

COMPUTER-SAVVY GRADS HAVE PLENTY OF OPTIONS

Summary: What career options do you have after completing your master's degree in computer science?



Question: I am a graduate student with a 4.0 grade-point average pursuing a master's degree in computer science. I can't decide what to do next. I wish someone could just tell me what all the options are so I could choose. How do I find the right career path?

Answer: The answer lies at the convergence of your personal goals and job-market availability. In the absence of a genie to grant your wish, the person most qualified to identify options and make the decision is you. Even generating the list of options will require your input. Self-reflection combined with occupational research will allow you to generate a list of options that represent your interests, as well as existing employment opportunities.

For starters, check all of the computer-related occupations listed in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook, which run the gamut from systems analysis and programming to web design and computer repair. Pay a visit to your friendly research librarian, browse your favorite bookstore and join an information-technology association to uncover additional resources. First-hand accounts from people talking about their daily work lives will offer realistic views to help narrow the professions you are considering.

As you think back on your classroom training, work experience, and free-time activities, consider which computer careers are most likely to tap your particular talents. Be sure to expand your search beyond IT companies. Almost every type of employer has a need for staff with varying degrees of computer savvy. Figure out what kind of organization and environment you are most likely to thrive in, and seek out the computer-related positions that fit your profile.

By the way, congratulations on the 4.0 G.P.A.

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