



Can You Have a Career in Software Configuration Management?

As a computer software engineer, you can have a rewarding career in software configuration management. With software configuration management, software engineers track and control changes in the software. Some of the things software engineers do with software configuration management are to establish baselines in the software and control revisions. Is this a career for you? Read on to find out more.



What is software configuration management?

Basically, the software engineer who is undertaking the task of software configuration management is saying, "This is a successful software program and we want to reproduce it." Oftentimes, those "reproductions"

aren't actually identical to the original product, but the product itself is going to undergo incremental changes and revisions that make it better. Often, then, what a software engineer does with software configuration management is to compare software's different results and analyze those differences.

It used to be that relatively simple products were the focus of this type of control development. However, today, software is complex enough that oftentimes, software engineers who handle software configuration management undertake sometimes very minute changes within their own control, and he must do so within the system being developed, which in itself is quite complex and which could be detrimentally affected by any changes made. This is why those who undertake software configuration management must be so careful.

What does software configuration management entail?

A software engineer who undertakes software configuration management deals with the following questions and situations. He or she must determine:

- What code is being worked with (configuration identification)
- The release of a product and the changes that that product has undergone (configuration control)
- Reporting and recording the components' status (status accounting)
- Making sure that the components are complete and

consistent (reviewing)

- Making sure that your company's developmental processes are adhered to (process management)
- Managing tools and the process to be used for builds (build management)
- Managing both the hardware and software that host the system (environmental management)
- Making sure defects can be traced back to the source (defect tracking)

What's new in software configuration management?

Over the years, more tools have been introduced so that today, software engineers work with so-called "lifecycle tools" that are fully integrated into the system and provide capabilities for most of the duties that need to be done. As software development has become more complex, so, too, have the number of tools that need to be used.

Version controls tools were one start of this development and have continued to grow from there.

What does it take to be in software configuration management?

The most part, software configuration managers are computer software engineers with a college education in software engineering or computer science. In some cases, graduate degrees are required. People who apply for this type of work must know all of the major computer languages, including Java, XML, and C++. National certification courses are sometimes required to get a job in software configuration management.

In some cases, if a programmer does not have the experience but shows great promise in this area, companies will hire and then train the programmer at the company's expense. In addition, software configuration undergoes rate changes, so these types of programming jobs require that continual education take place as new technologies arrive and need to be learned.



IT Job Feature

Is this a career for you?

If you're interested in learning about this type of work and think you might be good at it, study physics, computer science and mathematics; taking computer programming courses in school and learning computer languages in one's spare time is also a good way to get a head start. In college, you can get an internship with software engineers to further your education.

If you want to be in software configuration management, you must also be detail oriented and analytical. You must be able to solve problems via logic and you must be able to communicate effectively, especially with team members that you will likely be supervising in this type of setting.

Getting a job upon graduation

Once you've graduated, contacting consulting firms and computer manufacturers, as well as the federal government itself come is a good idea. For work in the federal government, there is a federal service examination you'll have to take. In many cases, college placement offices will help contact employers. Jobs sites online, newspaper and trade journal ads, and specialized Internet job banks are other places to look for employment.

Job path and outlook

When you start in software configuration management, you'll probably begin by verifying and testing programs that are in development. If you show ability, you can develop software

and may even go on to supervise other team members. Jobs in software configuration management and software engineering in general are expected to be strong through 2014, as the Internet continues to grow as a pervasive part of society and as a communication and information portal.

What's it like to work in software configuration management?

Usually, you'll work a 40 hour week that includes some evenings and weekends, and you may work long hours at times to meet deadlines. You'll work both independently and as part of a team, usually. You may meet with other group members to brainstorm for problems, discuss solutions, and explore new programs. The pay rate is quite good, and averages about \$80,000 a year.

Conclusion

A career in software configuration management to the verb awarding an exciting, as long as you have a strong attention to detail, like computers and understand the various components therein. A background in computers is a must, and you must be well versed in the basic computer languages get started in this field. Usually you'll begin as an entry-level programmer or software engineer and work your way into software configuration management. Sometimes, deadlines can be intense, but overall, it's a rewarding career that's fun to do as long as you have the aptitude for it.

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