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"AI Literacy" is Becoming a Performance Criterion - Here's What it Really Means

Boysen on LinkedIn (2025)

Context

"AI literacy" is increasingly cited in performance reviews and layoff justifications across consulting, banking and tech, yet remains undefined. Boysen argues this vagueness is consequential as AI is not a single tool but a stack of distinct technologies, each with its own failure modes and compliance implications. What literacy means therefore depends entirely on the role, as she shows applied in a table.

Key Insights

AI literacy is not one skill but a stack of distinct technologies

- Boysen identifies 14 types: predictive ML, classical deep learning, transformers, LLMs, multimodal reasoning, vector embeddings, RAG, agents & tool-calling, orchestration frameworks, automated evaluation loops, synthetic data pipelines, fine-tuning & distillation, alignment & safety layers, robotics

→ Roles determine what AI literacy actually requires (see table)

→ **FORGOOD lens (author's note):** How might a firm-wide AI literacy standard affect roles differently? Which goals does the assessment serve? Where is staff evaluated against unclearly defined AI skills?

Role	Efficiency	Accuracy	Traceability	Governance	Quality	Communication		
Software Engineer	Supervise code-gen agents	Debug MCP routing errors, Detect embedding drift, Spot agent/tool-selection errors		Secure local vs cloud AI	Integrate vector search & RAG	Explain model/tool behavior		
Data Scientist	Auto-feature engineering	Detect embedding drift, Validate generative model outputs vs ground truth, Monitor model drift (semantic, distributional)	Training-data provenance, retrieval logs & tool-call traces	Bias, PII handling, data boundaries, privacy, compliance, and safe use of AI-generated or sensitive content.	Data quality, synthetic data validation, and QA testing and evaluations	Summaries via LLMs		
Product Manager	Rapid AI-assisted prototyping	Spot hallucination risks, Identify AI-generated inconsistencies in specs	Track source assets, Log account reasoning, Record screening rationale, Log AI-assisted research paths and evidence chains		Synthetic persona testing	LLM feasibility & edge-case testing		
Project/Program Manager	Auto-summarize blockers/deps	Detect AI inconsistencies in project plans, Verify AI summaries for correctness	Content lineage & AI decision-path visibility, AI-assisted research paths & evidence chains		Realistic AI scoping	Copilot-driven status reporting		
Marketing/Communications	Multimodal content generation	Fact-check AI-generated content, Validate source references			Humanize AI-generated content	Trend scraping via agents		
Sales/Business Development	AI-powered CRM automation	Validate AI-generated research, Check correctness of synthetic account insights			AI-personalized pitches	Auto-decks & outreach drafts		
Customer Support	Supervise chatbots/voice agents	Correct hallucinated troubleshooting steps, Validate AI-generated resolutions			Tune troubleshooting responses	Detect escalations		
Educators	AI-generated materials/LMS cleanup	Validate AI outputs			Ethical classroom AI use, Safety protocols for AI tools	Reasoning-based assignment design	AI-assisted parent communication	
Trades (Electricians/Plumbers/Mechanics)	AI-based diagnostics	Spot incorrect sensor/robot readings, Validate AI-generated repair instructions			Safety protocols for AI tools	AI-generated repair steps	AI-assisted client explanations	
HR/Recruiting	Vector resume screening	Detect AI-generated resumes, Check consistency in AI-screened candidate profiles			Bias, PII handling, data boundaries, privacy, compliance, and safe use of AI-generated or sensitive content.EEOC alignment	Structured interview guides	AI templates for communication	
Healthcare Professionals	AI-assisted charting/referrals, AI-powered diagnostics & insight generation	Detect hallucinated clinical notes, Validate diagnostic suggestions			Content lineage & AI decision-path visibility, AI-assisted research paths & evidence chains	Bias, PII handling, data boundaries, privacy, compliance, and safe use of AI-generated or sensitive content. HIPAA-safe AI usage	Interpret multimodal clinical models	AI-generated patient explanations
Legal Professionals	AI-assisted brief/ memo drafting	Verify citations / case law, Detect hallucinated precedent or evidence				Client confidentiality, privilege boundaries, vendor risk, HIPAA/ABA compliance	Interpret legal AI tools' limitations; evaluate reasoning consistency	AI-generated summaries; explain AI-assisted findings to clients/courts
Trust & Safety/Moderation	AI pre-screening of content	Override unsafe or biased AI outputs, Evaluate false positives/negatives			HITL logs, safety decision trails	GRC-aligned HITL decisions	Evaluate multimodal decisions	Summaries of emerging abuse patterns