Younger adults report more frequent AI use than other adults who use AI
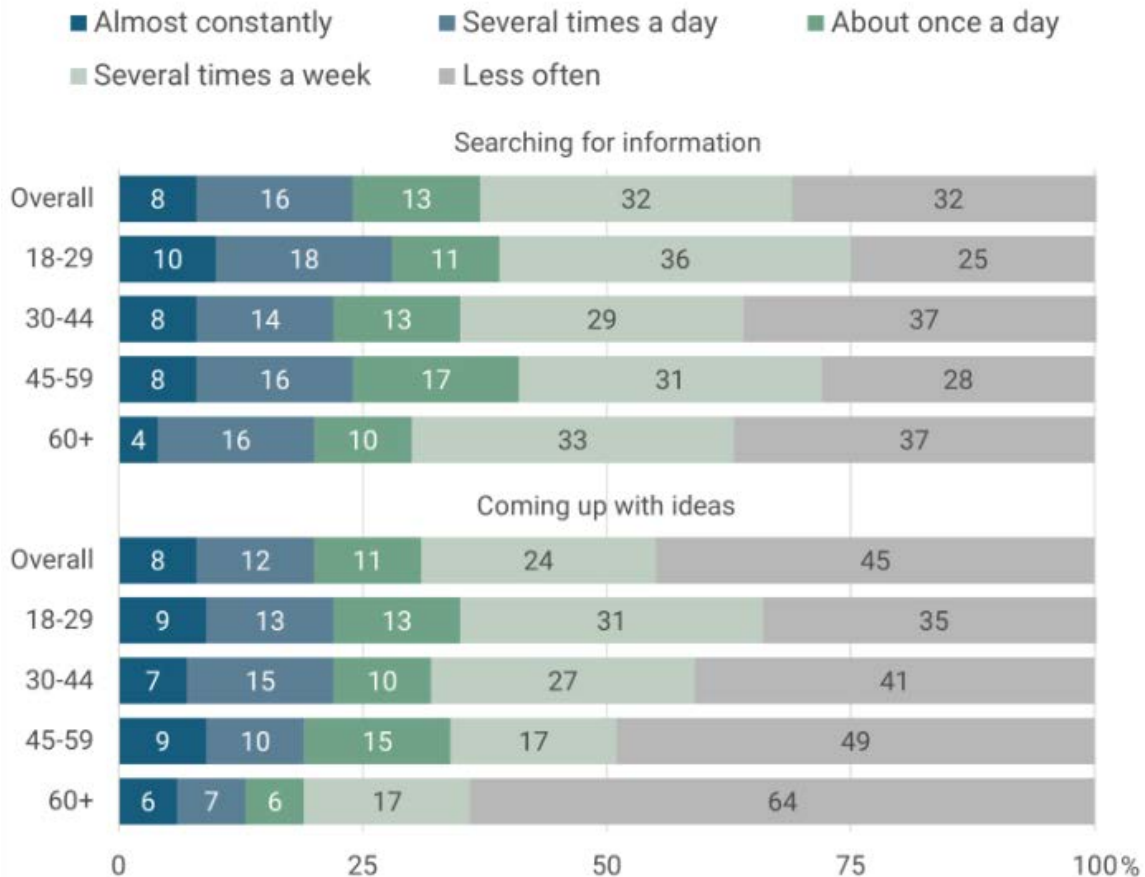
Percent of adults who have ever used AI

- ■ Almost constantly
- ■ Several times a day
- ■ About once a day
- ■ Several times a week
- ■ Less often

Searching for information

	Almost constantly	Several times a day	About once a day	Several times a week	Less often
Overall	8	16	13	32	32
18-29	10	18	11	36	25
30-44	8	14	13	29	37
45-59	8	16	17	31	28
60+	4	16	10	33	37

Coming up with ideas

	Almost constantly	Several times a day	About once a day	Several times a week	Less often
Overall	8	12	11	24	45
18-29	9	13	13	31	35
30-44	7	15	10	27	41
45-59	9	10	15	17	49
60+	6	7	6	17	64

0   25   50   75   100%

Question: About how often do you use artificial intelligence (AI) for each of the following? If you don't know, you can say that too.
Source: AP-NORC poll conducted July 10-14, 2025 with 1,437 adults age 18 and older nationwide.

Teaching Business Communication in the Age of AI

by Courtland Bovee and John Thill, coauthors of *Business Communication Today,* 16ᵗʰ Edition (Pearson).

Setting the Stage

Artificial intelligence is no longer a future skill—it's a present reality shaping how people search for information and generate ideas. As this chart reveals, younger adults are far more frequent users of AI than their older counterparts, creating both opportunities and challenges for the classroom. For business communication instructors, the data underscores

a critical question: How do we prepare students not only to use AI effectively, but also to communicate across generational and technological divides?

1. Generational AI Habits and Communication Readiness

The chart highlights that younger adults (18–29) use AI more frequently than older adults for both searching for information and generating ideas. For business communication instructors, this means students are entering the classroom with different baseline experiences than many of their future managers and colleagues. Instruction must therefore prepare students not just to use AI themselves, but to bridge the communication gap between digital-native peers and less AI-fluent supervisors or clients.

2. Teaching Critical AI Literacy

While many students already use AI frequently, the chart shows a substantial portion still use it 'less often.' This inconsistency creates an uneven playing field. Business communication courses should integrate AI-augmented research, writing, and idea-generation exercises so every student develops a baseline of fluency. This ensures graduates won't fall behind when employers expect them to seamlessly combine traditional communication skills with AI-enabled tools.

3. Information-Seeking vs. Idea-Generation

The chart makes a useful distinction: people use AI more consistently for information searches than for idea generation. For instructors, this suggests two teaching priorities:
- Train students to evaluate and fact-check AI-generated information (to prevent over-reliance).
- Develop creative communication assignments (marketing pitches, proposal drafts, brainstorming tasks) where students learn how to push AI beyond fact retrieval into structured idea development.

4. Preparing Students for Workplace Diversity

In the workplace, communication doesn't happen in an age silo. A 22-year-old graduate might draft AI-supported reports for a 55-year-old manager who uses AI less often. Business communication instruction must emphasize adaptability, translation, and ethical framing—teaching students to explain AI outputs clearly to audiences who may be skeptical or less experienced with these tools.

5. Classroom Application

- Assignments: Compare traditional research methods with AI-augmented searches to evaluate differences in efficiency, accuracy, and credibility.
- Exercises: Have students use AI for brainstorming, then refine outputs collaboratively, highlighting human judgment and editing skills.
- Discussions: Analyze generational attitudes toward AI and how they affect workplace communication styles.

Key Takeaways

The message for business communication educators is clear: AI literacy is not optional. Our students must learn to evaluate AI critically, use it creatively, and explain its outputs to diverse audiences with confidence. By weaving these lessons into our courses now, we equip graduates with the tools to bridge gaps, foster clarity, and thrive in an AI-powered workplace.

Business Communication Today, 16th Edition, is the only textbook fully aligned with the realities shown in this chart. As students enter classrooms with uneven AI skills, this text ensures every learner develops fluency in AI-augmented research, writing, and idea generation—while mastering timeless communication fundamentals.

With integrated coverage in every chapter, it equips instructors to close the skills gap, prepare students to bridge generational divides, and graduate confident communicators ready for the AI-driven workplace.