



FINDING EXPERTS IN A.I.

How to use this guide

This primer compiles resources to help journalists, policymakers, and others find experts in artificial intelligence (AI). Resources include a list of common roles in the field of AI, a list of directories of experts from nonprofits and computing organizations, and a list of major AI conferences.

For information about AI or generative AI specifically, please see **AI 101** and **Intro to Generative AI**, respectively.

Visit techprimers.aspendigital.org to see all primers.

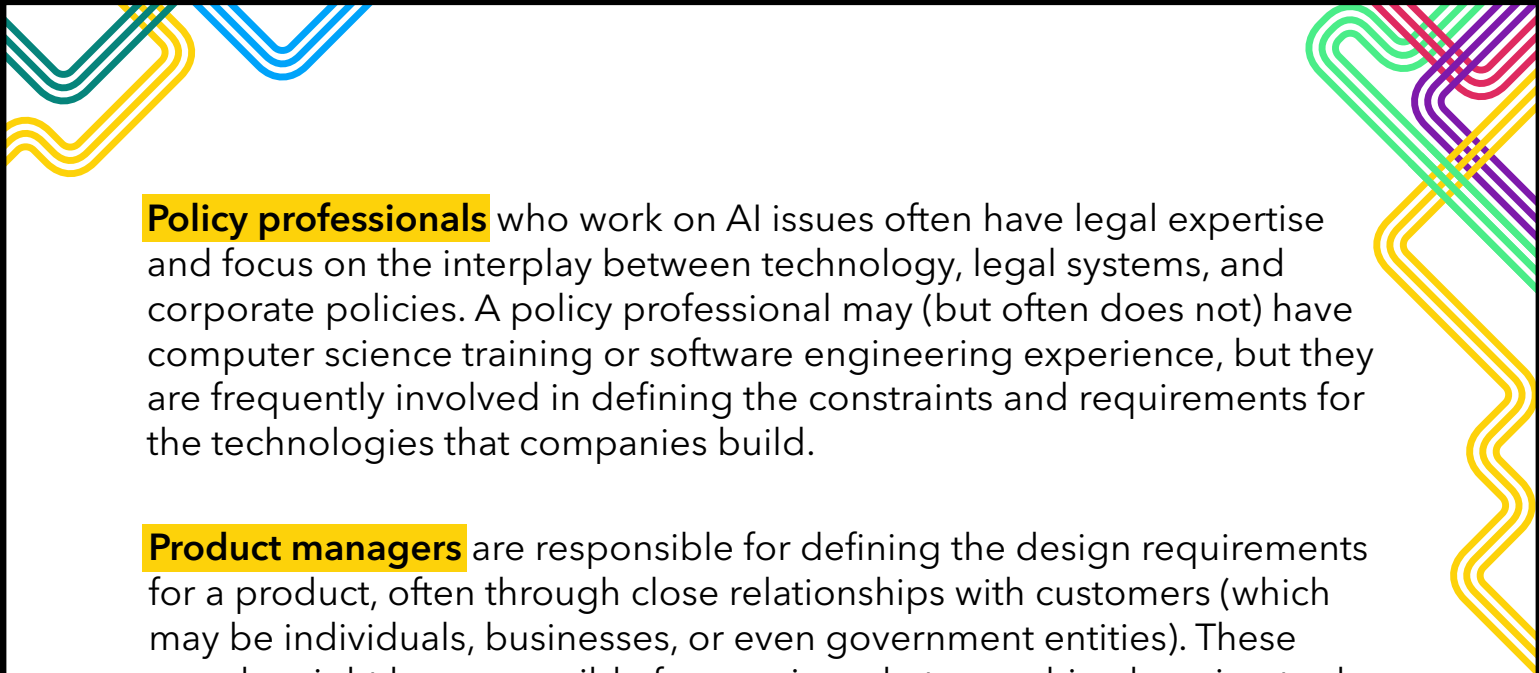
COMMON ROLES IN AI

Developing AI systems typically involves many different people who play different roles in the process. This list includes information about several common roles you may encounter:

Researchers are typically responsible for studying technologies. Some researchers focus on building technological capabilities: creating state-of-the-art software tools, finding possible applications for technologies, and developing more capable hardware. Other researchers focus instead on impact: How do technologies influence humans and different sectors of society? AI researchers often have backgrounds in mathematics, linguistics, physics, sociology, computer science, psychology, and philosophy. When looking for researchers, try to find someone who has expertise in the specific impact or type of AI you are reporting on (see the [Tech That People Call “Artificial Intelligence” chart](#) for examples).

Software engineers and developers work on producing software, which often means programming computer applications that can be used by companies to deliver services (B2B) or for direct consumer use (B2C). These people might be responsible for incorporating machine learning into a product or service for a customer or for building interfaces for people to interact with existing or off-the-shelf AI systems.

Data scientists use a variety of computational techniques, including machine learning, to identify patterns or meaningful insights in large datasets. These people are often employed by companies to make recommendations on business decisions, but they also exist in nonprofits and academia as well.



Policy professionals who work on AI issues often have legal expertise and focus on the interplay between technology, legal systems, and corporate policies. A policy professional may (but often does not) have computer science training or software engineering experience, but they are frequently involved in defining the constraints and requirements for the technologies that companies build.

Product managers are responsible for defining the design requirements for a product, often through close relationships with customers (which may be individuals, businesses, or even government entities). These people might be responsible for scoping what a machine learning tool needs to be capable of for a client. (Sometimes **project managers** share these responsibilities.)

DIRECTORIES OF EXPERTS

Computing organizations and nonprofits offer media kits and directories of experts.

SCILINE

A philanthropy-funded organization that connects reporters with science experts and helps science experts amplify their expertise.

sciline.org

WOMEN IN AI ETHICS

A fiscally sponsored project of the nonprofit Social Good Fund, which provides a directory of women who are experts in AI ethics.

womeninaiethics.org/directory

IEEE

The world's largest technical professional organization, which can connect media outlets with members who work in consumer electronics, robotics, cloud computing, and more.

iee.org/about/news/media-kit/media-kit-index.html

ASSOCIATION FOR COMPUTING MACHINERY (ACM)

A professional association of educators, researchers, and professionals focused on computer science research and innovation, which can connect media with members at media-center@acm.org.

acm.org/media-center

NOTABLE CONFERENCES

Conference agendas and event proceedings documents contain names and often contact information for experts. Conferences typically include press pass options, which can be an effective way to meet and connect with experts directly.

ACADEMIC CONFERENCES

CONFERENCE ON NEURAL INFORMATION PROCESSING SYSTEMS (NEURIPS)

An annual interdisciplinary academic conference known as one of the premier research conferences for the AI field with a wide range of experts largely focused on machine learning.

MACHINE LEARNING

GENERATIVE AI

REINFORCEMENT LEARNING

HEALTH

ETHICS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MACHINE LEARNING (ICML)

A premier annual international conference largely dedicated, like NeurIPS, to machine learning.

MACHINE LEARNING

GENERATIVE AI

REINFORCEMENT LEARNING

HEALTH

ETHICS

ACM CONFERENCE ON FAIRNESS, ACCOUNTABILITY, & TRANSPARENCY (FACCT)

A major interdisciplinary conference focused on AI ethics.

HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTION

ETHICS

PRIVACY

GOVERNANCE

IEEE/CVF COMPUTER VISION AND PATTERN RECOGNITION CONFERENCE (CVPR)

A major conference focused on computationally processing and analyzing visual information.

MACHINE LEARNING

GRAPHICS

GENERATIVE AI

AUTONOMOUS DRIVING

AR & VR

IEEE CONFERENCE ON ROBOTICS AND AUTOMATION (ICRA)

A major conference focused on robotics including machinery, vehicles, and soft robotics.

REINFORCEMENT LEARNING

HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTION

SIMULATION

ROBOTICS

AUTONOMOUS DRIVING

ACM'S SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP ON COMPUTER GRAPHICS AND INTERACTIVE TECHNIQUES (ACM SIGGRAPH)

A major conference focused on computer graphics, including those used in film, gaming, virtual reality, and simulation.

GRAPHICS

SIMULATION

HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTION

ROBOTICS

AR & VR

ACM CONFERENCE ON HUMAN FACTORS IN COMPUTING SYSTEMS (CHI)

A major conference focused on how people interface and interact with computers with emphasis on psychology, ergonomics, and user experience. (CHI is pronounced 'kai.')

HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTION

HEALTH

ACCESSIBILITY

PRIVACY

ETHICS

INDUSTRY CONFERENCES

CONSUMER ELECTRONIC SHOW (CES)

A major industry expo showcasing new products and technologies.

ROBOTICS

AR & VR

HEALTH

AUTONOMOUS DRIVING

ACCESSIBILITY

SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST (SXSW) CREATIVE INDUSTRIES EXPO

Part of the SXSW technology, film, culture, and music expo focused on business and technology.

GENERATIVE AI

STARTUPS

AR & VR

HEALTH

CIVIL SOCIETY CONFERENCES

RIGHTSCON

A major conference on human rights in the digital age.

ETHICS

GOVERNANCE

PRIVACY

INFORMATION INTEGRITY

MOZILLA FESTIVAL (MOZFEST)

A conference focused on digital rights, governance, and activism.

ETHICS

GOVERNANCE

PRIVACY

INFORMATION INTEGRITY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work was produced by Eleanor Tursman, B Cavello, and Tom Latkowski, and was made possible thanks to generous support from Siegel Family Endowment, the Patrick J. McGovern Foundation, and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.



[Aspen Digital](#) is a technology and information-focused nonpartisan organization that brings together thinkers and doers to uncover new ideas and spark policies, processes, and procedures that empower communities and strengthen democracy. This future-focused [Aspen Institute](#) program inspires collaboration among diverse voices from industry, government, and civil society to ensure our interconnected world is accessible, safe, and inclusive—both on and offline. Across its initiatives, Aspen Digital develops methods for elevating promising solutions and turning thought into networked impact.

[Contact us](#) with questions or corrections regarding this primer. Please note that Aspen Digital cannot guarantee access to experts or expert contact information, but we are happy to serve as a resource.

Visit techprimers.aspendigital.org to see all primers.