



Artificial Intelligence
for a New Design Education
Approach

DELIVERABLE 2.2

Map of Design Companies and Agencies

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Table of Contents

1	Executive Summary.....	2
2	Introduction.....	3
3	Methodology.....	4
4	The Interactive Geographic Map	5
5	Extended Data Analysis: AI Usage and Experience in Design Practice	7
5.1	Overview of Responses	8
5.2	AI Adoption Overview	9
5.3	AI in Design Phases	11
5.4	AI Tools & Technology	13
5.5	Skills and Capability Landscape.....	14
5.6	Industry and Geographic Insights.....	16
5.7	Access Note	17
6	Key Findings & Implications for AIDEA.....	18
7	Conclusion.....	20

1 Executive Summary

This report documents the delivery of D.2.2, the interactive map of design companies and agencies. The map is published on the AIDEA project website: <https://aideaproject.com/ai-design-map/>. It displays 71 design companies and agencies across Europe that consented to public display, showing each company's name, location and website link.

The map was built from a survey distributed by all project partners, which gathered 106 responses from seven countries against a target of 85, with every country target met. Beyond the data required for the map, the survey collected information on each company's use of and experience with AI, covering integration levels, the business processes and design phases in which AI is applied, the tools in use, barriers to adoption and the skills companies believe future design graduates need. This extended dataset was analysed in a Power BI dashboard, and the full analysis is presented in this report.

The analysis shows a sector engaging with AI broadly but not yet deeply. 60% of companies use AI actively in at least one phase of their design process and a further 33% are exploring it, yet only 11.32% place themselves at the two highest integration levels. AI use concentrates in research, ideation and delivery rather than development and production, and runs mainly through general-purpose tools, with ChatGPT and Gemini accounting for over 60% of all tool mentions. The barriers companies name most are the quality and reliability of AI output and the lack of skills and training, and the skill they most want in future graduates is prompt engineering, followed by workflow integration and data literacy.

These results provide input for the Manifesto for Collective AI Design and the Handbook of Teaching Tools and Methodologies, and the mapped companies form a contact base for the project's industry-facing activities.

2 Introduction

This report documents the development and delivery of D.2.2, the interactive map of design companies and agencies, produced under Work Package 2 of the AIDEA project (Artificial Intelligence for a New Design Education Approach, Erasmus+ KA220-HED). The deliverable corresponds to Activity A.2.2, Mapping of design companies and agencies, carried out with contributions from all project partners.

The purpose of the mapping activity was to identify design companies and agencies across the partner countries that can be engaged in project activities, with an interactive map as the output of the task. In delivering the task, this was developed as a geographic map published on the AIDEA project website. The public map displays each company's name, location and a link to its website. It gives the participating companies visibility at European level and establishes a contact base for later activities involving industry, including handbook co-creation, mentoring and the Piloting and Innovation Camp.

The methodology was designed to capture additional information beyond what the map itself required, covering each company's use of and experience with AI. This included AI integration levels, the business processes and design phases in which AI is applied, the tools in use, barriers to adoption and skills needs. The resulting dataset was analysed and visualised in a Power BI dashboard, a second interactive tool created to inform further project activities. The analysis provides an evidence base for two subsequent project outputs: the Manifesto for Collective AI Design and the Handbook of Teaching Tools and Methodologies.

This report presents the methodology used for the mapping, the delivered map, and the analysis of the extended survey data, together with the key findings and their implications for AIDEA. It also serves as the means of sharing the survey data with the project partnership, informing the partners' work on subsequent project activities.

3 Methodology

The mapping was carried out through a short online survey, built in Google Forms, and distributed by all project partners to design companies and agencies in their countries. Partners reached companies through their industry networks and existing contacts, through social media, and through direct outreach by email. The survey was administered in English.

The survey collected data in three parts. The first covered the company profile: name, address, country, website, primary design fields and company size. This contributed to the data required for the map itself. The second covered AI usage and experience: the company's self-assessed level of AI integration on a five-level scale from Explorer to Expert, the business processes and design process phases in which AI is applied, the tools most frequent in the workflow, barriers to further adoption, and the AI-related skills the company believes future design graduates should possess. The third part recorded consent, asking each company to confirm whether its name, location and website link could be featured on a map displayed on the project website. Only consenting companies appear on the map displayed on the website.

Each partner was required to map at least 15 companies in its country, with a reduced minimum of 10 for Austria, giving a combined target of 85. The survey received 106 responses from seven countries: 24 from Slovenia, 22 from Ireland, 19 from Italy, 16 from the Netherlands, 15 from North Macedonia, 9 from Austria and 1 from Croatia. The Croatian response was secured by the Austrian partners, bringing their combined total to 10 and meeting their target. All country targets were met, and the overall target of 85 was exceeded.

Of the 106 companies mapped, 71 gave consent to be featured publicly and are displayed on the map on the project website. The full dataset of 106 responses is retained for analysis and for future engagement with companies through project activities.

The company profile data of consenting companies was used to build the interactive geographic map published on the project website. The extended data on AI usage and experience from all 106 responses was analysed and visualised in a Power BI dashboard. The analysis is presented in Section 5 of this report, which serves as the route for sharing the findings with the partnership. Access constraints for the dashboard are addressed at the end of Section 5.

4 The Interactive Geographic Map

The interactive geographic map is published on the AIDEA project website and can be accessed under the page title 'AI DESIGN MAP'. The page is accessible from the main navigation of the project website, giving the map a permanent and visible place among the project's public outputs.

Interactive Geographic Map of Design Companies and Agencies:

<https://aideaproject.com/ai-design-map/>

The page introduces the map as part of the project's trend analysis, explaining that design companies and agencies across Europe were surveyed about their experience with AI and that the findings will inform the next stages of the project. Visitors are invited to explore the participating companies, see where they are based, and visit their websites to find out more.

Each company appears as a marker at its location. Hovering over a marker opens a pop-up with the company name and a 'Visit website' link, and clicking a marker opens the company's website directly in a new browser window. Visitors can navigate the map freely, zooming and panning across the participating countries.

Figures 1 and 2 show the map as displayed on the project website, including the pop-up shown when a visitor hovers over a company marker.

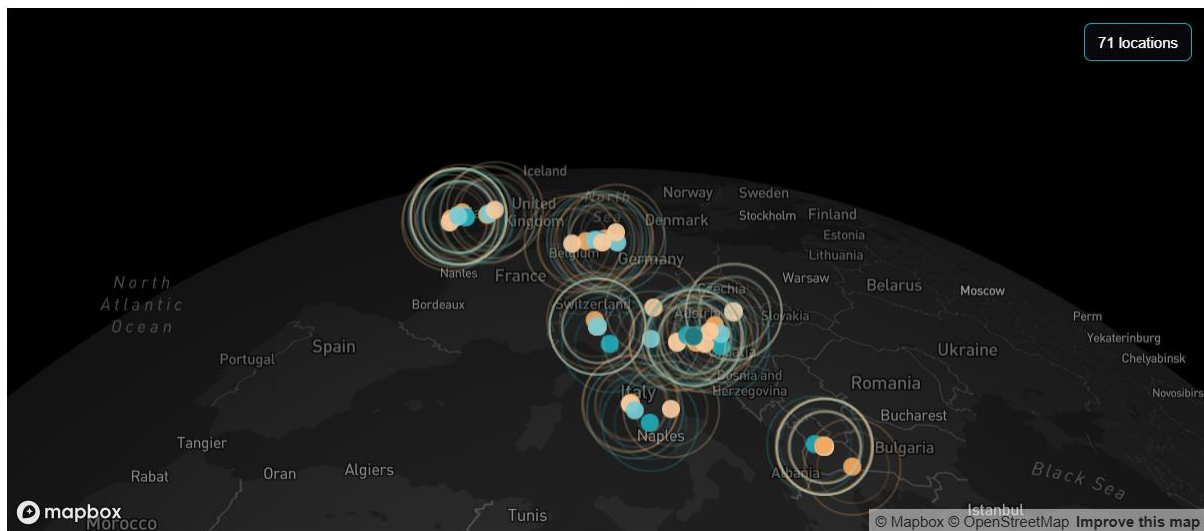


Figure 1 The interactive geographic map of design companies and agencies on the AIDEA project website.

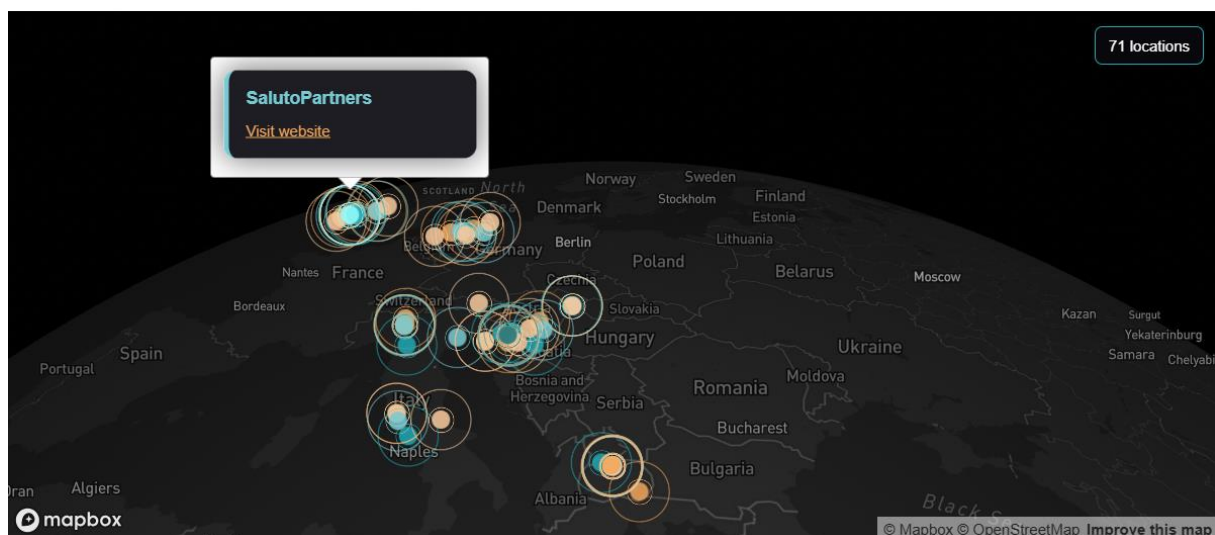


Figure 2 Pop-up displaying the company name and website link when hovering over a marker.

The map is built with Mapbox GL JS (version 2.15.0, loaded via CDN) and embedded in the project website's WordPress page through a Breakdance Code Block element, which holds the map's HTML, CSS and JavaScript directly in the page. The map renders in a dark visual style with a tilted three-dimensional perspective, inside a full-width container of fixed height. A resize routine runs when the page loads to ensure the map displays correctly once its container becomes visible.

Each company on the map is stored as a data point containing its name, website, marker colour and coordinates, built from the survey data and filtered to include only the companies that consented to appear on the website. The markers are custom elements with a pulse animation rather than standard map pins. Their colours are drawn from a small palette based on the two AIDEA brand colours, teal and orange, with lighter and darker tints, and are assigned so that neighbouring markers do not share the same shade.

The public map serves two purposes for the project. It gives the participating companies visibility at European level, presenting them as contributors to a European project on AI in design. It also establishes a visible, growing community of engaged companies, which supports the project's later industry-facing activities, including handbook co-creation, mentoring and the Piloting and Innovation Camp. The full contact base of 106 mapped companies, including those not displayed publicly, remains available to the partnership for these activities.

5 Extended Data Analysis: AI Usage and Experience in Design Practice

This section presents the analysis of the extended survey data on AI usage and experience, drawing on all 106 responses. The data was analysed and visualised in a Power BI dashboard structured across six pages, and this section follows that structure. Each subsection presents the corresponding dashboard page and interprets its findings. Throughout this section, the term AI integration level refers to each company's self-assessed rating on the five-level scale used in the survey, from Level 1 (Explorer) to Level 5 (Expert). The dashboard refers to this measure as the maturity score, and both terms describe the same data.

5.1 Overview of Responses

The landing page of the dashboard provides an overview of the full dataset. A geographic map at the top of the page shows all 106 surveyed companies as markers at their locations, colour-coded by AI integration level. Below it, a table lists each company with its response ID, name, integration level and country, and a set of summary figures presents the headline metrics of the dataset.

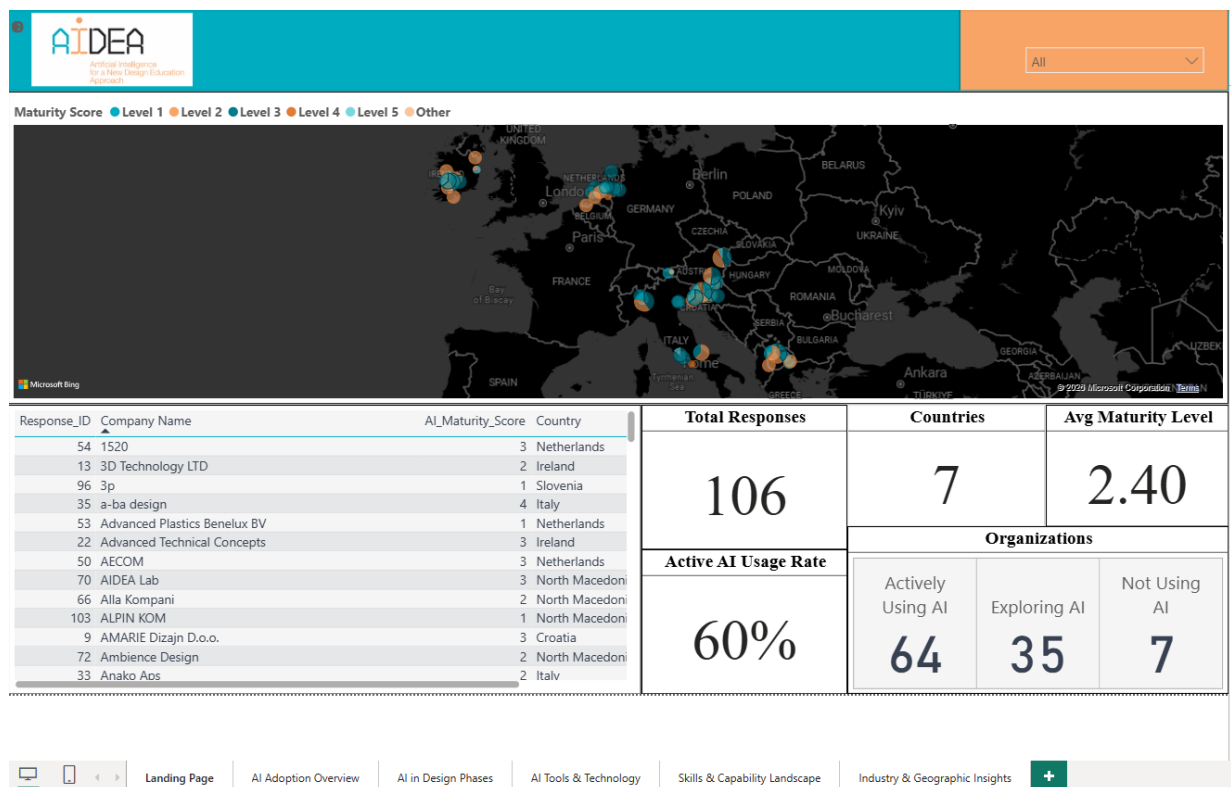


Figure 3 Landing page of the Power BI dashboard

The survey gathered 106 responses from companies and agencies across seven countries. The average AI integration level across all respondents is 2.40 on the five-level scale, placing the average respondent between Beginner and Intermediate. This indicates a sector in transition meaning most companies have moved beyond exploration, but AI is not yet deeply embedded in core workflows for the average respondent. The distribution behind this average is presented in Section 5.2.

The dashboard classifies the 106 companies by their engagement with AI across the five phases of the design process. Sixty-four companies (60%) actively use AI in at least one phase of their design process, corresponding to the active AI usage rate shown on the dashboard. A further 35 companies are exploring AI without yet using it actively in any phase, and 7 companies report not using AI in any phase. Taken together, 99 of the 106 companies are either using or exploring AI in their design practice.

These figures give a first evidence-based picture of AI adoption among design companies and agencies in the partner countries. They confirm the premise of the AIDEA project that AI is already present in professional design practice, while the level of its integration varies widely between companies. This is examined in more detail in the following subsections.

5.2 AI Adoption Overview

The AI Adoption Overview page presents the distribution of AI integration levels across the 106 respondents, alongside the profile of the responding companies by size and country and the business processes in which they use AI.

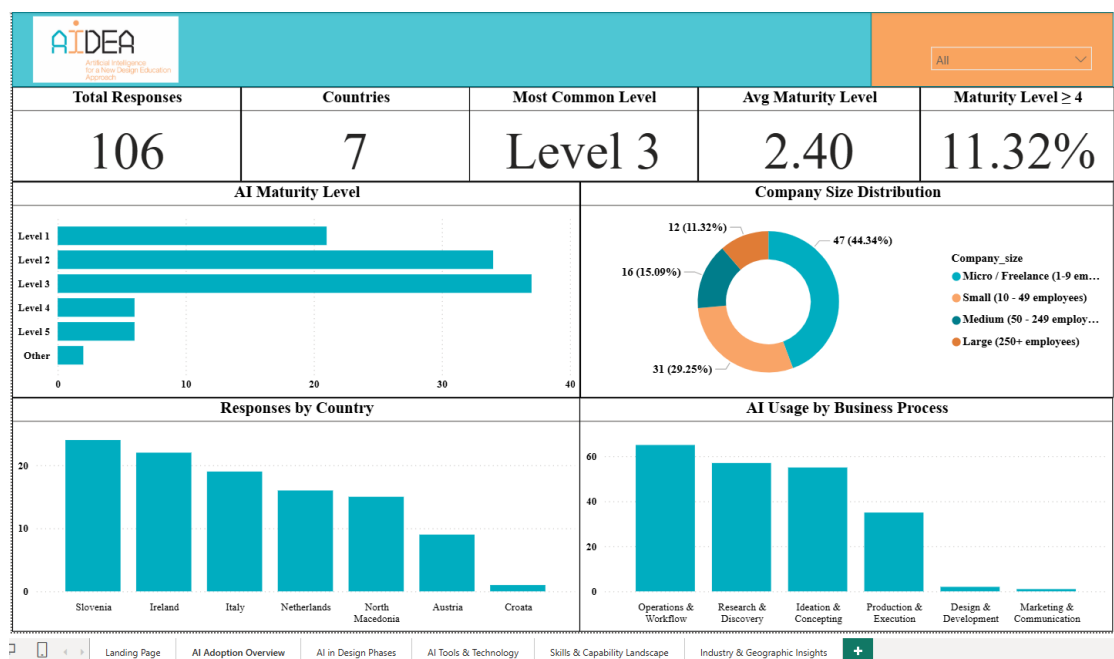


Figure 4 AI Adoption Overview page of the Power BI dashboard

The distribution of integration levels shows that engagement with AI is concentrated in the lower and middle levels of the scale. Of the 106 respondents, 21 rated themselves at Level 1 (Explorer), 34 at Level 2 (Beginner) and 37 at Level 3 (Intermediate), making Level 3 the most common response. Only 6 companies rated themselves at Level 4 (Advanced) and 6 at Level 5 (Expert). Companies at Level 4 or above therefore account for 11.32% of respondents, and the distribution averages out at the integration level of 2.40 reported in Section 5.1. The majority of companies are past initial exploration and use AI in their work, but few have made it a core part of their business model, and fewer still develop their own AI tools.

The company size distribution shows that the dataset is dominated by the smallest organisations. Of the 106 respondents, 47 (44.34%) are micro enterprises or freelancers with 1 to 9 employees, 31 (29.25%) are small companies with 10 to 49 employees, 16 (15.09%) are medium companies with 50 to 249 employees, and 12 (11.32%) are large companies with 250 or more employees. Nearly three quarters of respondents therefore have fewer than 50 employees. The responses by country reflect the distribution reported in Section 3, with Slovenia (24), Ireland (22), Italy (19), the Netherlands (16), North Macedonia (15), Austria (9) and Croatia (1).

The final visual on the page shows the business processes in which respondents currently use AI. AI use is most widespread in Operations and Workflow (65 respondents), followed closely by Research and Discovery (57) and Ideation and Concepting (55). Production and Execution follows at 35, while Design and Development (2) and Marketing and Communication (1) were reported only rarely. The pattern is consistent with the integration levels above. AI is used most in supporting processes, such as operations, research and early-stage ideation, and less in the production of final design outputs.

For AIDEA, the concentration of companies at Levels 1 to 3 means the project's outputs, particularly the Handbook of Teaching Tools and Methodologies needs to consider a sector that is already experimenting with AI but has not yet embedded it deeply. The predominance of micro and small companies also matters for the project's activities that involve industry: engagement formats for mentoring, handbook co-creation and the Piloting and Innovation Camp need to suit organisations with limited staff capacity.

5.3 AI in Design Phases

This page examines where AI sits in respondents' design processes. The survey asked each company to indicate, for five phases of the design process, whether it was not using, exploring, or actively using AI in that phase.

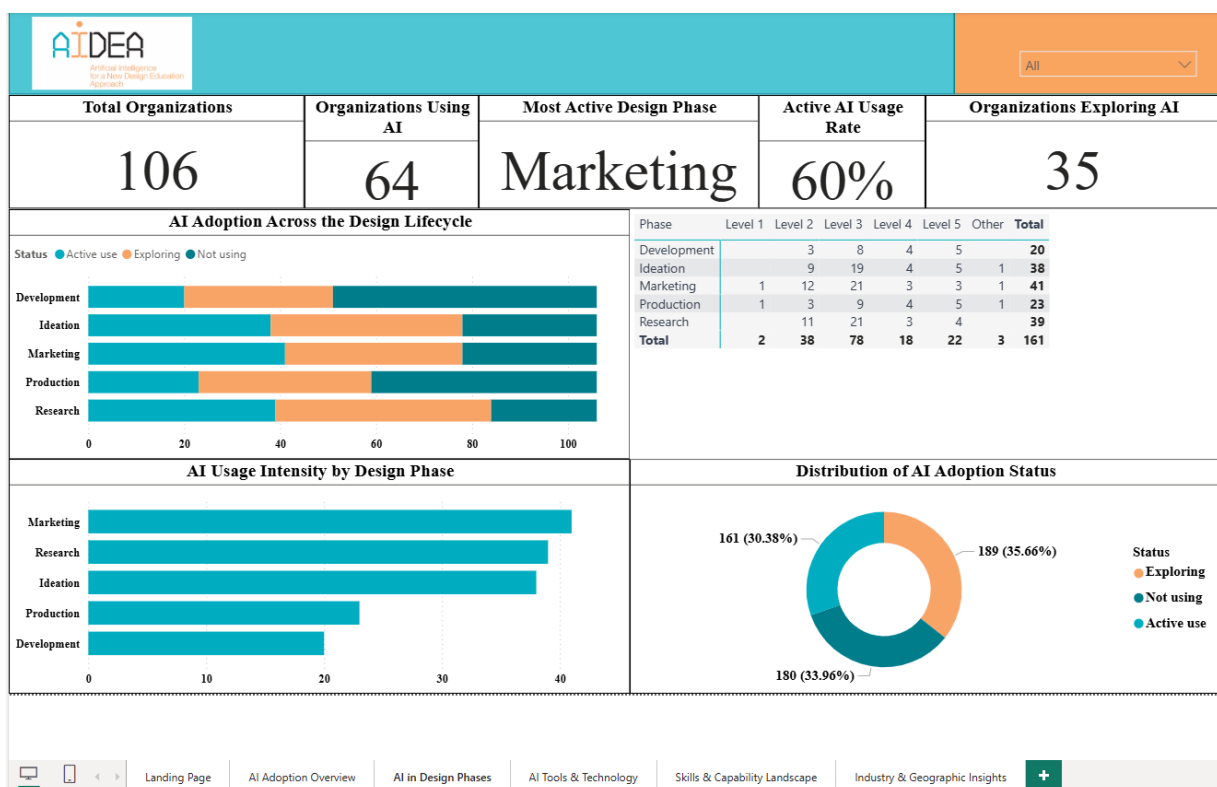


Figure 5 AI in Design Phases page of the Power BI dashboard

Across the 106 companies and five phases, the dataset contains 530 phase-level responses. Of these, 161 (30.38%) report active use of AI, 189 (35.66%) report exploring, and 180 (33.96%) report not using AI in the given phase. Engagement with AI is therefore spread almost evenly across the three statuses, with roughly a third of all phase-level responses in each. Taken together, active use and exploration account for around two thirds of phase-level responses, indicating that engagement with AI, whether exploratory or active, is more common than non-use across the design process as a whole.

Active use is not evenly distributed across the phases. Delivery & Marketing records the highest number of companies actively using AI (41), followed by Research & Discovery (39) and Ideation & Concept (38). Production & Execution (23) and Development & Prototyping (20) show markedly lower active use.

The pattern is consistent with the business process findings in Section 5.2. AI is applied most in the phases surrounding the core creative act: researching before it, generating concepts at the start of it, and communicating results after it. The phases where designs are developed, prototyped and brought to final production show the least active use. The table on the dashboard page breaks the active use figures down by integration level, showing that active use in every phase is concentrated among companies at Levels 2 and 3.

For AIDEA, this distribution is relevant to the Handbook of Teaching Tools and Methodologies and to the project's framing of AI as a co-creative partner. The data shows that AI use currently concentrates at the edges of the design process, while adoption in the development and production phases, where the Intelligence of the Hand is most engaged, remains lower. Design education that reflects current practice therefore needs to prepare graduates to use AI in research, ideation and delivery. The lower adoption in development and production may also indicate where practice changes next.

5.4 AI Tools & Technology

This page examines the specific AI tools respondents use and the barriers they face in adopting AI further. The tools question was open-text, asking companies to name the AI tools most frequent in their workflow. The responses were cleaned and aggregated for analysis.

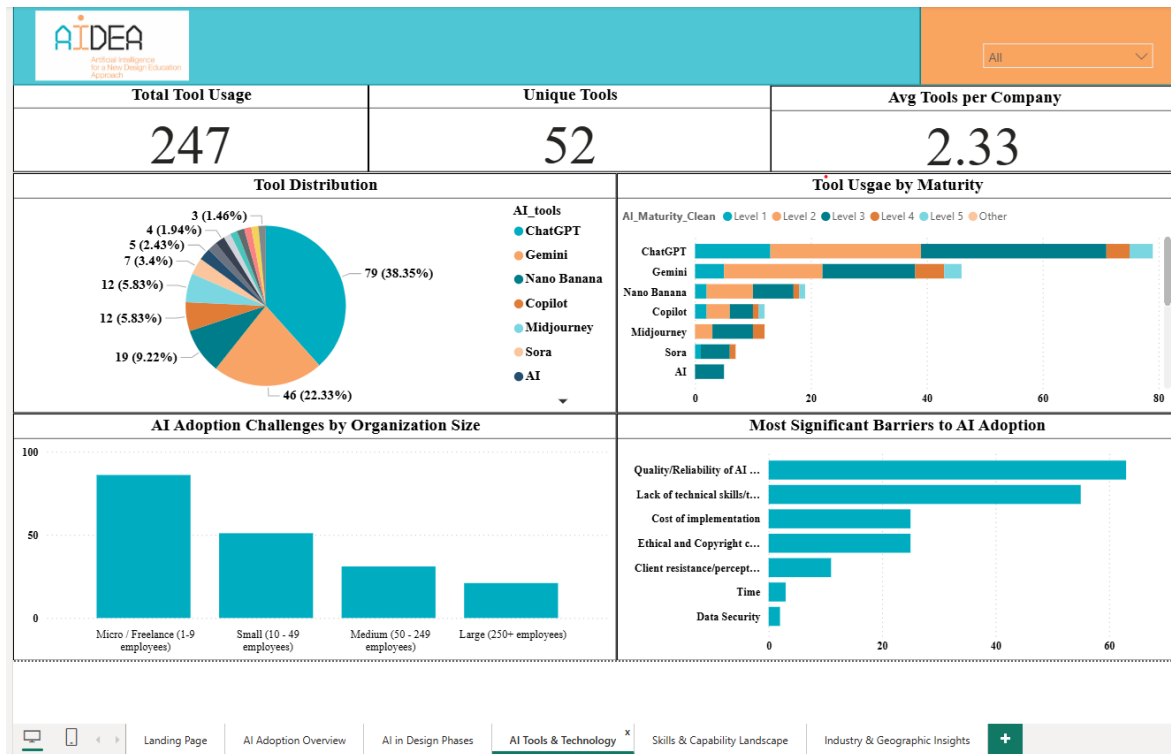


Figure 6 AI Tools and Technology page of the Power BI dashboard

Respondents named 52 unique tools, with 247 tool mentions in total, an average of 2.33 tools per responding company. The distribution is heavily concentrated at the top. ChatGPT is by far the most frequently named tool, with 79 mentions (38.35% of all mentions), followed by Gemini with 46 (22.33%). Together, the two general-purpose AI assistants account for over 60% of all tool mentions. The remaining frequently named tools are Nano Banana (19), Copilot (12), Midjourney (12) and Sora (7), with 5 responses naming AI generically rather than a specific tool. The long tail of the remaining tools, each mentioned only a few times, makes up the rest of the 52.

Two points stand out from this distribution. First, adoption is dominated by general-purpose, consumer-accessible tools rather than specialised design software. Second, the image and video generation tools that follow, Nano Banana, Midjourney and Sora, show that visual generative AI has an established place in design workflows, though far behind the general-purpose assistants. The dashboard's breakdown of tool usage by integration level shows that ChatGPT and Gemini are used by companies across all levels, indicating that these tools serve as the common entry point to AI regardless of how advanced a company's overall integration is.

The barriers question asked companies to identify the primary obstacles to further AI adoption. Quality and reliability of AI output is the most frequently selected barrier (63), closely followed by lack of technical skills and training (55). Cost of implementation (25) and ethical and copyright concerns (25) form a second tier, with client resistance or perception (11) behind them. Time (3) and data security (2) were identified through responses given under Other.

The barriers finding is relevant to AIDEA's outputs. The two dominant barriers, output quality and skills gaps, can both be addressed at least in part through education. Critical evaluation of AI output is a trainable skill, and the skills gap is the area the Train-the-Trainers programme and the Handbook of Teaching Tools and Methodologies are intended to address. The prominence of ethical and copyright concerns, level with cost as a barrier, supports the project's decision to embed Social Intelligence and ethical awareness throughout its outputs. The ethical and copyright findings in particular provide an evidence base for the Manifesto for Collective AI Design.

5.5 Skills and Capability Landscape

This page presents the skills companies believe future design graduates should possess. The survey asked respondents an open question: in their opinion, the top three AI-related skills future design graduates should possess. For analysis, the free-text answers were grouped into skill categories, and the dashboard shows the ten categories with the most responses assigned to them.

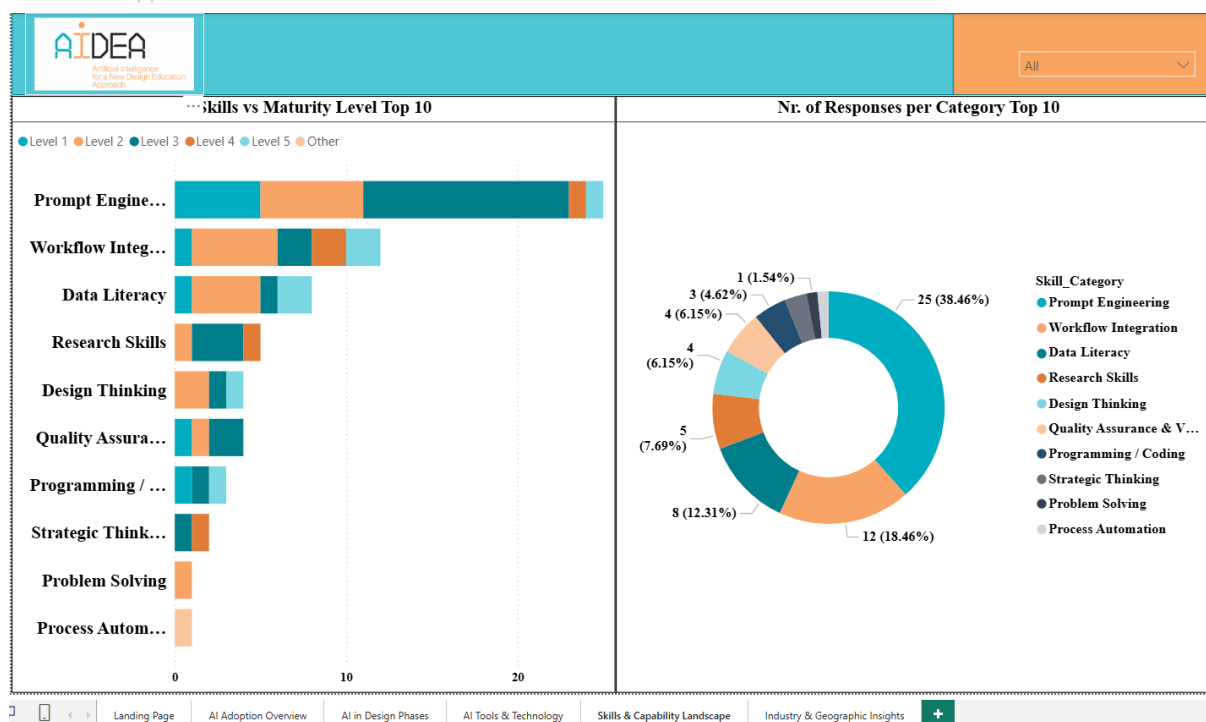


Figure 7 Skills and Capability Landscape page of the Power BI dashboard

Prompt Engineering dominates with 25 mentions (38.46%), more than double the next category, Workflow Integration, with 12 (18.46%). Data Literacy follows with 8 (12.31%), then Research Skills with 5 (7.69%), Design Thinking and Quality Assurance with 4 each (6.15%), Programming and Coding with 3 (4.62%), Strategic Thinking with 2, and Problem Solving and Process Automation with 1 each.

The skills companies prioritise are not primarily technical. Prompt Engineering, the ability to instruct and direct AI tools effectively, leads by a wide margin, while Programming and Coding sits near the bottom with 3 mentions. Between them sit skills of integration and judgement: embedding AI into workflows, understanding data, evaluating quality. Companies are asking for graduates who can direct AI and critically assess what it produces, not graduates who can build it.

The accompanying chart breaks the skill categories down by the integration level of the companies naming them. Prompt Engineering is named across the full range of integration levels, from Explorer to Expert, with the largest share coming from companies at Level 3 (12 of 25 mentions). The demand for prompt literacy is therefore not confined to beginners: it is voiced most strongly by companies that already have AI integrated into specific workflows.

For AIDEA, these results point towards the type of skills that companies want design graduates to have. Directing AI tools, integrating them into workflows and judging the quality of their output can all be taught. The results are therefore useful input for the Handbook of Teaching Tools and Methodologies and for the Train-the-Trainers programme.

5.6 Industry and Geographic Insights

The final page of the dashboard places the AI adoption findings in their industry and geographic context. A map shows the surveyed companies across the partner countries, and a chart breaks down AI integration levels by industry category.

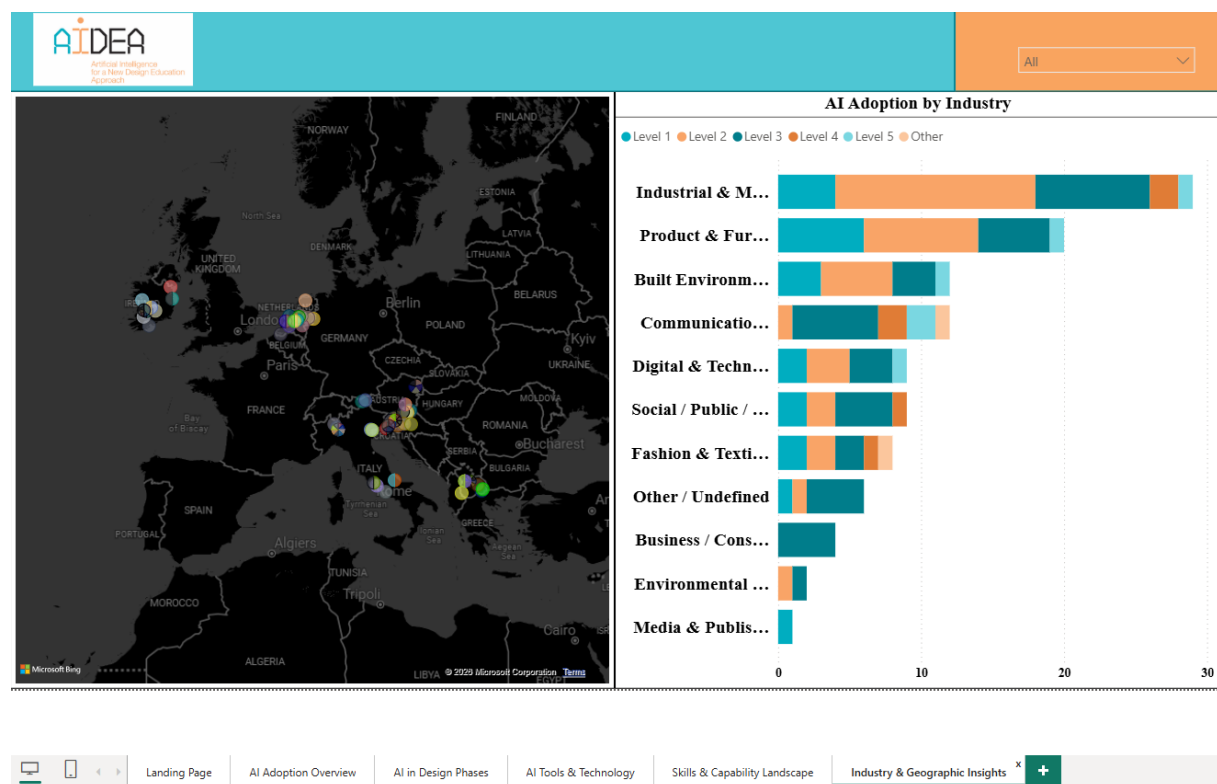


Figure 8 Industry & Geographic Insights page of the Power BI dashboard

The survey asked companies to identify their primary design field from a predefined list, with the option to describe their field in an open response. Many companies used the open option and described more than one field, so for analysis the responses were grouped into industry categories, with companies naming multiple fields counted in each relevant category.

Industrial & Manufacturing is the largest category, followed by Product & Furniture, with Built Environment and Communication & Branding next. Digital & Technology, Social/Public/Cultural and Fashion & Textiles form a middle group, and small numbers of companies fall under Business/Consulting, Environmental & Sustainability and Media & Publishing. A small share of responses could not be assigned to a specific field and remain under Other/Undefined.

The breakdown by integration level shows that AI engagement spans the industry categories rather than concentrating in one part of the sector. The largest categories contain companies from Explorer through to Expert level. Communication & Branding stands out for its weight at the upper levels, with more companies at Levels 4 and 5 than at the lower levels, while most other categories follow the overall pattern, with engagement concentrated at Levels 2 and 3.

For AIDEA, the breadth matters more than any single category. The mapped companies cover the industrial, product, spatial, communication, digital, social and fashion dimensions of design practice, and AI engagement is present across all of them.

5.7 Access Note

The extended data was analysed and visualised in Power BI to carry the interactive character of the map deliverable through to the additional data collected, complementing the public interactive map with an interactive analytical tool. The intention was to share this dashboard with the partnership as a working resource alongside the public map.

When sharing was arranged, it emerged that the dashboard, hosted by TUS, is subject to the institution's data governance rules, which restrict access to TUS account holders and do not permit embedding on external webpages. The interactive version can therefore not be shared with the partnership or embedded on the project website. The findings are therefore presented in this report with static views of each dashboard page. Only the interactive form of the analytical tool remains restricted.

6 Key Findings & Implications for AIDEA

The mapping exercise itself delivered beyond its targets. The survey gathered 106 responses from seven countries against a target of 85, with every country target met. The responding companies span the breadth of design practice and range from freelancers to large enterprises, with micro and small companies predominating. The project now has a public map presenting 71 of these companies at European level and a contact base of 106 companies for its industry-facing activities. Engagement formats for these activities should be designed for the small organisations that make up most of the base.

Beyond the delivery of the map, the extended analysis yields four key findings with implications for the project's subsequent activities.

Finding 1: AI is present in most companies but shallowly integrated. Sixty per cent of companies actively use AI in at least one phase of their design process, and a further 33% are exploring it, leaving only 7 companies not engaging with AI at all. On the integration scale, however, the most common level is Level 3, AI integrated into specific workflows, only 11.32% of companies place themselves at Level 4 or above, and the average level is 2.40. The sector the project addresses is engaged with AI but far from mature in its use. AIDEA's outputs should therefore be calibrated to companies, and by extension graduates entering them, that are experimenting and integrating, not to a sector of advanced adopters.

Finding 2: AI use clusters at the edges of the design process. Across the five design phases, active use concentrates in Delivery & Marketing, Research & Discovery and Ideation & Concept, while Development & Prototyping and Production & Execution show the least. The phases where designs take physical and final form remain predominantly human-led. In current practice, AI plays a supporting role around the core creative work. For the Handbook of Teaching Tools and Methodologies, this indicates where teaching can reflect established practice and where students should be prepared for phases that AI has only begun to reach.

Finding 3: Adoption runs through general-purpose tools, and the main barriers are educational. ChatGPT and Gemini together account for more than 60% of all tool mentions, far ahead of specialised design tools, and are used by companies at every integration level. The barriers named most often are the quality and reliability of AI output and the lack of technical skills and training, both of which can be addressed through education rather than technology. Ethical and copyright concerns rank level with cost. For the Manifesto for Collective AI Design, these results describe the current situation its principles need to address: a need for critical evaluation skills, training, and guidance on ethical and copyright questions.

Finding 4: Industry prioritises prompt literacy and judgement over technical skills. Asked what AI-related skills future design graduates should possess, companies named prompt engineering most often, followed by workflow integration and data literacy. Programming was rarely mentioned. Companies want graduates who can work with AI tools and assess their output, not build them. These results are useful input for the Handbook of Teaching Tools and Methodologies and the Train-the-Trainers programme.

7 Conclusion

An interactive geographic map of design companies and agencies is published on the AIDEA project website, presenting 71 companies across Europe, and the survey behind it gathered 106 responses from seven countries, exceeding the target of 85. Beyond the map, the task produced a dataset on AI usage and experience in professional design practice, analysed in this report, and a contact base of 106 companies available to the partnership for the project's industry-facing activities.

The findings of this analysis point to the following considerations for the Manifesto for Collective AI Design and the Handbook of Teaching Tools and Methodologies.

For the Manifesto, the data shows a sector engaging with AI broadly but shallowly: 60% of companies use AI actively in at least one phase of their design process, yet few have integrated it deeply, and adoption runs mainly through general-purpose tools. The barriers companies name most, quality and reliability of AI output and lack of skills and training, together with ethical and copyright concerns ranking level with cost, indicate the practical realities the Manifesto's principles should speak to.

For the Handbook, the data indicates where AI currently sits in design practice and what industry asks of graduates. AI use concentrates in research, ideation and delivery rather than development and production, and the skill companies name most for future graduates is prompt engineering, followed by workflow integration and data literacy, with programming rarely mentioned. These patterns can inform the Handbook's coverage.