



NITIC

National Information Technology
Innovation Center

Labor Market Bytes

A data-driven briefing designed to inform IT faculty and workforce stakeholders of the latest employment trends, in-demand skills, and projections shaping the tech landscape.

October 2026

Employability Skills Labor Market Report – October 2026

Information Translation

Artificial Intelligence has changed the way employers seek talent and how job hunters prepare and present their skills in applications and interviews. The NITIC Business and Industry Leadership Team poses that a candidate’s AI skills are only as good as their communication and human skills, which this Byte report calls “Information Translation”. AI is creating more information than employees can consume and act upon. **Employee value increasingly comes from those who can interpret, communicate, and act upon that information.**

The McKinsey Global Institute proposes that “workers will have to lean more heavily on the capabilities machines do not yet offer: judgement, relationship-building, critical thinking, and empathy.”¹ Companies ought to identify the skills that support human-AI collaboration and create value from the interaction itself. Employers have seen this through the first few years of strategic AI implementation in their organizations and want employees who can contribute to that critical growth. During the NITIC National BILT’s August meeting to discuss employability skills, business leaders voted on and discussed 34. This report looks at the top 50% of skills and matches them with their counterparts in Lightcast Skills Taxonomy² (see appendix for crosswalk). The 18 identified skills are categorized into an Information Translation framework for interpreting and acting upon AI-supported outputs in business operations, namely Information Acquisition, Sensemaking, Communication, and Activation. Acquisition skills allow one to collect information from a variety of sources for interpretation and analysis using Sensemaking skills. A team member’s Communication skills then encourage collaboration and discussion to solve problems on which their Activation skills can execute. Using the framework, this report seeks to address the following questions:

1. How does the Information Translation framework aid one’s understanding of employability skills within job posting trends?
2. What employability skills should candidates prioritize in entry-level jobs with AI-embedded responsibilities?
3. How do the interactions of skills better prepare students for the IT workforce?

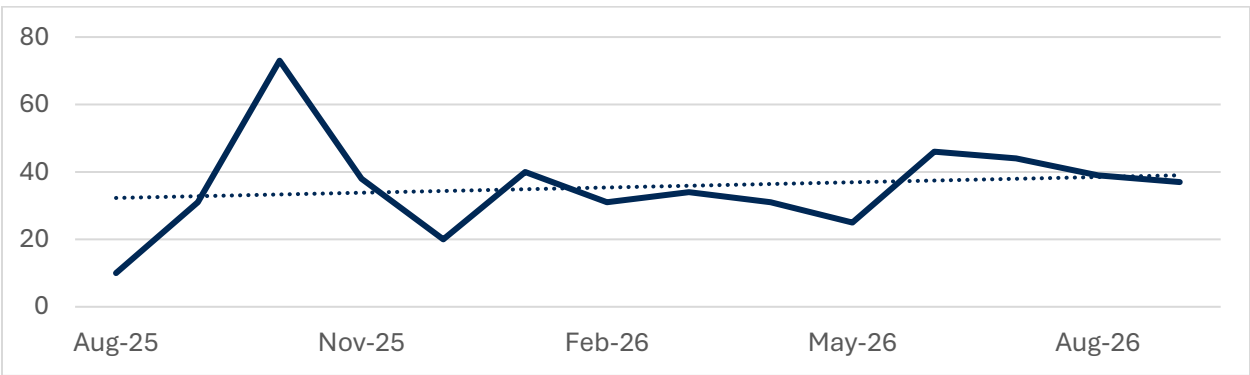
¹ “Human skills will matter more than ever in the age of AI”, McKinsey Global Institute, <https://www.mckinsey.com/mgi/media-center/human-skills-will-matter-more-than-ever-in-the-age-of-ai>

² Lightcast Skills Taxonomy, <https://lightcast.io/taxonomies/skills-taxonomy>

Skill Distribution

This report cross-references 500 job postings within the last year that contain keywords from the Global AI Skill 2026 list against the 18 Information Translation skills to create this data set. All labor market data is pulled from Lightcast in October 2026.

Graphic 1: Entry-Level AI Skills Job Posting Count with Trendline 2025-2026



When broken into the Information Translation categories, Sensemaking, Communication, and Activation have the highest frequency in job postings, between 94% to 99%.

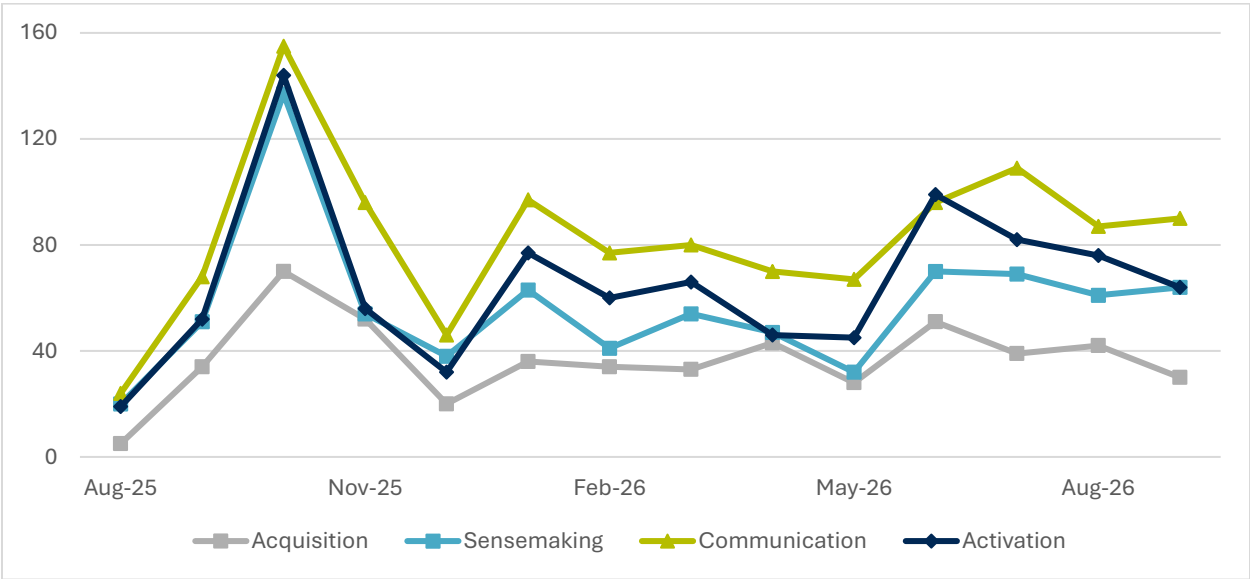
Acquisition follows with 78% of postings, indicating that employers assume prospective candidates have a foundation in information gathering and **are putting more explicit emphasis on interpreting and acting**. To further support that claim, the average number of skills from each category within a posting has decreased over the last year except for Activation, which has nearly doubled its mean frequency from one instance per posting to 1.75 instances. Communication’s decrease is very slight with an overall average remaining steady at 1.91 instances per posting within the last year.

100% of postings include skills from 2+ categories
70% include ALL categories

The largest takeaway from this data is that employers are less concerned with whether their teams can access information and more concerned with whether workers can evaluate and operationalize information. As AI increases at a rapid pace in business settings, its role as an information collector significantly elevates the importance of one’s ability to translate data into action.

Category	Percent of Postings
Communication	99.8%
Activation	98%
Sensemaking	94.4%
Acquisition	78.2%

Graphic 2: Skill Count by Information Translation Category



While every Information Translation category appears frequently, employer demand is concentrated on a smaller number of foundational skills. For the Acquisition category, Computer Literacy and Detail Oriented have the highest frequency within job postings and anchor the need to validate AI outputs. Sensemaking has three dominating skills, Personal Integrity, Critical Thinking, and Ethical Standards and Conduct that elevate data interpretation. Key skills from Communication and Activation complete the largest portion of frequently listed employability skills including general Communication, Customer Service, Interpersonal Communication, Professionalism, and Teamwork. Rather than emphasizing information gathering alone, employers are prioritizing judgement, collaboration, and action in AI-supported workplaces.

Graphic 3: Top 10 Employability Skills

Employability Skill	Information Translation Category	Percent of Postings
Communication	Communication	97%
Customer Service	Communication	89%
Professionalism	Activation	65%
Detail Oriented	Acquisition	61%
Teamwork	Activation	61%
Ethical Standards and Conduct	Sensemaking	59%
Interpersonal Communications	Communication	47%
Personal Integrity	Sensemaking	44%
Critical Thinking	Sensemaking	43%
Computer Literacy	Acquisition	33%

How Skills Interact

Employers are not looking for candidates who use skills in isolation. The Information Translation framework emphasizes skill balance across categories in job postings to attract well-rounded employees. Among the most common three-skill combinations found in the same posting, Communication appeared in every one of the top five groups, **indicating that it serves as a central connecting skill within AI-related IT work**. Employers want candidates who can provide technical communication in client-centered environments, collaborate effectively with team members, and prioritize ethically responsive engagement with AI systems and products. They value employees who can translate technical information into effective collaborations with team members, clients, and organization leadership.

Skill Combination	Percent of Postings	Workplace Function
Communication + Customer Service + Professionalism	58%	User support and client engagement
Communication + Customer Service + Teamwork	53%	Collaborative problem solving
Communication + Customer Service + Ethical Standards and Conduct	53%	Safety standards in tech
Communication + Customer Service + Detail Oriented	52%	Validated information transfer
Ethical Standards and Conduct + Professionalism + Communication	48%	User judgement and decisions

While the need for Information Translation skills is widespread across occupations, several career archetypes arise from the skill combinations. The first is system interpreters, those who help organizations understand technical environments by identifying and diagnosing problems and patterns. Their frequent use of sensemaking and communication amplifies their ability to understand AI outputs, contextualize information, and create recommendations. Experiential learning that emphasizes analysis, diagnosis, evidence-based recommendations, and evaluation of AI-generated outputs would be most influential to this archetype's student development. The second is technology connectors to interface between systems and non-technical users. Communication and activation allow them to partner with AI to generate troubleshooting guides, provide technical assistance, and adapt communication that centers user experience. Learning opportunities that focus on reframing technical language to a general audience and providing customer service experience would be beneficial for this type of student. The

final archetype is the digital solution builders who transform information into actionable resolutions. Acquisition and Activation are their primary employability skill categories to support validation, human-designed testing, and risk management that AI cannot provide alone. Project-based experiences that implement, test, and improve technical solutions would set this type of student up for success.

Archetype	Audience	Example Occupations	Information Translation Categories
Systems Interpreters	Decision makers	Computer systems analysts, IT project managers, data scientists	Sensemaking & Communication
Technology Connecters	End users	Computer user support specialists, network administrators, helpdesk technicians	Communication & Activation
Digital Solutions Builders	Systems and processes	Software quality assurance analysts, network architects, information security analysts, database administrators	Acquisition & Activation

Employability Skills Takeaway

Artificial Intelligence within the IT workplace is inevitable and graduating students need to be ready to emphasize the employability skills that complement AI instead of duplicate. The Information Translation categories provide an actionable framework for skills that partner with AI through the Acquisition, Sensemaking, Communication, and Activation stages. Faculty should use these employability skills inside their classrooms in partnership with technical skill development. Experiential learning that improves a student's ability to interpret, discuss, and act will better prepare them for the workforce. The value of turning IT data into organizational impacts will only increase with the spread of AI, so Information Translation can serve as a bridge between technical expertise and workforce readiness.

Appendix

Employability Skills, NITIC National BILT	Lightcast Skill Crosswalk	Information Translation Category
Integrity - Accountable, ethical, and fair. Consistent in thought, word, and action.	Personal Integrity	Sensemaking
Dependability - Consistent, timely, and prepared. Able to follow directions, attend to details, and fulfill obligations.	Reliability	Activation
Interpersonal Skills - Open-minded and emotionally intelligent. Builds strong relationships with everyone.	Interpersonal Communications	Communication
Communications - Skilled communicator. Listens and speaks clearly or uses alternative communication methods.	Communication	Communication
Critical and Analytical Thinker - Logical thinker. Analyzes information to draw conclusions.	Critical Thinking	Sensemaking
Computer Skills - Tech-savvy. Shares information via safe and secure technology, hardware, and software.	Computer Literacy	Acquisition
Professionalism - Non-defensive and composed under pressure. Demonstrates good judgement and a positive presence in all situations.	Professionalism	Activation
High Motivation - Driven and committed. Approaches work with energy, persistence, and a strong desire to achieve high-quality results.	Self-Motivation	Activation
Initiative - Self-starter. Begins challenging tasks with limited direction and sees them through to successful completion.	Proactivity	Activation

Reading - Skilled in comprehension. Understands and uses text and figures in documents.	Reading Comprehension	Acquisition
Quality Control and Assurance - Quality minded. Ensures products and processes meet the client's quality requirements.	Quality Control	Sensemaking
Enthusiasm - Positive and energetic. Approaches tasks with eagerness, optimism, and a willingness to engage fully.	Enthusiasm	Activation
Teamwork - Collaborative. Builds relationships and resolves conflicts to meet team objectives.	Teamwork	Activation
Client/Stakeholder focus - Customer-centered. Anticipates client needs and delivers personalized service.	Customer Service	Communication
Creative Thinking - Innovative. Finds inspiration in unexpected places and uncovers useful patterns that others miss to generate diverse solutions.	Creative Thinking	Sensemaking
Checking, Examining, and Recording - Careful and accurate. Effectively captures, checks, organizes, and maintains information in an accessible way.	Detail Oriented	Acquisition
Professional Ethics - Acts appropriately. Evaluates the merits, risks, and impacts of engineering activities.	Ethical Standards and Conduct	Sensemaking
Curiosity and Civility - Inquisitive and open minded. Excited about new and different perspectives and committed to respectful and free exchange of ideas.	Curiosity	Acquisition