

PACEDALL **ACADEMY**

PRACTICAL FIELD GUIDE

AI Platform Best Practices

A practical field guide for moving from promising AI idea to useful, secure and operable digital service.

BUILT FOR

Founders, product leaders, architects and delivery teams.

INSIDE

Opportunity framing, architecture, security, evaluation, operations and launch readiness.

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How to use this guide

Use the guide during discovery, architecture reviews and launch decisions. Each chapter ends with a decision rule that can be turned into an acceptance criterion.

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Pacedall principle

A useful AI platform is a complete service: product, workflow, data, safeguards, operations and commercial value. The model is only one component.

Start with a valuable outcome

Do not begin with a model or feature list.

Define the user, their current workflow and the costly or frustrating moment you intend to improve. A strong opportunity has frequency, consequence and a clear owner.

Write the measurable outcome before selecting technology. Examples include reducing review time, improving first-time completion or making a specialist process accessible outside office hours.

Practical checklist

- Name one primary user and one primary job
- Document the current workaround
- Identify the consequence of doing nothing
- Choose one measurable success signal

Decision rule

If a useful outcome cannot be measured or observed, the product idea is still too vague.

Design the whole service

The model is a component, not the product.

Map the full journey: entry point, identity, permissions, data capture, model call, human review, storage, notifications, support and deletion. Include failure paths, not only the happy path.

Use deterministic software for rules, calculations and permissions. Use AI where interpretation, synthesis or language genuinely improves the experience.

Practical checklist

- Draw the end-to-end workflow
- Mark AI and non-AI responsibilities
- Define escalation and recovery paths
- Specify ownership for support

Decision rule

Use the least complex architecture that can deliver the intended outcome safely.

Build security and privacy in

Trust is a product requirement.

Collect only the data required for the service. Classify it, define retention, control access and make deletion operational rather than aspirational.

Treat prompts, retrieved content, model outputs and tool calls as untrusted input. Validate actions server-side and keep secrets outside the client.

Practical checklist

- Apply least privilege
- Separate development and production
- Encrypt data in transit and at rest
- Log sensitive actions without logging secrets
- Publish clear limitations and data use

Decision rule

If the team cannot explain where user data goes, the feature is not ready to launch.

Engineer for AI uncertainty

Outputs require constraints and evaluation.

Define what a good response contains, what it must never do and when it should abstain. Use structured outputs where downstream software depends on the result.

Create a representative evaluation set that includes normal, difficult, ambiguous and adversarial cases. Re-run it whenever prompts, models, tools or retrieval change.

Practical checklist

- Set acceptance criteria
- Test hallucination and refusal behaviour
- Check latency and cost
- Version prompts and evaluations
- Provide a human route for consequential decisions

Decision rule

An AI feature is not tested because five demonstrations looked convincing.

Operate with evidence

Production is where learning begins.

Instrument the user journey, not only infrastructure. Monitor completion, corrections, abandonment, escalation, latency, cost and model failures.

Review feedback alongside behavioural data. Prioritise changes that improve the core outcome rather than adding surface-area.

Practical checklist

- Define service-level indicators
- Set cost and latency budgets
- Create an incident owner and rollback path
- Review model and prompt drift
- Close the loop with users

Decision rule

Every production signal should map to a decision the team is prepared to make.

Launch readiness review

A disciplined launch is a product capability.

Run a cross-functional review covering value, usability, architecture, security, legal obligations, support, analytics and rollback. Record accepted risks with owners and dates.

Start with a controlled audience when uncertainty is high. Expand only when evidence supports it.

Practical checklist

- Core journey works on mobile and desktop
- Authentication and permissions tested
- Backups and restore tested
- Legal and consent copy reviewed
- Support channel staffed
- Rollback rehearsed

Decision rule

Launch when the team can observe, support and safely reverse the service
- not when the demo is finished.

Keep building

Use this guide as a working artefact. Record decisions, test assumptions
with real users and update the document as evidence changes.

Learn more at academy.pacedall.com