



# 2018 Communicating Artificial Intelligence (AI) Global Report

```
operation == "MIRROR_X":  
    mirror_mod.use_x = False  
    mirror_mod.use_y = True  
    mirror_mod.use_z = False  
_operation == "MIRROR_Z":  
    mirror_mod.use_x = False  
    mirror_mod.use_y = False  
    mirror_mod.use_z = True
```

```
#selection at the end -add back the deselected mirror modifier object  
mirror_ob.select= 1  
modifier_ob.select=1  
context.scene.objects.active = modifier_ob  
print("Selected" + str(modifier_ob)) # modifier ob is the active ob  
mirror_ob.select = 0
```

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## The bots are here, but do *we* know where we are going?

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Balancing the tech and touch around artificial intelligence (AI), understanding where communication professionals will go to find out about AI in the coming year and what skills are required of communication professionals in the digital economy are some of the themes of the inaugural Communicating AI Global Survey proudly supported by the Centre for Strategic Communication Excellence. With participation from more than 230 communication professionals from 25 countries, we get an understanding of a gap in awareness of AI that needs to be filled, and may I suggest with some urgency, if we are to advise our organizations on the opportunities and pitfalls of AI.

AI is already here and has been underway for quite a while, impacting all of us and our organizations in both similar and unique ways. With only 35% of respondents actually communicating AI right now, we run the risk of an industry-wide lack of understanding of AI growing at a time when communication professionals are needed most in organizations. As the voice and conscience of the organization we should learn from our painful lack of preparedness with social media and prepare ourselves to navigate the amazing opportunities and challenges a changing world presents.

In this report, we explore the similarities and differences between those currently communicating AI and those who are not and highlight where our focus should be right now in building competence and perspective in AI. As Albert Einstein said, "The true sign of intelligence is not knowledge but imagination." I invite all communication professionals to start now and explore how AI can make our work easier and spark our imagination while challenging us to choose only those opportunities that enable us and our organizations to flourish and excel in an AI world.



CEO Cropley Communication  
September 2018



## What the results tell us

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The inaugural Communicating AI survey found consistencies and inconsistencies in general familiarity with artificial intelligence, perceived readiness to communicate AI and role expectations of the communication industry among communication professionals in organizations that are currently communicating AI and those that are not communicating AI.

Those in organizations currently communicating AI provided insights via comments on the top three most important communication skills used and learned in communicating AI, their biggest challenge in working on communicating AI and their plans for continual learning as the digital transformation gains momentum. Respondents shared the sources they plan to use to learn about AI and the information needed to be prepared to communicate AI.

The purpose of the survey was to benchmark what communication professionals know, feel and are doing on AI now, what knowledge is needed to be AI-ready and how communication professionals can assist in the process of “unveiling AI” in their companies and people's lives.

## Methodology

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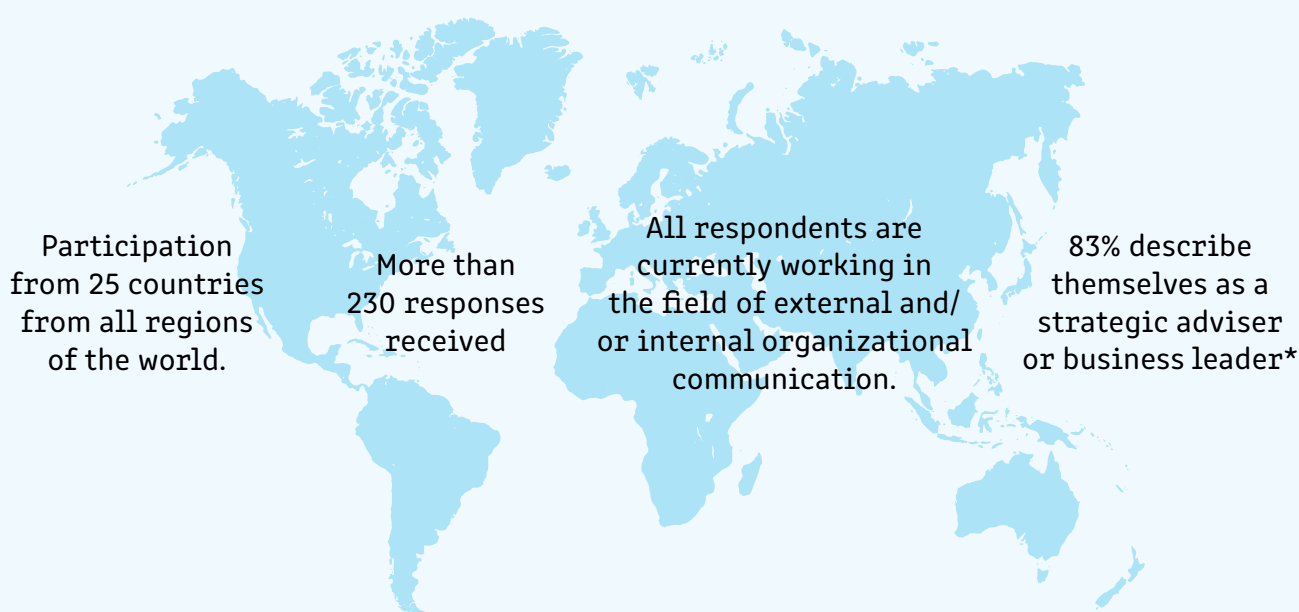
The survey was conducted in two phases from April – July 2018.

1. **Qualitative** in-depth interviews were conducted with global organizational communication thought-leaders active in emerging technologies in the UK, US and Europe to inform survey design.
2. A **quantitative** web-based survey was sent to communication professionals throughout the world via email invitation.

For the survey of those in organizations communicating AI, the results can be generalized to all in organizations communicating AI with a margin error of +/- 10 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. For those in organizations not communicating AI, the results can be generalized to all organizations not communicating AI with a margin error of +/- 5 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

## Who responded

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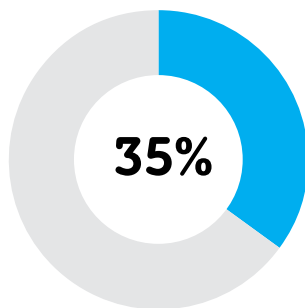


\*Global Standard of the Communication Profession Career Paths of the Communication Professional: <https://www.iabc.com/global-standard-2/>





## Where is communicating AI happening and by whom?



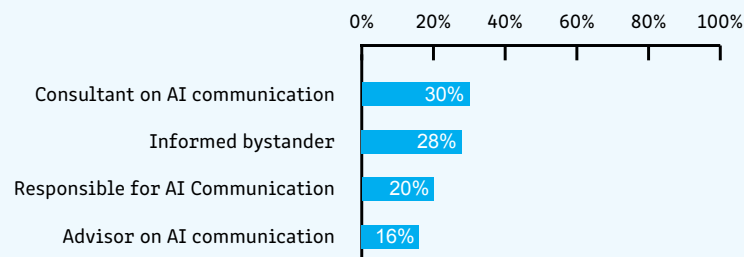
of respondents are in organizations communicating AI

### Organizational size

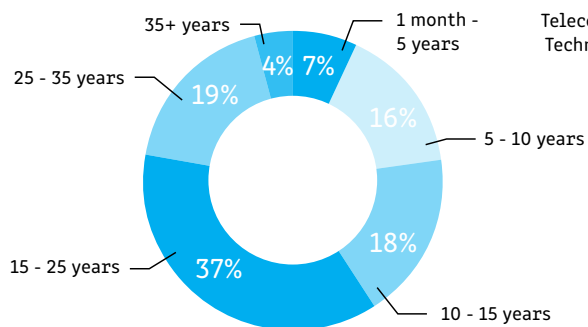
Those in organizations communicating AI come largely from organizations of either 1-50 and more than 25,000 full-time employees.

### Organizational relationship

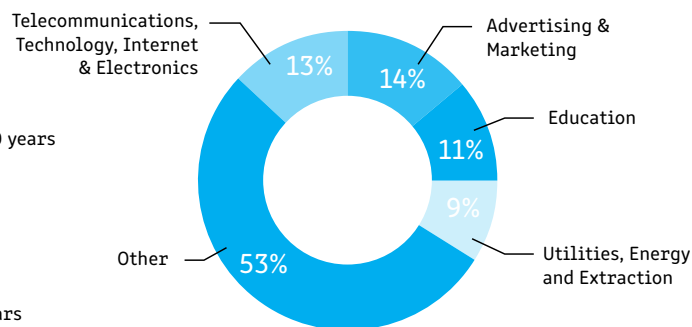
65% are in an employee/employer working relationship with the organization.



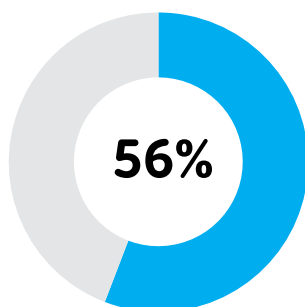
### Years in Communication Industry



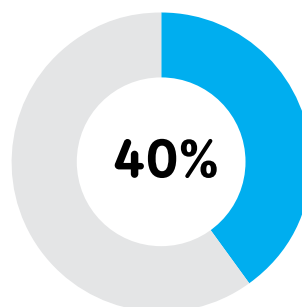
### Industry



### Currently using AI tools in their own communication work



56% of communication professionals in organizations communicating AI do not use AI tools in their communication work



40% are using AI tools.

“With active involvement in communicating AI and using AI tools in their work, communication professionals can build knowledge and experience AI.”



Overall, communication professionals have general knowledge and perspectives of AI with greater inconsistencies seen in those organizations already communicating AI.

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**Consistency between those in organizations communicating AI and those not communicating AI**

98% selected artificial intelligence as what AI represents to them. Despite an opportunity to select more than one meaning, only 10% of respondents did so.\*

Both groups understand that AI is one component in the digital transformation underway.

Both groups indicate an awareness of AI changing the way we do our work.

**Inconsistencies**

96% of respondents communicating AI felt AI affected them while 79% of those not communicating AI felt it affected them.

Both groups indicated less agreement with AI offering a more efficient way of doing their work.

The majority in both groups (74% of those communicating AI and 55% not communicating AI) disagreed that AI will surface in 2040 (the correct response)

While both groups define AI as primarily a global issue, those communicating AI chose organizational issue more often while those not communicating AI, chose technology.

**“Those in organizations not communicating AI have an opportunity to learn more on the overall impact and effect of AI.”**

\*Respondents could select descriptors from the following list: automated inquiry, augmented intelligence, artificial intelligence, automated institutions, augmented IQ, other.





## Top three concerns communication professionals think people have about AI in the workplace

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Both those in organizations communicating AI and those not communicating AI selected:\*

- > accuracy of technology's ability to make good decisions
- > dealing with ambiguity when things change
- > disruption in the way things are done now.

Comments provide further clarity with those made by communication professionals communicating AI more specific in nature.

### Organizations Communicating AI

"Integrity and ethics of the programmers."

"Organizations are using AI but not communicating transparently about how and why."

"Not understanding how it works...and failing to realize it is not intelligent."

### Organizations Not Communicating AI

"How ethical decisions are handled with machines in the mix."

"Lack of accountability in the implementation of AI."

"Further adding to the dumbing down of humans and our ability to be critical and creative thinkers."

"Abuse of AI to control/police human activity."

\*Respondents were asked to check the top three concerns they think people have about AI in the workplace from the following list: machines will rule over humans, dealing with ambiguity when things change, accuracy of technology's ability to make good decisions, effect on current job, disruption in the way things are done now, other.



## Top three concerns communication professionals have about AI

Both those in organizations communicating AI and those not communicating AI selected:\*\*

- > dealing with ambiguity when things change
- > management understanding the time it takes to learn new things
- > new skills to learn.

Comments provide further clarity with those made by communication professionals communicating AI more experiential in nature.

### Organizations Communicating AI

Understanding AI is good:

- > “My concern is that most reactions are due to ignorance.”
- > “Helping business leaders understand the challenges and opportunities of AI and to disrupt before we are disrupted.”
- > “There are a few concerns relating to comms. (1) AI actually communicating - we've all seen the fake customer service interface. How do we trust what we are hearing? Will our audience believe our message? (2) As communicators, we explain our products which increasingly contain AI. Do we understand this sufficiently to explain it honestly?”
- > “People understanding that “AI” is a good thing, and security “regulations” providing a sound foundation for implementation.”

Value of work:

“Providing strategic value when my work becomes automated.”

Communication role:

“Reliability of AI to be trusted if it's making decisions, not recommendations, as part of my role.”

### Organizations Not Communicating AI

Fear of technology's impact on the human element:

- > “Not sure that empathy and cultural sensitivity can be programmed. For internal communications this is critical.”
- > “Impact on the economy and on human relations.”
- > “Not trusting computer programmes.”

Governance/management concerns:

- > “Difficulty of implementation”
- > “Organizational commitment to change”
- > “Resistance to the investment that would be needed.”

**“Through knowledge and understanding of AI, communication professionals can allay fears and concerns about AI.”**

\*\*Respondents were asked to indicate their own concerns about AI in the workplace among the following list: technology to do my work, new skills to learn, dealing with ambiguity when things change, learning technology is a challenge, AI is “big brother” watching, management understanding the time it takes to learn new things, other.







## Communication professionals give insights on the skills needed and the challenges they experienced in communicating AI

Skill: Strategic Context of AI as a global and organizational issue

Used	Learned
"Understanding the underlying technology and how it improves the product."	"Asking the 'right' questions."
"Understanding the impact on people and business."	"IP is job 1 in protecting the effort."
"Benefit driven."	"Understanding AI and its impact."
"Clarity."	
"Establishing a digital mindset."	



**Skill: Change strategy and management as the digital transformation advances and the pace of transformation accelerates.**

Used	Learned
"Preparedness to engage."	"Continual learning in the AI / digital space."
"A new paradigm shift for understanding how machine learning / AI is different to traditional computing."	"Working across organizational divisions."
"Competency in managing change communication."	"What are the skills required for future of work."
"Creating the case for change."	"Analyzing data."

**Skill: Message strategy that focuses on organizational direction and understanding.**

Used	Learned
"Communication of purpose-written articles exploring themes."	"Focus on the target."
"Education"	"Building pool of influencers."
"Show the help of AI in the people's tasks."	"Audience segmentation."
"Promoting digital literacy."	
"Explaining the benefits of innovation."	
"Relevancy of AI usage."	
"Maintaining trust in the product when a machine is making decisions rather than people."	
"Show that AI makes people more competitive."	
"Connect AI to WIIFM among employees."	

Communication professionals found they relied on existing writing skills to provide clarity, continuity and comprehension within organizational context.

**"Understanding Context is the #1 skill used and learned by communication professionals in organizations communicating AI. Change, message strategy and writing skills also play key roles."**





## A steep learning curve in understanding AI concepts and its impact is seen as the greatest challenge by communication professionals communicating AI.

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- > Steep learning curve:
  - > "Steep learning curve in understanding the limits and expectations for AI vs human interaction."
  - > "Fear of the unknown."
  - > "Letting go of control elevated us from tacticians to strategists."
  - > "Getting consistent buy-in to establish a level of comfort."
  - > "Trusting the technology."
- > The ability to understand AI concepts and its impacts:
  - > "People don't really understand AI or its impacts."
  - > "Understanding the concepts covered by the organization to be applied at work."
  - > "Overcoming the perception that it's detrimental to employees."
  - > "Skepticism."
  - > "Learning new terminology and how to use it for targeted audiences; balancing the 'cool of new' and the 'fear of loss'."
  - > "Misunderstanding of what AI is."
  - > "It's a big topic and not well understood by the masses."
  - > "It's new – hiccups."

**"Communication professionals can mediate challenges in learning and understanding more about AI by taking small steps now to become familiar with AI."**



## Preparation for communicating AI is underway by communication professionals in organizations communicating AI as well as those that aren't.

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- > Generally, the majority of respondents in organizations communicating AI (63%) feel ready to communicate AI to stakeholders, while those in organizations not communicating AI do not (47%)
- > The majority of respondents plan to learn more about AI in the coming year with 89% in organizations currently communicating AI and 74% in organizations not communicating AI.
- > Both groups consistently identified similar topics pertinent to their readiness:
  - > The AI value proposition
  - > AI strategies
  - > Best practices in communicating AI
- > Respondents from organizations communicating AI weighted strategic knowledge more heavily, including AI context, knowledge of the value proposition, industry knowledge and AI strategies.
- > The consistent sources for both groups learning will be websites, blogs, industry meetings/conferences and professional development programs.\*\*

**“Websites, blogs, industry meetings/conferences and professional development programs are planned sources for learning about AI.”**

\*Respondents were asked to check the AI topics valuable to their readiness from among the following list: AI context, AI value proposition, AI communication strategies, AI communication tactics, AI used in my organization's industry, AI to use in my communication work, best practices in AI communication, other.

\*\*Respondents were asked to indicate where they intend to learn about AI communication from among the following list: websites, blogs, online search engines, organizational Industry meetings, trade associations, company educational initiatives, digital transformational team, organizational change team, academic resources, colleague networks, professional development programs, other.







## The communication industry has room for growth in fostering AI communication so communication professionals can serve a strategic leadership role.

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- > Both groups feel strongly that:
  - > communication should serve a leadership role in communicating on AI.
  - > organizations should have an AI strategy to guide activities touched by AI
  - > the disruption of AI will require people to be patient in learning new ways to do things\*
- > Both groups feel communication professionals need more preparation to be ready to communicate AI.
- > Both groups feel that more preparation and readiness should be coming from the organizational communication industry.
- > The majority in both groups would like to have an AI survey conducted annually.

## “Communication professionals need more preparation to be ready to communicate AI.”

\*Respondents were asked to rate a series of statements on the role of communication in AI communication from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

- > Communication should serve a leadership role in communicating on AI
- > Organizations should have an AI strategy to guide activities touched by AI
- > AI activities should align with organizational values
- > The disruption of AI will require people to be, patient in learning new ways to do things
- > Communication professionals are prepared to help stakeholders adjust to a new way of working with the organization
- > As an industry, organizational communication is preparing professionals for a new way to do their work.









### Centre for Strategic Communication Excellence

The Centre for Strategic Communication Excellence is a network of communication leaders from diverse global markets who develop communication professionals and organisations by sharing knowledge and insights and delivering expert online, virtual and classroom professional development.

For more information about the Centre for Strategic Communication Excellence contact us:

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### Supporters



### Thank you

Our thanks to the following people for their contribution to this project: Adrian Cropley OAM, FRSA, ABC, Mary Hills, ABC, Six Sigma, IABC Fellow, FRSA, Patricia Heimann, Sia Papageorgiou FRSA, Claire Watson ABC, MC, APR, Jane Mitchell FRSA, Martha Muzychka ABC, MC, Cyrus Mavalwala ABC, MC, Paulo Soares ABC, Amanda Hamilton-Attwell ABC, IABC Fellow, Brad Beer.

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