



INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) CAREER INTEREST SELF-ASSESSMENT



INTRODUCTION

This career exploration and self-assessment tool was developed for the Retraining the Gulf Coast IT Consortium. It is designed to help navigators, faculty, advisors, and career services staff provide appropriate guidance to students considering a career in IT. It is also appropriate for job developers and job placement staff to use as a pre-employment resource.

This tool is not a formal assessment. It does not measure a student's academic abilities, occupational skills, technical knowledge or aptitude for a career in IT. Instead, it is intended to inform students about what daily work might look like (and dispel some myths) to help them consider whether their work environment preferences and interests are a good fit for certain IT occupations. Further, it suggests sources for additional career exploration and information about IT occupations.

This tool was developed with the characteristics of the following occupations in mind: Computer User Support Specialist; Computer Network Specialist; Information Security Analyst; and Computer Programmer. It could also be applied to a host of IT occupations.

The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code is listed with the job titles below, because a variety of job titles might be used to describe a similar set of functions and job titles. Students can use the codes to research local labor market information and occupational profiles.

Computer User Support Specialist

[SOC 15-1151](#)

Computer User Support Specialists provide technical assistance to computer users. They answer questions or resolve computer problems for clients in person, via telephone, or electronically. They may provide assistance concerning the use of computer hardware and software, including printing, installation, desktop applications, electronic mail, and operating systems.

www.onetonline.org/link/summary/15-1151.00

Computer Network Specialist

[SOC 15-1152](#)

Computer Network Specialists are responsible for the day-to-day operations of a network. They analyze, test, troubleshoot, and evaluate existing network systems, such as local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), and Internet systems or a segment of a network system. They perform network maintenance to ensure networks operate correctly with minimal interruption.

www.onetonline.org/link/summary/15-1152.00

Information Security Analyst

SOC 15-1122

Information Security Analysts plan, implement, upgrade, or monitor security measures for the protection of computer networks and information. They may ensure appropriate security controls are in place that will safeguard digital files and vital electronic infrastructure. May respond to computer security breaches and viruses. www.onetonline.org/link/summary/15-1122.00

Computer Programmer

SOC 15-1131

Computer Programmers write, analyze, review, and rewrite computer programs, using workflow chart and diagram, and applying knowledge of computer capabilities, subject matter, and symbolic logic. Projects may include additional team members and programming languages may vary. www.onetonline.org/link/summary/15-1131.00

RESEARCHING IT OCCUPATIONS

To guide students through the use of this tool, advisors need to be familiar with career exploration resources and information students can use to research occupational profiles and gather information specific to their state and region. Any labor market information and occupational profiles gathered from national data sources and websites should be supplemented with local information provided by IT faculty, and employers and industry experts in your region.

| Occupational Information | Sources |
|---|---|
| Projected wages, job openings, job growth | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ State Workforce Websites, such as Louisiana Works, WIN Job Centers▪ Local employers▪ Industry associations▪ Internet search of local job postings |
| Companies and industries that employ these types of occupations. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Departmental faculty & advisors▪ Career Services▪ One Stop/Workforce Center▪ Industry associations▪ Internet search of local job postings▪ State Workforce Websites, such as Louisiana Works, WIN Job Centers |
| Education, training, and credentials required, Career pathways and opportunities and requirements to advance from entry level. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Departmental faculty & advisors▪ Career Pathway Maps (examples from Bossier Parish Community College http://tinyurl.com/odcv6kv)▪ Local employers▪ Industry associations▪ Internet search of local job postings |

| Occupational Information | Sources |
|---|--|
| Day-to-day requirements of the job: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Skills, knowledge, and abilities ▪ Tasks and responsibilities ▪ Tools and technology used ▪ Working conditions and environment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Departmental faculty & advisors ▪ Local employers ▪ People employed in the field and targeted occupations. ▪ Occupational profiles searchable on career sites, such as ONET, Career Ones Stop ▪ IT Career Videos (see below) |

IT CAREER EXPLORATION RESOURCES

In addition to the labor market and occupational information listed above, Career One Stop provides some videos about occupations in the Information Technology Career Cluster:

- IT Cluster
wpc.2a70.edgecastcdn.net/002A70/CareerVideos/00-0000.11.mp4
- Computer Support Specialist
wpc.2a70.edgecastcdn.net/002A70/CareerVideos/15-1041.00.mp4
- Help Desk Technician
wpc.2a70.edgecastcdn.net/002A70/CareerVideos/15-1081.08.mp4
- Network and Computer Systems Technician
wpc.2a70.edgecastcdn.net/002A70/CareerVideos/15-1071.00.mp4

CompTIA, an IT industry trade organization provides:

- IT certification road maps and job descriptions
certification.comptia.org/why-certify/roadmap
- Video interviews with IT professionals provide insight into the day-to-day work in a variety of IT occupations.
www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLp7gmFJpNgC3Xxa6zEN8Oj4GNdUBWOWfv

The self-assessment tools that follow were inspired by tools developed by GetIntoEnergy.com and by College and Career Navigators at Brazosport College.

IS A CAREER IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) RIGHT FOR YOU?

TOOL # 1 DOES THIS DESCRIBE YOU?

| Check <i>Yes</i> – if this statement is generally true for you. Check <i>No</i> – if this statement is not generally true for you. | Yes | No |
|---|-----|----|
| A. I am interested in computers and how they work. | | |
| B. I like working with others to solve complex problems. | | |
| C. I like to take things apart and put them back together. | | |
| D. I like to solve problems and work on puzzles, etc., with precision and accuracy. | | |
| E. I like to teach or explain to others how to do something. | | |
| F. I am the person that my friends and family go to for help with their phones, computers, and appliances. | | |
| G. I like to solve complex technical problems by gathering information and asking questions. | | |
| H. I prefer to have a lot of variety in my work day rather than have a set routine. | | |
| I. I prefer a job where I interact with different people. | | |
| J. I like to learn about new technologies and applications. | | |
| K. I like to know what to expect from my work each day and prefer to have a routine. | | |
| L. I prefer to focus on a single task or project and work without interruptions or distractions. | | |
| M. I prefer a job where I can be physically active. | | |
| N. I prefer to work by myself rather than in a team. | | |
| O. I prefer situations where I don't have to interact with other people. | | |
| P. I like to figure things out on my own, without input from others. | | |
| Q. I like to work on tasks with clear instructions and directions, so I know what I need to do and how to do it. | | |
| R. I don't like tasks that require a lot of accuracy, precision, and attention to detail. | | |
| S. I prefer a job where I can be outdoors all or some of the day. | | |
| T. I prefer a job where I can keep to myself and work at my desk most of the time. | | |

Total the number of *Yes*'s for lines A – J (shaded) = _____

Total the number of *Yes*'s for lines K- T (unshaded) = _____

Circle the number that is greater.

If you answered **YES** to more of the **SHADED** questions (A-J):

Your interests and work preferences may be well suited to IT occupations:

- Talk with your advisor further about the knowledge, skills, and academic programs of study needed to get a job in IT.
- Ask for help researching the wages, projected industry growth, companies, and current and future job opportunities in your region.
- Learn about the employment opportunities that exist in your local area, as you make your decision to invest in your education and training.

If you answered **YES** to more of the **UNSHADED** questions (K-T):

Your interests and work preferences may not be well suited to IT occupations. Most people who work in Computer User Support and Network Support positions interact a great deal with other people. Their work is rarely the same from day to day, and they have to solve new problems with teams of people.

- Talk with your advisor to learn more about the IT field and whether it's right for you.
- Talk with people in the IT field and do more occupational research.
- Consider which IT occupations might best suit your interests and work preferences better than others. For example, a Computer Programmer is more likely to work at a desk all day on a single project for an uninterrupted period of time than a Computer User Support or Network Specialist. At the same time, a Programmer may also be required to work as a part of a team.

IS A CAREER IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) RIGHT FOR YOU?

TOOL # 2 PROS AND CONS

| Check <i>PRO</i> if this aspect of IT work IS attractive to you. Check <i>CON</i> if this aspect of IT work IS NOT attractive to you. | PRO | CON |
|---|-----|-----|
| 1. Many IT jobs involve working in teams and collaborating to solve problems. | | |
| 2. Help Desk Specialists need to remain calm and patient when customers/clients are frustrated and upset about a problem. | | |
| 3. Every day on the job can look different. An IT professional can't predict each day what sort of issues they'll be asked to work on or who they'll be working with. | | |
| 4. Technology changes very quickly so there is always something new to learn. | | |
| 5. Many IT jobs require the ability to teach and explain things clearly to people who don't know much about technology. | | |
| 6. Many IT professionals are like detectives trying to get to the root of a problem. | | |
| 7. IT jobs require careful attention to detail and precision. | | |
| 8. Help Desk professionals need to be comfortable asking many questions of people in different roles (including the boss). | | |
| 9. IT jobs require diagnostic and troubleshooting skills to direct focus on the source(s) of problems quickly and effectively to solve them. | | |
| 10. IT professionals must be highly motivated and able to work independently to respond to issues without clear direction or instructions. | | |
| 11. IT professionals need to be flexible and shift focus quickly from one task to another when needed. | | |
| 12. IT professionals typically work in a high-pressure, fast-paced environment. | | |
| 13. IT professions require effective and frequent verbal and written communication. | | |
| 14. IT professionals rarely sit alone at their desks all day. | | |

Total the number of *PROs* = _____

Total the number of *CONs* = _____

Circle the number that is greater.

If you had **more PROs** than **CONs**:

Your interests, and work preferences may be well suited to IT occupations. IT **may** be a career path for you.

- Talk with your advisor further about the knowledge, skills, and academic programs of study needed to get a job in IT.
- Ask for help researching the wages, projected industry growth, companies, and current and future job opportunities in your region.
- Learn about the employment opportunities that exist in your local area, as you make your decision to invest in your education and training.

If you had **more CONs** than **PROs**:

IT **may not** be a career path for you. Most people who work in Help Desk and Network Support positions interact a great deal with other people. Their work is rarely the same from day to day, and they have to solve new problems with teams of people

- Talk with your advisor to learn more about the IT field and whether it's right for you.
- Talk with people in the IT field and do more occupational research.
- Consider which IT occupations might best suit your interests and work preferences better than others. For example, a Computer Programmer is more likely to work at a desk all day on a single project for an uninterrupted period of time than a Computer User Support or Network Specialist. At the same time, a Programmer may also be required to work as a part of a team.