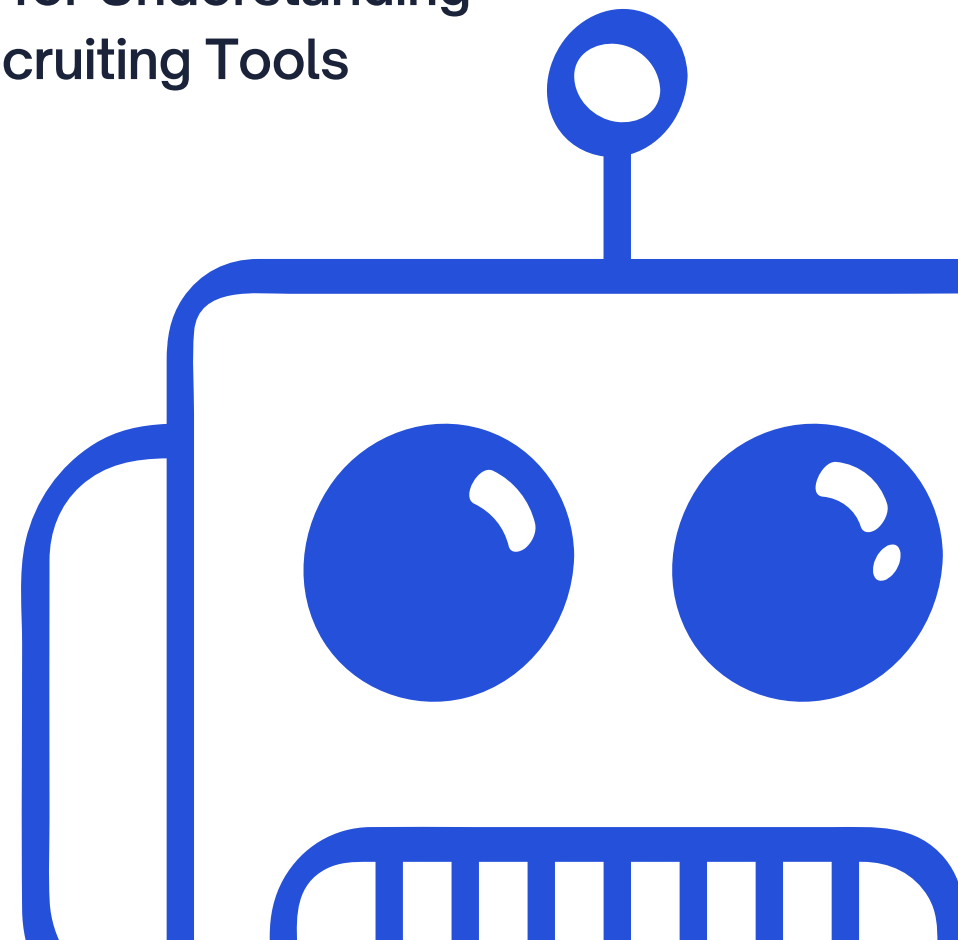
The Talent Acquisition and Recruiting AI (TARAI) Index

A Public Database for Understanding How AI Shapes Recruiting Tools

Ellen Simpson
Mona Sloane



November 2025

Executive Summary

The Talent Acquisition and Recruiting AI (TARAI) Index is a public, interactive database that maps how artificial intelligence (AI) is integrated into more than 100 HR and recruiting technologies. It provides a standardized, transparent view of the HR tech landscape—helping recruiters, researchers, and policymakers understand how AI operates across the hiring process.

The TARAI Index draws directly from company product materials and insights gathered through over 100 interviews with recruiters and HR tech professionals. It translates complex product language into clear, comparable data points about functionality, claims, assumptions, and AI clarity. The result is an accessible resource that allows users to explore, analyze, and question the growing influence of AI in hiring.

What makes the TARAI Index unique is its ability to deliver AI transparency in language that recruiters, HR leaders, and businesses can understand and act on. Rather than focusing only on the technical workings of AI, the TARAI Index reveals how deeply AI is intertwined with hiring itself—encouraging users to ask sharper, more informed questions about the technologies they rely on.

The TARAI Index offers clear, evidence-based insight into how AI is actually deployed across the industry and moves beyond compliance checklists to create a practical foundation for more accountable and transparent hiring technologies.

Why We Built the TARAI Index

AI is deeply embedded in the technologies powering hiring and recruitment. Applicant tracking systems, sourcing platforms, and interview tools increasingly rely on AI to filter, rank, or even communicate with candidates. Yet, for many recruiters, these tools are black boxes. They promise efficiency but rarely explain how decisions are made—or what assumptions about hiring are built into the technology. **This lack of clarity matters.**

Despite years of research into how humans interact with technology on the job, most studies have focused on general trends rather than the specific transparency needs of HR practitioners. Existing tools like applicant tracking systems, automated interview platforms, and candidate screening technology play a direct role in deciding who advances through the recruiting funnel. With governments and regulators now labeling hiring technologies as "high risk," there's growing scrutiny, but many regulations miss how these decisions are actually made through a mix of human and machine input. This makes clear, profession-specific transparency especially urgent for recruiting teams.

T**he Talent Acquisition and Recruiting AI (TARAI) Index,** created by the Sloane Lab at the University of Virginia, responds to this gap. It provides an open, accessible resource that helps recruiters, HR professionals, and researchers understand how AI is integrated into recruiting technologies—and how transparently companies communicate about it.

What The TARAI Index Offers And Why It Matters

The TARAI Index is **a public database of over 100 HR technology products** used in recruiting and talent acquisition. It allows users to:

Explore what an AI automates:
Does a tool simply automate scheduling, or does it rank candidates?

Assess AI clarity:
How clearly do products describe what their AI does and why?

Identify Product Claims and Assumptions:
What promises do vendors make, and what underlying ideas about efficiency, bias, or candidate "fit" are embedded?

Compare tools across the hiring funnel:
From sourcing and screening to interviewing and background checks.

All information is drawn directly from **product marketing materials**, contextualized with insights from **100+ interviews** with recruiters, HR practitioners, and HR tech developers.

What The TARAI Index Offers And Why It Matters

Two Interactive Environments

By standardizing how information about HR tech is presented, the TARAI Index makes the AI inside recruiting tools **legible, comparable, and accountable.**

The TARAI Index includes two environments that offer complementary perspectives: the recruiter environment which is grounded in daily recruiting practice, the researcher environment, which is grounded in systemic analysis.

For recruiters and businesses: Supports informed choices about technology adoption; highlights gaps in clarity and helps technology buyers ask sharper questions of technology developers and product marketing teams.

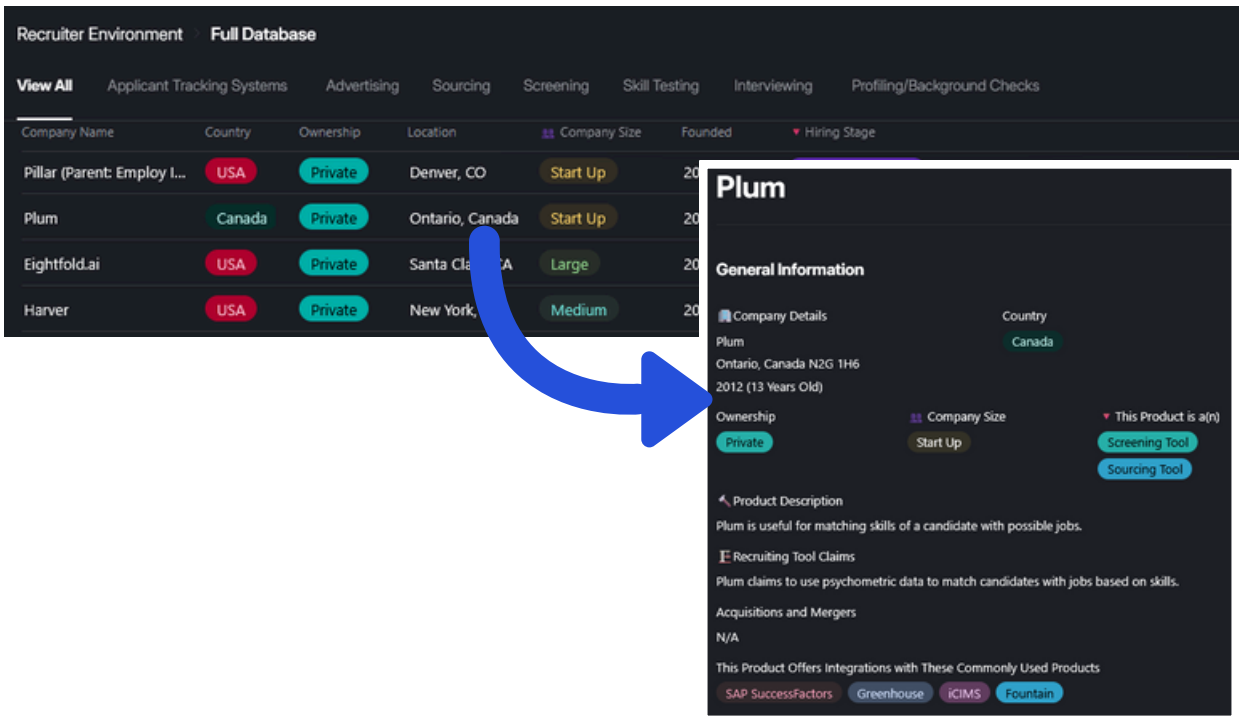
For researchers and policymakers: Creates a reference point for understanding how AI is deployed in real-world HR and recruiting contexts.

The TARAI Index is not just a catalog of tools—it is a step toward **contextual AI transparency,** ensuring that the integration of AI in hiring can be understood, scrutinized, and improved.

Recruiter Environment

Designed for practitioners, this view functions as a searchable, filterable list of products organized by **hiring stage.** Recruiters can:

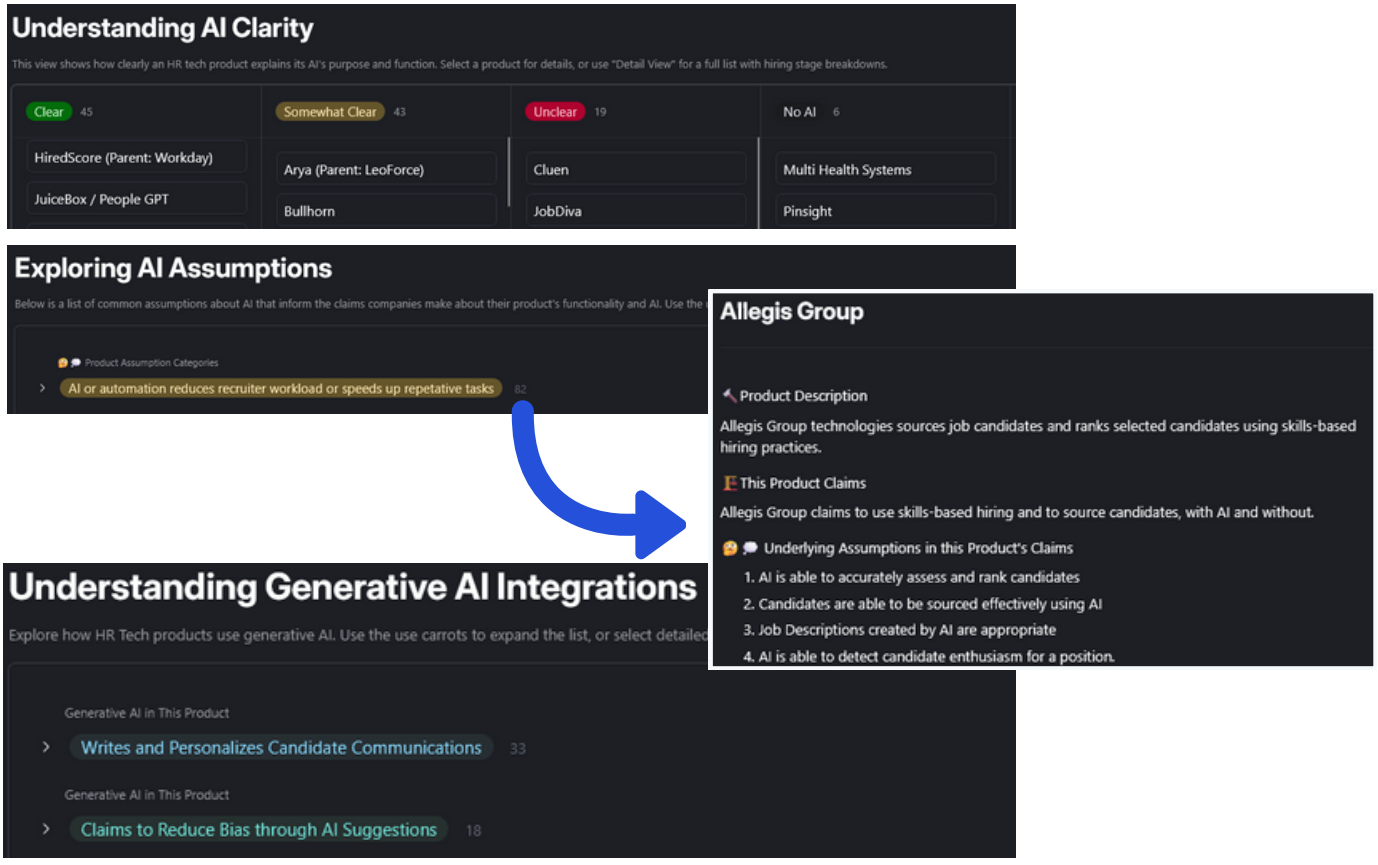
- Quickly compare tools across the stages of sourcing, screening, or interviewing.
- Review standardized descriptions of functionality, claims, and AI clarity.
- Spot where marketing promises may not align with real-world practices and practical needs.



Researcher Environment

A dashboard for deeper analysis. Offering custom insights through tailored product detail views, researchers, auditors, and policymakers can:

- Examine **patterns** in **AI functionality and clarity.**
- Review **assumptions and claims** across the HR tech ecosystem.
- Explore **integrations** of **generative AI** and other emerging technologies.



Team & Support

TARAI was developed by the Sloane Lab at the University of Virginia. The project was led by Dr. Mona Sloane and Dr. Ellen Simpson, with research assistants Ryan Ermovick, and Michael Amadi. Research support was provided by Dr. Sarah Lebovitz and Dr. Roshni Raveendhran.

Development of TARAI was supported by the 2023 University of Virginia's Darden-Data Science Collabratory (DCADS) Research Fellowship.

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA | DARDEN SCHOOL of BUSINESS
LaCross AI Institute

UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA | ARTS & SCIENCES

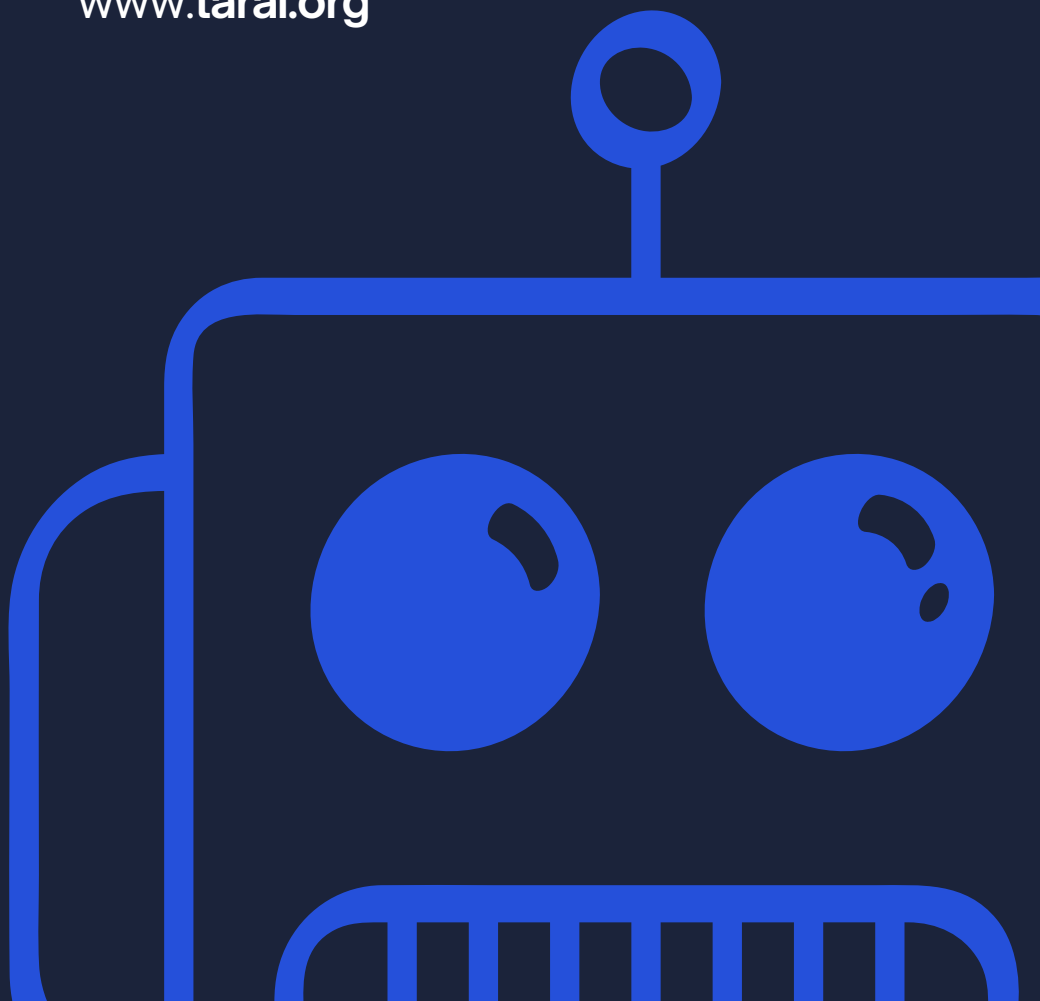
UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA | DATA SCIENCE

SLOANELAB

Explore TARAI

Explore TARAI

www.tarai.org



Read this Report @ UVA Libraries