

Public relations practitioners' AI knowledge is limited, but they are aware of AI's potential

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A new research report from the Chartered Institute of Public Relations'

AIinPR Panel, which has been co-authored by the University's Emeritus Professor of Corporate Communication Anne Gregory, has found that practitioners see the huge potential that artificial intelligence (AI) and Big Data offers the profession but possess limited knowledge on technical aspects of both.

The "AI and Big Data Readiness Report—Assessing the Public Relations Profession's Preparedness for an AI Future" research provides an overview of current AI understanding and preparedness within [public relations](#) and outlines how the profession should equip itself to exploit the potential and guard against the possible dangers of AI.

It finds a significant number of PR practitioners have limited [knowledge](#) of AI and lack confidence in using it (43.2%), compared with only a small number who feel "very comfortable" (13.9%). However, practitioners are optimistic and have an eagerness to learn. Their challenge is they do not know what they need to know and they don't know where to start.

The report also finds:

- 41.5% of respondents claim to understand what AI as a technology means but do not consider themselves technical
- Over one in three (38.9%) PR practitioners feel "excited" about AI compared to just 3.9% who feel "overwhelmed"
- 30% of practitioners are familiar with AI technology but don't feel confident to apply their knowledge to their role
- One in five practitioners (20.7%) feel very comfortable using data and analytics in their role compared to just 8.2% of those who feel the same about AI
- Around one in five practitioners are familiar with the relevance of both AI and Big Data to the communication profession

"Two years ago, when we produced the AI and the Professions Report," said the University's Professor Gregory, "we said that PR was in danger of sleepwalking into the technological future. Unfortunately, nothing has really changed. The knowledge and [skills](#) that have been acquired, driven partly by the COVID 19 pandemic, have been largely tactical.

"We need to get a strategic grip and determine for ourselves what our enhanced role and contribution can be in the organizations we serve. Otherwise, others will make the decision for us and it won't be in our favor. This report serves as the wake-up call," she said.

The Chair of the CIPR's AIinPR Panel, Andrew Bruce Smith, said, "There is clearly a mix of optimism and fear in the PR industry with regard to AI. Excitement at the potential and possibilities—and concern that the role of the practitioner will be eroded away. There is clearly a willingness to learn and adapt—but knowing where to start and a lack of time, training and skills seems to be putting a brake on progress. However, doing nothing is not an option either. AI is already impacting every aspect of PR from strategic planning to writing content. Anyone who wants to have a valued and meaningful career in PR in the coming years should pay great attention to the implications and recommendations from this report."

More information: The report is available for download at www.slideshare.net/CIPRPaul/ci...ata-readiness-report

Provided by University of Huddersfield

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