



If You Like Technology a Career in IT Is Right for You

Information Technology, also referred to as IT or infotech, is a broad term used to describe the technological advances in processing electronic information. Consider it an electronic filing cabinet a very resourceful and organized secretary keeps in her office. Everyone knows the boss signs the checks, but when the budgets from 1999 need to be found, even if it is all twelve revisions, or if a new database is being designed, the place everyone heads to is that one resourceful secretary. She can have copies of that ten-year old budget in two minutes flat and can pull the employment rosters, complete with hiring dates, pay raises, and even the names of every spouse of every current and former employee in even faster time.

A more official definition, courtesy of the Information Technology Association of America, is the study, design, development, implementation, support, or management of computer-based information systems, including both software and hardware. If you are thinking that covers everything, you are right. An IT worker in one company might perform duties which the competitor across town might outsource. It is one of those roles that is open to interpretation. The education requirements for an IT position are broad in scope, but most often include either a degree or relevant experience in the field. Most people, especially those who have started in entry-level positions and have learned their employer's programs, often promote to IT positions and maintain professional certification via the numerous continuing education courses available to ensure they remain up-to-date with the fast-growing technology field. There are also those who have gained experience through internships.

Any function that stores, protects, processes, and transmits information via electronic methods is some form of information technology. Technicians or professionals cover a range of duties. They design, incorporate, and install programs. Maintenance of these systems also falls within the realm of possible duties.

Those who are informed in this field say that on the IT forefront are the dedicated efforts to take this career avenue green. The Kyoto protocol, designed to cut carbon-dioxide emissions, is under heavy scrutiny as companies strive to become more environmentally aware of their choices. For those who are beginning their careers in information technology, now is the time to not only become familiar with the environmental issues that affect our constantly changing world, but to delve deeper and bring something to the table that will address and potentially solve the problems corporations have found themselves dealing with.

With everything from climate changes to computer hardware plaguing landfills, companies who are now voluntarily defining

their guidelines will be the same ones who will be following the laws which are likely to be put into effect in the very near future. Those employees who shine during these times will be the ones who are in the best positions for leadership roles and will have access to promotional opportunities. During an interview, be prepared to provide an answer to questions such as, "What is your solution for hardware that is not being used?" or "Approximately how many computers made it to landfills in 2005?" Rest assured, these questions beg for the right answers and every company in the world is looking for the solution. This is an important aspect within IT departments.

Another challenge IT groups are dealing with is the massive effort of going paperless. True, we have heard about this for years, but now that we have become more environmentally driven, we are seeing a new commitment to the paperless theory. As we begin to redefine so much in our careers such as outsourcing, freelancing, practicing SaaS (software as a service), and other advances, we begin to realize more and more people are in a position to work from home. Now that the focus has shifted once again towards a paperless environment, many of the stumbling blocks have been eliminated. With less risk of leaving that contract on the desk at home, companies are allowing more employees to telecommute. Of course, this involves a pretty advanced network, especially if employees are scattered across the globe. Still, it often results in a win-win for everyone.

What if your employer merges with another company? IT personnel are the ones who combine servers, email programs, security, and other technology-driven issues. This is becoming more common as more companies, in efforts to remain viable in an uncertain economy, begin to realize the benefits of mergers. Never before have mergers been so common. Each day brings a new announcement from CEOs regarding a new and more-powerful company that has been created as the result of a merger.



IT Job Feature

The employment numbers reflect the promise these careers offer. The demand remains high as educational institutes keep pace in redefining their curriculum to reflect the changing needs. Salaries vary based on a number of factors including company size, the company's current needs, and expected needs, as well as the region of the country. According to the government's Bureau of Labor Statistics site, computer systems design personnel earn, on average, slightly over \$109,000 per year and management members earn close to

that, coming in at around \$106,000. Those in support roles can earn anywhere from \$40,000 up to around \$95,000 per year; again, depending on the company and other factors. Those who choose to teach these skills in universities stand to earn salaries of around \$85,000. Not surprising, vice presidents and others in upper management earn close to \$200,000 per year in their positions. Most companies provide excellent benefits, stock options, bonuses, and even expense accounts.

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