



# St. Louis Occupation Brief

## Starting an Information Technology Career

**Information Technology (IT)** occupations are in high demand in the St. Louis area. IT professionals interact with every level of an organization's structure, and are drivers of innovation at most businesses. Technology now connects people and businesses on a global scale, and an unprecedented number of firms of all types and sizes need help with information technology products.

Over 41,000 people are employed in IT occupations in the St. Louis area and jobs are growing. From 2012-2022 IT jobs are projected to grow by 13.6%, compared to 9.4% for all occupations. Current demand is also high, with Real-Time Labor Analysis\* showing 24,500 job postings for IT careers in St. Louis over the year ending July 2014.

### Entry-Level Opportunities

Although many IT jobs require an associates or bachelors degree, there are opportunities for entry-level employment as well. *Computer User Support Specialists* and *Computer Operators* are two jobs that can often be pursued without a college degree. Over 7,000 people were employed as *Computer User Support Specialists* and *Computer Operators* in the St. Louis workforce region according to 2013 Occupational Employment Statistics (OES). Wages for *Computer User Support Specialists* and *Computer Operators* were both higher than the average wage for all occupations.

#### 2013 Average Annual Wages St. Louis WIA

All Occupations	\$46,751
Computer User Support Specialist	\$51,611
Computer Operators	\$47,013

Source: 2013 Occupational Employment Statistics

Current demand for entry-level IT occupations is high; with employers in a wide spectrum of industries hiring *Computer User Support Specialists* and *Computer Operators*. Over the year ending July 2014, there were 1,896 on-line job postings in 51 different industries for the two entry-level IT occupations.

#### Top Industries for Entry Level IT Occupations

NAICS Code	Industry	Job Openings
541	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	129
443	Electronics and Appliance Stores	125
424	Merchant Wholesalers, Nondurable Goods	66
622	Hospitals	54
524	Insurance Carriers and Related Activities	53
523	Securities and Other Financial Investments and Related Activities	46
336	Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	40
561	Administrative and Support Services	36
515	Broadcasting (except Internet)	34
519	Other Information Services	33

Source: Labor/Insight Jobs (Burning Glass Technologies), Aug. 01, 2013 - Jul. 31, 2014

#### Top Employers

##### Entry level IT Occupations

Best Buy - Geek Squad  
Monsanto  
The Boeing Company  
Charter Communications  
Scottrade Incorporated  
Thomson Reuters  
Oracle  
BJC Healthcare  
Levi Ray & Shoup Incorporated  
Enterprise Rent-a-Car

Source: Labor/Insight Jobs (Burning Glass Technologies), Aug. 01, 2013 - Jul. 31, 2014

## Skills and Certificates

Both basic and advanced computer skills, such as Microsoft Office and SQL, are requested by employers in on-line job ads. Mastering basic skills is common in all jobs and is essential in gaining entry-level employment and for continued career success. Several soft skills such as communication, customer service, and organizational skills rank in the top 10 requested skills for all IT occupations.

Certificates are a key component to a career in Information Technology. Certificates can be obtained without having to pursue the normal higher education path. IT training and certificates are available through community colleges, universities, and self guided online learning modules.

<b>Entry Level IT Occupations</b>	
<b>Top Baseline Skills</b>	
Communication Skills	Writing
Customer Service	Microsoft Windows
Troubleshooting	Microsoft Office
Organizational Skills	Microsoft Excel
Problem Solving	Research
<b>Top Software and Programming Skills</b>	
Microsoft Windows	Microsoft Powerpoint
Microsoft Office	Oracle
Microsoft Excel	LINUX
SQL	Microsoft Word
UNIX	Virtual Private Networking (VPN)
<b>Top Certifications</b>	
CompTIA Certified A+ Technician	
Microsoft Certified Systems Engineer (MCSE)	
CompTIA Network+ Certified	
Project Management Certification (E.G. PMP)	
Series 7 Financial	
Microsoft Certified Professional (MCP)	
Capability Model Maturity Integration (CMMI) Certification	
IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL)	
Cisco Certified Network Associate	
Microsoft Certified Desktop Support Technician	
<i>Source: Labor/Insight</i>	
<i>Aug. 01, 2013 - Jul. 31, 2014</i>	

The most common requested certificates for entry-level IT jobs are through CompTIA, Microsoft, and CISCO and include;

**Microsoft Technology Associate (MTA),  
Cisco Cert. Entry Networking Tech. (CCENT),  
CompTIA A+ Certificates.**

These beginning certificates can be obtained through specialized classroom training sessions, or online at the students own pace and schedule. The MTA certificate is recommended as a base certificate for people new to technology before they move on to other Microsoft certifications, such as Microsoft Certified Solutions Expert (MCSE).

Entry level certificates can be obtained with as little as 2-3 months of study and \$200-\$400, including the cost of testing fees and study materials. Testing centers for these certificates are located throughout the state, and offer testing in a variety of IT disciplines, at all levels of certification.

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*\*Data for this analysis has been extracted using Burning Glass Technologies Labor/Insight™ tool which collects information from over 17,000 web sources, including job boards, newspapers, and employer websites. Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) uses this data to compile and publish reports for the State and Labor Market Regions. While this analysis presents a broad picture of hiring activity and serves as a measure of labor demand, it does not capture openings that are filled through other networks*