

WHY A SECOND MAJOR MAY BE WORTH THE EFFORT

Summary: Find out whether or not earning a double major in computer science is really worth it.



Question: I'm an undergrad and will have to declare my major soon. I know that I want an M.B.A. and will definitely major in management with a concentration in international business. My parents want me to minor or even double major in computer science. Although I'm confident that I'd be able to handle a minor or second major, I'm not sure that I want that kind of course load. Will my job prospects improve if I add a major or minor in computer science?

Answer: Mom and Dad have a point. A computer-science minor or major is a marketable specialty that will eventually distinguish your M.B.A. from all the others. For additional viewpoints, contact graduates who are now working to see what they'd do if they could set the clock back.

Before making a final decision, find out how much extra coursework the minor or double major will require. If you're confident that you can handle the added classes, go for it. Also consider two other "value-adds" to enhance your major: foreign-language courses and internships or co-op experience.

Anecdotally, my brother was earned a degree in economics but decided late in his college years to add a second major in computer science, delaying his graduation by a semester. Upon graduation, he was unable to find an economics-related job. Meanwhile, he received several offers for work in software firms. He took one of those offers and worked in the field for a couple months before finding a job where he could utilize his knowledge of economics and computer science. In his case, the double major was definitely worth it. While your experience may not be the same as his, it wouldn't be a bad idea to spring for that second major.