

Pre-Program Survey Results

AI Accelerator | Build, Apply, Learn

Women in Digital Academy × Ai Her Way
44 Participants | 39 Organisations | March 2026

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Executive Summary

This report summarises the pre-program survey responses from 44 participants enrolled in the Women in Digital Academy AI Accelerator program, commencing 25 March 2026. The survey assessed current AI experience levels, tool usage, confidence, key concerns, and learning goals to inform program delivery and ensure curriculum alignment with participant needs.

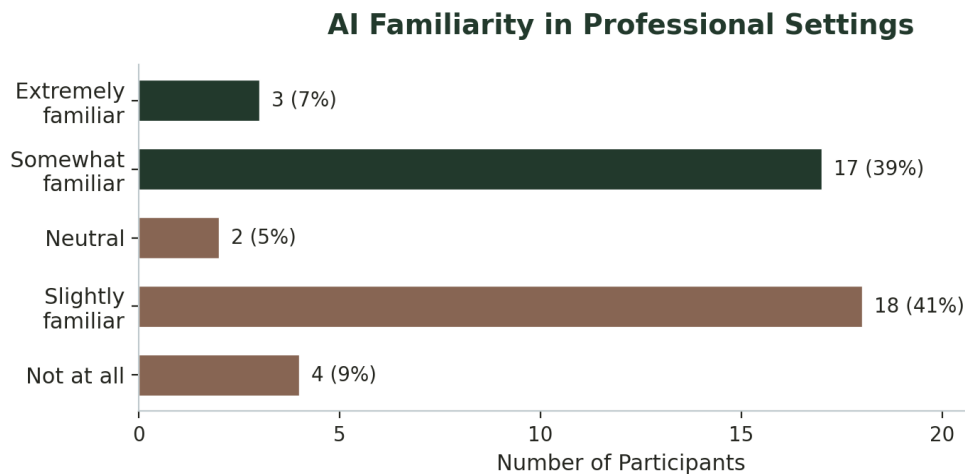
Key Findings at a Glance

Metric	Result
Total Respondents	44
Organisations Represented	39 unique companies
AI Familiarity: Slightly or Not At All	50% (22 participants)
Confidence: Not At All or Slightly	70% (31 participants)
Most Used Tool	ChatGPT (86%)
Top Learning Interest	Automation of repetitive tasks (95%)
Top Concern	Data privacy, security & governance

Detailed Findings

AI Familiarity

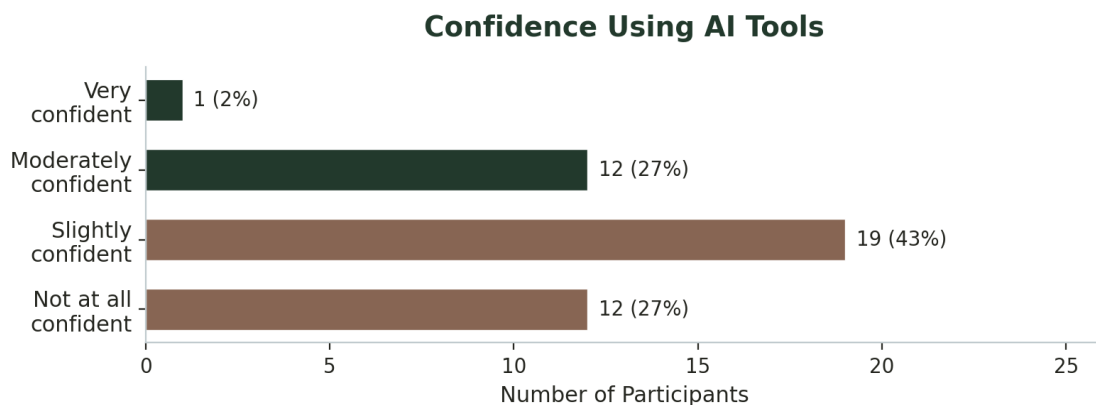
Participants were asked to rate their familiarity with using AI in a professional setting. The majority are early in their AI journey, with half describing themselves as only slightly familiar or not familiar at all.



This tells us the program needs to start with strong foundations and avoid assumptions about baseline knowledge. However, 39% are somewhat familiar, so content should also provide depth for those who have been experimenting.

Confidence Using AI Tools

Confidence levels skew even lower than familiarity, indicating that even participants who have some exposure don't yet feel assured in their ability to use AI effectively.

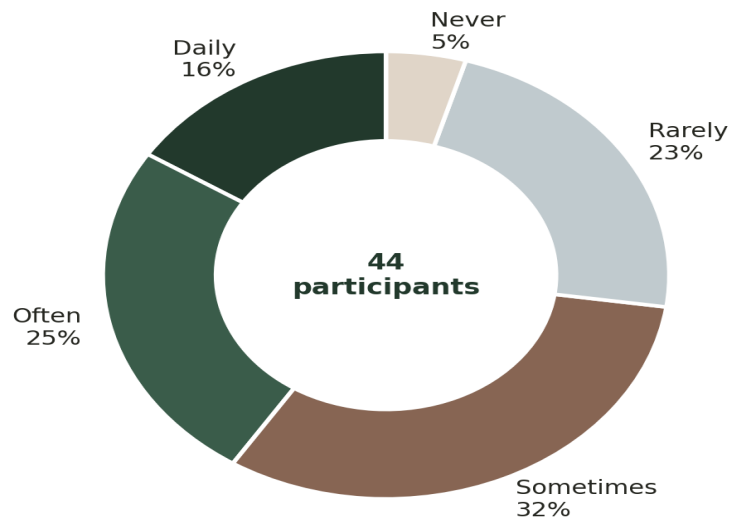


70% of participants are not at all or only slightly confident. This is a significant opportunity — the program can deliver meaningful confidence uplift, and the post-program survey should capture this shift.

How Often Participants Use AI at Work

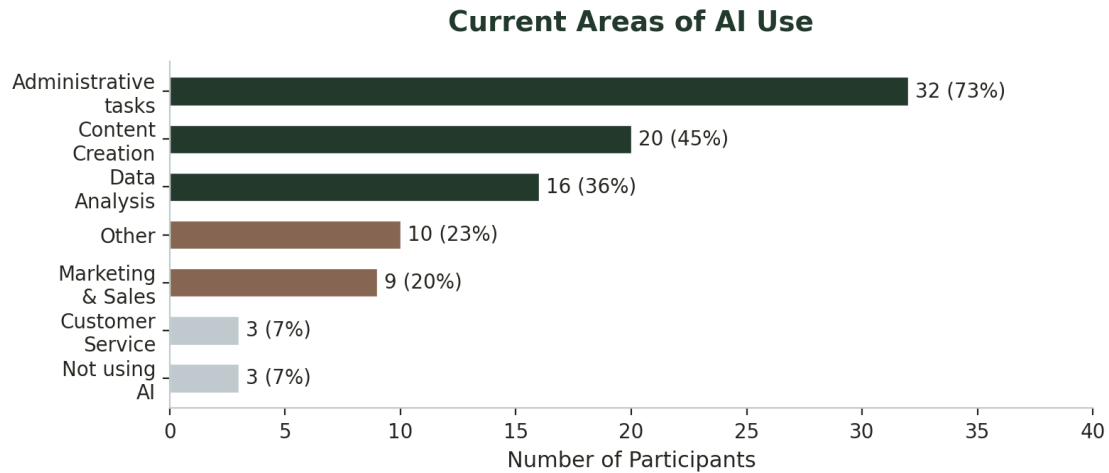
Usage is spread across the spectrum. The largest group (32%) uses AI only sometimes, while 28% rarely or never use it and 41% use it often or daily. This confirms the need for a curriculum that serves both beginners and regular users.

How Often AI is Used at Work



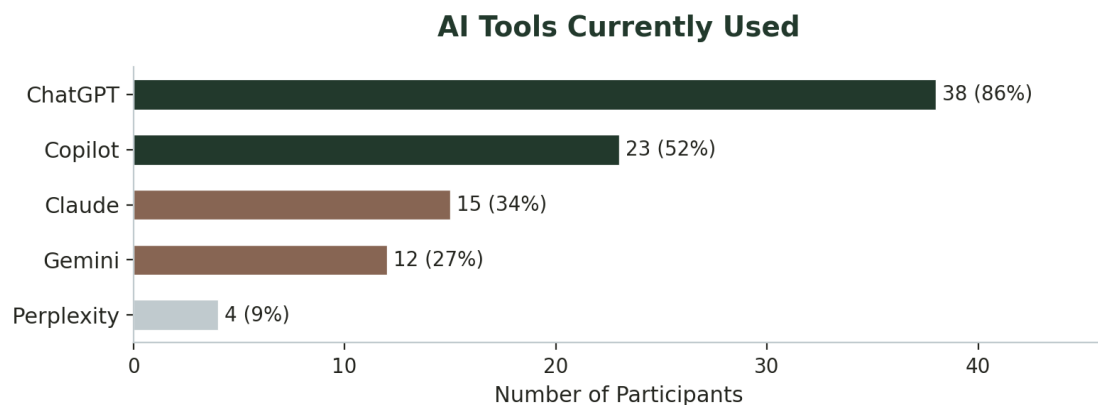
Current Areas of AI Use

Participants who are using AI are predominantly applying it to administrative tasks (73%) and content creation (45%). Data analysis (36%) and marketing (20%) also feature. Only 7% reported not using AI at all.



AI Tools Currently Used

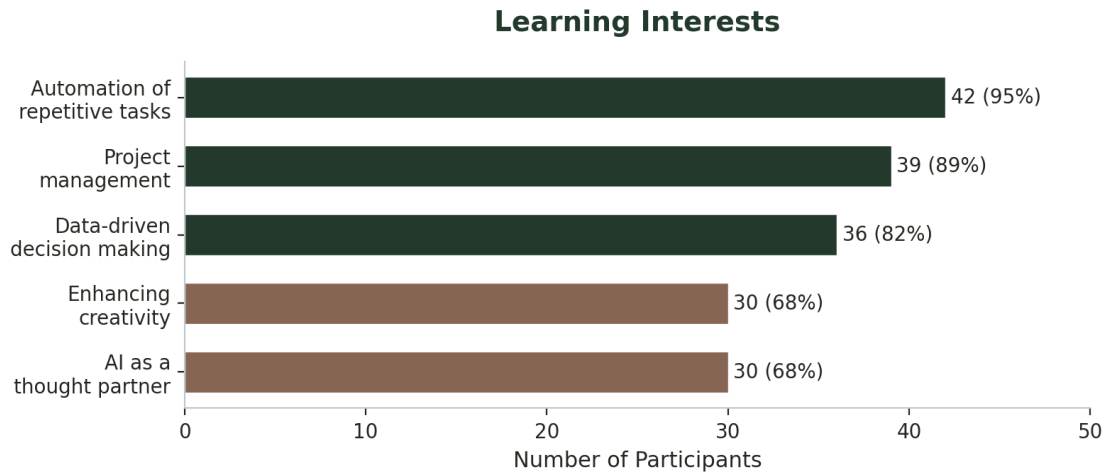
ChatGPT dominates as the tool of choice, with 86% of participants having used it. Microsoft Copilot (52%) reflects the enterprise nature of this cohort. Claude, Gemini, and Perplexity also have meaningful adoption.



This tool mix means demonstrations should be primarily in ChatGPT (most familiar) and Claude (growing adoption), with Copilot context for those in Microsoft ecosystems. Custom GPT builds in Week 3 align well with the ChatGPT dominance.

Learning Interests

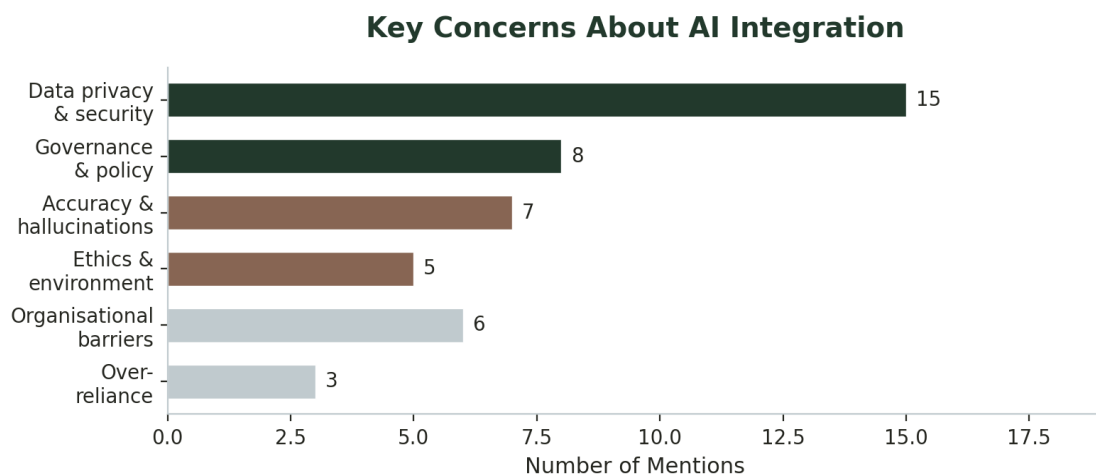
Participants were asked what aspects of AI they most want to learn about. Automation of repetitive tasks is nearly universal (95%), followed closely by project management applications (89%) and data-driven decision making (82%).



Notable 'Other' interests mentioned include: building agentic AI systems, creating AI-powered tools and applications, SEO and marketing automation, integration with existing data environments, and supporting mentoring and leadership programs.

Key Concerns

Participants were candid about their concerns. Data privacy, security, and governance were the most frequently cited themes, reflecting the enterprise environment many work in.



Data privacy, security & governance: Mentioned by approximately 50% of respondents. Many work in regulated industries (health, finance, insurance, government) and need clear guardrails around what data can be shared with AI tools.

Accuracy & hallucinations: Concern about AI outputs being wrong, especially in high-stakes contexts like court documentation, financial analysis, and client advice.

Ethics & environmental impact: Several participants raised thoughtful concerns about AI's environmental footprint, bias in models, impact on entry-level jobs, and the need for inclusive, representative AI systems.

Organisational barriers: Multiple participants noted restrictive workplace policies, lack of approved tools, or conservative organisational cultures limiting AI adoption.

Over-reliance: A few participants expressed concern about becoming too dependent on AI or losing critical thinking skills.

These concerns directly validate the inclusion of the EquiAI Framework, governance content, and responsible AI practices throughout the curriculum. The program should address these head-on from Week 1 and reference them throughout.

Hoped Outcomes from the Program

The most commonly expressed desired outcomes cluster around three themes:

- 1. Efficiency & time savings (most common):** Reducing time on repetitive administrative tasks, streamlining workflows, and freeing up time for higher-value strategic work.
- 2. Confidence & competence:** Feeling confident enough to use AI tools effectively, explain AI to colleagues, and lead AI adoption within their teams or organisations.
- 3. Practical, buildable skills:** Participants want to leave with something tangible — a working bot, an automation, a framework they can implement immediately. Multiple respondents explicitly said they don't want just theory.

Other notable goals include: being able to build and deploy data agents, creating bespoke tools for competitive advantage, understanding AI security implications for client advisory work, and using AI for better data analysis and decision making.

Organisations Represented

44 participants from 39 unique organisations are enrolled. The cohort spans a wide range of industries including financial services, healthcare, government, technology, engineering, recruitment, education, and not-for-profit. Notable organisations include:

- Enterprise: Rio Tinto, Australia Post, Transurban, Oracle, Cisco, Ecolab, Culture Amp, Bank of Queensland
- Government & Health: Queensland Health, Queensland Department of Education, Crime and Corruption Commission, Sunshine Coast Health Service, NIISQ
- Technology & Digital: Data#3, Kinetic IT, Hatchd, Staunch Technology, Exclaim IT, Highertech, InfoMedix
- Other: Endeavour Foundation, CleanCo, Marvel Engineers, The Urban Developer, BA Creative, Bridgit

This diversity means examples and use cases in the program should span multiple industries, not default to tech-only scenarios.

Curriculum Implications & Recommendations

Week 1: Foundations

- Start from genuine basics — 50% are slightly or not at all familiar with AI
- Address data privacy and governance concerns early and directly — this is the #1 concern
- Show multiple tools (ChatGPT, Copilot, Claude) since the cohort uses all three
- Reference the AI Maturity Index and help participants locate themselves — survey confirms wide range

Week 2: Prompting

- Use admin task examples (73% current use case) and content creation (45%) for prompt exercises
- Include data analysis prompting — 36% already using AI here and 82% want to learn more
- Address hallucination concerns with practical verification techniques

Week 3: Custom AI Assistants

- ChatGPT Custom GPTs are the right primary platform (86% already use ChatGPT)
- Also demonstrate Claude Projects for the 34% who use Claude
- Emphasise practical use cases: admin assistants, data analysis bots, project management aids

Weeks 5–7: Strategy, Automation & Showcase

- Lean heavily into automation content — 95% want this
- Include governance and organisational barriers as part of use case mapping — many face restricted environments
- Showcase should emphasise tangible, practical outcomes — participants explicitly don't want just theory

Cross-Cutting Themes

- Ethics and responsible AI should be woven throughout, not siloed — participants care deeply about this
- Policy and governance is a major interest area — dedicate significant time in Week 5 and reference throughout
- Use industry-diverse examples (health, finance, engineering, government, creative) to reflect the cohort
- Build confidence deliberately — 70% start with low confidence, so celebrate small wins throughout