What Skills Are Required For A Geographical Information Systems Career?

Due to the amount of data you will be dealing with at any given time, strong quantitative skills are a must have for GIS employment. You must have the fundamental expertise required to not only collect data and but to also manage, manipulate and interpret the data to suit a particular target audience. It is this need to have a high aptitude in dealing with numbers that causes geographical information systems careers to favor people with good skills in mathematics.

But as a GIS professional, you not only need to have a skill for numbers; you must also demonstrate good communication skills. GIS jobs demand not only technical competence but the ability to clearly communicate data and findings in a way that your audience can understand. Communication skills here refer to competence in both written and oral communication. Many times, the people that may require information from you might not be well versed with the technical information and jargon that characterizes GIS data. You must find a way to break down this data into easily understandable terms and have knack for leaving out information that might be irrelevant for a particular person or group.

Your communication skills as a GIS professional must also go hand in hand with good people skills. A GIS job is one of job types that require one to relate to people across the employment divide. You must be able to relate well with your peers as well as with people at the senior most level of the organization. GIS professionals will usually be an integral part of various types of project teams and they will be expected to be the subject matter expert when it comes to geographical information systems.

GIS employment also requires one to be a fast learner. Geographical information systems is largely a technology related field and as with any profession that is heavily dependent on technology, changes come thick and fast. A GIS application that was relevant 5 years ago may very well be approaching obsolescence today. To keep up, you must have enthusiasm in keeping pace with any technological developments that have repercussions for the GIS industry.

Record keeping is another strong point expected of a GIS expert. The effectiveness of geographical information systems is contingent on the quantity and quality of data that they contain. GIS employment will demand that one have the necessary skills to store records well such that their integrity and availability is assured. Since the source data for GIS applications will largely be electronic nowadays, a good understanding of the best techniques and data management systems will be an added advantage for the GIS expert. This is also where the niche role of a GIS programmer becomes apparent as he or she would be the person responsible for developing the tools required to capture, convert and transfer GIS data from one GIS application environment to another.

As far as educational qualification goes, a degree in geographical information systems would be the ideal starting point. However, degrees in information technology, engineering, geography, mapping, statistics, or any other related field are often also acceptable more so if they are followed up with a post graduate credential or a professional certification in geographical information systems. Since many employers will favor people that have some level of experience, looking for internships (whether paid or otherwise) is a good way for individuals new to the industry to start to distinguish themselves from the competition.

Knowing what you need in order to succeed in GIS employment is one thing. But knowing where to look for jobs and other important information around GIS jobs is another. If you want a website that offers the very best information around GIS jobs as well as the top opportunities in the GIS industry in the country, look no further than GIScrossing.com. Why don't you register for a free account today and see what you might have been missing?