

FROM ECONOMIST TO APPLICATIONS DEVELOPER: HOW TO MAKE THE SWITCH

Summary: Learn how to make the switch from economist to applications developer.



Question: I'm an economist who wants to change careers and move into the IT field. I have precious little in terms of computer-science skills, but I'd like to seek training and certification in Oracle to become an applications developer. Unfortunately, after speaking to more than two dozen Oracle practitioners, headhunters and placement professionals, I can't decide on the training and career path I should take. Any suggestions?

— *Arvind, Clinton, N.Y.*

Arvind: Since you're lacking a mentor or role-model whose example you can follow, it makes sense to gather a variety of opinions to sort through. You've obviously started down that path, but can expand your efforts. If your indecision is based on not knowing the types of opportunities that will be available depending on which route you take, spend time talking to employers (the folks who will make it all possible). Try attending several IT job fairs, where employers will be happy to discuss the expertise they're seeking, as well as what they'll pay for candidates based on their level of training. The shortage of many IT specialists is so acute, some employers may even pay for your training in return for a commitment from you to join them for a set period of time. Another suggestion is to go back to the Oracle practitioners you've met — and others they'll refer you to — and ask if they're really happy. Compare their answers to what you need to gain to be happy in your work life. A trend may appear that could help you select one career path over another.