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NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION — The News&Observer

SCHOOL to career

focus on jobs in

Information Technology

Future job opportunities

There are more than a million good reasons to consider a career in the Information Technology (IT) industry today. That's because employers will create a demand in this country for roughly 1.6 million IT workers this year. With demand for appropriately skilled people for exceeding supply, half of these positions-843,328-will likely go unfilled. In a total U.S. IT workforce of 10 million, that shortfall means one job in every dozen will be vacant. Therefore, job opportunities are expected to be plentiful in this fast growing field.

Where/how to get training

EDUCATION

Information Technology (IT) is the study, design, development, implementation, support or management of computer-based information systems, particularly software applications and computer hardware. IT workers help to ensure that computers work well for people. Nearly every company, from a software design firm, to the biggest manufacturer, to the smallest "mom & pop" store, needs IT workers to keep their business running smoothly.

Due to the wide range of skills required, there are many ways workers enter computer-related occupations. Someone staffing a help-desk, for example, needs skills and training that differ from those of a computer engineer designing chips or a Webmaster responsible for creating and maintaining a web page. The level of education and type of training employers require depends on employers' needs. One factor affecting these needs is changes in technology.

Most community colleges and many independent computer learning centers offer training in information technology that may be more geared toward meeting the needs of local businesses and more occupation specific than those designed for a 4-year degree. Employers usually look for people who have broad knowledge of and experience with computer systems and technologies, strong problem solving and analysis skills, and good interpersonal skills. Technological advances come so rapidly in the computer field that continuous study is necessary to keep skills up to date.

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It is nearly impossible to turn on a TV or radio to pick up a magazine without seeing the impact the Internet makes in our lives. Traffic on the Internet doubles every 100 days, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce. According to Network Wizards, there are currently 100 million web hosts on the Internet today and there will be over 1 billion by the year 2005. Internet jobs are hot. The following statistics were published in Certification Magazine's June 2000 issue:

• Analysts estimate that the worldwide base of Internet users will reach 227 million in 2001.

• U.S. Web commerce is projected to grow from $43 billion in 1998 to over $1.3 trillion in 2003.

• Internet tools training will increase more than three-fold between 1998 and 2003.

Job growth in Internet technologies will most greatly affect those with experience and expertise in systems administration, application development, e-commerce, and site design. This means that the importance of Internet certification will be greater than ever. Companies need to be ensured that the people they hire to fill these jobs know what they are doing. Certification from a reliable company gives them a guideline for determining a person's level of Internet skills. A study conducted by The Information Technology Association of America (ITAA) in April 2000 revealed the following:

• Employers will attempt to fill 1.6 million new IT jobs in 2000.

• For every ten IT jobs that exist today, employers will attempt to fill another 1.6 positions this year.

• Short courses were found effective in training Internet skills dues to their focus on specific skills and technologies, plus their speed and efficiency. As far as the "hottest" IT jobs:

• The three hottest IT jobs are tech support, database administration, and programming.

• These three categories represent 68% of all IT job demand.

What you wear

Computer systems analysts, engineers and other computer scientists normally work in offices or laboratories in comfortable surroundings. Dress is usually business casual or casual.

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Want to know more?

Visit the following websites:

New Horizons Computer Learning Center
4601 Creekstone Dr. Suite 112
Durham, NC 27703

4700 Falls of the Neuse
Suite 100
Raleigh, NC 27607
(919) 941-5008
http:www//newhorizonsrtp.com

Information Technology Assoc. of America
1401 Wilson Blvd.,
Suite 1100
Arlington, VA 22209
(703) 522-5055
http://www.itaa.org/

Recommended Classes

Students interested in the Technical Industry should prepare early by taking basic Word, Excel, Windows, and even Webmaster classes.

Jobs in this field

Jobs in the Field	Description
Computer Scientists	design computers and conduct research to improve their design or use, and develop and adapt principles for applying computers to new uses.
Computer Engineers	work with the hardware and software aspects of systems design and development.
Systems Analysts	use their knowledge and skills in a problem solving capacity, implementing the means for computer technology to meet the individual needs of an organization.
Computer Programmers	write and maintain the detailed instructions, called "programs" or "software," that list in logical order the steps that computers must execute to perform their functions.

Information Technology Career Titles (commonly advertised)

Database Administrator Associate, Information Systems- Operator/Analyst, Interactive Digital Media Specialist, Network Specialist, Programmer/Analyst, Software Engineer, Technical Support Representative

Average Starting Salary $25-45,000

Activity

1. Think about how you use the computer. List at least 5 projects that you did on the computer this week.

2. List projects that you do manually that could be done on a computer.

Profile

Darlene Hart
Hartford, Connecticut

Darlene Hart is all about making people's jobs easier. With a background in Organizational Development and Education, Hart's career has evolved from improving processes and designing workflow improvement solutions to training and motivating individuals on how to use such process improvement tools. In her new career, Hart continues to make people's jobs easier. This time she provides different tools and data online. Hart decided to investigate a career in web design. She thought the Internet would be a field of great opportunity, and with her experience using several graphic software packages, she had some confidence credentials to help her become marketable. "I knew I needed a certificate or credential that would prove that I had the skills to be a web designer. Once I could attain a credible certification, I would have a technology-based resume and a foot in the door to go through the interviewing process. " Hart decided to begin taking technical classes. The State of Connecticut was offering financial support provided by a Federal Grant, to people in fields experiencing declining opportunities. The financial support paid for many of Hart's classes. "I took classes from September through November of 1999 to broaden my technical skill set. During which time, I was introduced to the CIW program, which seemed to be exactly what I was looking for in terms of a credible credential for web design. The program offered an opportunity for continual learning in specific web job roles," Hart commented. On the day before Thanksgiving in 1999, Hart passed the CIW exam for the first time with a score of 90 percent. Shortly thereafter, she developed a couple of web sites on her own. "CIW gave me what I needed, a comprehensive look at the Internet. I walked away with a solid understanding of the basics including HTML and networking. CIW is valuable because as in my case, it makes you credible. The exam forces you to learn the information. When you know there is a test, you have a whole new level of listening." Hart landed a job as a web manager at the Roper Center in the University of Connecticut, which houses the largest database of public opinion research. As web manager, she is responsible for some design, day-to-day maintenance, managing a re-design of entire site, and working with staff to develop content. "Working at the university is a tremendous experience. I could use all of my skills, plus I am in an environment that is encouraging me to go back for more training." Since CIW, Hart has taken a number of supplemental design courses. She is currently considering CIW Site Designer and CIW E-commerce Professional courses next. Hart recognizes the benefits her Organizational Development background has brought to her new web site management role. She has had to use a different kind of creativity in designing web sites as opposed to designing process improvements. "The good news is that there is a lot of facilitation in this job. My consulting background is very helpful. I have been able to leverage the efforts and skills of other team members. Web design is more visual than designing process improvements for organizations. I have to encourage myself to just relax and let it happen. I have come to accept that I am a creative person." With a Bachelor of General Studies degree (major in Industrial Engineering) from the University of Connecticut, Hart never dreamed she would be back at her alma mater as a CIW certificate holder, doing what she does best…helping people do their jobs easier.

Best Advice

The workplace demands hands on experience as well as knowledge. One of the best ways to get this experience is Internship with a company that provides Technical Training.

If you would like to make a statement about your business's commitment to education, call Mary Moxin at 829-4870 or email mmoxin@nando.com. For information about Newspapers in Education, call Jean House 829-8921 or Anita Stack 829-4811.

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