Accelerating the digital transformation of the healthcare sector in the Americas

AI prompt design for public health

Using generative AI responsibly

PAHO
Pan American Health Organization
World Health Organization
Americas Region

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Executive summary

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) holds transformative potential for public health, enabling faster creation of advisories, summaries, reports, speeches, training materials, and community guidance. However, its effectiveness relies on one critical and often overlooked skill: the ability to craft clear, precise, and purpose-driven prompts. Much like a SMART objective in public health programming, a well-structured prompt provides focus, reduces ambiguity, and sets the direction for AI-generated content that is accurate, inclusive, and ready for use. In contrast, vague or imprecise prompts often lead to generic, inaccurate, or irrelevant outputs, wasting time and risking misinformation. Just as public health communication must be targeted and trustworthy to drive behavior change, AI prompts must be strategic to ensure that output meets the needs of their intended audiences.

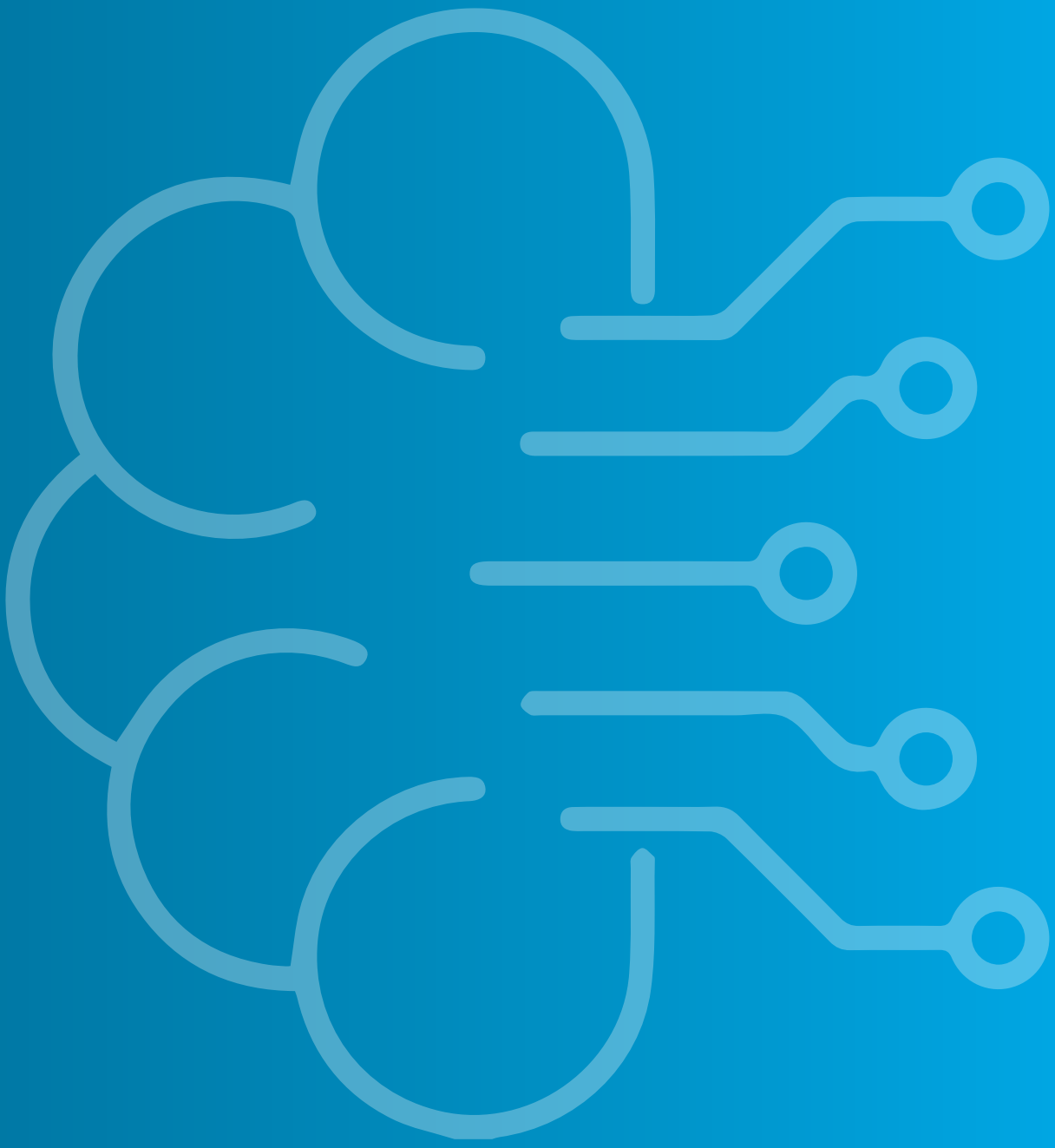
Prompt design should be seen not as a secondary task but as a form of content architecture – an essential first step that shapes what is said, how it is framed, and to whom it is addressed. A good prompt functions like a research brief: it provides scope, context, tone, and purpose, enabling AI to act as a meaningful support tool rather than a random generator of text. Beyond content creation, strategic prompting is critical to generating actionable insights across fields, from public health (e.g., modeling disease spread or optimizing vaccine distribution) to policy design (e.g., drafting bias-free legislation or simulating socioeconomic impacts). Poorly designed prompts risk perpetuating biases in algorithms or decision-making tools, while well-structured prompts, such as those specifying disaggregated data or equity-focused parameters, can mitigate harm and foster inclusive outcomes. In digital health and beyond, prompt design is not just about technical precision; it is a lever for ethical, equitable, and effective systems.

Prompts are not static scripts but "living protocols" that should be tested, adapted, and refined across different public health use cases, audiences, and languages. Strategic prompting reduces downstream editing, shortens production timelines, and results in content that is closer to deployment quality. Mastering this skill transforms generative AI from a novelty into a precision tool for supporting public health decisions, shaping narratives, and improving communication outcomes. It also promotes more inclusive content development when guided thoughtfully.

Prompt engineering is already recognized as a core competency within the Pan American Health Organization's Digital Literacy Program, which aims to strengthen the skills of public health workers across the Region of the Americas. It forms part of a broader learning pathway designed to equip the health workforce with the capabilities needed to navigate and lead in the digital transformation of health systems. In a world where speed, clarity, and trust are essential, the ability to guide AI effectively is no longer optional but a foundational capacity for driving better decisions, faster responses, and healthier futures.

This knowledge capsule focuses on analyzing foundational principles, ethical considerations, best practices, and practical guidelines, including specific prompt examples, for designing effective, domain-specific prompts tailored to public health decisions and actions.

Chapter 1



Why prompting matters in public health

Generative AI's value depends on the ability to guide it effectively

Generative artificial intelligence (AI) is no longer limited to experimental settings; it has become a practical tool in public health practice, and its usefulness is therefore defined by how well it can be guided to produce accurate, relevant, and culturally appropriate results. Prompting, once considered a specialized skill, emerges as a core competency in public health, enabling AI to facilitate communication, improve decision-making, and contribute to more equitable and effective health outcomes.

The evolution of AI in public health began with data analysis, helping to identify disease trends, anticipate outbreaks, and inform resource planning. As computing power and access to quality data increased, AI expanded to decision support, helping prioritize interventions, detect anomalies in real time, and refine planning based on contextual variables.

With the arrival of generative AI, the technology shifted from analyzing information to creating it, and public health institutions began using AI to generate announcements, translate reports into plain language, prepare educational materials, and simulate responses. Tasks that previously required multiple rounds of review by communications specialists can now be initiated quickly, provided the AI is given clear instructions, with a clear purpose and sensitive to the public's needs.

This transition has brought with it a new approach: guiding AI with intention, designing prompts that ensure results aligned with institutional objectives and public expectations, avoiding common errors such as misrepresentation, exclusion, or inaccuracy. AI has ceased to be a passive content generator and has become a flexible and responsive extension and ally of the healthcare worker, facilitating dissemination, participation, and informed decisions under human supervision.

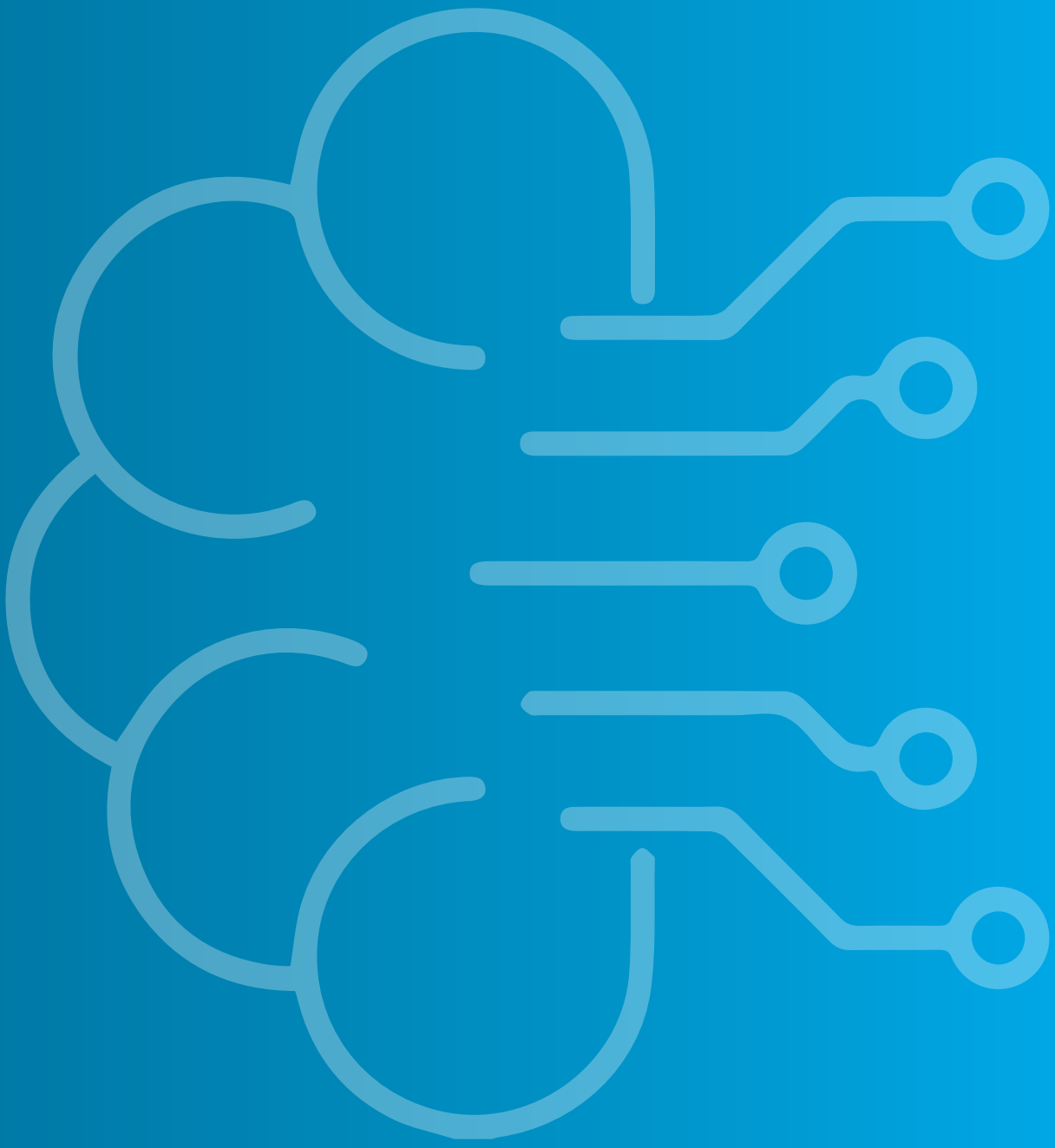
In its simplest form, prompting refers to the instruction given to an AI system in the form of a short question or a detailed request that outlines the desired tone, format, and audience. The nature of that instruction directly shapes the output: a vague prompt tends to produce vague answers; a prompt grounded in context and purpose will generate something far more useful.

This makes prompt design a necessary skill for all public health personnel. It is not just about contributing to operational efficiency, but also ensuring that messages are reliable, understandable, and practical. The stakes are high when using generative AI in public health, especially when the generated content can influence public behavior, inform local policies, or support emergency responses. Whether the goal is to promote vaccination, issue health warnings, or summarize complex data for community use, the success of the communication depends on the quality of the prompt that generated it.

The skill of designing prompts is relevant to all those working in public health, from policy and surveillance to education and program management, and the effectiveness of the results you obtain from generative AI will depend on the ability to write them strategically. Public health professionals already know how to tailor messages to different audiences and how to write in simple, inclusive language. These same principles apply to AI-powered prompt design, making it a natural extension of existing communication skills. However, adopting prompt design as part of routine public health work requires more than individual learning; it requires organizational support, training opportunities, and the recognition of digital literacy as a fundamental activity endorsed by institutions.

At its best, prompting is not just instructing a machine but rather directing the results with well-crafted prompts that help generate content that informs, motivates, and supports sound decision-making. As AI continues to evolve, prompt design will be one of the key skills that will determine whether public health institutions can fully leverage its potential – not just to communicate faster, but to communicate better.

Chapter 2



From input to impact: The strategic architecture of a prompt

Prompts as SMART objectives for AI – structured, purposeful, and aligned

A prompt is not just a question to an algorithm, it is a blueprint that determines the quality, relevance, and usability of AI-generated content. By applying structure and clarity to prompt formulation, public health workers can transform AI from a generic engine into a targeted, purpose-driven tool. This chapter explores the core elements of prompt design, comparing its function to the SMART objectives used in public health programming.

2.1 Understanding the anatomy of a prompt

A prompt is the instruction given to a generative AI system to guide the type of content it produces, and the quality of the output is directly shaped by the structure and clarity of the prompt. A well-designed prompt in public health, where clarity, accessibility, and trust are essential, ensures that the AI response is relevant, accurate, useful for public health purposes, and provides representative outputs for diverse populations.

A complete prompt typically includes the following elements:

- **Objective or purpose:** States what AI is expected to generate (e.g., a summary, a message for the public, a training paragraph). Whether the task is to summarize a technical report, generate health promotion messages, or draft a community advisory, clearly stating the intended use helps the AI align its response with the expected outcome.
- **Audience:** Identifies who the content is for (e.g., policymakers, community members, healthcare workers). A message for the public will differ in complexity and language from one intended for health workers or policymakers. AI-generated content should reflect the needs and understanding of its target audience to ensure the information is accessible and appropriate.
- **Format:** Indicates the desired structure (e.g., list, paragraph, slide, headline) in which the result must be provided. Clearly identifying the output reduces the time needed for reorganization or rewriting.

- **Tone or style:** Specifies how the information should sound to be perceived by the audience. For public health, this could range from neutral and informative to urgent, motivational, or empathetic. Providing tone guidance helps shape the content to match the communication context.

- **Context or background:** Provides any necessary details, such as specific information, data, or instructions, that will help the AI generate a response that is accurate and relevant. This can include information, specific data points, relevant historical details, or current circumstances that influence the content.

Not all prompts need to contain every element, but including these components increases the likelihood of receiving high-quality, targeted results.

2.2 Parallels between SMART objectives and prompt design

The SMART framework logic, which emphasizes goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound, can be applied to prompt design to produce results that are clear, focused, and aligned with the intended purpose. For example:

- **Specific:** A prompt should clearly state what is being asked of the AI (e.g., "Summarize key messages from a report for a nontechnical audience").

- **Measurable:** While not numerical, a good prompt has criteria that define success (e.g., "Use no more than 150 words" or "Include three main recommendations").

- **Achievable:** The request should match what the AI can do, avoiding tasks that require judgment beyond its design.

- **Relevant:** The prompt should align with the context and communication goals (e.g., health promotion, risk communication, or training).

- **Time-bound:** In some cases, the prompt can include temporal context (e.g., "Generate a short message based on this week's dengue data").

This parallel reinforces that public health workers already possess many of the skills needed for effective prompt design, as they are already familiar with the value of well-defined objectives.

2.3 Building reusable prompt templates

A prompt template provides a structured format that can be adapted to various topics, audiences, and communication goals for reducing the time required to start from scratch and improving output reliability. Reusable prompt templates can improve consistency, efficiency, and quality across different tasks and teams and are especially helpful for recurring activities such as:

- Drafting public advisories or health alerts;
- Summarizing technical documents for different audiences;
- Preparing key messages or talking points;
- Generating training content or educational materials;
- Translating complex content into plain language.

A basic prompt template includes placeholders for the main elements:

- **[Purpose]** – What the AI is expected to produce;
- **[Audience]** – Who the content is for;
- **[Format]** – Desired structure (e.g., bullet points, paragraph, script);
- **[Tone]** – How the message should sound (e.g., informative, persuasive);
- **[Additional context]** – Specific information, data, or instructions.

Example template:

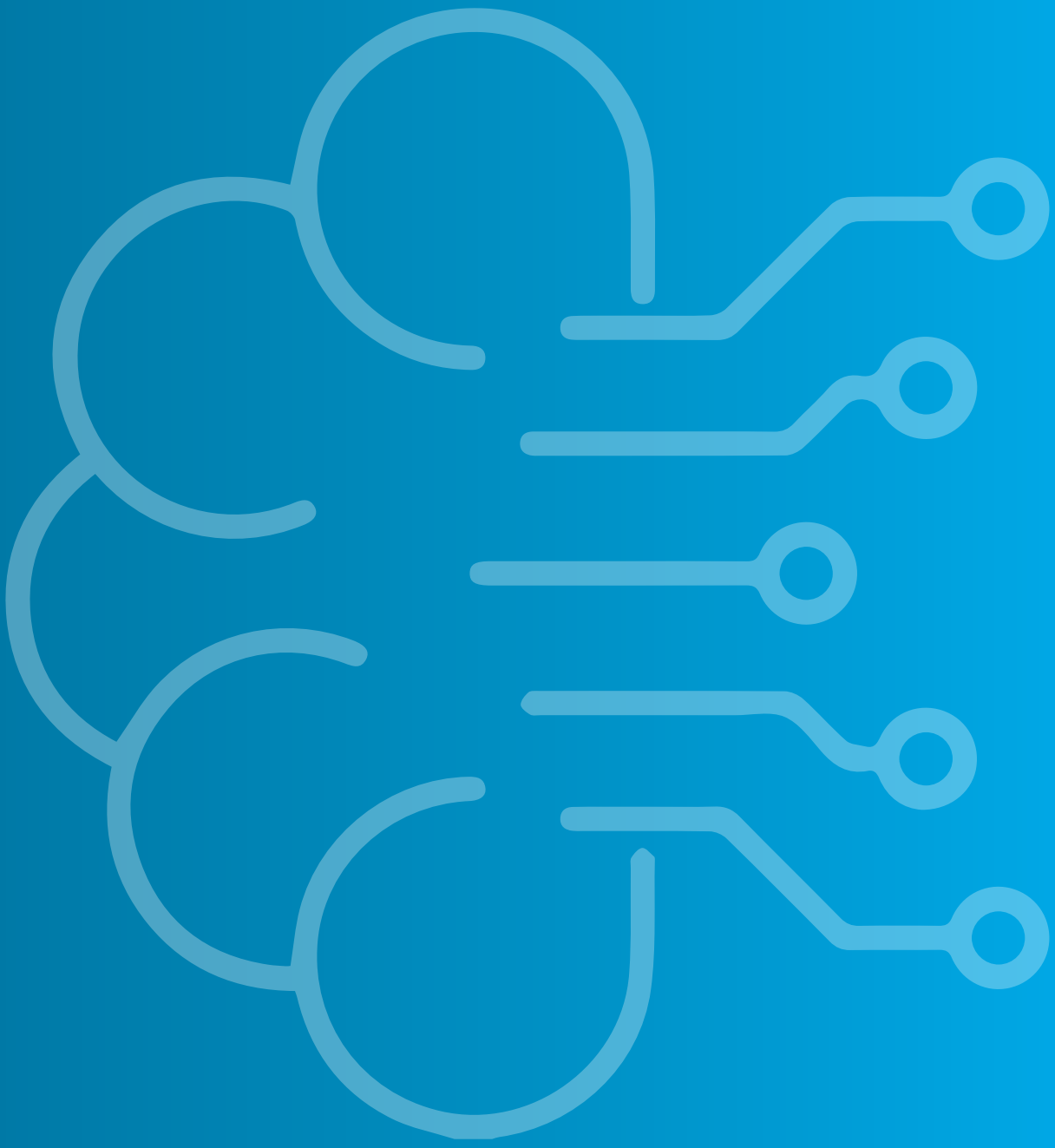
Generate a `[format]` that explains `[topic]` to `[audience]` in a `[tone]` tone. The purpose is to `[purpose]`. Include `[any additional context or data]`.

Concrete example:

Generate a `[three-sentence radio announcement]` that explains `[dengue prevention]` to `[rural community members]` in a `[reassuring and actionable]` tone. The purpose is to `[increase community awareness and encourage preventive behaviors]`. Include `[one specific action people can take immediately, such as eliminating standing water]`.

Reusable templates allow teams to work more efficiently while ensuring that outputs meet public health communication standards while supporting knowledge-sharing and helping standardize prompt quality across departments, projects, or institutions. Templates should remain flexible and be adjusted as needed based on feedback, evolving needs, or specific communication contexts.

Chapter 3



Avoiding the void: How poor prompts undermine AI's usefulness

Unclear instructions lead to confusion, mistrust, and unusable content

Poorly constructed prompts often lead to outputs that are vague, inaccurate, or irrelevant, which results in wasting time and undermining trust in AI systems. This chapter emphasizes the need for intentionality and precision to ensure that AI contributes constructively, avoiding common mistakes in prompt design that result in unclear public health messages.

3.1 Common causes of ineffective prompts

Vague and weak prompts are ineffective and are often the result of unclear, incomplete, or poorly structured instructions that limit the potential of generative AI by leaving too many assumptions unaddressed:

- **Generic or vague instructions:** Broad or general requests often result in content that is unfocused, repetitive, or fails to meet the intended objective, contributing to confusion, reduced message uptake, or even misinformation in public health communication. For example, a vague prompt like "Write a message about COVID-19 vaccines" may generate text that is too general – such as "Vaccines help protect people from COVID-19" – which provides no new or actionable information. In some cases, the AI may pull from outdated or nonspecific references, further reducing the relevance and accuracy of the content.

- **Assuming AI has background information:** Another frequent issue is assuming that the AI system has access to implicit information. For example, prompting "Draft a message about the new guidelines" without including or referencing the guidelines themselves leads to incomplete or fabricated content.

- **Using abbreviations or specific terms:** Prompts that rely on institutional abbreviations/acronyms or country, cultural, or geographical specific terms without explanation can confuse the system and yield irrelevant responses.

- **Ambiguous language:** An unclear request can also degrade the quality of AI-generated content. A prompt like "Make it more impactful" does not clarify what type of impact is intended – emotional, behavioral, or persuasive – and gives the AI no reference for tailoring tone or structure.

3.2 Real-world examples of low-quality outputs

Low-quality results are often due to insufficient prompt and can take various forms, such as irrelevant content, unclear language, or incorrect emphasis. The following examples illustrate how the quality of AI-generated content is directly related to the clarity and structure of the prompt, and highlight the importance of anticipating how the AI will interpret the instruction and taking steps to guide it more effectively.

Example of a weak prompt:

> "Create an announcement about dengue."

Typical result: A generic statement such as "**Dengue is a mosquito-borne disease. Protect yourself by avoiding mosquito bites,**" which lacks contextual relevance, actionability, and audience targeting.

Improved version:

> "Create a three-sentence announcement for radio in rural areas of Central America to raise awareness about preventing dengue, using plain language and a reassuring tone."

This version specifies the format, audience, region, and communication style, significantly improving the usefulness of the output.

Example of a vague prompt:

> "Explain handwashing."

Likely result: A basic explanation such as "**Handwashing helps prevent illness. Use soap and water and wash for 20 seconds,**" which may be acceptable in some contexts but is too general for targeted public health campaigns.

Improved version:

> "Write a message for primary school teachers to explain to young children why handwashing is important, using friendly language and a simple example."

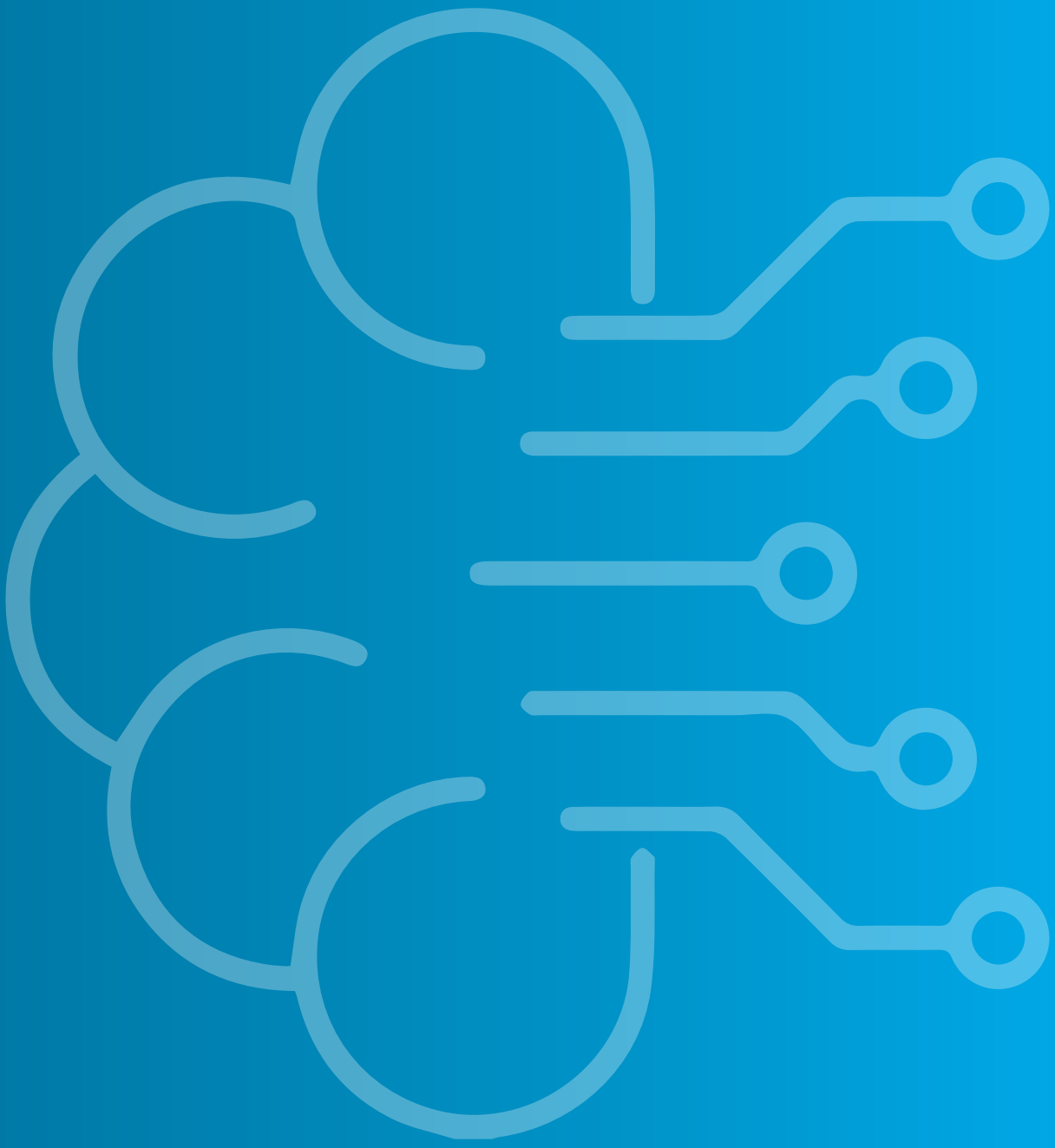
This refined prompt helps the AI adjust both the content and tone to fit a specific audience, increasing the chance of behavior change and message retention.

Understanding these common causes of ineffective prompts allows public health workers to better structure their instructions and reduce the need for revision or rework. Ensuring that prompts include sufficient detail and context helps generate outputs that are both technically sound and effective in practice.

3.3 Correcting and refining weak prompts

Improving weak prompts involves identifying missing elements and adding specificity that aligns with the communication objective. The process includes defining the purpose of the content, the audience, the expected format, and the desired tone. Prompt refinement is not only a technical adjustment but also a learning process. Reviewing outputs, comparing results from different prompt versions, and gathering feedback from colleagues can help build internal capacity and improve outcomes over time. Developing a culture of iterative improvement is essential for maximizing the value of AI tools in public health practice.

Chapter 4



Ensuring accuracy and fairness through prompt design

Prompts as mechanisms to reduce bias and improve the quality of AI outputs

Prompts do more than initiate AI responses: they directly influence the technical integrity, relevance, and fairness of the content produced. This chapter outlines how prompt design serves as a first layer of quality control and a method to reduce distortions or blind spots often embedded in large datasets. It also shows how prompts can mitigate bias by explicitly requesting key perspectives, disaggregated data, or culturally appropriate language.

4.1 Prompting as a mechanism for quality assurance

Prompting plays a key role in ensuring the accuracy, clarity, and appropriateness of information process in public health by serving as a first layer of **quality assurance**. A well-structured prompt provides guidance to the AI on what to generate, how to frame it, and who the audience is. This reduces the likelihood of vague, biased, or technically incorrect content, and helps ensure that the output aligns with public health standards, institutional objectives, and ethical communication principles.

For example, a prompt like "Generate a 200-word summary of the updated hypertension guidelines for primary care physicians, emphasizing changes in medication protocols and using clear, clinical language" gives the AI enough direction to produce a relevant, audience-specific, and technically accurate output. It proactively addresses risks such as omitting key updates, using the wrong terminology, or producing content unsuitable for the intended readership.

Prompting also allows for **proactive error reduction**. By specifying what to include or avoid (e.g., "Avoid references to non-PAHO sources" or "Do not use alarmist language"), users can minimize the need for extensive post-generation editing.

In this way, prompting is not only a tool for generating content but also a practical mechanism for **embedding quality controls** at the start of the content creation process. It strengthens the reliability of AI outputs and supports the production of trustworthy, actionable public health information.

4.2 Addressing bias through design

Bias in AI-generated content is a recognized concern, particularly in public health, where equity, inclusion, and cultural sensitivity are essential. Although AI systems are trained on large datasets that may reflect historical or systemic inequalities, prompt design provides a practical way to help reduce the risk of reinforcing those biases.

Including equity-related instructions into prompts, like details about expected language, representation, or data disaggregation, health workers can guide the AI to produce more inclusive and balanced outputs and help ensure the response aligns with public health values. For example, prompts can request the use of gender-sensitive terms, the avoidance of stereotypes, or the inclusion of culturally relevant examples.

Example 1:

> "Draft a short message for a general audience on diabetes prevention that uses inclusive language, avoids stereotypes, and reflects different cultural eating habits in Latin America."

This kind of prompt encourages the generation of socially appropriate content and helps ensure the information is respectful and relevant to diverse audiences.

AI can also be directed to produce outputs that highlight disparities across groups, when asking for data disaggregated by age, sex, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status supports more nuanced analysis and avoids the risk of overly generalized messaging.

Example 2:

> "Summarize the cardiovascular disease risk factors in adults aged 40–60, disaggregated by sex and income level, using language suitable for policymakers."

Designing prompts with these considerations in mind strengthens the ethical quality of AI-generated content and supports the goal of reducing health inequities across the Region of the Americas.

4.3 Using prompts to improve language and representation

Effective public health communication depends on how well messages resonate with the target audience, with language playing a critical role in ensuring clarity and avoiding inadvertent exclusion, stereotyping, or stigmatization.

Example 1:

"Create a message on mental health support for youth that avoids stigma and reflects gender and cultural diversity in Latin America."

This helps AI produce content that is more broadly relevant and less likely to alienate groups who may be sensitive to tone, framing, or terminology.

Example 2:

"Generate three examples of how digital health tools are improving access to care in rural, Indigenous, and Afro-descendant communities."

Requests for geographic and cultural representation also improve the AI's output and support a more comprehensive narrative – moving away from generic descriptions to ones that reflect different contexts across the Region.

By embedding these parameters directly into prompts, users can help ensure that outputs are better attuned to the nuances of public health communication and less prone to distortions caused by data gaps or training biases.

4.4 Bias-aware prompt strategies

Bias-aware prompting aims to produce outputs that more accurately reflect the complexity of public health realities. These strategies, based on addressing blind spots, such as underrepresented regions, population groups, or languages, are particularly valuable when AI is used to inform communication, education, or policy development.

Examples:

"Summarize the barriers to accessing maternal health services in the Caribbean, disaggregated by age and geographic location."

"Generate a list of key messages on noncommunicable disease prevention tailored to urban youth from historically underserved backgrounds."

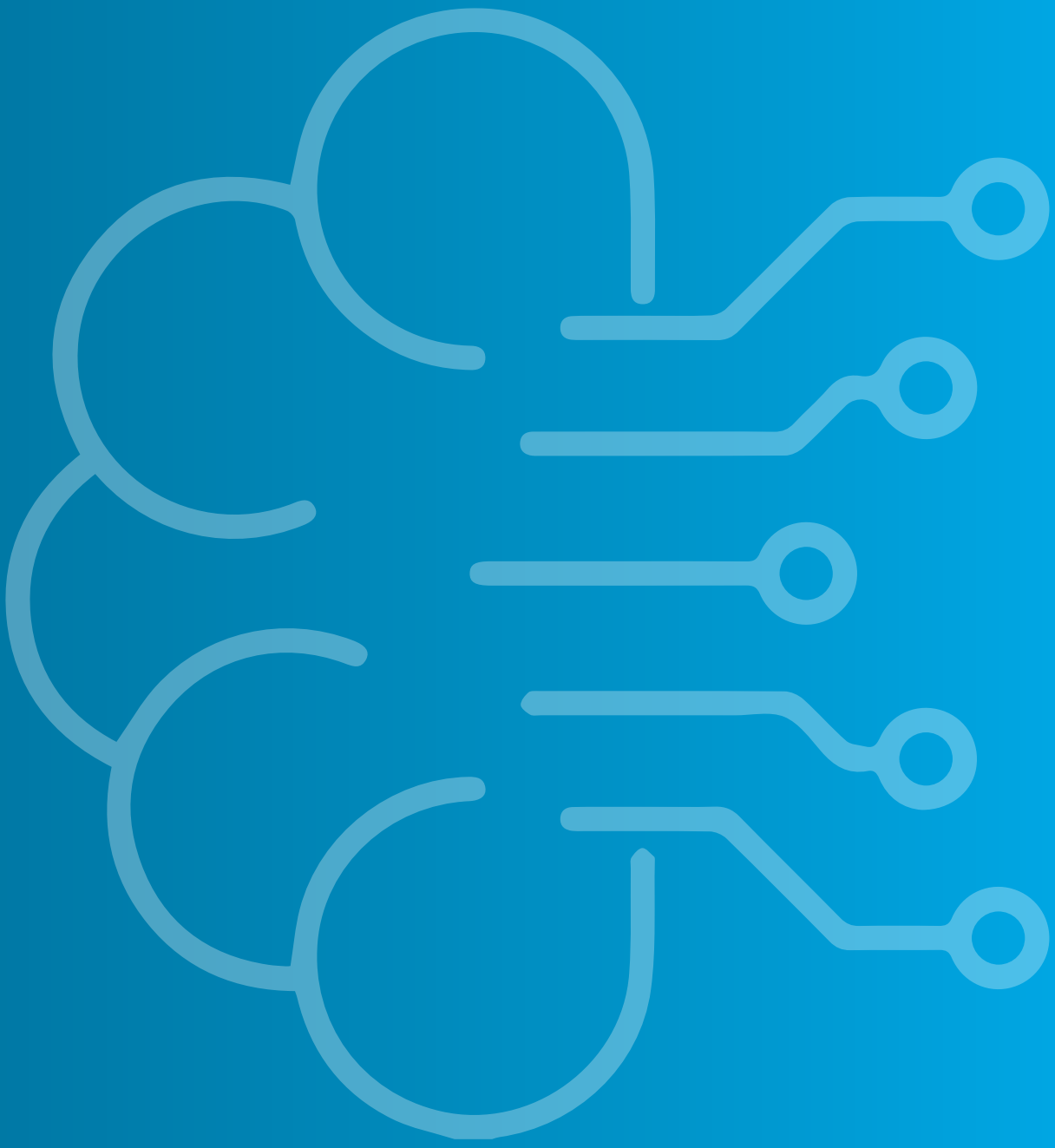
"Draft a message encouraging COVID-19 vaccination uptake in Indigenous communities, using respectful language and addressing culturally specific concerns."

"Create an educational infographic outline on HIV prevention that avoids stigmatizing terms and includes references to community-led efforts."

"Write a health advisory in plain Spanish that could be easily adapted into Haitian Creole and Portuguese for regional use."

These examples of prompts oriented to improve the balance and usefulness of the output demonstrate how precise design helps guide AI away from generic or biased content and toward outputs that are better suited to the realities of different settings. This approach is not about political framing; it is about improving relevance, minimizing blind spots, and enhancing the usefulness of AI-generated content for public health action.

Chapter 5



Prompting in practice: Use cases, risks, and real-world applications

Prompting for purpose, aligning AI with public health goals

The effectiveness of prompting lies in its application. This chapter provides practical strategies for writing clear prompts and identifies common challenges that users encounter in the field.

5.1 Public health use cases for prompting

Generative AI, when guided by well-constructed prompts, can support a wide range of public health activities, from communication and training to policy development and knowledge translation, enhancing efficiency and helping produce targeted outputs tailored to specific audiences and contexts.

Key use cases include:

- **Health communication and risk messaging:** AI can assist in drafting messages for different populations during emergencies or awareness campaigns. For example, on the creation of short messages for radio in rural areas about preventing mosquito bites during dengue season.
- **Technical summarization:** Prompts can be used to convert lengthy reports or scientific papers into plain-language summaries for nonexpert stakeholders. For example, summarizing the key findings of a noncommunicable diseases surveillance report in 200 words for a national policymaker.
- **Training and educational materials:** AI can help produce outlines, scripts, or content for public health training sessions, especially when time or staff capacity is limited. For example, in generating a training script on cold chain management for new immunization workers.
- **Policy and advocacy content:** AI tools can be prompted to support the creation of talking points, policy briefs, or position statements aligned with public health goals. For example, drafting a one-page brief on the importance of digital health investments for inclusion in a Ministry of Health meeting.

- **Internal communications and documentation:** Prompts can streamline the preparation of important e-mails, internal memos, meeting summaries, or standard operating procedures. For example, in the creation of a summary of action points from the last regional health information system workshop.

These examples demonstrate how prompt-based AI tools can support day-to-day public health work. With proper oversight and quality control, prompting serves as a valuable complement to existing workflows, freeing up time for higher-value analysis and decision-making.

5.2 Structuring prompts by content type

Different public health tasks require different types of content – ranging from short messages to detailed technical summaries. The structure of a prompt should reflect the expected content type, ensuring that the AI produces outputs that are appropriate in length, tone, and level of detail.

Tailoring the structure of a prompt to match the content type improves the relevance and usability of the result. It also helps avoid the need for significant revisions, especially in time-sensitive or high-impact communication settings.

Examples of prompt structures by content type include:

Short messages or announcements:

> "Write a two-sentence message for the general public on the importance of handwashing, using plain language and a motivational tone."

Social media posts:

> "Create a tweet (280 characters or less) about World Mental Health Day, highlighting one key takeaway for youth."

Educational or training content:

> "Generate a one-page training handout on food safety practices for community health volunteers."

Summaries or executive briefs:

> "Summarize the main recommendations of the regional malaria strategy in no more than 300 words, using professional and concise language."

Guidelines or procedural steps:

> "List five key steps for correctly storing vaccines in primary care settings, using clear and instructional language."

Frequently asked questions (FAQs):

> "Develop an FAQ section with five questions and answers about cervical cancer screening, targeting women aged 30–49."

Matching the structure of a prompt to the content type allows the AI to deliver outputs that are more immediately usable. It also supports greater consistency across materials, especially when multiple team members are involved in content generation. Standardizing prompt structures for commonly used formats is a practical step toward institutionalizing effective prompting practices in public health settings.

5.3 Avoiding ambiguity and unintended outcomes

Ambiguous prompts can lead to outputs that are misaligned with their original objectives, contain factual inaccuracies, or reflect unintended tone, complexity, or cultural framing. Ensuring clarity and specificity in prompt construction is essential to minimize these risks and produce content that is relevant, accurate, and appropriate for its intended use.

Unclear prompts often result from assumptions about shared context or background knowledge that the AI does not possess. For example, a prompt like "Create a message for the community about prevention" does not specify which health issue is being addressed, who the target population is, or how the message should be delivered. The AI may generate a vague or generic output that fails to address the actual communication need.

Another risk is unintended tone or level of formality. A prompt requesting "a short explanation of vaccination" without stating the audience may return language that is too technical for the general public or too simplistic for health workers.

Improved version:

> "Draft a three-sentence message in plain language for parents of young children in urban areas, encouraging routine vaccination and addressing common concerns."

This prompt eliminates ambiguity by clearly defining the audience, purpose, format, and tone, greatly increasing the chance of receiving a usable and well-aligned response.

Avoiding ambiguity also involves testing prompts before wide use. Generating multiple outputs from the same prompt and adjusting based on results helps ensure the final version consistently delivers the intended message. When prompting is treated as part of the content design process, not just a technical input, the likelihood of achieving meaningful, accurate communication increases significantly.

5.4 Lessons learned from field applications

Early experiences using generative AI in public health settings offer valuable insights into what works, and what does not, when applying prompt-based approaches. Field applications have demonstrated that while AI can accelerate content development and improve efficiency, the quality and usefulness of outputs depend heavily on how prompts are structured and tested.

One consistent lesson is the importance of **contextual specificity**. Prompts that clearly define the health topic, audience, and communication objective tend to produce higher-quality outputs with fewer revisions. In contrast, generic prompts often result in vague, repetitive, or irrelevant content, highlighting the need for upfront clarity.

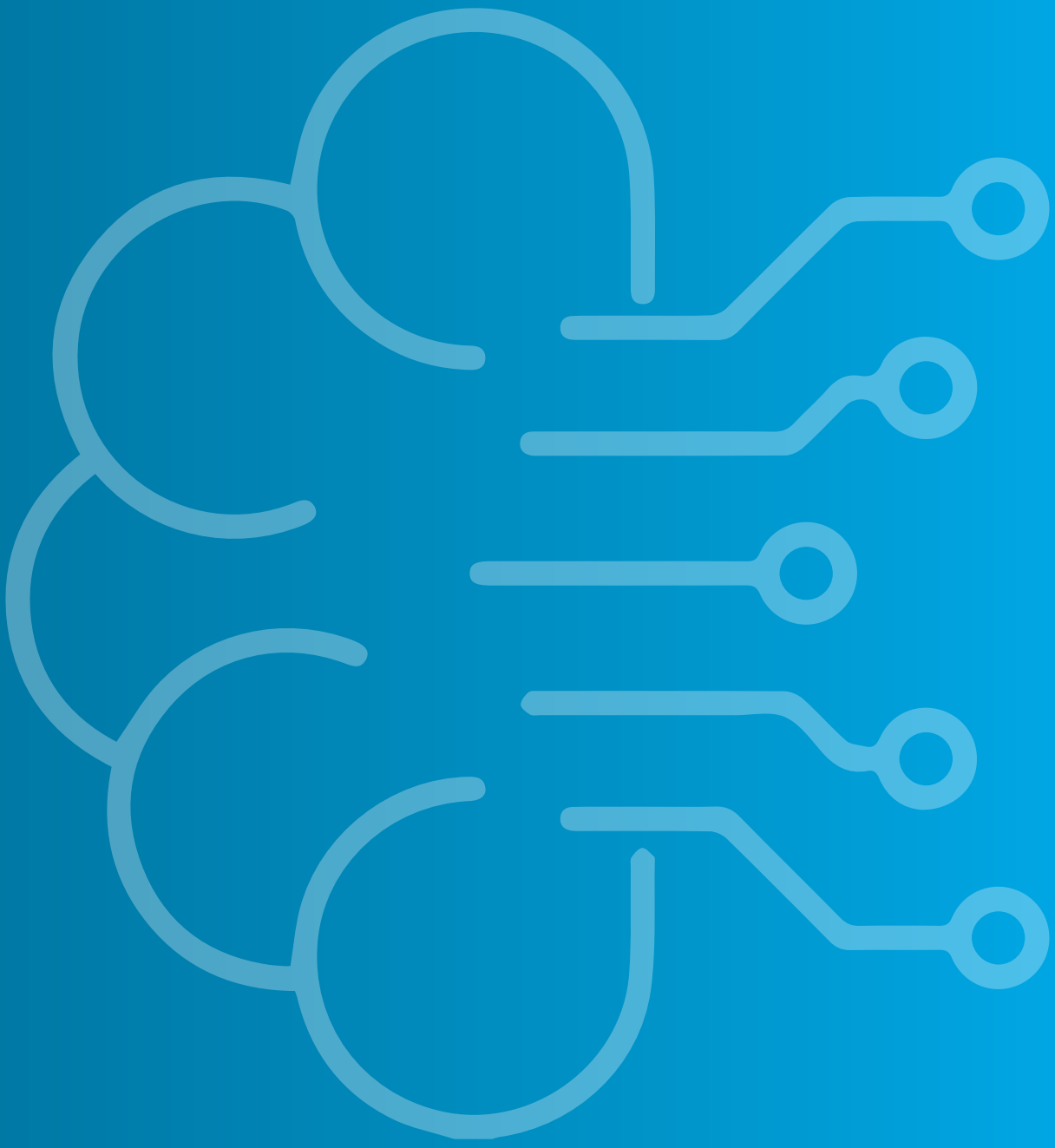
Another key lesson involves the **iterative nature of prompt refinement**. Initial outputs frequently require adjustment, leading users to revise their instructions for greater precision. This process improves outcomes over time and helps build internal prompting capacity across teams. In many cases, teams have found it helpful to document successful prompts and use them as internal templates or training tools.

Experiences also show the value of **multidisciplinary collaboration**. Involving content experts, communication professionals, and technical staff in reviewing prompt outputs helps ensure that messages are technically accurate, culturally appropriate, and aligned with institutional priorities.

Finally, field applications confirm the importance of **human oversight**. While AI can accelerate content generation, outputs must be reviewed and validated before use, particularly in sensitive or high-stakes public health communications.

These lessons underscore that prompting is both a skill and a process. Effective use of generative AI in public health requires thoughtful design, collaborative review, and a commitment to continuous improvement. Institutions that invest in building this capacity are better positioned to leverage AI tools for timely, inclusive, and impactful communication.

Chapter 6



Operationalizing prompts: Integrating into public health workflows

The prompt becomes the new first draft, shaping speed and accuracy

Incorporating prompt design into day-to-day workflows is key to scaling the use of AI across health institutions. This chapter discusses how prompts are becoming the starting point in public health communication cycles. It highlights how well-integrated prompting can reduce content development timelines and improve alignment with organizational goals.

6.1 Where prompting fits in communication workflows

Prompting plays an increasingly important role in public health communication workflows, especially as generative AI tools become more accessible across institutions. Rather than replacing traditional communication processes, prompting serves as an entry point that enhances and accelerates content development when properly integrated.

In a typical workflow, prompting is most effective at the **content creation stage**, where initial drafts of messages, reports, FAQs, or summaries are required. With a well- structured prompt, AI can produce draft content tailored to a specific audience, tone, and purpose – freeing up time for teams to focus on refinement, validation, and strategic alignment.

Prompting also supports the **adaptation and localization of content**. Teams can use prompt variations to quickly adjust messages for different regions, population groups, or communication channels (e.g., radio, social media, print). This flexibility makes prompting a practical tool in emergency response, health promotion campaigns, and community engagement.

In communication workflows that involve multiple review steps, prompts can be used to generate early drafts for internal use or team discussion. These drafts can provide a starting point for technical review and collaborative editing, reducing the time and effort needed to produce final content.

Prompts are also useful in **routine institutional tasks**, such as drafting reports, creating meeting notes, or generating standard operating procedures. In these cases, prompt libraries and templates can streamline recurring communication needs.

Integrating prompting into communication workflows requires clear roles, documentation practices, and guidance to ensure consistency and quality. When strategically positioned, prompting enhances efficiency, maintains alignment with communication objectives, and strengthens the overall responsiveness of public health messaging.

6.2 Integrating prompting into knowledge management and data teams

Knowledge management and data teams are essential actors in the production, translation, and dissemination of public health information. As these teams increasingly adopt digital tools to manage complex data and support evidence-based communication, prompting emerges as a valuable addition to their workflows.

Generative AI, guided through well-constructed prompts, can assist these teams by transforming technical documents, datasets, and reports into usable formats for different audiences. For example, AI can help summarize surveillance data, produce plain-language explanations of research findings, or generate outlines for knowledge products such as policy briefs and technical summaries.

Integrating prompting into knowledge management processes allows teams to **bridge the gap between data and communication**. Prompts can be used to produce initial drafts of content based on structured inputs, such as evaluation findings, dashboards, or routine health reports, making the outputs more accessible for decision-makers, practitioners, and the public.

In data teams, prompts can also support the **translation of complex indicators or metrics into narrative formats** that are easier to interpret. This is especially useful in contexts where large datasets need to be communicated quickly and clearly, such as during public health emergencies or monitoring and evaluation exercises.

Example use cases include:

- Generating summary tables or executive overviews of regional health trends;
- Explaining key findings from data visualizations;
- Drafting key messages for dashboards or interactive platforms;
- Producing FAQs or supporting materials for data dissemination efforts.

To be effective, this integration requires collaboration between technical staff, data specialists, and communicators. Prompt design should reflect the goals of the communication product while respecting the integrity of the data. Documenting successful prompt strategies and creating prompt templates for routine use can further support adoption within teams.

Incorporating prompting into the work of knowledge and data teams strengthens the ability of institutions to turn data into action – ensuring that insights are not only technically sound but also timely, understandable, and impactful.

6.3 Monitoring prompt effectiveness and revising outputs

Effective use of generative AI in public health depends not only on crafting good prompts but also on monitoring their performance and continuously improving the outputs they generate. Treating prompting as an iterative process helps ensure that AI-generated content remains aligned with communication goals, institutional standards, and audience needs.

Monitoring prompt effectiveness involves reviewing whether the outputs meet the expected criteria for quality, clarity, and relevance. Teams should assess whether the AI-generated content:

- Reflects the intended message and tone;
- Is appropriate for the target audience;
- Accurately represents technical information;
- Requires minimal revision for final use.

When output falls short, it is essential to analyze the underlying prompt. In many cases, the issue lies not in the AI system but in the lack of specificity, context, or structure within the prompt itself.

Example:

If a prompt like "`Summarize this report for decision-makers`" results in content that is too technical or too long, refining it to "`Summarize the key findings of this 10-page report in 150 words, using clear language for national health policymakers with limited technical background`" can significantly improve the output.

Feedback loops are critical. Involving colleagues in reviewing outputs, testing prompt variations, and documenting what works helps build institutional knowledge and strengthens internal capacity. Keeping records of effective prompts for different content types – such as FAQs, policy briefs, or community messages – can also support faster and more consistent content generation.

Monitoring and revising prompt strategies is part of ensuring responsible and effective AI use. It allows institutions to maximize the value of generative AI while maintaining high standards for public health communication.

6.4 Governance considerations in institutional use of prompting

As generative AI becomes integrated into institutional workflows, clear governance mechanisms are essential to ensure that prompting is used responsibly, consistently, and in alignment with public health values. Prompting may appear as a simple task, but it shapes the content, tone, and accuracy of AI-generated outputs, making it a critical part of the information, communication, and knowledge production process.

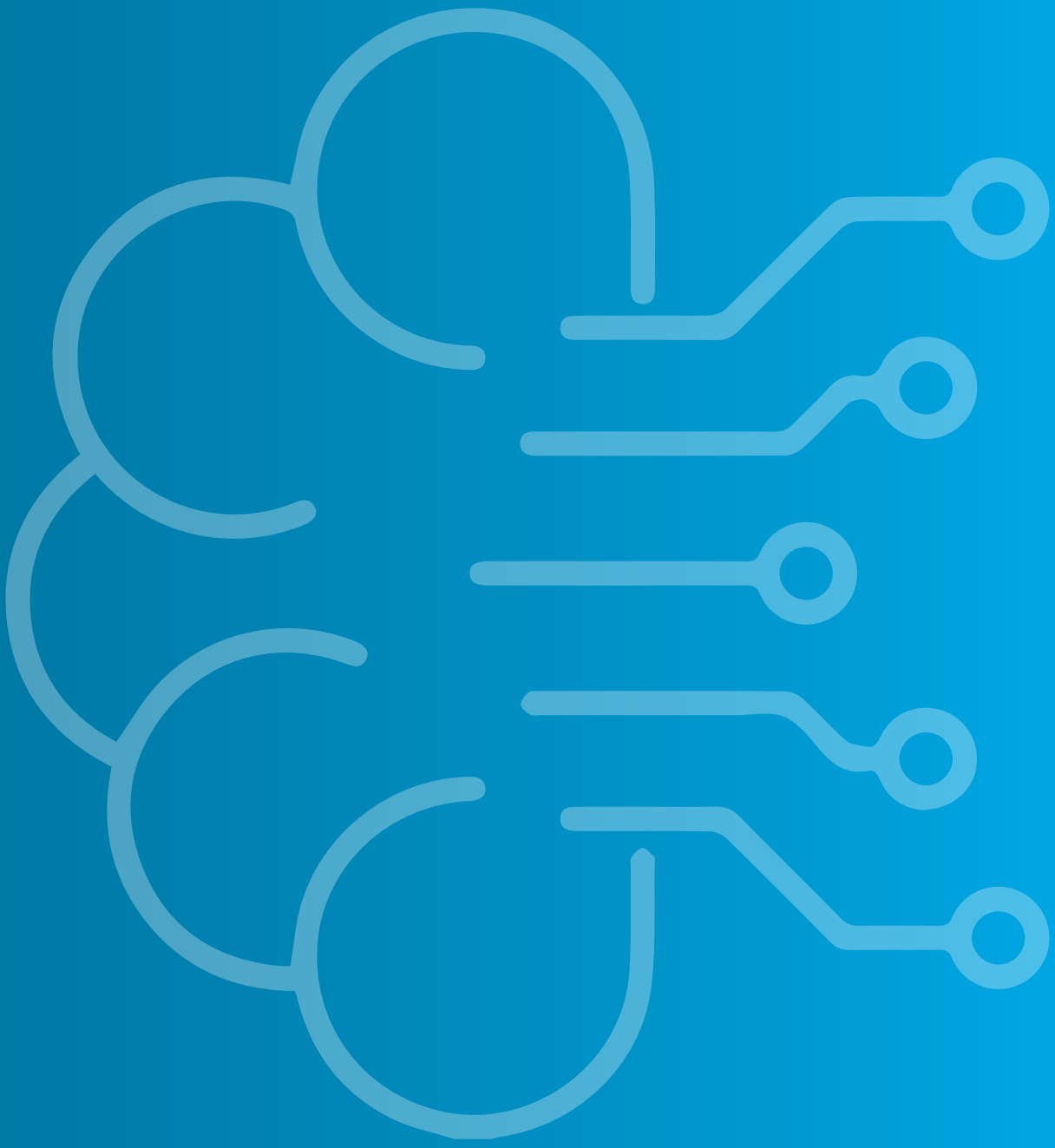
Institutions must consider several governance aspects when embedding prompting practices:

- **Standardization and quality control:** Developing internal guidelines and prompt templates and libraries helps maintain consistency across outputs and reduces variability in tone, terminology, and structure. Regular peer reviews can further ensure alignment with communication and good practices.
- **Ethical and inclusive use:** Prompts should be designed to avoid reinforcing bias and reflect institutional commitments to diversity and inclusion. Governance policies should encourage the use of inclusive language and disaggregated perspectives in all AI-assisted outputs.
- **Documentation and version control:** Maintaining records of prompt templates, variations, and use cases helps track what has been generated, supports institutional learning, and ensures transparency, especially in multilingual or multi-country settings.
- **Training and capacity-building:** Prompting should be included in digital literacy initiatives to ensure that staff understand its importance and know how to use it effectively. Training should cover both technical and ethical dimensions.

- **Risk management and safeguards:** AI-generated content must be reviewed by humans before publication. Institutions should establish minimum review procedures, particularly for high-stakes communications or materials related to emergencies, health risks, or policy decisions.

Incorporating these governance considerations ensures that prompting practices are aligned with the organization's communication standards, protect public trust, and support the effective and ethical use of AI in public health.

Chapter 7



Treating prompts as living protocols

Iterated, validated, and adapted across audiences and contexts

Prompting is not a one-size-fits-all solution; it evolves alongside use cases, audiences, and technologies. This chapter proposes a protocol-based approach to prompting, encouraging organizations to treat prompts as living tools that can be standardized, reviewed, and improved over time for greater consistency and effectiveness.

7.1 Prompting as an operational protocol

As generative AI becomes a more common tool in public health communication and knowledge generation, prompting should be treated as more than an informal skill; it should be managed as an operational protocol. This means establishing clear procedures, documentation practices, and quality standards for how prompts are created, used, and reviewed across an institution.

Positioning prompting as a protocol helps ensure consistency, especially when multiple teams or individuals are involved in producing content. It supports alignment with institutional guidelines, messaging frameworks, and ethical standards. Standardized prompt protocols can also reduce duplication of effort by enabling the reuse of well-designed prompt templates for routine tasks such as report summaries, health advisories, training materials, and technical briefs.

Protocols can define elements such as:

- When and where prompting should be used within a workflow;
- The minimum information a prompt should include (e.g., purpose, audience, format, tone);
- Required review and validation steps before content is finalized or disseminated;
- Responsibilities for prompt development and output quality control.

Establishing prompting as an operational protocol does not limit creativity; it enhances reliability. It provides a structured approach that supports high-quality outputs while building confidence among staff in the responsible use of AI tools. As institutions increase their reliance on digital technologies, formalizing prompt design and use as part of everyday operations strengthens the capacity for timely, clear, and inclusive public health communication.

7.2 Iteration and validation in different contexts

Prompting is not a one-time task; it is a process that benefits from continuous iteration and validation, especially when applied across diverse public health contexts. The same prompt may yield different results depending on the topic, language, target audience, and regional nuances. Adjusting and refining prompts based on feedback and observed outcomes is essential to ensure that AI-generated content remains relevant, accurate, and appropriate.

Iterative refinement helps improve prompt quality over time. Initial drafts may require revision if they produce outputs that are too vague, too technical, or misaligned with the communication goal. Testing different versions of the same prompt, varying elements such as tone, structure, or word choice, can help identify what works best in a given setting.

Validation is equally important. Outputs should be reviewed by subject matter experts, communication professionals, or local stakeholders to ensure that the content reflects public health priorities and respects cultural and linguistic context. In multilingual environments, prompts may also need to be adapted to maintain consistency and clarity across languages.

Example:

A prompt used to draft a community message on dengue prevention in urban areas may need significant adjustment when applied to Indigenous communities in rural settings. Validation with local teams ensures that terminology, imagery, and communication style are appropriate and effective.

Incorporating mechanisms for prompt testing, feedback, and adaptation allows institutions to use generative AI more effectively. It also reinforces quality, inclusiveness, and accountability in AI-assisted communication, especially when content is shared across different countries, languages, or population groups.

7.3 Adapting prompts across languages and cultural settings

Effective public health communication must account for linguistic diversity and cultural context. When working with generative AI, prompts that are not adapted for local language use or sociocultural norms may result in outputs that are unclear, inappropriate, or ineffective. Tailoring prompts to reflect local realities is essential to ensure that messages resonate with the intended audience and support meaningful engagement.

Prompt translation alone is not sufficient. Directly translating a prompt from one language to another may preserve the words but lose the intended tone, relevance, or clarity. Instead, prompts should be **culturally adapted**, meaning they are revised not only in language but also in structure, phrasing, and framing to match the expectations and values of the audience.

Example:

A prompt written in English for a message on maternal health may focus on clinical recommendations. When adapted for a Spanish-speaking audience in a rural Latin American setting, the same message may need to emphasize family support, accessibility, and community-based care to reflect cultural priorities.

Prompt adaptation also includes the use of culturally relevant terminology, imagery, and references. Instructions can be included in the prompt to ensure this level of customization. For example:

> "Generate a short message encouraging childhood vaccination, in Brazilian Portuguese, using culturally appropriate language and examples relevant to the northeastern region of Brazil."

In multilingual regions or regional campaigns, adapting prompts for each audience ensures alignment of core messages while allowing for localized communication strategies. Building prompt templates that can be easily modified across languages and contexts supports consistency and scalability in public health communication.

Recognizing the importance of cultural and linguistic adaptation in prompt design strengthens the ability of AI tools to support inclusive, respectful, and effective communication across diverse populations.

7.4 Creating institutional prompt libraries

As generative AI becomes a regular feature of public health communication and knowledge production, creating institutional prompt libraries is a practical way to promote consistency, efficiency, and quality across teams and departments. A prompt library is a curated collection of well-tested, reusable prompts tailored to common use cases in the organization.

Prompt libraries serve several purposes:

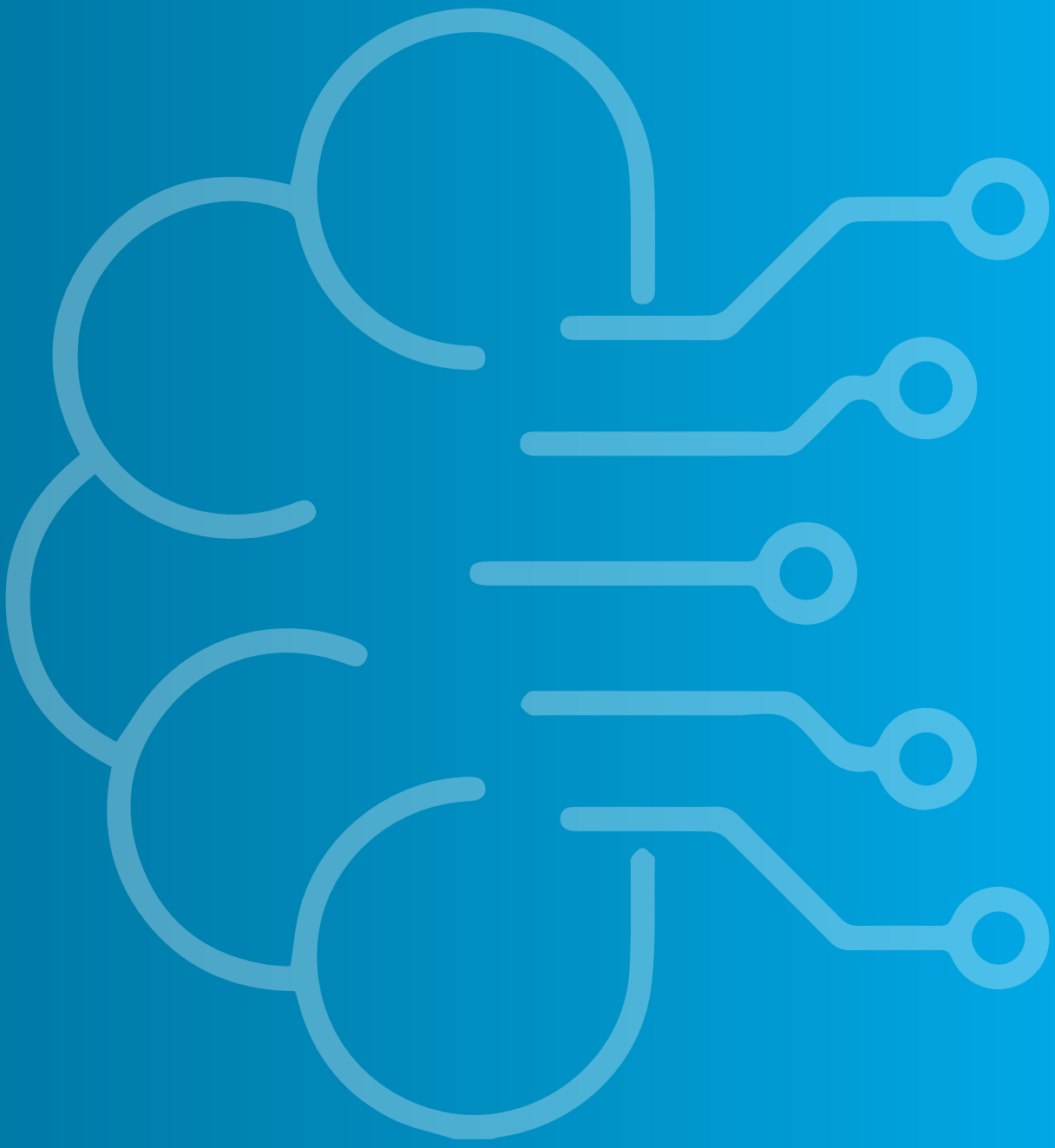
- They reduce the time needed to formulate new prompts by offering ready-to-use examples.
- They help standardize language, tone, and structure across products.
- They facilitate knowledge-sharing and capacity-building, especially among staff who are new to AI tools.

Well-organized prompt libraries can be categorized by content type (e.g., summaries, social media posts, FAQs), audience (e.g., general public, policymakers, health workers), or communication purpose (e.g., behavior change, technical guidance, advocacy).

Libraries should include notes on successful use, recommended adaptations, and version history when applicable. They should also be maintained regularly to ensure alignment with evolving terminology, institutional priorities, and regional context.

Establishing prompt libraries not only strengthens quality control but also builds institutional memory, capturing effective strategies and lessons learned across different teams and use cases. As a shared resource, prompt libraries support more coordinated, agile, and inclusive communication across the public health system.

Chapter 8



Ensuring responsible use of generative AI in public health

Safeguarding quality and integrity through guided AI prompting

The integration of generative AI into public health communication and information workflows brings new opportunities, but also new responsibilities. As AI tools become more powerful and more accessible, institutions must ensure that their use aligns with core public health values, such as equity, transparency, scientific integrity, and accountability. Prompting plays a central role in this process, not only shaping outputs but also guiding how AI tools are applied, reviewed, and interpreted. This chapter outlines key considerations to support the safe, appropriate, and non-biased use of prompting in public health contexts.

8.1 Respecting privacy, confidentiality, and data sensitivity

Generative AI tools should never be used to process or generate outputs that involve identifiable personal health information or confidential institutional data. Prompts must be crafted to avoid inadvertently disclosing sensitive information or combining data in ways that could violate privacy protections.

Prompts should:

- Avoid including names, personal details, or patient-specific scenarios;
- Not request or simulate outputs that imitate real individuals without consent;
- Be aligned with applicable data protection policies at national and institutional levels.

In public health practice, safeguarding privacy also extends to how population-level or disaggregated data are presented. When prompting AI to summarize or interpret datasets, users should ensure that outputs do not unintentionally reveal sensitive group characteristics in small populations or high-risk communities.

8.2 Human oversight and the limits of AI outputs

Generative AI should be viewed as a support tool, not a decision-maker or authoritative source. All outputs must be reviewed and validated by qualified personnel before dissemination or publication, particularly in high-stakes or sensitive contexts.

Key considerations:

- AI-generated content must be **fact-checked** for accuracy and alignment with current evidence or policy.
- Outputs should be reviewed for tone, clarity, and appropriateness, especially when addressing vulnerable populations or controversial topics.
- Human oversight is essential to detect hallucinations, incorrect references, or cultural misinterpretations.

Prompts can help mitigate risks by clearly instructing the AI to stay within defined limits, such as avoiding speculative recommendations or making medical claims.

8.3 Aligning with PAHO/WHO principles on digital and ethical governance

Prompting practices should align with existing frameworks that promote the ethical use of digital technologies in health. The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and World Health Organization (WHO) have issued guiding principles on the digital transformation of health systems, emphasizing:

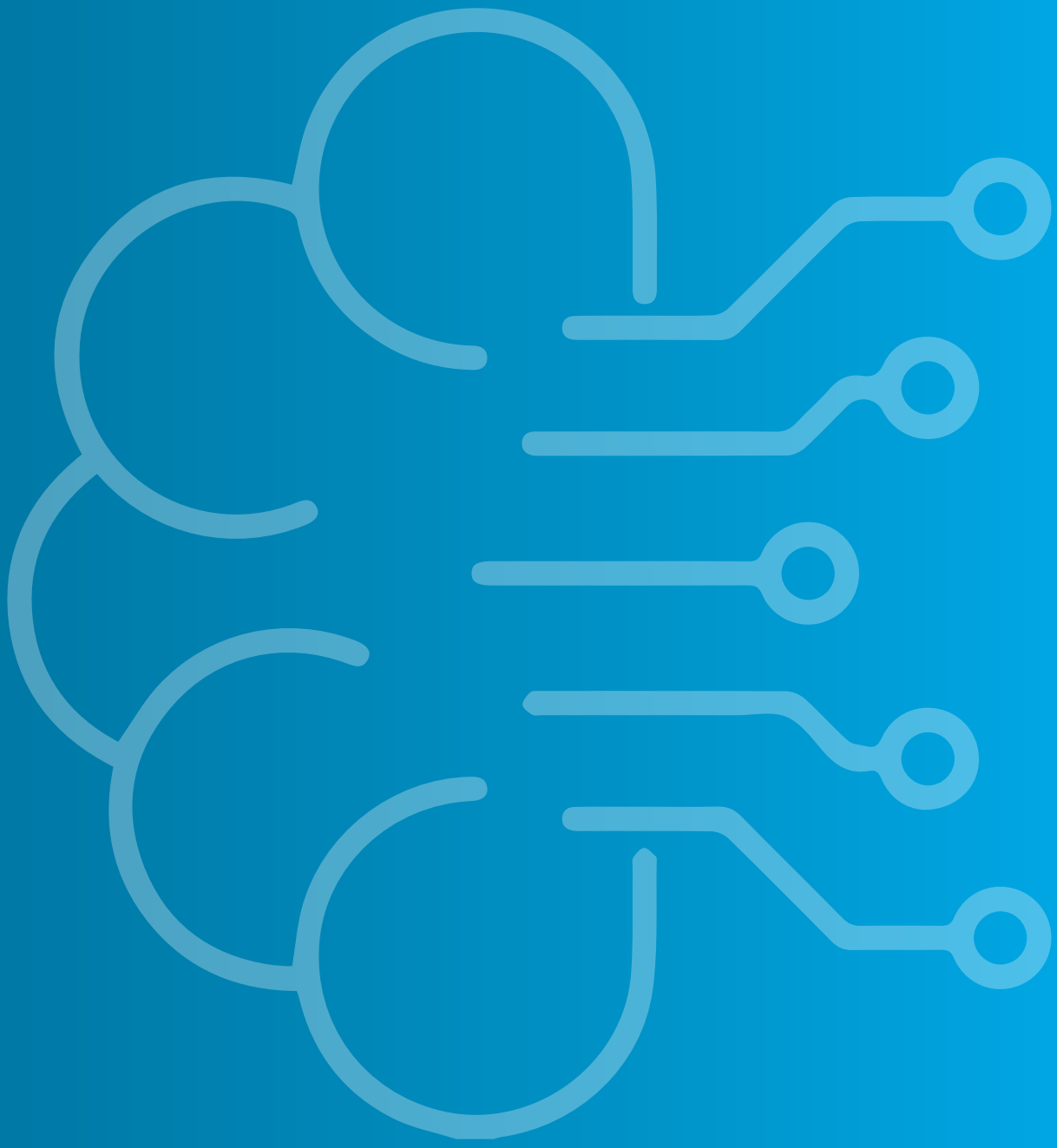
- People-centered and inclusive design;
- Transparency in how technologies are used;
- Data protection and accountability;
- Scientific integrity in outputs;
- Nondiscrimination and fairness.

Prompting strategies can support these principles when designed with care. For example, prompts can:

- Request outputs that reflect gender, cultural, and linguistic diversity;
- Avoid stigmatizing or stereotypical framing;
- Emphasize accuracy, source transparency, and balanced presentation.

Institutions are encouraged to establish internal review mechanisms and provide staff with training on the ethical use of AI, including real-world scenarios and common pitfalls.

Chapter 9



Prompting as a learning journey: Building digital capacity in public health

From foundational awareness to strategic application of AI prompting

As AI technologies become more integrated into public health functions, the ability to guide generative tools through effective prompting must evolve from a technical curiosity to a recognized workforce skill. This chapter reframes prompting not as a one-time training but as a **progressive learning pathway**, one that can be followed by health professionals across roles and experience levels. The goal is to support lifelong digital literacy and ensure that the use of AI in public health is strategic.

Step 1 – Foundation

Understanding prompting and its value

Every learning journey begins with awareness. Health workers must first understand what prompting is, why it matters, and how it connects to their day-to-day responsibilities. PAHO's Digital Literacy Program introduces prompting not as a standalone function but as a skill embedded within digital communication, knowledge translation, and data use.

Health workers need to learn how prompts influence outputs, why specificity matters, and how AI can be guided to support real-world public health goals. Early training should include practical examples, exercises with real tools, and guidance on how to apply prompting across common tasks such as message creation, report summarization, or stakeholder communication.

> **Milestone:** Learner understands how prompting fits into his/her work and gains confidence using basic prompts in safe, supervised environments.

Step 2 – Core skills

Developing prompting competencies

Once foundational awareness is established, learners begin to build **core competencies** – structured skills that enable more accurate and responsible prompting. These competencies include:

- Understanding how AI interprets inputs;
- Structuring prompts clearly with defined goals;
- Adapting prompts to specific formats, audiences, and use cases;
- Validating AI-generated content before use;
- Addressing bias and inclusion in prompt design.

These competencies overlap with traditional public health communication skills, such as plain language, audience segmentation, and ethical review, making them easier to learn and apply.

Milestone: Learner is capable of drafting and reviewing prompts for diverse tasks and recognizes ethical considerations in AI content generation.

Step 3 – Integration

Embedding prompting into broader learning pathways

To maximize relevance, prompting should not be taught in isolation. Instead, it should be embedded in broader learning experiences that support digital transformation across the health workforce. This includes modules on:

- Digital communication for diverse populations;
- Knowledge translation and technical simplification;
- Data-to-action strategies and evidence dissemination;
- Equity-centered public health planning.

Prompting is introduced within these topics to help learners see how AI can complement their work. This integrated model improves retention, builds confidence, and promotes consistency across teams and institutions.

Milestone: Learner can use prompting across multidisciplinary settings, tailoring content for communication, education, or policy needs.

Step 4 – Scale and impact

Expanding digital literacy systemwide

At the final stage of the learning journey, the focus shifts to **institutionalization and scale**. Prompting becomes part of organizational culture, including national training programs, regional strategies, and continuous professional development.

To reach this scale, digital literacy efforts should:

- Be aligned with institutional AI governance and digital health strategies;
- Use blended formats to reach rural and urban teams;
- Include practice-based activities such as scenario-building and peer review;
- Foster communities of practice for shared learning and prompt library development.

When prompting becomes a common skill across the health sector, the entire system benefits – from faster communication to better crisis response and improved equity in messaging.

> **Milestone**: Learner becomes an internal advocate, trainer, or team resource, helping others build confidence and fluency in responsible prompting.

Conclusion

Lifelong competency for a digitally enabled health sector

Prompting is not a one-time skill. Like all core public health competencies, it evolves with technology, evidence, and social context. As generative AI matures, so must the ability to guide it, ensuring that its outputs reflect institutional values, ethical norms, and the needs of diverse communities.

Framing prompting as a **learning journey**, from awareness to impact, ensures that every health worker is empowered to use these tools not just efficiently, but responsibly and strategically in service of better health outcomes.

Key messages

- In public health, generative AI tools can help create advisories, summaries, reports, speeches, educational materials and more, but their true value depends on one key skill: crafting effective prompts always supervised by human expertise.
- A well-crafted prompt is like a carefully designed public health intervention. While vague goals lack direction, a SMART objective provides a clear road map. Similarly, a specific prompt guides AI to generate high-quality, purpose-driven content.
- Public health workers know that vague messaging can lead to confusion, mistrust, or inaction. The same is true when working with AI; unclear prompts often result in generic, unusable content.
- Clear and specific prompts are essential for generating targeted, meaningful outputs that align with the intended purpose, meet audience needs, and minimize the risk of irrelevant or ineffective content. Well-crafted prompts guide AI toward producing content that is accurate, appropriate, and almost ready for use in real-world contexts.
- Generative AI pulls from broad data, structured and unstructured, but it is your prompt that brings focus. Think of it like instructing a research assistant: you would not say "Just get info"; you would specify the topic, format, tone, and intended use. A prompt is your strategic brief for content generation.
- Mastering prompt design unlocks the potential of AI to support public health by enabling faster, clearer, and more relevant content generation. While human oversight remains essential, a well-crafted prompt brings AI-generated drafts much closer to real-world use, saving time and enhancing impact.
- Generative AI can be a game-changer for public health, but only if you know how to guide it. A thoughtful, well-structured prompt transforms AI from a generic engine into a precision tool for producing content that is inclusive, clear, and impactful.
- Every piece of content in public health has the power to influence decisions, shape behaviors, and impact health outcomes. Whether it is a message about prevention, a data summary for policymakers, or guidance for communities, the way information is presented matters. That is why prompt design is not just a technical step – it is a strategic one.

- Prompt engineering is an essential layer of quality control in AI-generated public health content. Basically, what you ask determines what you get.
- Prompt design is a form of content architecture: it shapes not just what is said, but how it is framed, for whom, and with what expected outcome.
- Precision in prompts reduces cognitive load downstream by producing drafts that are closer to final use, minimizing the need for extensive edits.
- In public health communication workflows, the prompt is the new first draft. Its quality directly affects accuracy, inclusiveness, and time to deployment.
- Treat prompts as living protocols. Like standard operating procedures (SOPs), they require iteration, validation, and adaptation across use cases and audiences.
- Strategic prompting is a public health capacity. It should be taught, tested, and standardized as part of digital literacy for the health workforce.
- Every effective AI output begins with a well-structured hypothesis. Your prompt is that hypothesis, operationalized.
- Prompts are not shortcuts, they are amplifiers. The better the prompt, the greater the value AI can deliver in service of public health goals.
- In this age of digital interdependence, understanding and mastering prompting is not optional; it is a new public health competency, essential for shaping better decisions, faster responses, and healthier futures.

Recommended reading

Artificial Intelligence in Public Health: Readiness Assessment Toolkit

Q&A on artificial intelligence for supporting public health: Reference tool to support the exchange of information and promote open conversations and debates

Artificial Intelligence in Public Health

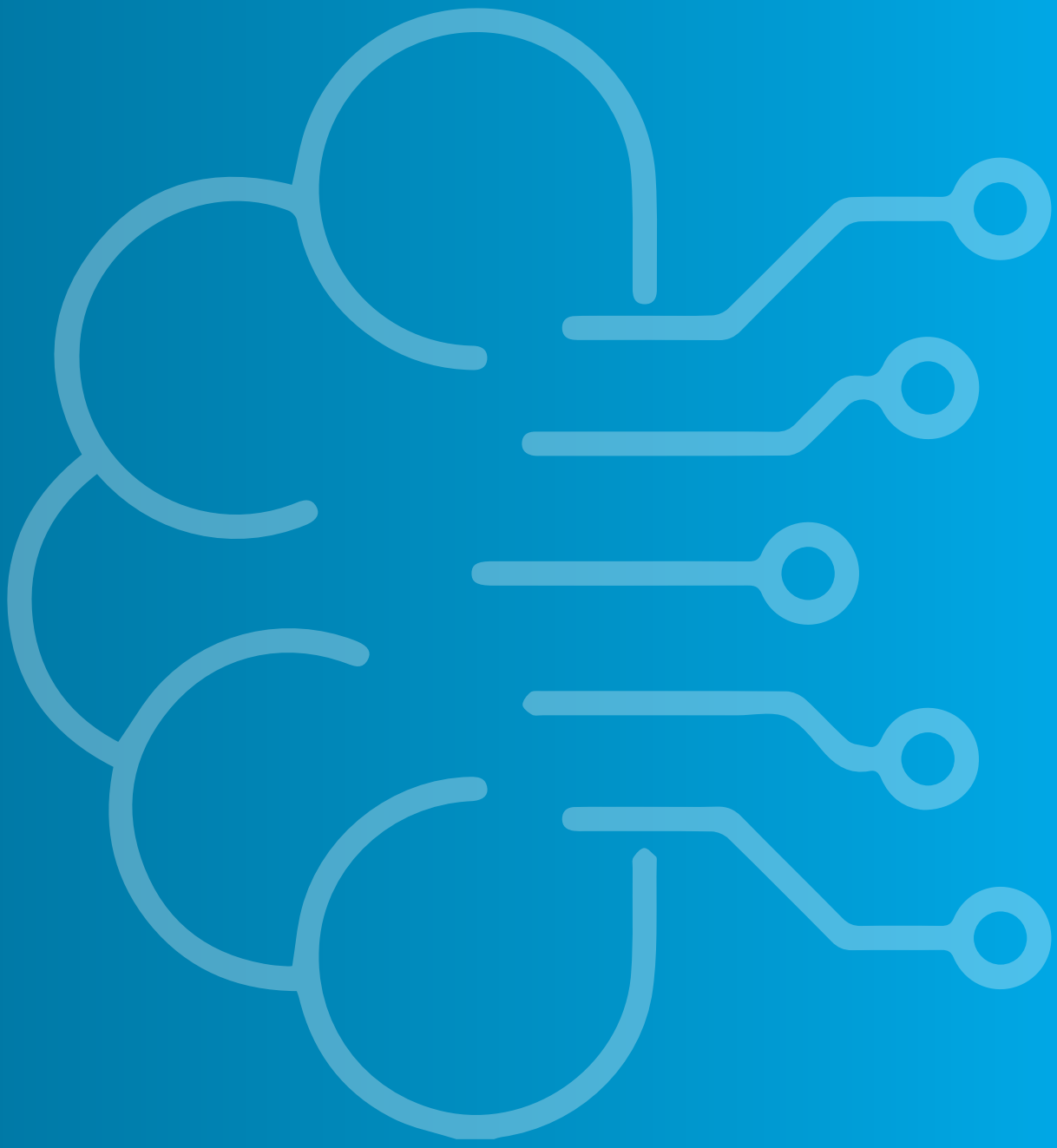
Digital Transformation Toolkit. Artificial Intelligence. Policy overview

From national and regional commitments to global impact: artificial intelligence for equitable public health at the G20

Roadmap for the Digital Transformation of the Health Sector in the Region of the Americas

Policy on the Application of Data Science in Public Health Using Artificial Intelligence and Other Emerging Technologies

Annexes



Annex 1

Prompt examples library for public health use cases

Practical templates to support consistent, inclusive, and purpose-driven AI content generation

Each prompt below is designed to demonstrate good practice in clarity, structure, and alignment with public health values. A short explanation follows each example to highlight how it addresses tone, audience, format, and equity-related considerations.

A Health promotion messages

Use case: Raise awareness about hand hygiene in schools in English-speaking countries

Prompt:

> "Create a two-sentence message in English for children aged 7–10 that encourages handwashing in a fun and motivating way. Use simple language, avoid fear-based messaging, and ensure cultural neutrality so it can be used across the Americas."

Why this works:

- **Audience** is clearly defined by age group.
- **Tone** is positive and age-appropriate.
- **Bias avoidance:** Prevents use of fear or shame, and avoids culture-specific idioms or references.
- **Inclusive design:** Applicable across different settings and languages.

Use case: Promote physical activity in adults in Argentina

Prompt:

> "Write a short motivational message in Spanish, Argentine style will be an asset, encouraging daily physical activity for adults aged 30-50 in urban settings. Use inclusive language that avoids gender stereotypes and reflects time constraints experienced by working people."

Why this works:

- **Audience and setting** are specified.
- **Bias avoidance:** Explicit instruction to avoid gendered assumptions (e.g., roles or routines).
- **Inclusivity:** Recognizes social determinants of health, such as time availability. Also, the use of "Argentine style" may help with cultural aspects.

B Emergency communication

Use case: Communicate risk during a dengue outbreak in Brazil

Prompt:

> "Generate a 30-second community radio message in Brazilian Portuguese about dengue prevention for residents in low-income urban neighborhoods. Use plain, respectful language, avoid placing blame, and include one action people can take immediately."

Why this works:

- **Target audience** is clearly identified and respected.
- **Bias avoidance:** Avoids framing that could stigmatize communities based on income or housing conditions.
- **Empowerment:** Focuses on actionable steps, not fear.

Use case: Extreme heat alert for older adults for Spanish-speaking cities

Prompt:

> "Draft a short public advisory for older adults living alone in Spanish-speaking cities, using respectful, clear language and offering three practical heat safety tips. Avoid language that assumes digital access or caregiver presence."

Why this works:

- Recognizes **vulnerability** without diminishing autonomy.
- Avoids **technological bias** (e.g., assuming all seniors have smartphones).
- **Respectful tone** supports dignity and relevance.

C Technical summaries and briefs

Use case: Summarize a surveillance report for policymakers

Prompt:

> "Summarize the main findings from a 20-page dengue surveillance report in no more than 200 words, using concise, neutral language for policymakers with no technical background. Highlight implications for urban, peri-urban, and rural settings."

Why this works:

- Avoids **technical jargon** for accessibility.
- Considers **geographic diversity** in outcomes (avoiding bias toward urban-centric solutions).
- Supports **evidence-informed policymaking** without overgeneralization.

Use case: Translate research into plain language

Prompt:

> "Write a plain-language explanation (max. 150 words) of how air pollution affects children's respiratory health, for use by community health workers in multicultural Latin American settings. Avoid technical terms and ensure clarity across literacy levels."

Why this works:

- Focuses on **health equity** (children's vulnerability).
- Avoids **linguistic or educational bias** by requesting low-literacy, accessible phrasing.
- Designed to be **culturally adaptable**.

D Training and education

Use case: Create training content on cold chain management

Prompt:

> "List the five key steps in cold chain maintenance for new immunization staff in low-resource settings. Use practical, plain-language instructions that do not assume previous technical training or Internet access."

Why this works:

- Removes **assumptions about prior knowledge**.
- Avoids **technological access bias**.
- Prioritizes **usability and field applicability**.

Annex 2

Prompt review checklist

A tool to improve clarity, quality, and alignment in AI-generated content

This checklist provides a simple and effective way to assess whether a prompt is clear, complete, and aligned with public health communication goals. It can be used individually or in teams before submitting a prompt to a generative AI tool.

Each question is answered with **Yes / No / Needs improvement**, and space is provided for comments or prompt revision if needed.

Prompt content and clarity

Question	Yes / No / Needs improvement	Notes or action needed
1. Is the **purpose** of the content clearly stated?		
2. Is the **target audience** clearly defined?		
3. Does the prompt specify the **desired format** (e.g., paragraph, list, summary)?		
4. Is the **tone or style** appropriate for the audience and topic?		
5. Are **keywords or key ideas** clearly included to guide the AI?		

Relevance and context

Question	Yes / No / Needs improvement	Notes or action needed
6. Is the prompt **specific enough** to avoid a generic or vague output?		
7. Is any **necessary context** included (e.g., location, timing, background)?		
8. Does the prompt avoid **assumptions the AI may not understand** (e.g., acronyms or local references)?		

Ethical considerations

Question	Yes / No / Needs improvement	Notes or action needed
9. Does the prompt encourage the use of **inclusive language**?		
10. Does it reflect **cultural or regional appropriateness** if relevant?		
11. Does the prompt **avoid stereotypes or bias** (e.g., based on gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status)?		
12. If applicable, does it request **disaggregated information** (e.g., by sex, age, location)?		

Quality control and review readiness

Question	Yes / No / Needs improvement	Notes or action needed
13. Could the AI reasonably generate the intended output using this prompt?		
14. Has the prompt been **tested or reviewed** by a colleague if the content is high-stakes?		
15. Is the content **appropriate for public release or internal use**, based on institutional guidance?		

Final prompt version

(Write or paste the final reviewed version of your prompt here)

This checklist may be adapted for specific institutional needs and included as part of digital literacy training or internal workflow protocols. When used consistently, it supports better output, reduces errors, and builds institutional confidence in the use of AI tools for public health communication.

Annex 3

Multilingual prompting considerations

Adapting prompts for effective use in diverse linguistic and cultural contexts

Public health communication in the Region of the Americas requires reaching audiences across multiple languages and cultures. When using generative AI, translating prompts is not enough. Effective prompting in multilingual settings must consider linguistic precision, cultural appropriateness, and equity in access to information.

Key considerations for multilingual prompting:

- **Avoid idioms and culturally specific references:** Expressions like "get the ball rolling" or "kill two birds with one stone" may confuse AI models when translated and fail to convey the intended meaning across languages.
- **Use plain, standardized language:** Prompts written in plain Spanish, Portuguese, French, or English yield more consistent and understandable outputs. Avoid technical terms unless targeting a specialized audience.
- **Specify language and regional context:** Instead of "Write a message in Spanish," say: "Generate a short message in Latin American Spanish, using plain language appropriate for a rural community health campaign."
- **Account for regional vocabulary differences:** The same term (e.g., "bus," "clinic," "mosquito net") may vary across countries. When needed, instruct the AI to use locally appropriate terms or review outputs with native speakers.
- **Ensure a holistic approach in language access:** Prompts can explicitly request multilingual outputs or culturally adapted versions: "Create a health message on Zika prevention in both Haitian Creole and Spanish, ensuring clarity and consistency across both."
- **Test prompts in each language:** A well-performing prompt in English may not generate equally effective results when translated. Testing and refinement are essential in each language used.

Multilingual prompting reduces the risk of leaving populations behind due to language barriers. Institutions are encouraged to maintain prompt templates in all official working languages and support linguistic adaptation through collaboration with local experts.

A good prompt acts like a road map, giving the AI focus, reducing confusion, and ensuring the final content is accurate, inclusive, and ready for use. This publication presents prompt design as a necessary skill for public health workers to determine the message, its framing, and its intended recipient.

The publication breaks down the essential parts of a prompt, such as its objective, audience, format, tone, and context, offering practical ways to avoid common mistakes that lead to vague, inaccurate, or useless results. It also explains how prompt design can serve as a form of quality control and a tool for using "bias-aware" strategies to minimize harm.

The publication also covers how to embed prompting into public health workflows, suggesting that prompts should be seen as "living protocols" that can be refined over time. It recommends creating institutional prompt libraries to ensure consistency and efficiency. Ultimately, the publication stresses that human oversight is crucial for checking and approving all AI-generated material, making prompt design a fundamental skill for the public health sector's digital future.

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