

Career Center Career Choices

Special Opportunities

Special Opportunities usually do not require technical training, although a few programming course can help to get that first job and to advance more rapidly. They do require familiarity and comfort with using computer systems and the Internet. Although they do not necessarily lead to other jobs requiring more technical experience, they can be personally and financially rewarding for a lifetime, with many opportunities for advancement into senior-level and management-level positions within that profession.

Business Analyst

Develops general specifications for a systems solution to a business need. In other words, business analyst learn about a company's specific business needs and 'translate' what the users want into a description of how the software must work (the specifications). Using these specifications as a guideline, the company's management then decides either to purchase a packaged solution or to have the software developed. Because business analysts understand both sides (technical and business sides), they provide an important communications link between the users and the programmers during the development and installation of the software. This work does not require technical training or experience but does require a good understanding of how computer systems work from the user's point of view. Business analysts may have developed this understanding by being experienced users of a business-related application system. This is not an entry-level position for someone entering the workplace for the first time, but it can be a great opportunity for an experienced businessperson to move into the technical side of the industry.

Technical Recruiter

Finds and hires people with computer-related experience and skills for computer-related positions. Technical recruiters analyze their clients' open positions (job requirements), and then use many resources, including the internet and telephone, to find the right people for those jobs - those who are qualified, available and interested. Technical recruiters then submit the resumes to the clients and make sure that the interview and hiring processes go smoothly. This job requires strong "people" skills but generally does not require technical experience or background to begin. Employers often prefer to train technical recruiters according to the company's approach and style.

Technical Salesperson

Specializes in selling hardware or software products, systems or services. These salespeople must have general sales ability and experience or training, but technical training or background is often not required. It is often provided by the employer or by a technical support person assigned to work with the salesperson.

Technical Writer

Writes the manuals and on-line help for users of computer systems. Technical writers organize the overall layout of the materials, interview the programmers, and work directly with the system to make sure that the documentation is accurate. As the system develops, the technical writers use software documentation tools (word processors or online help software), to write and edit the copy. If the product is an extremely technical product to be used by technicians, the writers may be required to have programming training or experience. However, most technical writers begin their careers with little technical experience or training, other than with the documentation tools they use.

Tester, Test Developer, Software Tester

Is responsible for designing and running test plan(s) for a software program or system. To run the test plan, the software tester may have to write programs to test the accuracy of the software (making sure it does what was designed to do) and then record the results. The software tester may also enter the test data manually. This is often an entry-level position. It can be filled by people with light programming training or experience but no computer-related college degree. It is an ideal place for those who want to learn the skills and gain the

no computer-related college degree. It is an ideal place for those who want to learn the skills and gain the experience to become a software developer.

Web Content Provider

Writes and edits copy for web sites. The web content provider presents ideas clearly, organizing information based upon the Web's unique structure, including hyperlink (linking logically from one page to another), and distilling ideas into digestible, page-sized chunks rather than long blocks of text. Although a working knowledge of HTML (the command language used for the Web) is helpful, neither technical education nor experience is required for this work. The ability to write and edit clearly, however, is a must.

Web Designer

Designs web pages and interfaces. The web designer creates attractive web pages and workable web links, using logical design principles and computer-based web design tools, such as Adobe PhotoShop/Illustrator ; Macromedia Dreamweaver. Although knowledge of these web tools is helpful, neither technical education nor experience is required for this work. However, artistic ability and creativity are required.