



International Council of Women
Conseil International des Femmes



A Practical Introduction to AI for Women

A Practical AI Companion

Prepared for the WSIS Forum 2026 – Women and Girls in Digital Track

International Council of Women

Mohinder Watson

Independent Researcher

Main Geneva Representative

Acknowledgements

- This Practical AI Companion was developed as part of the International Council of Women's contribution to the WSIS Forum 2026 Women and Girls in Digital Track.
- The author gratefully acknowledges the insightful feedback from the President and Board of the International Council of Women during the development of this publication.
- The author also wishes to thank the many colleagues, workshop participants and members of civil society whose questions, insights and willingness to explore artificial intelligence have helped shape the practical focus of this Companion.

About the International Council of Women

- **Founded in 1888, the International Council of Women (ICW)** is one of the world's oldest international women's organisations. Through its network of National Councils of Women and affiliated organisations, ICW works to promote women's rights, equality, education, peace, sustainable development and the full involvement of women in all aspects of society.
- ICW is committed to ensuring that women and girls are able to participate meaningfully in the opportunities created by digital technologies, while recognising the importance of addressing the challenges that accompany rapid technological change.
- Website: <https://www.icw-cif.com/>

About the Author

- **Dr Mohinder Watson** is a social scientist, researcher and international advocate working at the intersection of human rights, gender equality and emerging technologies.
- She currently serves as the Main Geneva Representative of the International Council of Women (ICW) at the United Nations in Geneva and has over a decade of experience advancing women's rights through research, policy and international advocacy.
- Her work has included child marriage, violence against women and girls, girls' education and, more recently, the opportunities and challenges that artificial intelligence presents for women, girls and society.
- Through her research, writing and training, she aims to make complex issues accessible and support women in using AI confidently and responsibly to strengthen their work while helping shape a more inclusive AI future.

Contents

Acknowledgements	1
About the International Council of Women	1
About the Author	1
Welcome	3
Why This Companion?	3
What Is Artificial Intelligence?	4
How AI Can Support Everyday Work	4
Start with the Task, Not the Technology	5
Choosing the Right AI Tool	6
Communicating with AI Through Prompts.....	7
Practical Example of a Weak and Strong Prompt.....	9
Using AI Responsibly	12
How Can AI Support Your Learning?	14
■ Frequently Asked Questions	15
Selected Beginner Friendly AI Courses	16
Glossary	20
Contact	22
Final Thoughts	23

Welcome

- Welcome to this Practical AI Companion, created for the International Council of Women's workshop at the WSIS Forum 2026: "I Thought AI Was for Experts" – A Practical Introduction to AI for Women.
- Artificial intelligence is rapidly becoming part of everyday life across governments, international organisations, businesses, education, healthcare and civil society. New tools are emerging quickly, bringing both opportunities and challenges.
- Yet for many people, AI still feels unfamiliar or intimidating and a space reserved for specialists. This Companion takes a practical approach to AI. It starts with the everyday tasks professionals already do—and shows how common AI tools can support them.
- It is written for experienced women across civil society, education, healthcare, government, international organisations, research and community development curious about AI and want a grounded, accessible starting point rather than a technical manual.
- Inside, you'll find simple explanations, practical examples, sample prompts and frameworks, guidance on responsible use of AI and suggestions for further learning. Our aim is to help you explore AI thoughtfully and confidently, recognising that your professional judgement and experience remain your greatest strengths.

Why This Companion?

- Artificial intelligence is now shaping how we learn, work and participate in society. Understanding this societal shift is increasingly important for professionals across every field—not just those in technology.
- Women however remain under-represented in AI, yet their participation is essential for shaping technologies that serve everyone. Building confidence and capability in this space is crucial for a more inclusive, equitable digital future.
- Many readers of this Companion are already experienced leaders, researchers, practitioners and advocates. This Companion explores how AI, when used thoughtfully and responsibly, can complement your expertise and support the work you already do.
- This Companion offers a beginner friendly introduction to AI: where it can help, where to be cautious and how to start using these tools responsibly. No technical background is required—only curiosity and a willingness to explore.
- Learning to use AI tools takes practice, and everyone will use it differently. This Companion is simply a practical starting point. As you begin exploring AI, it can help to start with a clear, practical understanding of what AI actually is — not in technical terms, but in ways that relate directly to your everyday work.

What Is Artificial Intelligence?

- Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly woven into everyday life—often without us noticing. Tools like translation apps, navigation systems, personalised recommendations, voice assistants and writing support all rely on AI.
- The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) defines AI as “computer systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as reasoning, learning, perception and language understanding. These systems analyse vast datasets, recognize patterns and make decisions with unprecedented speed and accuracy.” Modern AI enables computers to work with natural language rather than code, making interactions feel more conversational and intuitive for users.
- You do not need technical knowledge to begin using AI. Just as people drive cars without understanding how the engine works, you can start using AI tools without knowing the underlying computer science. Practical experience is the most important first step.
- AI is now used across education, healthcare, government, business, research, international organisations and community work. Therefore understanding how AI can support professional tasks and where caution is needed has become a valuable skill.

How AI Can Support Everyday Work

- AI tools are increasingly used to help with tasks such as:
 - **drafting emails**
 - **summarizing reports**
 - **preparing presentations**
 - **translating documents**
 - **brainstorming ideas**
 - **explaining unfamiliar concepts**
 - **reviewing written work**
 - **creating first drafts of policies or briefings**
- AI can save time, spark ideas and reduce routine workload. But it also has limits: it can make mistakes, give incomplete answers, reflect bias, or present inaccurate information with confidence. That is why it should be seen as a helpful assistant, and not an expert authority. You remain responsible for deciding how the final work is used.
- As AI becomes more common, organisations are exploring how it can support their work while ensuring ethics, transparency, privacy, inclusion and accountability are addressed.

- For experienced professionals, the key question is shifting from **“What is AI?”** to **“How can AI support my work—and how do I use it responsibly?”**
- With these thoughts in mind, the next question becomes: **“How do you decide when and how to use AI?”** A very effective approach is to begin with your task, not the technology.

Start with the Task, Not the Technology

- When people begin exploring AI, a common question is: “Which tool should I use?” But a more helpful starting point is: **“What am I trying to do?”**

■ Everyday Tasks Where AI May Help

Everyday task	How AI may help	Your responsibility
Draft an email	Produce a first draft, suggest clearer wording or adjust tone	Check names, dates, commitments and sensitive details
Summarise a report	Highlight key points, themes and questions before full reading	Read important documents yourself when decisions rely on them
Prepare a presentation	Suggest structure, outline slides or draft speaker notes	Tailor content to your audience, context and purpose
Write a briefing note	Organise information into a clear, concise format	Verify facts, references and organisational positions
Draft a press release or public statement	Provide a professional first draft and refine content and tone	Ensure final wording reflects your organisation’s stance and sensitivities
Prepare for a meeting	Suggest agenda outlines, questions, risks or talking points	Adapt suggestions to your objectives and the meeting dynamics
Translate or simplify text	Produce a first translation or rewrite in plain language	Review important translations carefully for accuracy and nuance
Brainstorm ideas	Generate options, perspectives or alternative approaches	Use judgement to select realistic, relevant and ethical ideas
Learn something new	Explain unfamiliar concepts in accessible language	Continue learning from reliable, domain-specific sources

Draft policy text, interventions or negotiation language	Provide a first draft, refine structure or suggest alternative wording	Ensure alignment with organisational policy, legal requirements and careful review
Analyse qualitative input	Identify themes in consultation responses or feedback	Verify interpretations and check for missing or misrepresented viewpoints
Organise information	Sort notes, group ideas or create summaries	Ensure the final structure reflects your priorities and not the tool's assumptions
Plan tasks or work patterns	Suggest steps, timelines or checklists	Adapt plans to real constraints, people and organisational processes

Choosing the Right AI Tool

- The first and most important question is: **“What task am I trying to achieve?”** Once the task is clear, choosing an AI tool and writing a useful prompt becomes much easier.
- Most leading AI assistants can perform many of the same tasks. Differences between them are becoming smaller as the technology evolves. In practice, people choose tools based on:
 - **the task** they need to complete
 - **the systems** they already use
 - **personal preference**
 - **professional background**
 - **their work environment**
- Developing a **clear understanding of the task, good prompting practices and informed judgement** will matter far more than finding the “perfect” tool.
- **A note on language accessibility.** Although English is often the default language used in AI tools, you can usually ask the AI to communicate in your preferred language. Many AI tools now support a wide range of languages, making them more accessible to people around the world. If the translation doesn't sound natural or is difficult to understand, ask the AI to provide an alternative translation or use more natural language.
- Next follows a table with examples of how some AI tools are used. This table reflects common real-world usage patterns based on publicly available information on how people typically use these tools and not on vendor marketing claims.

■ How AI Tools Are Commonly Used

AI Assistant	How people commonly use it	Why people choose it
ChatGPT	Everyday writing, summarising, brainstorming, drafting reports, emails and presentations	Broad general-purpose capability; widely adopted; large collection of examples, tutorials and shared prompts.
Claude	Working with long documents, editing, refining tone, analysing text, thoughtful discussion	Strong performance on long texts; valued for clarity, structure and careful reasoning.
Gemini	Tasks connected to Google Search, Gmail, Google Docs, Google Drive and Sheets	Deep integration with Google's ecosystem; convenient for users already working in Google Workspace.
Copilot	Drafting and editing in Word, analysing data in Excel, preparing slides in PowerPoint, summarising Teams meetings	Integrated directly into Microsoft 365, making it practical for individuals or organisations already using these tools.
Perplexity	Research, evidence-based queries, finding sources, checking citations	Strong at fast retrieval and clear referencing, making it especially useful for research and fact-checking.

- Once you have chosen a tool, the next skill is learning how to communicate with it clearly, so you get the results you need. This is where prompting comes in.

Communicating with AI Through Prompts

- AI tools respond to the instructions you give them—these instructions are called prompts. A prompt can be short (“summarize this”) or detailed, including background information, examples, audience, tone or format.
- It can help to think of prompting as a conversation rather than a single command. You ask for help, the AI responds, you review the response, and refine your instructions until the result matches your needs. Each follow-up prompt helps you move closer to the result you want. This process of refining your prompts is known as **iteration**.
- Prompting is a skill that develops with practice; small refinements such as clarifying the task, adding context, or specifying tone and format can significantly improve the quality of AI responses and help reduce editing time.

- Please note that the following suggestions for improving prompts are not set rules but rather some commonly used practical techniques. You do not need to use all of them every time you write a prompt. Apply the ones that are most appropriate for your task.

■ Ten Simple Ways to Improve Your Prompts

Small Adjustment	Example	Why it often helps
1. Give AI a role	<i>Act as an experienced communications officer...</i>	Helps AI respond from an appropriate professional perspective.
2. Provide context	<i>This conference is for researchers working on child mortality in the Global South</i>	Gives background that helps AI produce a more relevant response.
3. Explain the task clearly	<i>Prepare a two-page briefing note...</i>	Makes your request clear and reduces ambiguity.
4. Describe your audience	<i>Write for experienced NGO professionals with no technical background...</i>	Helps AI adjust the language and level of detail.
5. Specify the format	<i>Present the information as a table with headings and bullet points.</i>	Produces a response that is easier to use immediately.
6. Set the length	<i>Limit the response to 300 words.</i>	Helps keep the response focused and proportionate to your needs.
7. Give an example	<i>Use a similar style of writing to the example provided ...</i>	Shows AI more clearly what you are looking for.
8. Refine the response	<i>Please shorten this, simplify the language and make it more diplomatic.</i>	Think of prompting as a conversation. Small refinements often lead to responses that better match what you need.
9. Ask for alternatives	<i>Give me three different versions and briefly explain the strengths of each</i>	Allows you to compare different approaches before deciding which works best.
10. Ask AI to re-write your prompt to help improve it (Meta-prompting)	<i>Please improve the following prompt so that I get a clearer and more useful response. Explain what you changed and why.</i>	Particularly useful once you are familiar with the basics of prompting and would like help refining more complex requests.

Practical Example of a Weak and Strong Prompt

Original prompt	"Write a press release for our upcoming fundraising event"
------------------------	--

- This weak, vague prompt gives the AI very little information.
- It immediately raises questions such as:
 - Which organisation is this for?
 - What is the announcement about – what is the purpose, context?
 - Who is the audience?
 - What tone should be used?
 - How long should it be?
- In the absence of clear and specific information, the AI system relies on assumptions, which reduces the clarity and relevance of the output.

Below is an example of a stronger prompt showing how the same prompt can be improved by giving the AI more clear, relevant and specific information about what you want from it.

Improved prompt	"Take on the role of a communications specialist in a global civil society organisation." "Draft a 300-350 word press release announcing our fundraising campaign supporting communities recovering from the recent earthquake in Venezuela." "The press release should be suitable for media outlets, the wider public, donors, civil society partners and policy makers." "Use a clear, positive and accessible tone." "Include:" "A strong headline that captures attention;" "An opening paragraph with the key messages;" "A short quotation from the campaign organiser;" "Contact details for further information."
------------------------	---

- **Why the second prompt works better**
- The improved prompt gives the AI clear information about the role, purpose, audience, structure and length of the document. This means the draft will be much closer to what

you need and will usually require less editing.

■ Practical Prompt Frameworks

- The following examples of prompt frameworks are starting points. Complete them by adding your own context, objectives and requirements to create prompts that fit your specific needs.

■ 1. Draft a Professional Email

When might you use this?	Inviting someone to a meeting, following up a discussion, requesting information or thanking a colleague.
Prompt framework	“Draft a professional email. You should include: Purpose: ... Audience:... Key messages:...” “Use a professional, warm and respectful tone.” “Keep the email concise and end with an appropriate call to action.” “Before finishing, check that the email is clear, polite and free from repetition.”

■ Why it works

- This prompt explains the purpose of the email, identifies the audience and specifies the desired tone, helping AI produce a draft that will generally require less editing.

■ 2. Summarize a Report

When might you use this?	Reading and working with lengthy reports, consultation papers or research publications.
Prompt framework	“Summarise the attached report for a busy professional.” “Please provide: a summary of under 250 words; five key findings; and three practical recommendations.” “Write in plain English and avoid unnecessary technical language.”

■ Why it works

- Rather than asking simply for a summary, the prompt explains exactly what information is required and how it should be presented.

■ 3. Prepare Talking Points

When might you use this?	Preparing for meetings, conferences, advocacy discussions or panel events.
Prompt framework	“Act as an experienced policy adviser.” “ Prepare five concise talking points for a meeting on: Topic:... Audience:... Objective of the meeting:...” “Use a constructive and professional tone.” “End each talking point with a practical recommendation or question that could help move the discussion forward.”

■ Why it works

- Giving AI a professional role, a clear objective and information about the audience usually produces more focused and relevant talking points.

■ 4. Draft a Funding Proposal

When might you use this?	Preparing a short proposal for donors, foundations or grant making organisations.
Prompt framework	“Act as an experienced programme officer working for a non-profit organisation”. “Draft a short funding proposal outlining: Project title: ... Organisation: ... Problem the project addresses: ... Proposed activities: ... Expected outcomes: ... “Write approximately 500-600 words. Include: a clear summary of the issue; a description of the planned activities; expected results and a closing paragraph explaining why the project merits support. “Use clear, professional language and avoid unnecessary jargon.”

■ **Why it works**

- Giving the AI a professional role, a clear structure and the key elements donors expect usually produces a more coherent and persuasive short funding proposal.

As you begin using AI more often, responsible use becomes essential. AI is powerful, but it also has limitations that require careful reflection and judgement.

Using AI Responsibly

- Artificial intelligence can be a powerful assistant, but it must be used with care. It can draft text, organise ideas and explain concepts, yet it can also make mistakes, reflect bias and sound confident even when wrong. AI should support your judgement, not replace it.
- **Treat AI as a Starting Point**
- AI is great for first drafts, brainstorming and clarifying ideas, but it is up to you to decide what is accurate, appropriate and aligned with your organisation and needs.
- **AI Makes Mistakes**
- AI doesn't store facts, rather it generates responses by predicting what words are likely to come next. It can make mistakes such as:
 - invent information
 - misinterpret questions
 - leave out important details
 - provide partial answers
 - use outdated data
 - produce confident but incorrect responses
- So, it is essential to verify key facts, references, statistics and quotations using reliable sources.
- **AI Can Reflect Bias**
- Because AI learns from human generated data, it can reproduce stereotypes or overlook important perspectives. When reviewing AI content, ask:
 - **Is this balanced?**
 - **Are any voices missing?**
 - **Could this reinforce bias?**
 - **Should I request alternative viewpoints?**

- Your judgement remains essential.
- **Protect Sensitive Information**
- Before sharing anything with an AI tool, stop and consider whether it is appropriate.
- **Avoid entering:**
 - confidential organisational information
 - personal or sensitive data
 - case details
 - unpublished research
 - legal advice
 - passwords or security information
 - commercially confidential material
- Check your organisation's policies carefully. If unsure, **leave it out**.
- **Before You Use AI-Generated Content, Ask Yourself...**
 - **Is this accurate?** (Check it makes sense and is consistent with reliable sources.)
 - **Could it contain bias?** (Look for stereotypes, missing perspectives or one-sided arguments.)
 - **Is it up to date?** (AI may rely on older information so check quoted facts are still current.)
 - **Does it protect privacy?** (Ensure no personal or sensitive information has been shared or appears in the output.)
 - **Does it reflect my organisation's position?** (Check the tone, content and recommendations align with your organisation's values and context.)
- **Would I be comfortable putting my name to it?** (A final check before sharing or publishing)
- **Use AI Where It Adds Value**
- Nobody produces perfect prompts every time. Start small, choose tasks where AI genuinely helps, and **never assume AI is an expert**. It's a tool and **you** are the professional over-seeing its use. You do not need to use AI for everything, only use it where it can genuinely support your work.

- With practice, you will quickly learn:
 - which tasks AI genuinely supports
 - which tools suit your own tasks and personal style of working
 - how much context to include
 - when a response seems trustworthy
 - and when to stop and verify information yourself
- Beyond everyday tasks, AI can also support your learning and professional development if used thoughtfully.

How Can AI Support Your Learning?

- AI can be a powerful learning partner. It can explain unfamiliar ideas and concepts, break down complex topics and adapt to your level of knowledge, making learning more flexible for busy professionals. However AI is not a replacement for expert advice or formal education.
 - **Learn Through Conversation**
 - AI lets you learn by asking questions, not just reading information. You can ask it to:
 - **simplify an idea**
 - **give a practical example**
 - **explain a topic to a beginner**
 - **compare two concepts**
 - **test your understanding**
 - **suggest what to learn next**
 - **Build Practical Skills**
- AI can also help you build and strengthen everyday professional skills, such as:
- **improving your writing**
 - **preparing presentations**
 - **understanding research methods**
 - **interpreting graphs or statistics**
 - **learning about new software**

- If something is unclear, ask AI to explain it in simpler language, give more detail, or break it down step by step.
- **Use AI Wisely**
- AI is helpful for learning, but it is not an expert. For legal, medical, financial or other specialist advice, always consult qualified professionals.
- While AI can help you explore new topics and explain unfamiliar ideas, only you can decide what is relevant and reliable.
- Many beginners have similar questions when they first start exploring AI. The following FAQs answer some of the most common ones.

■ Frequently Asked Questions

- **Do I need to be good with technology to use AI?**
- No. Most AI tools work through simple conversation. If you can draft an email or search online, you already have the skills to begin.
- **Will AI replace my job?**
- AI is changing work, and it is likely that certain jobs will disappear or change, but for most people it becomes a tool, not a replacement. Human skills of critical thinking, communication, creativity, ethical judgement and leadership will remain essential in the AI era, so invest in developing these.
- **Should I trust everything AI tells me?**
- No. AI can make mistakes, sound confident when wrong or reflect bias. Always check important facts, statistics, quotations and references before relying on them.
- **Which AI tool should I start with?**
- If you use Microsoft 365 or Google Workspace, start with their built-in AI tools - Microsoft Copilot or Google Gemini. Otherwise, many beginners try a general purpose assistant like ChatGPT or Claude and explore others over time. What matters most is understanding your task, not choosing the “perfect” tool.
- **Do I have to pay to use AI?**
- Not necessarily. Many tools offer free versions that are enough to learn the basics. You can decide later whether paid features are useful for your work.
- **How often should I use AI?**
- There is no rule. Some people use AI daily; others only for specific tasks. The goal is not to use AI more — it is to use it where it genuinely helps.

Next are some beginner friendly AI courses which can help you on your AI journey.

Selected Beginner Friendly AI Courses

- High-quality introductory AI courses are now widely available, many of them free or open for auditing. This means you can usually follow the course at no cost, although a fee may be charged if you want a completion certificate. This makes AI learning more accessible for people working in civil society, education, community organisations, public services and other sectors with limited training budgets.
- The courses below are well established, beginner friendly and focused on practical understanding rather than technical depth.

Course/s	Provider	Why it is recommended
Elements of AI	University of Helsinki	One of the world's most respected non-technical introductions to AI; available in multiple languages
AI for Everyone	Andrew Ng / DeepLearning.AI	Clear, accessible overview of what AI is, how it's used and why it matters — no technical background needed
Google AI Essentials	Google	Practical guidance on using AI in everyday professional tasks
Microsoft Learn – AI Skills	Microsoft	Useful for anyone working with Microsoft 365 or Copilot; includes hands-on exercises
IBM SkillsBuild – AI Foundations	IBM	Structured beginner pathway with workplace examples and optional digital badges
AI literacy, Digital skills for beginners, Responsible and inclusive AI, Digital inclusion and more	ITU Academy - ITU's main online learning platform offering structured courses across digital development	Vast array of courses for beginners and more advanced learners. Most courses are offered free of charge. Extensive catalogue of courses some online, some in person.

Prompting Essentials and many shorter practical modules	ITU Skills Coalition	Prompting essentials – around 45 minutes that introduces safe and effective prompting. Many courses ideal for beginners who want quick, hands-on skills in many different AI areas.
---	----------------------	---

■ A Note About Learning

- There is no need to study every course. Choose one course that matches your interests and available time and apply what you learn. Then decide what to do next.
- As AI becomes more widely used, international organisations, including the United Nations, are working to ensure it is governed responsibly and inclusively.

AI and the United Nations

- Artificial intelligence is no longer just a technological issue — it is also a societal and human rights issue. As AI becomes embedded in education, healthcare, employment, public services and communication it has the potential to expand opportunities for under-represented groups, including women and girls, by improving access to information, skills, services and economic participation.
- But AI can also reinforce existing inequalities if bias, digital exclusion, unsafe online environments and unequal access to technology are not addressed. This reflects a shared priority of WSIS and many UN agencies: ensuring that digital transformation advances inclusive development, gender equality and human rights.
- Meaningful participation of women and girls in the use, development and governance of AI is essential. Women’s expertise, lived experience and leadership are needed to help ensure AI is inclusive, equitable and reflects the needs of the diverse communities it serves.
- Governments, international organisations, businesses, researchers and civil society are increasingly working together to maximise the benefits of AI while addressing critical issues such as inclusion, transparency, accountability, safety and human rights.
- On 6–7 July 2026 in Geneva, the UN Secretary-General’s High-Level Scientific Panel on AI Governance held its first global dialogue. This marks an important moment for strengthening evidence-based approaches to AI governance, and for civil society to advocate for gender equality, human rights and inclusive participation.
- **The UN Sustainable Development Goals and AI**
- The **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** are the United Nations’ shared blueprint for improving lives and protecting the planet by 2030. They address issues such as health, education, equality, decent work, climate action, and strong institutions. Artificial

intelligence has the potential to support many of these goals by improving access to services, strengthening decision-making and enabling innovation, in areas such as education, healthcare, agriculture, scientific research, disaster response, accessibility and public services. Realising these benefits, however, depends on ensuring that AI is developed and used responsibly, ethically and inclusively.

■ **The Role of Civil Society**

- Civil society brings essential experience and perspectives to AI governance that technical experts alone cannot provide. Organisations working on human rights, gender equality, disability inclusion, community development and social justice ensure that AI reflects real people's needs, especially those who are often under-represented.
- Civil society strengthens AI inclusivity by:
 - **promoting digital inclusion**
 - **building AI literacy**
 - **contributing evidence and research**
 - **advocating for human rights**
 - **bringing community voices into decision making**
 - **ensuring no one is left behind**
- You do not need to be a computer scientist to help shape the future of AI. Expertise in education, health, law, social policy, research, communications, community development and many other fields is equally valuable and urgently needed. As AI becomes increasingly embedded in society, civil society has a responsibility to become informed, engage in the dialogue and help ensure these technologies are developed and used in ways that uphold human rights, promote gender equality and benefit everyone.

Selected Resources for Further Learning

- Readers wishing to explore these topics in greater depth may find the following resources helpful. They provide accessible entry points into how artificial intelligence is being discussed across the United Nations and other international organisations. Their publications are authoritative, regularly updated and offer reliable insights into the rapidly evolving opportunities, challenges and governance of AI.
- Alongside the UN resources listed below, a wide range of tools, courses and learning materials is available to help you deepen your understanding of AI and apply it in your own work. The resources highlighted here are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to provide a useful starting point for exploring some of the key organisations and initiatives shaping AI policy, governance and practice across the UN system, Europe and beyond.

■ UN Frameworks, Initiatives and Guidance

Initiative	Why it matters
WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) https://www.itu.int/net/wsis/index.html	Promotes inclusive digital development and cooperation to ensure ICTs, including AI, support human rights, gender equality and sustainable development.
Global Digital Compact https://www.un.org/global-digital-compact/en	Adopted at the Summit of the Future, it provides a shared international framework for digital cooperation, including principles for safe, inclusive and rights-based AI governance.
UNESCO Recommendation on the Ethics of AI www.unesco.org/en/articles/recommendation-ethics-artificial-intelligence	The first global standard-setting guidance on AI ethics, emphasising human rights, dignity, inclusion, transparency, fairness and accountability.
UN Secretary-General's High-Level Scientific Panel on AI Governance https://www.un.org/independent-international-scientific-panel-ai/en	Established to provide independent scientific advice, strengthen evidence-based policymaking and support global dialogue on AI governance. Its first global dialogue took place on 6–7 July in Geneva.
AI for Good (International Telecommunication Union) https://aiforgood.itu.int/	A UN platform bringing together governments, industry, academia and civil society to explore practical AI solutions for realising the SDGs and promote responsible innovation.

Other Key International and Regional AI & Data Governance Frameworks

The following are some other international and regional frameworks you may see mentioned and want to learn more about.

- OECD AI Principles. <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/ai-principles.html>
- NIST AI Risk Management Framework (for readers wishing to explore AI governance in greater depth). <https://www.nist.gov/itl/ai-risk-management-framework>
- EU Artificial Intelligence Act. <https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/>
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) <https://gdpr-info.eu/>

Glossary

- The purpose of this glossary is to explain some of the most commonly used AI terms in plain language which are based on generally accepted definitions. They are included simply as a quick reference whenever you come across unfamiliar terminology. More detailed glossary links are provided at the end of this glossary for those wanting to delve deeper into the topic.

- **Agentic AI**

AI systems designed to carry out a sequence of tasks with a degree of independence. This is an emerging area of AI and is more advanced than the examples covered in this Companion.

- **Algorithm**

A set of step-by-step instructions that tells a computer how to carry out a task or solve a problem. AI systems use many algorithms to process information and generate responses.

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Computer systems that can perform tasks which normally require aspects of human intelligence, such as understanding language, recognising patterns, generating text, answering questions and supporting decision-making.

- **Bias**

When an AI system reflects or amplifies unfair assumptions, stereotypes or patterns found in the information on which it has been trained. Bias may relate to a person's sex, age, culture, disability, language or other characteristics. This is one reason why human judgement remains essential.

- **Chatbot**

A computer program that allows people to interact using natural language. Modern AI assistants such as ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini, Copilot and Perplexity are examples of AI-powered chatbots.

- **Context**

Background information that helps AI understand what you are trying to achieve. Providing context often leads to more useful and relevant responses.

- **Generative AI**

A type of AI that creates new content such as text, images, presentations, computer code or audio in response to a prompt.

■ **Hallucination**

When an AI system generates information that appears convincing but is incorrect, misleading or completely invented. Important information should always be checked against reliable sources.

■ **Iteration**

The process of gradually improving a prompt or response by making small changes and asking follow-up questions.

■ **Large Language Model (LLM)**

The technology that powers many modern AI assistants. Large Language Models are trained on very large amounts of text and are designed to understand and generate human language.

■ **Machine Learning**

A branch of artificial intelligence that enables computers to identify patterns and improve their performance by learning from data rather than only following given instructions.

■ **Meta-prompting**

Using AI to help improve or rewrite your prompt to produce a clearer or more useful response.

■ **Model**

An AI system that has been trained to perform particular tasks such as generating text, recognising images or answering questions.

■ **Multimodal AI**

AI that can work with more than one type of information, such as text, images, audio or video.

■ **Prompt**

The instruction, question or request that you give to an AI system. Clearer and more specific prompts usually produce more useful responses.

■ **Prompt Engineering**

The process of designing and refining prompts to improve the quality of AI responses. For most everyday users, simple, clear prompting is usually sufficient.

■ **Responsible AI**

The development and use of artificial intelligence in ways that are ethical, transparent, accountable, fair and respectful of human rights.

■ Websites for glossary of terms and other resources

The glossary in this Companion draws on multiple sources, including recognised AI education materials, public glossaries, and the author's own professional learning to provide beginner friendly explanations. It does not replace formal technical definitions.

For readers who want a deeper, more technical glossary, many authoritative organisations maintain comprehensive lists of AI terms which complement the introductory glossary provided in this Companion. Examples include:

- **International Organization for Standardization**
<https://www.iso.org/artificial-intelligence/what-is-ai>
- **Coursera Artificial Intelligence Glossary Learn AI Vocabulary**
<https://www.coursera.org/resources/ai-terms>
- **MIT Sloan – AI Basics** <https://mitsloanedtech.mit.edu/ai/basics/glossary/>
- **Nielsen Norman Group – AI Glossary** <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/artificial-intelligence-glossary/>

■ Keeping Up to Date

- AI is developing rapidly. Readers are encouraged to follow updates from the United Nations lead organisations on AI such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), UNESCO, and other authoritative organisations.

Contact

■ Dr Mohinder Watson

- Email: mohinderw@bluewin.ch

- International Council of Women: <https://www.icw-cif.com/>

■ Copyright: © 2026 International Council of Women

- Prepared by **Dr Mohinder Watson**

- This Companion has been prepared for educational purposes as part of the International Council of Women's contribution to the WSIS Forum 2026.
- It may be shared for non-commercial educational purposes provided appropriate acknowledgement is given to the International Council of Women and the author.
- No part of this publication may be reproduced for commercial purposes without prior permission from the author.

Final Thoughts

- Thank you for taking the time to explore this Practical AI Companion.
- Artificial intelligence will continue to evolve, but curiosity, critical thinking, professional judgement and lifelong learning are enduring qualities that will remain in demand.
- The ideas for this workshop and report were conceived and developed by humans, drawing on their own experience and learning. AI tools were used to help speed up the editing process, showing how human insight and AI support can complement each other.
- You do not need to become an AI expert to begin benefiting from AI.
- It is useful to remember that every experienced AI user was once a beginner.
- We hope our Workshop “I thought AI was just for Tech Experts” and this Companion has demonstrated that AI is not just for technology specialists—it is a practical tool that, when used thoughtfully and responsibly, can support the important work that experienced professionals like you already do every day.
- We wish you every success as you begin or continue your AI journey.

Geneva, Switzerland. July 2026.