ESAI GUIDELINES

I developed the Essential Skills for Artificial Intelligence (ESAI) guidelines to help individuals master AI. These guidelines include seven skills: communication, creativity & ingenuity, capability, strategic thinking, function, and tools. These skills are transferable and can be used with any form of AI to maximize your outputs and help you reach your goals. Below, I explain each skill in relation to AI, its areas of focus, related skills, and why it is essential. Check them out to start taking your AI interactions to the next level.

Communication
AI Communication Skills

Effective **communication** is undoubtedly the most important skill that an individual should have when interacting with AI. Ineffective communication is the biggest barrier users have when trying to get desired outputs from AI. AI systems like ChatGPT and Gemini are conversational generative AI systems, also known as AI chatbots, that operate on inputs from users, called prompts. Prompts are the instructions users input into the AI. Prompts should not be structured like an inquiry in a search engine, but instead, they should be conversational. Effective communication includes properly phrasing questions, structuring prompts, and iterative refinement of outputs.

Key Focus Areas & Skills to Build: Prompt engineering techniques, active iteration, feedback loops, conciseness, clarity, and information structuring

Why It Matters: Effective communication produces more usable outputs. It turns AI into an assistant and not just a tool. Failing to develop these skills can lead to generic or useless outputs, the inability to properly iterate when outputs aren't useful, and overlooking the need for including an efficient amount of details in prompts for clarity and accuracy.

Creativity & Ingenuity
Creative use of AI

Using AI **creatively** is where its true power emerges. Creatively using AI involves generating new and original ideas, as well as remixing, combining, and evolving existing ideas and concepts. This isn't limited to creatively using it to create art, but also applies to problem-solving, business strategies, and product development.

Ingenuity is about being resourceful and innovative, and using AI beyond its original purpose. This involves using AI with other computer programs to provide unique solutions or advanced functionality (e.g., customizing outputs or repurposing AI outputs to meet a specific goal) and with human interactions (facial scans to suggest the skin care regimen needed to improve skin health).

Key Focus Areas & Skills to Build: Art principles, art mediums, art styles, color theory, design theory, storyboarding, storytelling, cross-tool integration, brainstorming with AI, converting AI suggestions to real-world actions

Why It Matters: Being creative and innovative with AI enables users to elevate the applications and resourcefulness of AI beyond its basic outputs and uses. It gives them the ability to solve complex issues and enhance (not replace) their creativity.

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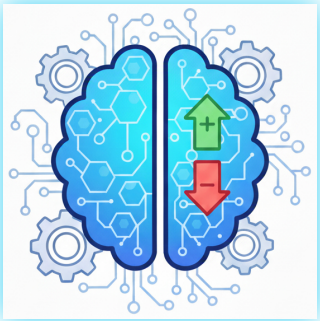
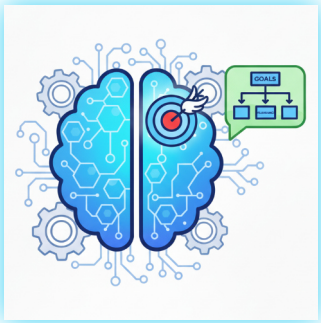


Capability
Recognizing the Capabilities of AI

AI technologies have different **capabilities**. Some are great at generating text, while others specialize in creating images or analyzing data. Understanding what different AI tools are capable of allows users to select the right AI technology for specific tasks and goals.

Key Focus Areas & Skills to Build: Tool evaluation, critical thinking, skepticism, error recognition, fact-checking outputs, and knowing when human judgment is required.

Why It Matters: The relevance of this skill lies in a user's ability to determine which AI tool is most effective in achieving a goal. Being aware of an AI's capabilities will help users determine how far they can push the technology and prevent overestimating what AI can do. It also ensures that users aren't relying on AI to solve all problems, that they aren't ignoring the need for human oversight, and that they are cross-verifying AI outputs. As a result, this helps produce quality results and reduces the risk of misinformation.



Strategic Thinking
Strategic use of AI

Strategically using AI involves looking beyond the immediate benefits of AI and instead focusing on its long-term implementation and how it adds value to achieve long-term goals for individuals and organizations. This also includes using it to adapt to new challenges, manage risk, facilitate collaboration, and make data-driven decisions.

Key Focus Areas & Skills to Build: Critical thinking, risk assessment, compliance compatibility, ethical considerations, strategic alignment with business objectives, ability to apply AI to dynamic business needs and operations

Why It Matters: Failure to utilize AI strategically can result in not aligning with goals, limited use that only satisfies immediate needs and short-term goals, unnecessary expenses, and potential legal issues. The strategic use of AI allows individuals and organizations to achieve scalability and efficiencies with fewer resources. This skill also enables individuals and organizations to develop and grow in ways that are not possible without AI.

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Function
Understanding the Functionality of AI

Functionality involves understanding how AI works. This includes understanding how AI is built, trained, uses data, generates outputs, and why it behaves the way that it does. These skills enable the user to interpret AI outputs with greater accuracy and anticipate potential errors.

Key Focus Areas & Skills to Build: Basic understanding of how AI is trained, machine learning, natural language processing, awareness of biases, hallucinations, factual errors, and overfitting

Why It Matters: Having a basic understanding of how AI functions, learns, and the errors it can make will keep users' expectations realistic and prevent blind reliance on the technology. It also ensures that the user understands how AI uses their data. Understanding how AI generates output will help users communicate more effectively with it and enhance its outputs. Additionally, this skill allows users to recognize when outputs require human judgment and cross-verification.

Tools
Knowledge of AI Tools

New AI **tools** are continually being released, so knowing which relevant AI tools are available and their capabilities is essential, as it allows users to ensure they are using the best tools to complete their tasks and achieve their goals.

Key Focus Areas & Skills to Build: AI tool research and testing, feature comparison, pricing models and benefits, integrating tools into workflows, staying current on new AI tools and uses

Why It Matters: Utilizing the right AI tool can save time, boost productivity, and help individuals and organizations remain adaptable and competitive in a rapidly evolving AI landscape. This all depends on conducting proper research and utilizing the tools effectively. Not researching AI tools and using them simply because they are new or popular can lead to complicated workflows, uneducated individuals, which in turn results in underutilization of the tool, increased expenses, and reduced productivity.