

I ndustry Snapshots

- The computer systems design and related services industry is among the economy's largest and fastest sources of employment growth. Employment increased by 616,000 over the 1994–2004 period, posting a staggering 8.0-percent annual growth rate. The projected 2004–14 employment increase of 453,000 translates into 1.6 million jobs, and represents a relatively slower annual growth rate of 3.4 percent as productivity increases and offshore outsourcing take their toll. ("Industry output and employment projections to 2014" by Jay M. Berman, Bureau of Labor Statistics)
- However, the main growth catalyst for this industry is expected to be the persistent evolution of technology and business' constant effort to absorb and integrate these resources to enhance their productivity and expand their market opportunities.
- Employment of computer and information systems managers is expected to grow between 18 to 26 percent for all occupations through the year 2014. (*Career Guide to Industries 2006-07*)

High Growth INDUSTRY PROFILE

W orkforce Issues

Outsourcing

There is concern about federal, state and local government policy proposals that may restrict overseas outsourcing where labor costs are lower. Some companies move jobs overseas to remain competitive by managing labor costs. Others are opening new markets overseas for their products and hiring local employees as an incentive and an accommodation.

Government resources

Some stakeholders believe that the government can offer tax relief to small businesses for training their incumbent workers toward IT certification.

Role of government in industry's workforce initiatives

Stakeholders also believe that government could serve as an honest broker for specific issues such as promotion and image, forecasting the future of the workforce and training needs. This could be a task for the public education system, where children could be introduced to the new, dynamic global workplace and learn more about the current business culture.

Skills and training

Over 90 percent of IT workers are employed outside the IT industry, which makes it necessary for them to have complementary training in their respective business sectors such as health care, manufacturing or financial services. Employers are also looking for well developed soft skills, transferable IT skills and adaptability in their workforce. Incumbent training programs may help in this respect, as could community colleges.

S kill Sets

(Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2006-07 Career Guide to Industries)

- For all IT-related occupations, technical and professional certifications are growing more popular and increasingly important.
- IT workers must continually update and acquire new skills to remain qualified in this dynamic field. Completion of vocational training also is an asset. According to a May 2000 report by the Urban Institute, community colleges play a critical role in training new workers and in retraining both veteran workers and workers from other fields.
- People interested in becoming computer support specialists generally need only an Associate degree in a computer-related field, as well as significant hands-on experience with computers. They also must possess strong problem-solving and analytical skills as well as excellent communication skills because troubleshooting and helping others are such vital aspects of the job. And because there is constant interaction on the job with other computer personnel, customers, and employees, computer support specialists must be able to communicate effectively on paper, using e-mail, and in person. They also must possess strong writing skills when preparing manuals for employees and customers.

E TA in Action

In June 2003, ETA announced the High Growth Job Training Initiative to engage businesses with local education providers and the local/regional workforce investment system to find solutions that address changing talent development needs in various industries.

In October 2005, the Community-Based Job Training Grants were announced to improve the role of community colleges in providing affordable, flexible and accessible education for the nation's workforce.

ETA is investing more than \$260 million in 26 different regions across the United States in support of the WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) Initiative. Through WIRED, local leaders design and implement strategic approaches to regional economic development and job growth.

WIRED focuses on catalyzing the creation of high skill, high wage opportunities for American workers through an integrated approach to economic and talent development.

These initiatives reinforce ETA's commitment to transform the workforce system through engaging business, education, state and local governments, and other federal agencies with the goal of creating a skilled workforce to meet the dynamic needs of today's economy.

I nvestments

ETA has invested over \$8,525,458 in the information technology industry. This includes three High Growth Job Training Initiative grants totaling \$7,816,982 and one multi-industry Community-Based Job Training Grant totaling \$708,476. Leveraged resources from all of the grantees total \$7,346,592.

R esources

For additional background information about the industry and details on the grants, information about employment and training opportunities and workforce development tools for employers, educators and workforce professionals, please visit: www.doleta.gov/BRG, www.careervoyages.gov, www.careeronestop.org, and www.workforce3one.org.