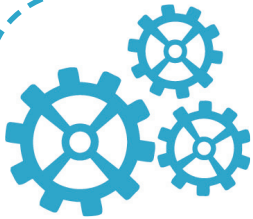# career choice
IT

What do IT professionals do?

With an IT workforce of about one million in the UK, it comes as no surprise that career opportunities in IT are remarkably diverse. The reliance of modern commerce on technology has meant that IT professionals can be found in almost all industries. What's more, the rapid development of technologies means that new career opportunities in IT are constantly popping up.

Unlike the time-honoured professions of medicine or law, IT has yet to develop a single recognised career route. Typically, though, IT careers are begun in development or service provision roles. From there, you will find opportunities to move into a variety of different jobs.

IT salaries

While entry-level IT salaries might seem modest, the rewards compare favourably with other professions the further you get into your IT career. An IT Trainee can expect to earn about £17,482, while a Junior Analyst should take home around £22,900. Mid-tier IT jobs can net you anywhere between £39,910 and £66,166, with top-level job salaries surging past the £100,000 mark.

However, there is a huge variety in IT salaries according to geographical location, job type and industry. For example, higher IT salaries are enjoyed by those working in the banking sector of the City of London.

IT Skills

In addition to technical know-how, the modern IT professional needs to have people skills. IT is crucial to more areas than almost any other subject, and as such, IT workers must be able to work well with others.

On a related note, IT recruiters favour candidates with strong business awareness. You must be able to demonstrate an understanding of how the IT department affects the business as a whole.

Routes into IT careers

The more traditional 'hard' IT jobs require degrees in computing, but you do not need an IT-related degree to enter the profession. Many IT employers are looking for the soft skills that come with having gone to university, and will often fund these graduates while they go on IT training courses.
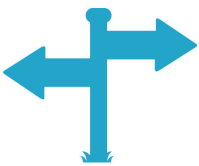
However, it is certainly possible to begin an IT career without a degree. You might work your way up from an IT helpdesk, for example. Large organisations sometimes allow their employees to transfer to an IT division, and will provide the requisite training.

IT employers

In brief: the IT profession encompasses a wide variety of career paths and entry points, and offers the potential for high earnings. It all depends on where you choose to work.

Alongside iconic brands like IBM, IT employers include the Big Four professional services firms (PwC, EY) as well as more pure IT service delivery businesses (SunGard). You could pursue a path in software development (Redgate), or implementing IT solutions in the financial arenas of banking (Bank of America Merrill Lynch, Barclays, RBS) and insurance (Direct Line Group).

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