



The list below highlights IT trends mentioned by the National IT Innovation Center's BILT (Business and Industry Leadership Team) at the June 2026 employability skills prioritization meeting and the August 2026 AI literacy knowledge and skills prioritization meeting. The purpose of this summary is to keep faculty – and their students – informed on the ever-evolving IT landscape.

1

Storytelling is an invaluable form of communication. This applies to job interviews, where applicants must use their hard technical skills to show value. That is, you can't just talk about writing code or doing math. You have to show how those skills – plus your passion and drive – bring value to the organization. This also applies to collaborating with less technical audiences. Can you clearly explain a technical problem or solution? This skill, which can be practiced and strengthened, is particularly important in leadership: people tend to follow visionary storytellers. Learn more: www.forbes.com/councils/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/10/04/the-art-of-storytelling-in-tech/

2

Become an AI policy expert. As one employer said: "We all need to be policy wonks when it comes to AI." In the absence of federal rules, more and more states are creating legislation around AI use. This is on top of individual company rules and guidelines. Policies will be different depending on where you are and what you're trying to do. Students need to learn how to monitor all of this. As the tools change, the rules around them will also change. Learn more: legal.thomsonreuters.com/blog/navigating-ai-laws-and-regulations-across-practice-areas/

3

Do not be afraid to ask questions. Employees who are most valued are often those more willing to speak up if they run into trouble. Be a self-starter. While new hires can't be expected to know everything, they likely will be expected to ask questions and seek advice. Too often, entry-level workers nod their head "yes" and do the work as requested rather than think creatively and challenge the situation. New hires need to voice their opinions. Embrace an innovative mindset: look at processes and tasks and products and think about how to make it better. Learn more: www.volarisgroup.com/acquired-knowledge/the-way-weve-always-done-things-challenging-the-status-quo/

4

Learn how to leverage AI tools to get what you need. Anyone can use an LLM, but how can you use it to solve problems and perform tasks? One employer has noticed that hiring managers are starting to ask job applicants to demonstrate how they've used AI to improve performance and productivity. Everyone's job will be integrated with AI. For this reason, one BILT member suggested that rather than a single stand-alone course, AI tools and skills should be threaded through every course. Learn more: zapier.com/blog/best-ai-productivity-tools/

5

Customer satisfaction is important. It's the customers that pay the bills. IT jobs aren't just about creating new things and fixing problems. A big part of IT is doing what the customer wants. Too often, new hires can seem "ambivalent or antagonistic" to customer needs. Students need to reject the traditional mindset that IT controls workflows and systems in favor of embracing IT's more contemporary role supporting business needs and making customers happy. Learn more: <https://www.zendesk.com/blog/customer-service/satisfaction/measuring-customer-happiness/>

For a deeper dive into these topics, visit NITIC's BILT page: www.nitic.org/industry/national-bilt/bilt-overview.