



The list below summarizes IT trends mentioned by the National IT Innovation Center's BILT (Business and Industry Leadership Team) at the August 2024 trends meeting, which also featured a special prioritization vote on essential employability "soft" skills. The purpose of this summary is to keep faculty – and their students – informed on the ever-evolving IT landscape.

1

Employers prioritize entry-level workers whose skills go beyond the technical. One employer needed more entry-level workers who can think critically. If he has to do the thinking for them, it wastes everyone's time and energy. Another wished he had entry-level workers who could collaborate across disciplines without him having to step in and "translate." Other employers noted the need for new hires to have innate curiosity and morality, which can't always be taught. Another employer said that if an entry-level worker is willing to collaborate and learn and operate with integrity, then "you're 50% of the way there."

Learn more: <https://www.forbes.com/advisor/business/soft-skills-examples>

The five employability skills receiving the highest prioritization average - via the 27 IT employers who voted at the August 2024 BILT meeting - were integrity (accountable, ethical, fair), dependability (consistent, timely, prepared), critical/analytical thinker (analyzes to draw conclusions), professionalism, (composed, positive, good judgment) and interpersonal skills (emotionally intelligent, open-minded, builds relationships).

2

There are concerns about the AI boom. One employer noted it's a "bad idea" to focus solely on AI to the exclusion of everything else; people and person-to-person transactions will not entirely go away. Another employer noted the rate of innovation in AI may be "outpacing our conversations about ethics and governance to set guard rails." Another agreed the ethics of AI – sometimes called "responsible AI" – can seem like an afterthought.

Learn more: <https://connect.comptia.org/blog/common-ethical-issues-in-artificial-intelligence>

3

Integrated sensing and communications (ISAC) is one of the few IT trends that is projected to have significant positive growth. ISAC – technology that combines software and hardware into a single autonomous device – may soon be reaching a tipping point; reports suggest the industry is hiring more technicians and fewer high-level engineers. The most common ISAC examples cited are autonomous vehicles.

Learn more: <https://www.ericsson.com/en/blog/2024/6/integrated-sensing-and-communication>

4

New hires must consider the business context. There is a company with a purpose beyond the task the worker is completing at any given moment. How does that task connect to the company's mission? Students need to learn that rather than simply solve a problem, they have to also consider how their solution might relate to the overall business purpose. One employer noted that he's worked with data scientists who are good technically, but had trouble applying – and communicating – their results to the larger business needs.

Learn more: <https://hbr.org/2021/09/5-reasons-your-employees-dont-understand-your-companys-vision>

Learn more: <https://www.hibob.com/guides/onboarding-company-culture/>

For a deeper dive into these topics and others, visit NITIC's BILT page, which can be accessed for free here: <https://www.nitic.org/industry/national-bilt/bilt-overview>.