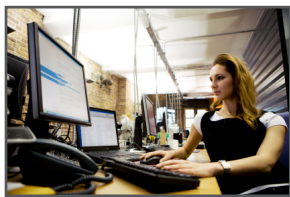




The Importance of the Information Technology Field

Jobs in Information Technology, or IT, are rising and probably set to explode throughout the next decade. Our economy is moving toward a more service-oriented, information exchange-based model as we become ever more dependent on high tech solutions. Politicians are beginning to realize that they have lagged way behind in understanding the vital importance of IT jobs and the IT industry. This has led to a situation where American public educational systems have not been doing enough to prepare young people for IT jobs in today’s high-tech world.



According to the Computer Desktop Encyclopedia, IT is:

...processing information by computer. IT is an umbrella term for the entire computer industry and its latest moniker, which took hold in the 1990s. It actually took

40 years before the industry settled on what to call itself. First it was “electronic data processing” (EDP), which was followed by “management information systems” (MIS) and then “information systems” (IS). Depending on whom you talk to, the term may embrace or exclude the telecommunications and networking industry. However, all information that is created and disseminated by computers is moved via networks and common carriers. Therefore, it would seem that information technology naturally embraces everything that delivers information to a user.

Therefore, one of the areas where IT jobs are most visible is the Internet. Website administrators, website programmers and designers, people who work for search engine companies, and others like them are those whose IT jobs rely on the existence and furtherance of the Internet.

The US government is seeking new ways to fund the National Science Foundation and the National Institutes of Standards and Technology in order to make America more competitive in the world IT marketplace and advance the nation’s technological sophistication. There is also going to be a push by the government to give incentives to schools and young Americans to promote science, math, engineering, and research skills, as well as investment in alternative energies to allow more innovative, IT-related start-ups to thrive in the country.

Programmers, engineers, researchers, and people able to work in new and innovative “green” businesses are going to be in increasing demand in the United States for the foreseeable future.

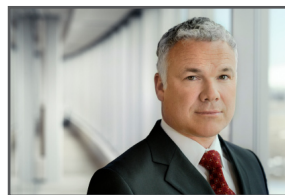
Clearly, getting into the IT profession requires a high level of education as well as a great aptitude for science and analytical research. Entry level IT jobs typically require a four-year college degree, and many companies want to see at least two years of work experience, although some IT companies, like Google and Microsoft, will deliberately seek out freshly graduated college students with the right degree so they can bring them up in their ranks and have a stable workforce as well as future management.

Nationally, the average IT manager makes \$100,000 a year, and the average salaried non-management IT employee earns nearly \$75,000 a year. According to *Wired* magazine, the top cities and regions in which to find IT jobs are Seattle, the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, Austin, Orlando, the Raleigh-Durham area, Pittsburgh, New York City, Boston, and the Washington, DC, area.

Many people with IT aptitudes become Internet based entrepreneurs. People who have great aptitudes for IT tend to be self-starters who are smart enough to have entrepreneurial drive.

Movers and Shakers

Those in the IT profession who hold IT jobs or even hire people into IT jobs have much to say that illuminates where IT needs to go and what its importance in our lives is.



CEO of Microsoft Corporation Steve Ballmer says, “The number one benefit of information technology is that it enables people to do what they want to do. It lets people be creative. It lets people be productive. It lets people learn things they didn’t think they could learn before, and so in a sense it is all about potential.”



IT Career Feature

Success guru and best-selling author Stephen R. Covey says, "It's a fact that more people watch television and get their information that way than read books. I find new technology and new ways of communication very exciting and would like to do more in this field."

Highly influential business author, strategist, and consultant Peter Drucker said, "The new information technology — Internet and email — have practically eliminated the physical costs of communications."

East Asia's wealthiest man, renowned philanthropist, and Hutchison Whampoa Chairman Li Ka Shing says, "Information and communications technology unlocks the value of time, allowing and enabling multi-tasking, multi-channels, multi-this and multi-that."

And IT industry heavyweight Bill Gates says, "Information technology and business are becoming inextricably interwoven. I don't think anybody can talk meaningfully about one without talking about the other...Microsoft has had its success by doing low-cost products and constantly improving those products, and we've really redefined the IT industry to be something that's about a tool for individuals."

Conclusion

IT jobs are among the most important and most coveted jobs in the United States in the 21st century economy.

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