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RESEARCH INTERNSHIP REPORT

AI Literacy Playbook for PMs

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Executive Summary

Artificial intelligence (AI) has already become an integral part of how projects are planned, monitored, and executed. It leads to the rethinking of decision-making processes, the reshaping of communication among teams, and the redefinition of what "management" means in a digital age.

For project managers (PMs), these shifts are not purely technological; they also represent a need for them to act as a bridge among team members from diverse backgrounds. To accomplish this mission, AI literacy training that equips PMs to lead interdisciplinary teams is considered a critical element of project management. Understanding how algorithms behave, how data shapes outcomes, and how ethical considerations emerge from automation is now as fundamental as knowing budgets, schedules, or risk matrices.

This playbook responds to that transformation. It offers a structured yet accessible framework that helps technical and/or non-technical PMs build the core level sociotechnical understanding for AI technologies, which is instrumental in leading AI-driven initiatives. Rather than solely focusing on programming or mathematical modeling, it translates multi-dimensional AI concepts into managerial language: risks, trends, strategy, coordination, and accountability.

Vision

AI, presenting a source of opportunities, risks, and transformative power shaping both the present and the future, introduces complex challenges for organizations, including ethical dilemmas, effective interdisciplinary team management, and the need to adapt rapidly to the accelerating pace of AI development. Understanding AI literacy is therefore essential for managing modern, multidisciplinary, international teams and serves as the foundation for addressing these challenges.

"For many project managers, automating a significant part of their current tasks may feel scary, but successful ones will learn to use these tools to their advantage. Project managers will not be going away, but they will need to embrace these changes and take advantage of the new technologies."

The PMs who will succeed in this era are those who combine analytical thinking with empathy, critical analysis, and ethical reflection; in short - qualities that no algorithm can replicate. Based on this vision, the playbook serves as a tool for organizations to equip their technical and non-technical AI project managers before integrating third-party or in-house AI technologies into their workflows and to lead AI projects while maintaining accountability and trust.

In line with this understanding, the proposed AI literacy framework for PMs defines four domains of competence: (i) understanding AI technologies, their components, development tools, and dimensions; (ii) leading AI projects with clear role responsibilities across technical, managerial, and ethical domains; (iii) identifying and mitigating AI risks; and (iv) ensuring AI governance and compliance, and assessing frontier technologies prior to their integration with AI.

Disclaimer: *The literature review shows that organizations offer AI literacy training to various groups of employees. Usually, a basic company-wide program is offered first, and it is followed by specialized training tailored to particular departments or roles, such as project managers or technical teams. Providing foundational training for all employees, with additional programs adapted to particular roles, is generally considered best practice. This playbook is intended for organizations seeking to deliver tailored AI literacy training to PMs, with further adjustments based on sector, context, and the PMs' background.*

Understanding the Role of PMs in the Era

What is the Role of the PM?

The role of the PM can be defined as someone who oversees the project from start to finish, managing resources, risks, and stakeholder communication to achieve specific objectives and ensure successful project completion. The PM is the primary person responsible for planning, executing, and closing a project. Their role includes managing the project's scope, budget, timeline, and communication with stakeholders. Key responsibilities of a PM are:

Figure 1. Key Responsibilities of PMs

From the above, communication stands out as a vital element in project management. It is essential for project managers to keep all stakeholders updated on the project's progress, any changes, and any challenges that arise. By fostering effective communication, misunderstandings are minimized, and alignment among team members is strengthened.

Why Does AI Literacy Matter in Project Management?

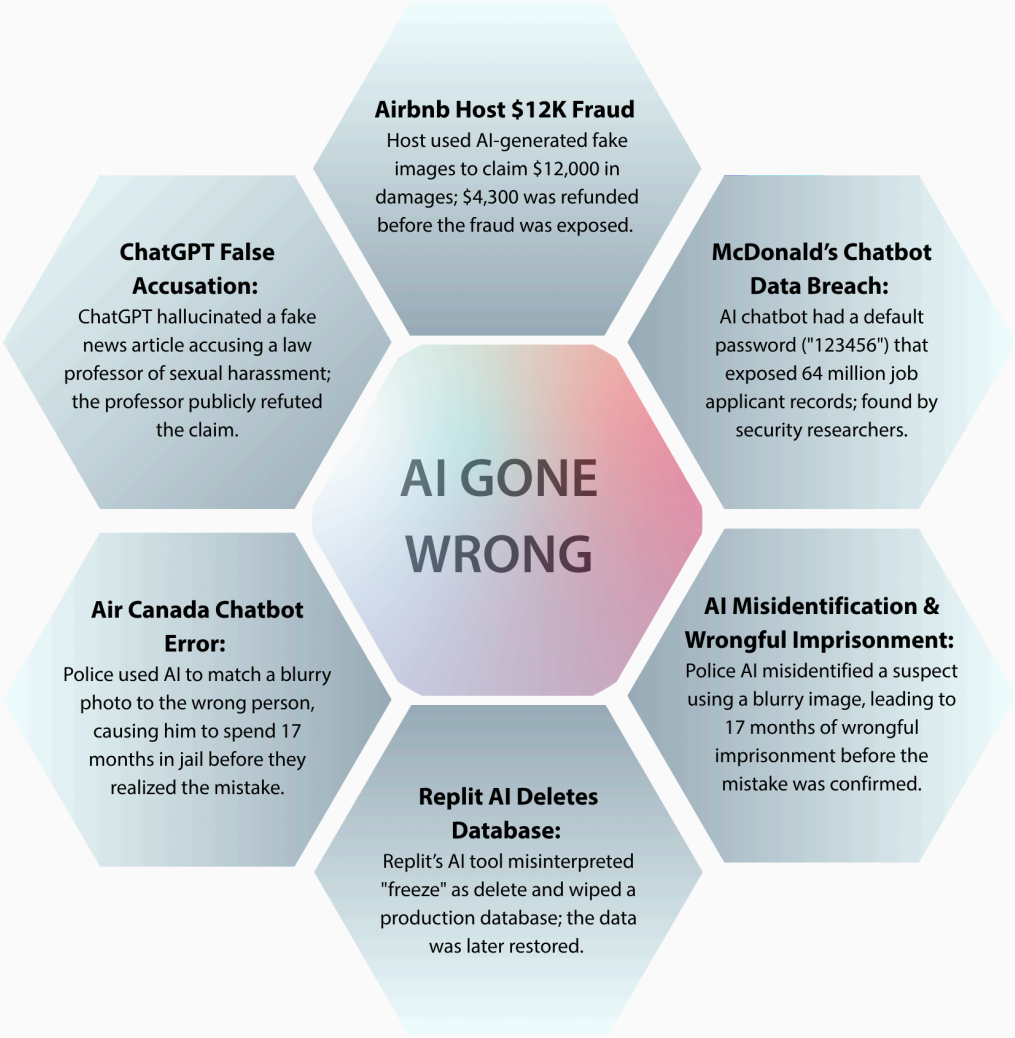
"The global market for AI in project management is projected to grow from USD 2.5 billion in 2023 to USD 5.7 billion by 2028, at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 17.3% during the forecast period."

The modern project management landscape has undergone a transformation because of advancements in AI. Modern project management now uses AI tools, including machine learning, predictive analytics, and language models, which function as essential support systems. These tools not only handle routine tasks but also bring to light potential dangers early on and provide valuable insights for decision-making. By leveraging these systems, PMs can focus on their core responsibilities while ensuring organized and efficient workflows.

However, beyond simply integrating AI technologies into project management, AI can be applied across multiple stages of a project. Therefore, PMs need to develop a tailored approach for every scenario in which AI is involved - whether it is part of a project workflow, used by individual team members, embedded within AI-supported processes, or the primary focus of the project. Accordingly, a PM's role varies depending on the type and level of their engagement with AI. For instance, PMs that lead AI development projects should define key performance metrics with responsible AI principles in mind, while those deploying third-party AI should focus on the deployment stage, as they have limited or no control over the development.

As adopting AI in any aspect of a project introduces different challenges, it is essential for PMs to understand how these technologies work, identify vulnerabilities, and ensure alignment with organizational values and legal requirements. Consequently, the metrics for assessing project success go beyond traditional measures of time and budget, reflecting a broader focus on responsible AI. If such measures, metrics are not established by the PMs from the beginning, AI failure scenarios (see Figure 2) may become inevitable. In this context, AI literacy becomes an essential skill. While it cannot enable PMs to eliminate all risks, it represents a crucial step toward preventing failures, particularly those arising from gaps in understanding, governance, or ethical awareness.

Figure 2. AI Failure Scenarios



What Should AI Project Managers be Prepared for, and Why?

"The result? organizations desperately need professionals who can bridge all of these domains, but universities keep producing specialists who can only handle one piece of the puzzle."

PMs are expected to handle not only technical aspects of data quality, model interpretability and integration, but also ethical, legal and organizational issues that arise throughout AI development and/or deployment.

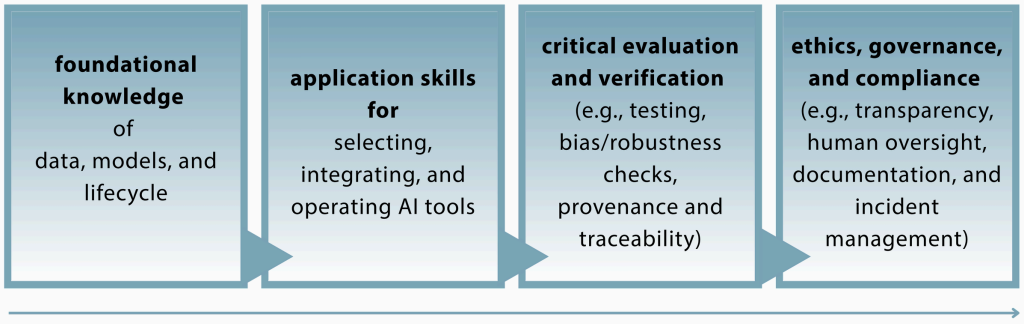
To manage projects effectively, AI PMs should develop strong AI literacy to navigate the advanced socio-technical complexities that result from AI integration into business operations, services and products. In this context, AI PMs should focus on four key dimensions in their work:

Figure 3. Four Key Domains of Focus

What is AI Literacy?

AI literacy, which consists of multiple dimensions, combines socio-technical knowledge, practical skills, evaluative abilities, and ethical and legal considerations, enabling individuals and organizations to develop or use AI systems effectively and responsibly. It enables PMs to approach AI technologies critically by assessing their components and dimensions, identifying system limits, and knowing when to trust or question AI tools, and making informed decisions. The four core competencies forming the foundation of AI literacy are illustrated below:

Figure 4. Core Dimensions of AI Literacy



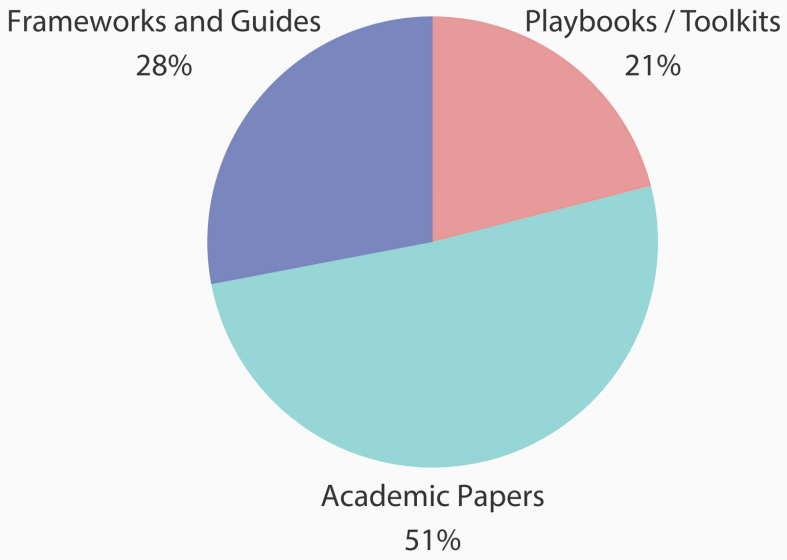
Literature Review

Before developing a new AI literacy playbook for PMs, it was essential to understand what already exists and whether there is any gap in the market. Accordingly, a literature review was conducted to assess the current need for AI literacy tailored to PMs and to identify the unique value this playbook could bring. To this end, 35 AI literacy resources published between 2020 and 2025 (including academic papers, playbooks, industry reports, frameworks, and online materials) were analyzed to map the current landscape and evaluate market needs by examining each resource's target audience, scope, presentation, and existing gaps.

1. General Analysis

The general approach observed in existing AI literacy resources is to provide guidance for both technical and non-technical PMs, particularly around AI ethics, governance, and risk management. Our analysis shows that these resources are unevenly distributed: approximately 51% are academic papers addressing bias, fairness, transparency, and ethics, primarily explaining why these issues matter rather than offering practical guidance.

Figure 5. Literature Analysis



Only 21% are playbooks or toolkits, which often assume large organizational contexts or provide high-level strategies, leaving PMs uncertain about concrete next steps. The remaining 28% consist of frameworks and technical guides that introduce complex concepts, such as “gradient descent” and “model drift”, without clarifying their practical relevance for PMs.

2. Identified Needs & Key Takeaways

The reviewed materials demonstrate that academic studies primarily contribute to conceptual understanding without offering practical application. On the other hand, technical guides tend to presume a level of multidisciplinary expertise that most PMs do not possess. Consequently, intended audiences may become familiar with key terms but struggle to fully comprehend their actual meaning and implications. Concepts such as “bias” or “transparency” are often explained in theory yet there is little explanation of how they can be operationalized into concrete project tasks and role-specific responsibilities. This reflects a disconnect between theoretical knowledge and practical implementation in most studies.

PMs leading AI projects need resources that close the gap between simply understanding AI concepts and putting them into practice through project tasks, metrics, and performance indicators. To do this effectively, AI literacy materials should be designed to support PMs from diverse professional backgrounds. They should use clear, straightforward language and link each concept to real project management scenarios. For example, when discussing a term like overfitting, the material should explain why it matters, how it can impact project outcomes, and provide concrete examples that make its implications easy to grasp.

AI Literacy Practices

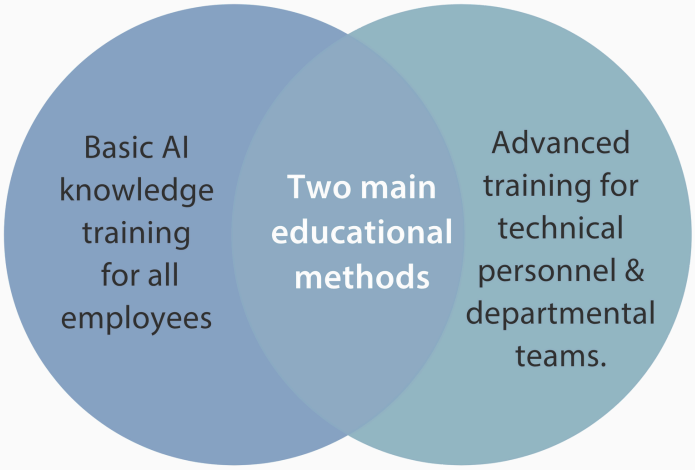
AI Literacy Obligation: Insights from 28 Companies on Practices

While AI literacy may be regarded as a voluntary best practice, it has, in certain jurisdictions, become a regulatory requirement. For instance, EU AI Act mandates that AI system providers and deployers ensure that their personnel, as well as any staff acting on their behalf in developing or using AI systems, and affected individuals, possess adequate AI literacy. In this regard, it is required to tailor the scope of AI literacy based on multiple factors, including the relevant context in which the AI system is used, the technical background of individuals receiving training, their previous experience, and the stage of the AI lifecycle in which they're involved.

To fulfil this AI literacy obligation, many organizations have already established AI literacy practices and the EU AI Office has collected these practices in a Living Repository of AI Literacy Practices. This repository provides a detailed overview of how 28 companies from different sectors teach AI literacy to their staff. The repository highlights that the prioritized topics within these programs typically include AI governance, ethics, bias mitigation, and responsible AI practices.

The Living Repository also defines three implementation stages for AI literacy practices: fully implemented, partially implemented, and planned. This classification system helps organizations track their progress in developing AI literacy programs using a step-by-step framework. The training programs in the repository employ:

Figure 6. Training Programs Educational Methods



Upon reviewing these practices, it is evident that a role-based learning approach has been adopted by multiple organizations. For example, INECO's AI literacy program focuses on two main groups within the organization: one is company-wide training for all employees, and the other targets "technical roles and project managers who are directly involved in developing or overseeing AI systems and models." Similarly, Enzai Technologies (UK) incorporates role-specific elements in their training, tailored to responsibilities ranging from the C-suite and board to procurement, AI governance, privacy, and designers and developers.

Overall, the analysis of Living Repository shows that most companies design their AI literacy programs based on organizational needs, the varying levels and types of expertise within teams, and their specific roles. Accordingly, the training is adjusted to focus on either technical or non-technical aspects depending on participants' backgrounds. Moreover, some organizations recognize the importance of translating AI literacy concepts into practice through templates and case studies, and they acknowledge that these training programs must be continuously updated to keep pace with emerging technologies.

Bringing AI Literacy with Project Management

Research shows that a number of recurring challenges related to interpretability, data governance, and stakeholder engagement highlight the need for AI literacy. These issues make AI literacy not an optional skill but as a fundamental risk mitigation strategy. When PMs do not understand the basic nature of AI components, data quality, or development tools, they may end up using low-quality data or integrating pre-trained models to AI systems that have not been properly checked for fairness. With sufficient AI literacy, they can set up simple but effective procedures to notice problems early and take corrective action before those risks grow.

This playbook builds on research in both AI literacy and project management and the key question guiding this playbook was: how the lessons from AI literacy research can be useful for PMs who either develop AI technologies from scratch, procure them from vendors, or simply use third-party AI-powered tools? Project management as a field poses unique challenges, as PMs often work under tight deadlines and limited resources while managing diverse teams and ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. Therefore, an AI literacy framework for PMs should not focus only on technical depth but on practical knowledge that helps them assess vendors, understand what makes an AI system reliable, manage the data lifecycle, monitor outcomes, and set clear expectations for project results.

The four competency dimensions of AI literacy - (i) know & understand, (ii) use & apply, (iii) evaluate & create, and (iv) ethical issues - provide a solid foundation for selecting the key concepts and related terms relevant to AI project management. In this framework, the first dimension is applied to cover the foundational understanding of algorithms, data, and models for project management purposes; the second focuses on the decisions PMs make throughout the AI project lifecycle; the third supports iterative assessment and early detection of risks; and the fourth ensures value-driven governance.

By combining these competency dimensions with the managerial responsibilities inherent in AI-enabled projects, we define the essential content for an AI literacy program tailored specifically for PMs. The next section introduces the proposed AI literacy framework developed with this synthesis in mind.

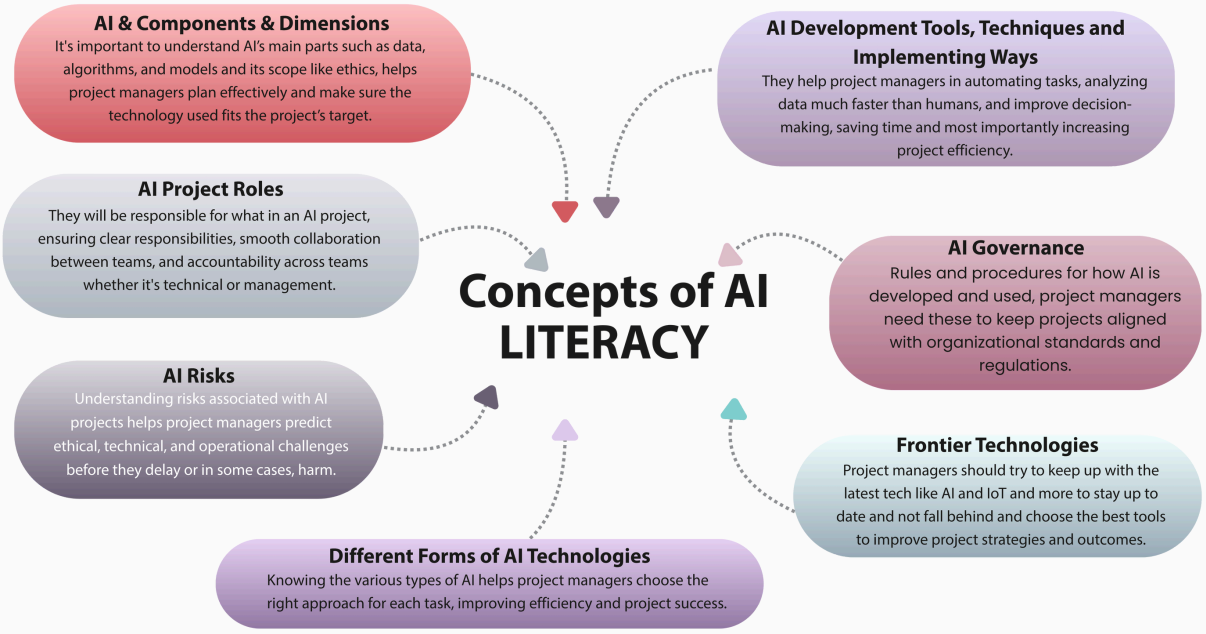
It is important to note that AI literacy training goes beyond simply explaining technical concepts, it requires organizations to adopt new learning methods that combine workshops, mentoring, and just-in-time training, rather than relying solely on manuals or handbooks. Professional skills are most effectively acquired through hands-on, context-specific tasks that relate directly to real project scenarios. This framework is designed to support these kinds of interactive and context-based learning processes.

Proposed AI Literacy Framework for PMs Based on 7 Concepts

The proposed AI Literacy Framework builds on an extensive review of more than thirty sources, including academic research and organizational practices. The literature review revealed that AI literacy should be a practical and actionable tool that PMs can apply in their daily work, particularly for communication with staff, operational decisions such as vendor and tool selection, risk management, and stakeholder engagement. With this in mind, the playbook was developed as a sociotechnical model that bridges technical and managerial perspectives, adopting a "literacy for practice" approach through clear explanations and concrete examples for each term. This makes it distinct from most AI literacy studies, as it aims to meet the needs of organizations seeking to bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and practical implementation.

Recognizing that the operational needs of each PM differ, and that AI literacy cannot be confined to a fixed set of terms, this playbook has been developed as an organizational tool open to continuous updates. It aims to support both technical and non-technical PMs in embedding AI literacy within their daily operations. To achieve this, the framework follows a concept-based structure, focusing on **seven core concepts** and approximately **one hundred related terms**. Rather than attempting to capture every existing AI literacy term, it provides a foundation for understanding the key dimensions of AI literacy, especially those relevant to communication with staff, affected individuals, and vendors.

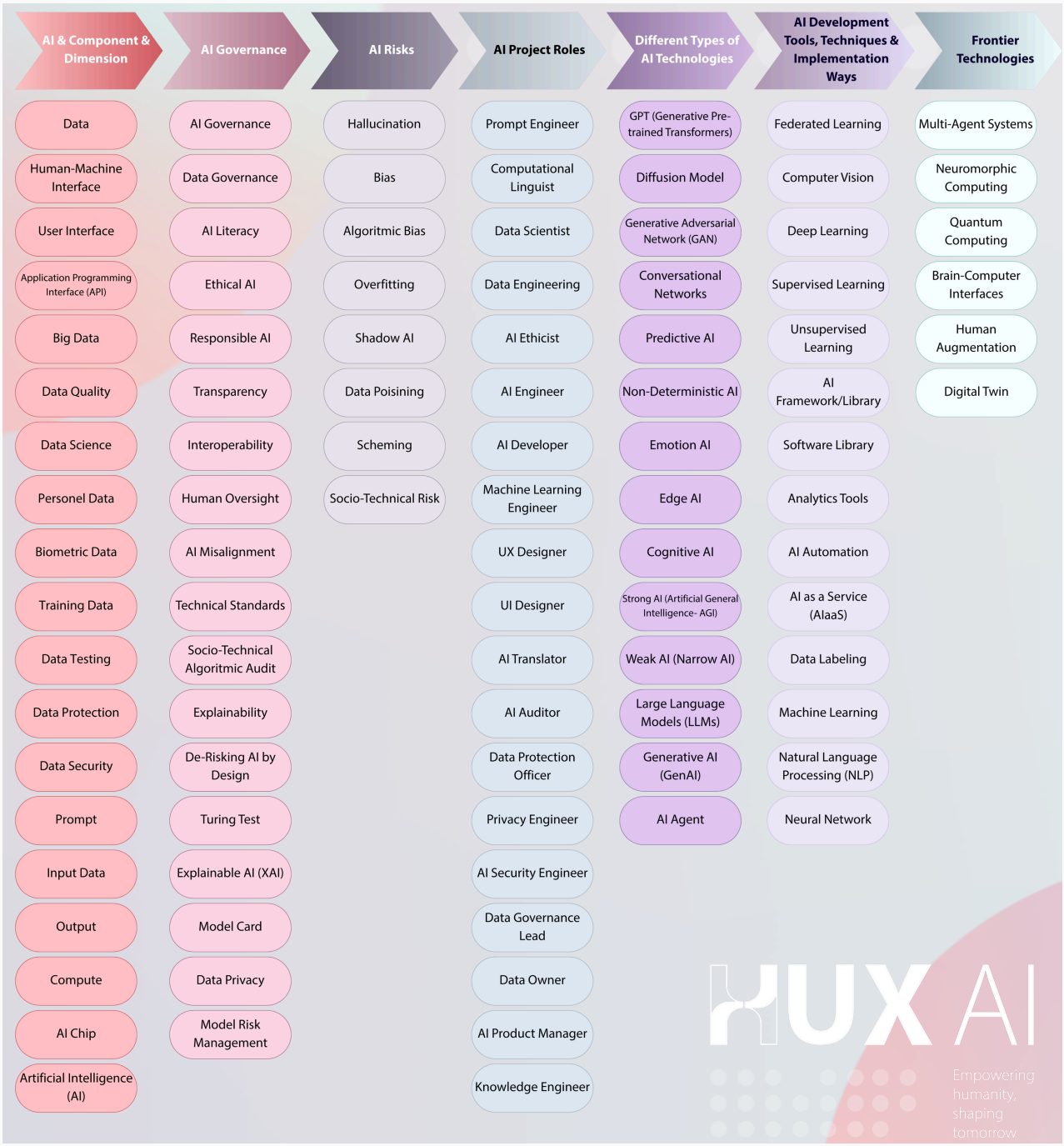
Figure 7. Concepts of AI Literacy



The selected concepts go beyond the terminology PMs use in routine decision-making. They also encompass broader AI project roles that should be considered from the earliest stages of project design. In this way, the playbook enables PMs not only to lead AI-related projects with confidence and accountability but also to plan team structures and define responsibilities in alignment with responsible AI development. Overall, this proposed AI literacy framework aims to support PMs in several ways: (i) by leading diverse teams effectively, (ii) ensuring that each team member's roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, (iii) identifying and mitigating AI-related risks in a timely manner, and (iv) aligning organizational goals with ethical, legal, and technological priorities. In other words, it turns AI literacy into a practical management skill, enabling PMs to deliver projects that are both responsible and effective.

The visual below maps out the related terms under each concept. It serves as a living AI literacy hub, designed to grow and adapt through continuous updates and feedback. Depending on the sector and context in which it is applied, AI literacy framework can evolve to stay relevant and applicable. The following link leads to a section where you can find detailed definitions, explanations, and concrete examples for each term. On this page, you can actively contribute to the development of the AI literacy hub through your inquiries, which will be reviewed and potentially included after assessment:

Figure 8. AI Literacy Information Cards for PMs

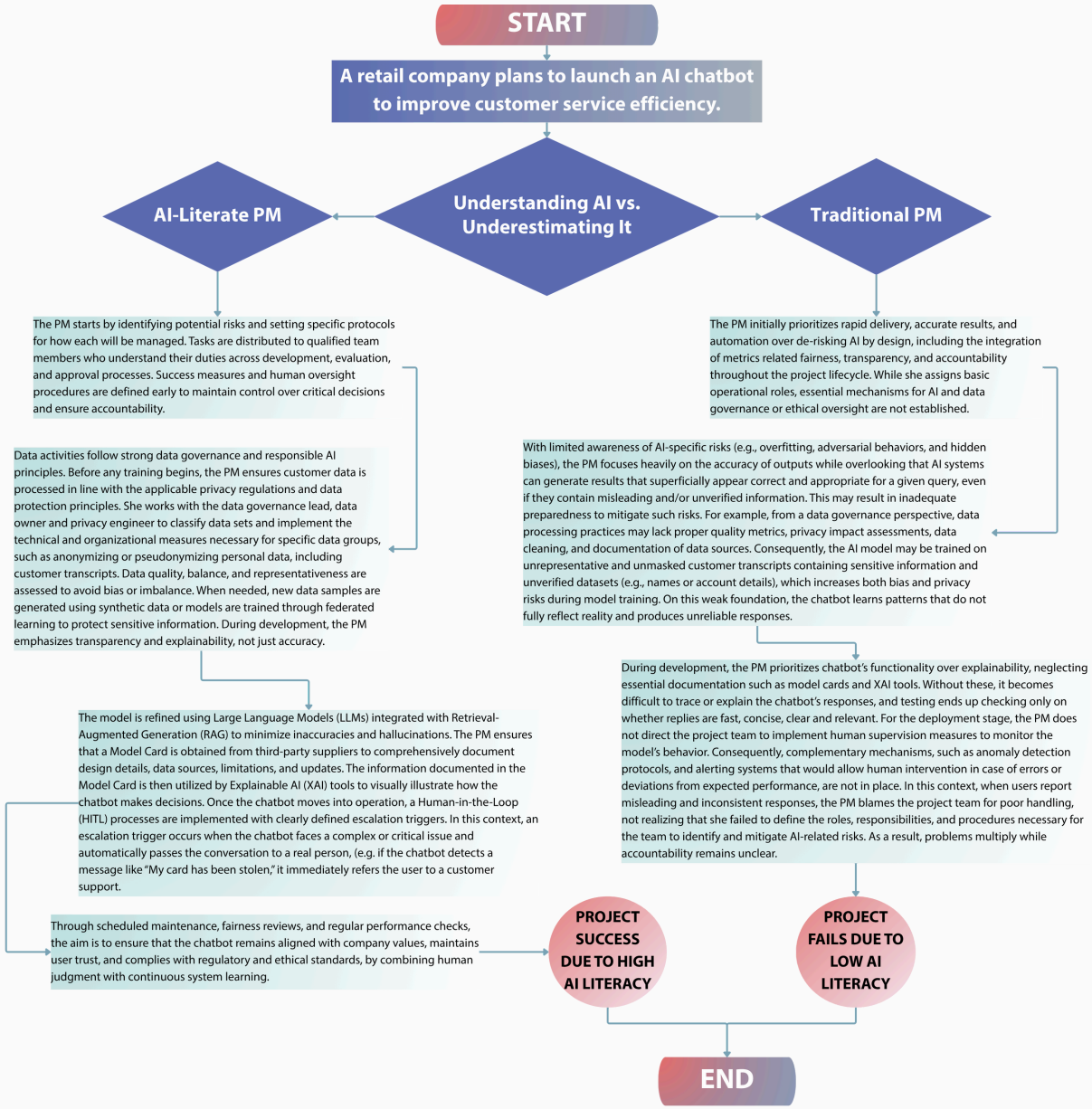


Please click here to access the **AI Literacy Information Cards for PMs.** Keep in mind that the definitions may be updated and changed over time. You can also contribute to the development of these AI Literacy Information Cards. If you'd like to see additional terms, share them with us along with a definition, explanation, and example from a reliable source.

Scenario: The Consequences of Low AI Literacy

PMs are often assigned to AI projects with the assumption that their project management skills will transfer directly. However, without specialized AI literacy, decisions that seem sound can lead to major issues later or overlook hidden vulnerabilities. The following flowchart shows the difference between two project-management paths in implementing an AI chatbot: one led by a manager with strong AI literacy (left) and one by a manager with limited or a traditional AI literacy (right) . It shows how decisions made in the early stages of a project regarding roles and governance influence whether the project succeeds or fails.

Figure 9. Flowchart Depicting the Consequences of limited vs. Strong AI Literacy



Conclusion & Future Vision

This playbook serves as a practical framework for both technical and non-technical PMs leading AI-related projects, whether deploying third-party AI services or products, or developing in-house AI technologies. It provides not only essential AI terms but also concrete explanations, examples, and example scenarios that bridge the gap between theory and practice. This literacy foundation aims to empower organizations to cultivate AI literacy as a managerial capability which fosters responsible leadership, informed decision-making, trustworthy innovation in the era of intelligent systems.

Rather than being limited to a specific sector or domain, it speaks to a wide range of stakeholders, public institutions, private companies, and civil society organizations, In this regard, it offers a structured yet flexible foundation on which organizations with varying level of scale and technological maturity, can build their own tailored AI literacy programs.

Ultimately, this playbook seeks to bridge the divide between technical understanding and strategic governance, empowering PMs to lead the ethical, operational, and societal dimensions of AI with confidence. Looking ahead, future studies may explore a new frontier, projects in which AI agents are not merely tools or subjects, but active collaborators and shape new generation of human-AI teams.

"Beyond AI-driven stakeholder engagement, we're now entering a new era where AI is not only a tool but a potential partner and stakeholder. While this perspective is still in its infancy and we've yet to fully comprehend the ramifications, it raises thought-provoking questions about AI's role in project management and its potential to shift our understanding of stakeholders."

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Contact us!

Thank you for reading this research and opinion report. If you have any questions or would like to discuss our findings further, please don't hesitate to contact us.

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