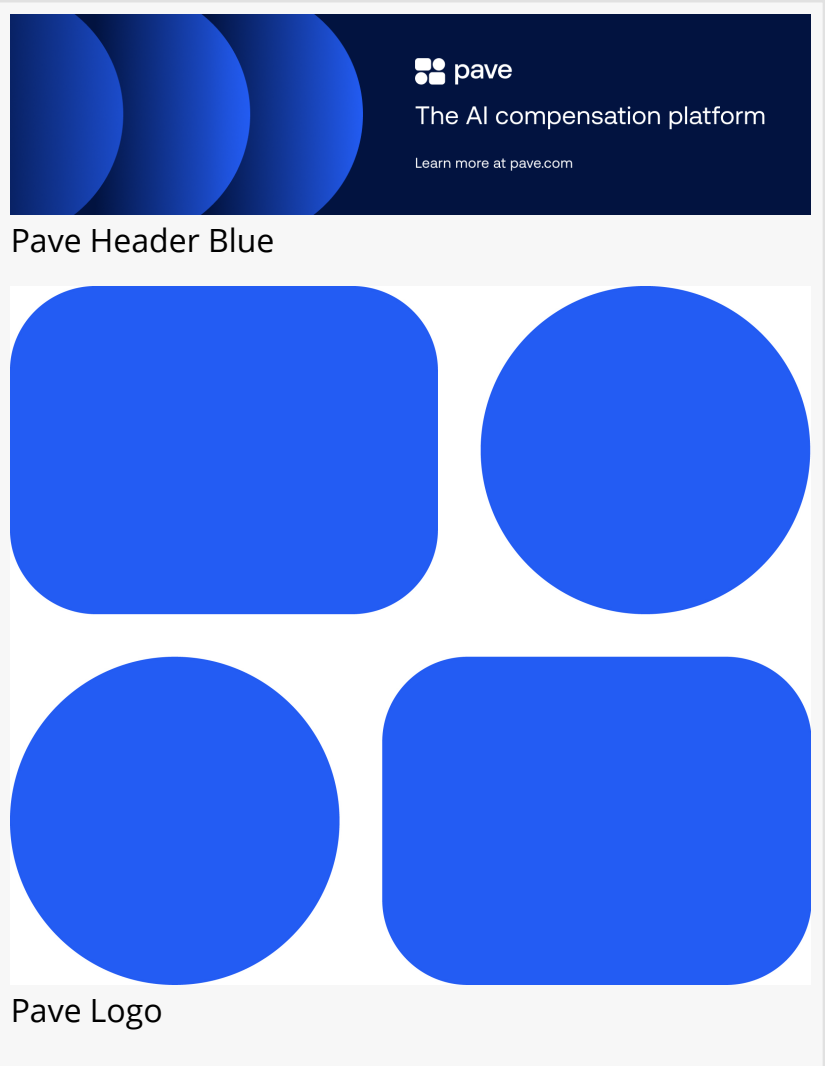


Pave's Hot Jobs Index: AI's Second Wave Hits Hiring as Governance, Audit, and InfoSec Surge — SEO Joins the Coldest Jobs

AI Engineer holds the #1 spot, but the bigger story in Q2 is the rise of the roles that govern, audit, and secure AI systems — not just the ones that build AI.

SAN FRANCISCO, CA, UNITED STATES, July 7, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Pave, the AI compensation platform, today released the latest update to its [Hot Jobs Index](#), a quarterly ranking of which roles are heating up and cooling down across the workforce. Drawn from real-time data spanning more than 9,000 companies, the Q2 2026 Index shows that enterprise AI's hiring impact is broadening well beyond the engineers who build it. [Data Governance](#) jumped from #5 to #2 this quarter; Internal Audit and Information Security Operations both remain in the top five; and Search Engine Optimization enters the 10 coldest jobs list for the first time, underscoring how AI is reshaping how people find information online.



"The first wave of AI hiring was all about the builders — AI Engineers, ML Engineers," said Alex Cwirko-Godycki, GM of Market Data at Pave. "What we're seeing now is the second wave: companies hiring the people who make sure those systems can be trusted. Data Governance almost doubled its score in a single quarter, which shows AI is moving from pilot projects into systems that actually make decisions."

Key findings from the Q2 2026 Index

The 10 hottest jobs, scored from -100 (cooling fast) to +100 (heating fast):

- 1). [AI Engineer](#): +97
- 2). Data Governance: +88
- 3). Information Security Operations: +76
- 4). Field Marketing: +71
- 5). Internal Audit: +70
- 6). Machine Learning Engineer: +69
- 7). Firmware Engineering: +68
- 8). Deal Desk: +64
- 9). Technical Account Management: +59
- 10). Animation: +59



The 10 coldest jobs:

- 1). Web Development: -83
- 2). Content Marketing: -80
- 3). HR (Generalist): -69
- 4). Marketing Technology Management: -68
- 5). Search Engine Optimization (SEO): -67
- 6). Digital Marketing (Generalist): -67
- 7). Marketing (Generalist): -64
- 8). HR Operations: -62
- 9). Media Production: -61
- 10). Graphic Design: -58

AI Engineer's two-year climb

AI Engineering has grown roughly 11x in prevalence across Pave's dataset over the past two years, from a role that barely registered to one of the most in-demand jobs in tech. Pave expects the role to keep expanding as more companies formalize it as a distinct job family.

Field Marketing rises as a counterweight to AI content

The share of companies with a dedicated Field Marketing function rose from 4.83% to 8.35%, accelerating sharply in late 2025. Pave's data suggests that as AI-generated content becomes ubiquitous, companies are placing a higher premium on in-person, high-touch engagement to stand out.

Web Development cools as AI tools take over the workflow

Web Development posted the coldest score in the Index at -83. The share of new hires entering web development roles fell from 0.18% in Q4 2023 to 0.07% in Q2 2026, alongside the rise of AI-assisted "vibe coding" tools that enable non-specialists to build and ship web products.

Methodology

The Hot Jobs Score combines two signals: Hiring Momentum (65%), which tracks how a role's

share of new hires is trending, and Workforce Prevalence (35%), which tracks how a role's share of total headcount is trending. Both are measured as growth rates relative to baseline, converted to percentile ranks across all eligible job families, and combined into a single score.

The full Hot Jobs Index, including emerging roles Pave is tracking — Forward Deployed Engineer, AI Transformation Lead, GTM Engineer, AEO/GEO Specialist, and AI Product Manager — is available at pave.com/hot-jobs-index.

About Pave

Pave is the AI compensation platform, helping companies benchmark pay, price jobs, plan compensation cycles, and communicate total rewards — all powered by real-time data from more than 9,000 companies. Learn more at pave.com.

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