

The Bi-annual Conference of the Finnish Association of Communication and Social Interaction Research (Prologos)

Friday 9.10. – Saturday 10.10.2026, Tampere

Proposal for presentation

Note: If required, the presentation may also be presented in Finnish.

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The Emerging Competence Requirements for Communication Directors in the Age of AI

Artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping workplaces, with significant implications for management and leadership. These changes also influence the responsibilities and practices of Communication Directors. Consequently, there is a growing need to understand how their role is evolving, particularly as they are central to guiding the effective and ethical adoption of AI across organisations and within communication departments.

Communication Directors may rely on AI for activities such as idea generation, content analysis and summarisation, communication planning, strategy optimisation, and crisis management. However, their role extends well beyond the operational use of AI. They are responsible, for example, for leading and supporting communication teams through change, making strategic choices regarding AI adoption and access, ensuring that AI practices align with organisational objectives and values, and influencing how AI is discussed both internally and externally. In doing so, they also shape organisational culture as well as stakeholder perceptions and trust related to AI.

In this presentation, our aim is to outline the emerging competence requirements for Communication Directors in the age of AI. The presentation draws on previous research and literature, which we review and synthesise to provide an overview of the topic. It is also based on our forthcoming handbook chapter, in which we examine the evolving role of Communication Directors more broadly from the perspective of AI and ethics.

We argue that, in order to fulfil their evolving role, Communication Directors need the competence to (1) address complex ethical questions, (2) demonstrate a sufficient level of technical understanding of AI to evaluate its ethical implications, (3) lead effectively and appropriately, and (4) communicate and collaborate with key actors to foster dialogue, align diverse perspectives, and promote shared responsibility across the organisation. We will examine each of these areas, using practical examples to clarify their significance.