
- With these examples in mind, the question becomes: **“How do you decide when and how to use AI?”** The most effective approach is to begin with your task, not the technology.

## Start with the Task, Not the Technology

- When people begin exploring AI, a common question is: “Which tool should I use?” But a far more helpful starting point is: **“What am I trying to do?”**
- In daily professional life, we rarely begin by choosing technology. We begin with tasks—drafting an email, preparing a presentation, summarising a report, writing a statement or proposal, drafting a press release, conducting research, analysing consultation responses, translating a document, understanding a new topic or reviewing a policy paper.

### ■ Everyday Tasks Where AI May Help

| Everyday task                             | How AI may help                                                | Your responsibility                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Draft an email                            | Produce a first draft, suggest clearer wording or adjust tone  | Check names, dates, commitments and sensitive details                      |
| Summarise a report                        | Highlight key points, themes and questions before full reading | Read important documents yourself when decisions rely on them              |
| Prepare a presentation                    | Suggest structure, outline slides or draft speaker notes       | Tailor content to your audience, context and purpose                       |
| Write a briefing note                     | Organise information into a clear, concise format              | Verify facts, references and organisational positions                      |
| Draft a press release or public statement | Provide a professional first draft and refine tone             | Ensure final wording reflects your organisation’s stance and sensitivities |
| Prepare for a meeting                     | Suggest agendas, questions, risks or talking points            | Adapt suggestions to your objectives and the meeting dynamics              |

|                                                          |                                                                        |                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Translate or simplify text                               | Produce a first translation or rewrite in plain language               | Review important translations carefully for accuracy and nuance                    |
| Brainstorm ideas                                         | Generate options, perspectives or alternative approaches               | Use judgement to select realistic, relevant and ethical ideas                      |
| Learn something new                                      | Explain unfamiliar concepts in accessible language                     | Continue learning from reliable, domain-specific sources                           |
| Draft policy text, interventions or negotiation language | Provide a first draft, refine structure or suggest alternative wording | Ensure alignment with organisational policy, legal requirements and careful review |
| Analyse qualitative input                                | Identify themes in consultation responses or feedback                  | Confirm interpretations and check for missing or misrepresented viewpoints         |
| Organise information                                     | Sort notes, group ideas or create summaries                            | Ensure the final structure reflects your priorities, not the tool's assumptions    |
| Plan tasks or workflows                                  | Suggest steps, timelines or checklists                                 | Adapt plans to real constraints, people and organisational processes               |

- When your task is clear, choosing a tool becomes much simpler. Most tools can do similar things — what matters is how they fit to your daily work.

## Choosing the Right AI Tool

- The first and most important question is: **“What task am I trying to achieve?”** Once the task is clear, choosing an AI tool—and writing a useful prompt—becomes much easier.
- Most leading AI assistants can perform many of the same tasks. Differences between them are becoming smaller as the technology evolves. In practice, people choose tools based on:
  - **the task** they need to complete
  - **the systems** they already use
  - **personal preference**
  - **their work environment**
- Developing **clear task thinking**, **good prompting skills** and **strong professional judgement** will matter far more than finding the “perfect” tool.
- **How AI Tools Are Commonly Used**
- This table focuses on **real world usage patterns**, drawn from organisational adoption studies,

user behaviour research, and documented integration features—not vendor marketing claims.

| AI Assistant | How people commonly use it                                                                                        | Why people choose it                                                                                    |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ChatGPT      | Everyday writing, summarising, brainstorming, drafting reports, emails and presentations                          | Broad general-purpose capability; widely adopted; large community of examples and tutorials             |
| Claude       | Working with long documents, editing, refining tone, analysing text, thoughtful discussion                        | Strong performance on long texts; valued for clarity, structure and careful reasoning                   |
| Gemini       | Tasks connected to Google Search, Gmail, Docs, Drive and Sheets                                                   | Deep integration with Google’s ecosystem; convenient for users already working in Google Workspace      |
| Copilot      | Drafting and editing in Word, analysing data in Excel, preparing slides in PowerPoint, summarising Teams meetings | Integrated directly into Microsoft 365, making it practical for organisations already using these tools |
| Perplexity   | Research, evidence-based queries, finding sources, checking citations                                             | Strong focus on retrieval and referencing; useful when work begins with research or fact-checking       |

## ■ Key Messages (Short, Practical, Evidence Based)

- Most AI assistants can perform **similar core tasks**.
- Differences increasingly relate to **ecosystem integration, interface design, and how they handle long or complex text**.
- The best tool is the one that fits **your task, your workflow, and your organisation’s systems**.
- **Good prompting skills** transfer across all tools.
- Professional judgement—**checking facts, reviewing outputs, applying expertise**—remains essential.

## ■ Skills That Matter More Than the Tool

■ These skills will serve you well regardless of which AI assistant you use:

- **Thinking clearly about your task**
- **Writing clear prompts**
- **Reviewing information critically**



- **Checking important facts**
- **Applying professional judgement**
- These are the durable skills that will remain valuable even as AI tools continue to evolve.
- Once you've chosen a tool, the next skill is learning how to communicate with it effectively. This is where prompting comes in.

## Communicating with AI Through Prompts

- AI tools respond to the instructions you give them—these instructions are called prompts. A prompt can be short (“summarise this”) or detailed, including background information, examples, audience, tone or format.
- It helps to think of prompting as a conversation, not a single command. You ask for help, review the response, then refine your instructions until the result fits your needs. Each follow up prompt improves the output.
- Like any professional skill, prompting improves with practice. Small adjustments—clarifying the task, adding context, specifying tone or format—can dramatically improve the quality of the response and reduce editing time.
- Prompting is a skill you develop over time. A few simple techniques can dramatically improve the quality of AI responses.

## Ten Simple Ways to Improve Prompts

- One of the biggest misconceptions about AI is that you need to write the perfect prompt every time. This is not true and in many situations, even just one or two small changes to your prompt can produce a much more useful response.
- Please note that the suggestions below are not rules but common practice and you do not need to use all of them every time you write a prompt. They are practical techniques that you can use when they are appropriate for the task you are trying to achieve.
- As you gain experience, you will naturally discover which of these small adjustments work best for you.

## ■ Ten Simple Ways to Improve Your Prompts

| Simple Steps                                            | Example                                                                                                                        | Why it often helps                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Give AI a role                                       | Act as an experienced communications officer...                                                                                | Helps AI respond from an appropriate professional perspective.                                                             |
| 2. Provide context                                      | <i>This conference is for researchers working on child mortality in the Global South</i>                                       | Gives background that helps AI produce a more relevant response.                                                           |
| 3. Explain the task clearly                             | <i>Prepare a two-page briefing note...</i>                                                                                     | Makes your request clear and reduces ambiguity.                                                                            |
| 4. Describe your audience                               | <i>Write for experienced NGO professionals with no technical background...</i>                                                 | Helps AI adjust the language and level of detail.                                                                          |
| 5. Specify the format                                   | <i>Present the information as a table with headings and bullet points.</i>                                                     | Produces a response that is easier to use immediately.                                                                     |
| 6. Set the length                                       | <i>Limit the response to 300 words.</i>                                                                                        | Helps keep the response focused and proportionate to your needs.                                                           |
| 7. Give an example                                      | <i>Use a similar style of writing to the example provided ...</i>                                                              | Shows AI more clearly what you are looking for.                                                                            |
| 8. Refine the response                                  | <i>Please shorten this, simplify the language and make it more diplomatic.</i>                                                 | AI improves through conversation. Small refinements often produce much better results.                                     |
| 9. Ask for alternatives                                 | <i>Give me three different versions and briefly explain the strengths of each</i>                                              | Allows you to compare different approaches before deciding which works best.                                               |
| 10. Ask AI to help improve your prompt (Meta-prompting) | <i>Please improve the following prompt so that I get a clearer and more useful response. Explain what you changed and why.</i> | Particularly useful once you are familiar with the basics of prompting and would like help refining more complex requests. |

- You do not need to use all ten techniques every time you write a prompt. Choose the ones that are most helpful for the task you are trying to complete. With practice, you will naturally develop your own prompting style.
- To make these techniques easier to apply, the next section provides practical examples you can adapt directly to your own work.

## Practical Examples of Prompts

|                        |                                                            |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Original prompt</b> | "Write a press release for our upcoming fundraising event" |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|

- This gives AI very little information.
- Questions immediately arise:
  - Which organisation is this for?
  - What is the announcement about - context?
  - Who is the audience?
  - What tone should be used?
  - How long should it be?
- In the absence of clear information, the AI has to make assumptions, and the resulting output will likely be vague.
- You do not need to use all ten techniques every time you write a prompt. Choose the ones you find most helpful for the task you are trying to accomplish. With practice, you will naturally develop your own prompting style.

|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Improved prompt</b> | <p>"Act as an experienced communications officer for an international non-governmental organisation."</p> <p>"Draft a 300-word press release announcing the launch of our fundraising campaign for disaster relief in Venezuela."</p> <p>"The audience includes the media, the public, donors, civil society organisations, policy makers."</p> <p>"Use a professional, positive and accessible tone."</p> <p>"Include:"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>"A compelling headline to draw readers in;"</li><li>"An opening paragraph with key messages;"</li><li>"A short quotation from the campaign organiser;"</li><li>"Contact details and where to find further information."</li></ul> |
|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## ■ Why the second prompt works better

- The improved prompt gives AI clear information about the role, purpose, audience, structure and length of the document. As a result, the draft outcome will be closer to what is needed and likely require less time spent editing.

## ■ Practical Prompt Examples

- The following examples are intended as starting points. They are designed to be copied, adapted and modified to suit your own work.

- Remember that they are just examples—not templates that must be followed exactly.

### ■ 1. Draft a Professional Email

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>When might you use this?</b> | Inviting someone to a meeting, following up a discussion, requesting information or thanking a colleague.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Prompt framework</b>         | <p>“Draft a professional email. You should include:</p> <p>Purpose: ...</p> <p>Audience:...</p> <p>Key messages:...”</p> <p>“Use a professional, warm and respectful tone.”</p> <p>“Keep the email concise and end with an appropriate call to action.”</p> <p>“Before finishing, check that the email is clear, polite and free from repetition.”</p> |

## ■ Why it works

- This prompt explains the purpose of the email, identifies the audience and specifies the desired tone, helping AI produce a draft that will generally require less editing.

### ■ 2. Summarise a Report

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>When might you use this?</b> | Reading and working with lengthy reports, consultation papers or research publications.                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Prompt framework</b>         | <p>“Summarise the attached report for a busy professional.”</p> <p>“Please provide: a summary of under 250 words; five key findings; and three practical recommendations.”</p> <p>“Write in plain English and avoid unnecessary technical language.”</p> |

## ■ Why it works

- Rather than asking simply for a summary, the prompt explains exactly what information is

required and how it should be presented.

### ■ 3. Prepare Talking Points

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>When might you use this?</b> | Preparing for meetings, conferences, advocacy discussions or panel events.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Prompt framework</b>         | <p>“Act as an experienced policy adviser.”</p> <p>“Help me prepare five concise talking points for a meeting on:</p> <p>Topic:...</p> <p>Audience:...</p> <p>Objective of the meeting:...”</p> <p>“Keep the tone constructive and professional.”</p> <p>“End each talking point with one practical recommendation or question that could help move the discussion forward.”</p> |

### ■ Why it works

- Giving AI a professional role, a clear objective and information about the audience usually produces more focused and relevant talking points.

### ■ 4. Draft a Press Release or Public Statement

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>When might you use this?</b> | Announcing a new publication, campaign, partnership or event.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Prompt framework</b>         | <p>“Act as an experienced communications officer working for a non-profit organisation”.</p> <p>“Draft a press release announcing:</p> <p>Topic: ...</p> <p>Organisation: ...</p> <p>Audience: ...</p> <p>Purpose: ...</p> <p>“Write approximately 300 words. Include: a headline; an opening paragraph; a short quotation; and a closing paragraph explaining where readers can find further information.”</p> <p>“Use clear, professional language and avoid unnecessary jargon.”</p> |

### ■ Why it works

- The AI understands both the purpose of the document and the structure expected,

producing a more usable first draft.

■ **Remember**

■ These examples are intended as starting points.

- Copy them.
- Adapt them to your own tasks.
- Practice and experiment with them.

■ Over time you will naturally develop prompts that reflect your own professional role, writing style and organisation.

■ As you begin using AI more often, responsible use becomes essential. AI is powerful, but it also has limitations that require careful judgement.

## Using AI Responsibly

■ Artificial intelligence can be a powerful assistant — but it must be used with care. It can draft text, organise ideas and explain concepts, yet it can also make mistakes, reflect bias and sound confident even when wrong. AI should support your judgement, not replace it.

■ **Treat AI as a Starting Point**

■ AI is great for first drafts, brainstorming and clarifying ideas. You should decide what is accurate, appropriate and aligned with your organisation.

■ **AI Makes Mistakes**

■ AI doesn't "know" facts — it predicts likely answers. This means it can:

- invent information
- misinterpret questions
- miss key details
- use outdated data
- produce confident but incorrect responses

■ It is essential to check important facts, references, statistics and quotations against reliable sources.

■ **AI Can Reflect Bias**

■ Because AI learns from human generated data, it can reproduce stereotypes or overlook important perspectives. When reviewing AI content, ask:

- **Is this balanced?**

- **Are voices missing?**
- **Could this reinforce bias?**
- **Should I request alternative viewpoints?**
- Your judgement remains essential.
- **Protect Sensitive Information**
- Before sharing anything with an AI tool, stop and consider whether it is appropriate.
- **Avoid entering:**
  - **confidential organisational information**
  - **personal or sensitive data**
  - **case details**
  - **unpublished research**
  - **legal advice**
  - **passwords or security information**
  - **commercially confidential material**
- Carefully check your organisation's policies. If unsure, **leave it out**.
- **AI Changes Quickly**
- Tools evolve fast. Rather than trying to keep up with every update, focus on durable skills:
  - **define your task clearly**
  - **write clear prompts**
  - **review outputs critically**
  - **check facts**
  - **apply professional judgement**
- **Before You Use AI Generated Content**
- Ask yourself:
  - Is it accurate?
  - Could it contain bias?
  - Is it up to date?
  - Am I protecting privacy?
  - Does this reflect my organisation's position?

- Would I sign my name to this?
- **Use AI Where It Adds Value**
- Nobody produces perfect prompts every time. Start small, choose tasks where AI genuinely helps, and **never assume AI is an expert**. It's a tool — **you** are the professional. You do not need to use AI for everything, only use it where it can genuinely support your work.
- Learning to use AI isn't about writing perfect prompts — it's about building good judgement. With practice, you quickly learn:
  - which tasks AI genuinely supports
  - which tools suit your own tasks and personal style of working
  - how much context to include
  - when a response seems trustworthy
  - and when to stop and verify information yourself
- The more you practise, the easier it becomes to recognise where AI can support you and where your own expertise must take the lead. Through practice you will find what works best for you.
- Beyond everyday tasks, AI can also support your learning and professional development — when used thoughtfully.

## How AI Can Support Your Learning?

- AI can be a powerful learning partner. It can explain unfamiliar ideas and concepts, break down complex topics and adapt to your level of knowledge — making learning more flexible for busy professionals. But AI is not a replacement for expert advice or formal education.
- **Learn Through Conversation**
- AI lets you learn by asking questions, not just reading information. You can ask it to:
  - **simplify an idea**
  - **give a practical example**
  - **explain a topic to a beginner**
  - **compare two concepts**
  - **test your understanding**
  - **suggest what to learn next**
- There is no need to worry about asking “basic” questions — AI doesn't get impatient, and repeating or rephrasing questions often deepens understanding.



## ■ **Build Practical Skills**

- AI can also help you practise and improve daily professional skills, such as:
  - **improving your writing**
  - **preparing presentations**
  - **understanding research methods**
  - **interpreting graphs or statistics**
  - **learning new software**
- If something is unclear, simply ask AI to explain it differently — in simpler language, with more examples or step by step.
- **Use AI Wisely**
- AI is helpful for learning, but it is not an expert. For legal, medical, financial or other specialist advice, always consult qualified professionals.
- AI can support your learning — your judgement completes it.
- Many beginners ask similar questions when they start exploring AI. The following FAQ addresses some of the most common ones.

## ■ **Frequently Asked Questions**

- **Do I need to be good with technology to use AI?**
- No. Most AI tools work through simple conversation. If you can write an email or search online, you already have the skills to begin.
- **Will AI replace my job?**
- AI is changing work, and it is likely that certain jobs will change, but for most people it becomes a tool, not a replacement. Human skills — critical thinking, communication, creativity, ethical judgement, leadership — remain essential.
- **Should I trust everything AI tells me?**
- No. AI can make mistakes, sound confident when wrong or reflect bias. Always check important facts, statistics, quotations and references before relying on them.
- **Which AI tool should I start with?**
- If you use Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace, start with the tools already built in. Otherwise, many beginners try a general purpose assistant like ChatGPT or Claude and explore others over time. What matters most is understanding your task, not choosing the “perfect” tool.

### ■ **Do I have to pay to use AI?**

- Not necessarily. Many tools offer free versions that are enough to learn the basics. You can decide later whether paid features are useful for your work.

### ■ **How often should I use AI?**

- There is no rule. Some people use AI daily; others only for specific tasks. The goal is not to use AI more — it is to use it where it genuinely helps.
- With these foundations in place, you can continue building confidence step by step. AI learning is a gradual, practical journey.

## Further learning - Continuing Your AI Journey

- Learning AI is like learning any professional skill — you build confidence step by step. Try one task, test a prompt, ask questions, reflect, and improve. Small, regular practice makes the biggest difference.
- AI will keep evolving, but you don't need to chase every new feature. What matters most are developing the skills that will always be needed: critical thinking, clear communication, ethical judgement, and lifelong learning. These strengths — your strengths — will guide you no matter how AI changes.
- Your journey continues with curiosity, caution and confidence.

## Selected Beginner Friendly AI Courses

- High quality introductory AI courses are now widely available — many of them free or open for auditing. This makes AI learning accessible for people working in civil society, education, community organisations, public services and other sectors with limited training budgets.
- The courses below are well established, beginner friendly and focused on practical understanding rather than technical depth.

| Course               | Provider                    | Why we recommend it                                                                                         |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Elements of AI       | University of Helsinki      | One of the world's most respected non-technical introductions to AI; available in multiple languages        |
| AI for Everyone      | Andrew Ng / DeepLearning.AI | Clear, accessible overview of what AI is, how it's used and why it matters — no technical background needed |
| Google AI Essentials | Google                      | Practical guidance on using AI in everyday professional tasks                                               |

|                                   |                                       |                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Microsoft Learn – AI Skills       | Microsoft                             | Useful for anyone working with Microsoft 365 or Copilot; includes hands-on exercises                       |
| IBM SkillsBuild – AI Foundations  | IBM                                   | Structured beginner pathway with workplace examples and optional digital badges                            |
| ITU Academy – AI & Digital Skills | International Telecommunication Union | Vast array of courses relevant for learners interested in digital inclusion, development and global policy |

## ■ A Note About Learning

- There is no need to complete every course. Choose one that matches your interests and available time. Complete the course and apply what you have learned. Learning does not have to be formal. Many people develop their AI skills by combining short courses with regular practice, asking questions, experimenting with everyday tasks and sharing ideas with colleagues. The AI journey for everyone will be ongoing—and every small step builds your understanding.
- As AI becomes more widely used, international organisations — including the United Nations — are working to ensure it is governed responsibly and inclusively.

## AI and the United Nations

- Artificial intelligence is no longer just a technological issue — it is also a societal and human rights issue. As AI becomes embedded in education, healthcare, employment, public services and communication it has the potential to expand opportunities for under-represented groups, including women and girls, by improving access to information, skills, services and economic participation.
- But AI can also reinforce existing inequalities if bias, digital exclusion, unsafe online environments and unequal access to technology are not addressed. This is central to the WSIS mandate: ensuring that digital transformation supports inclusive development, gender equality and human rights.
- Meaningful participation of women and girls in the development, governance and use of AI is essential. Without their unique voices, perspectives and leadership, AI systems risk reproducing the same structural barriers that already limit women’s rights offline and online.
- Governments, international organisations, businesses, researchers and civil society are increasingly working together to maximise the benefits of AI while addressing critical issues

such as inclusion, transparency, accountability, safety and human rights.

- On 6–7 July 2026 in Geneva, the UN Secretary General’s High Level Scientific Panel on AI Governance will hold its first global dialogue — an important moment for strengthening evidence based approaches to AI governance and ensuring that gender equality, human rights and inclusive participation remain at the centre of global AI discussions.
- **The UN Sustainable Development Goals and AI**
- The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are the United Nations’ shared plan for improving lives and protecting the planet by 2030. They cover issues such as health, education, equality, decent work, climate action and strong institutions. Artificial intelligence can support many of these goals by improving access to services, strengthening decision making and enabling innovation — for example in education, healthcare, agriculture, scientific research, disaster response, accessibility and public services. Realising these benefits depends on ensuring AI is developed and used responsibly, ethically and inclusively.
- **The Role of Civil Society**
- Civil society brings essential experience and perspectives to AI governance — perspectives that technical experts alone cannot provide. Organisations working on human rights, gender equality, disability inclusion, community development and social justice ensure that AI reflects real people’s needs, especially those who are often under represented.
- Civil society strengthens AI inclusivity by:
  - **promoting digital inclusion**
  - **building AI literacy**
  - **contributing evidence and research**
  - **advocating for human rights**
  - **bringing community voices into decision making**
  - **ensuring no one is left behind**
- You do not need to be a computer scientist to shape AI. Expertise in education, health, law, social policy, research, communications, community development and many other fields is equally valuable — and urgently needed. Get engaged and claim your seat at the table. Civil society works to makes AI more inclusive, fairer and more accountable.
- **Looking Ahead**
- Given what we have witnessed over the past few years, artificial intelligence will keep evolving — and so will global discussions on how it should be governed. You don’t need to follow every development or understand every technical detail to use AI effectively. What matters is building the **knowledge, confidence and critical thinking** that help you engage thoughtfully,

ask informed questions and keep learning as the technology and international debates progress.

- Focus on developing durable skills rather than chasing constant updates. With that foundation, you will be well prepared for whatever comes next.
- This Companion is simply one step in that ongoing journey.

## Further Reading

- Readers who want to explore these topics further may find the following resources especially helpful. They offer clear entry points into how artificial intelligence is being discussed across the United Nations and other international organisations. Their publications are authoritative, regularly updated and provide reliable guidance as global conversations on AI continue to evolve.

| Initiative                                                                 | Why it matters                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society)</b>                      | Promotes inclusive digital development and cooperation to ensure ICTs — including AI — support human rights, gender equality and sustainable development.                                                   |
| <b>Global Digital Compact</b>                                              | Adopted at the Summit of the Future, it provides a shared international framework for digital cooperation, including principles for safe, inclusive and rights-based AI governance.                         |
| <b>UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI</b>                           | The first global standard-setting instrument on AI ethics, emphasising human rights, dignity, inclusion, transparency, fairness and accountability.                                                         |
| <b>UN Secretary-General's High-Level Scientific Panel on AI Governance</b> | Established to provide independent scientific advice, strengthen evidence-based policymaking and support global dialogue on AI governance. Its first global dialogue will take place on 6–7 July in Geneva. |
| <b>AI for Good (International Telecommunication Union)</b>                 | A UN platform bringing together governments, industry, academia and civil society to explore practical AI solutions for the SDGs and promote responsible innovation.                                        |

- Please note this list is not exhaustive but rather a general introduction.

# Glossary

- The purpose of this glossary is to explain some of the most common AI terms in plain language. You do not need to memorise these definitions. They are included simply as a quick reference whenever you come across unfamiliar terminology.

- **Agentic AI**

AI systems designed to carry out a sequence of tasks with a degree of independence. This is an emerging area of AI and is more advanced than the examples covered in this Companion.

- **Algorithm**

A set of step-by-step instructions that tells a computer how to carry out a task or solve a problem. AI systems use many algorithms to process information and generate responses.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Computer systems that can perform tasks which normally require aspects of human intelligence, such as understanding language, recognising patterns, generating text, answering questions and supporting decision-making.

- **Bias**

When an AI system reflects or amplifies unfair assumptions, stereotypes or patterns found in the information on which it has been trained. Bias may relate to gender, age, culture, disability, language or other characteristics. This is one reason why human judgement remains essential.

- **Chatbot**

A computer program that allows people to interact using natural language. Modern AI assistants such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini and Copilot are examples of AI-powered chatbots.

- **Context**

Background information that helps AI understand what you are trying to achieve. Providing context often leads to more useful and relevant responses.

- **Generative AI**

A type of AI that creates new content such as text, images, presentations, computer code or audio in response to a prompt.

- **Hallucination**

When an AI system generates information that appears convincing but is incorrect, misleading or completely invented. Important information should always be checked against reliable sources.

## ■ **Iteration**

The process of gradually improving a prompt or response by making small changes and asking follow-up questions.

## ■ **Large Language Model (LLM)**

The technology that powers many modern AI assistants. Large Language Models are trained on very large amounts of text and are designed to understand and generate human language.

## ■ **Machine Learning**

A branch of artificial intelligence that enables computers to identify patterns and improve their performance by learning from data rather than following only fixed instructions.

## ■ **Meta-prompting**

Using AI to help improve or rewrite your own prompt so that it produces a clearer or more useful response.

## ■ **Model**

An AI system that has been trained to perform particular tasks such as generating text, recognising images or answering questions.

## ■ **Multimodal AI**

AI that can work with more than one type of information, such as text, images, audio or video.

## ■ **Prompt**

The instruction, question or request that you give to an AI system. Better prompts usually produce more useful responses.

## ■ **Prompt Engineering**

The process of designing and refining prompts to improve the quality of AI responses. For most everyday users, simple, clear prompting is usually sufficient.

## ■ **Responsible AI**

The development and use of artificial intelligence in ways that are ethical, transparent, accountable, fair and respectful of human rights.

# References

- The resources below have been selected because they are authoritative, widely recognised and suitable for readers wishing to continue learning beyond this Companion. As artificial intelligence develops rapidly, readers are encouraged to consult the latest versions available from the relevant organisations.

## ■ UN Frameworks and Guidance

- UNESCO. Recommendation on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence (2021).
- United Nations. Global Digital Compact (2024).
- United Nations. Pact for the Future (2024).
- World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).
- International Telecommunication Union (ITU). AI for Good.
- United Nations. Independent International Scientific Panel on Artificial Intelligence (latest publication).
- ISO Website

## ■ Learning Resources

- Elements of AI — University of Helsinki
- ITU Academy – AI and Digital Skills
- AI for Everyone — Andrew Ng / DeepLearning.AI
- Google AI Essentials
- Microsoft Learn – AI Skills
- IBM SkillsBuild – AI Foundations

## ■ Good Practice

- OECD AI Principles.
- NIST AI Risk Management Framework (for readers wishing to explore AI governance in greater depth).

## ■ Keeping Up to Date

- AI is developing rapidly. Readers are encouraged to follow updates from the United Nations lead organisations on AI such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UNESCO, and other authoritative organisations.

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Please note this report will be further updated after the WSIS 2026 Forum to add further links and references.

## Final Thoughts

- Thank you for taking the time to explore this Companion.
- Artificial intelligence will continue to evolve, but curiosity, critical thinking, professional judgement and lifelong learning remain timeless qualities that will remain in demand.
- The ideas for this workshop and report were conceived and developed by humans but AI has helped speed the process showing how the two can complement each other.
- You do not need to become an AI expert to begin benefiting from AI. Start with one task. Learn to use one tool well to start with. Experiment with one prompt. Complete one short course. Ask questions. Reflect on what works. Then build on what you have learned.
- It is useful to remember that every experienced AI user was once a beginner.
- We hope our Workshop “I thought AI was just for Tech Experts” and this Companion has demonstrated that AI is not just for technology specialists—it is a practical tool that, when used thoughtfully and responsibly, can support the important work that experienced professionals like you already do every day.
- We wish you every success as you continue your AI journey.