Careers in IT
Systems Development

The Systems Development Team

After the sales and marketing department has captured a customer, it is up to the Systems

Development team to carry out a series of tasks in order to produce a system to solve the customer's problem:

- The initial understanding of the business and the analysis of the problem requires *business analysts*
- Describing the new computer system or modifications to the old one, is carried out by *systems analysts*
- Designing the systems requires *systems designers*
- Designing and writing the code to achieve the solution is the work of *programmers or developers*
- Finally the installation and testing is completed by the development team in conjunction with the customer

In addition there are a number of specialist roles:

- To deliver a quality product on time and in budget you need a *project manager*
- Developers with specialist skills in techniques such as object orientation may be called *software engineers*
- The overall way in which systems fit together is determined by a *systems architect*

What do I need?

Some employers prefer to recruit school-leavers or take graduates and train them in IT on the job; others look only for graduates already trained and experienced in computing.

All the specialist software roles will require a degree or HND in Computing or a related subject.

For the more business orientated roles a course in computing is not essential, a degree in Business Studies may be useful. The ability to listen, communicate and think in a structured and organised fashion is more important than a specific qualification.

If you have taken a degree in a non-technical subject it is possible to undertake a post graduate course (full or part time) to learn computing skills.

Even if you have chosen an unrelated career it may be possible to move into IT. Determination can take you far and it may be possible to move sideways with an employer if you show interest and keep up with the ever-changing technology.

A Typical Day

The systems development team tend to work within a project structure, which means that work for the day will usually be planned around specific deliverables.

A typical day for a programmer would consist of a meeting with an analyst or designer to understand the requirements of a particular software module. This would be followed by translation into a specification, writing the code and doing some testing.

Pay and Prospects

There are no set pay scales in computing. The average graduate starts on £18,000. Pay will rise with experience and responsibility.

Sometimes there is a shortage of specific software skills and salaries can rise according to supply and demand.

With experience you can work your way up the promotion ladder. It may be necessary to move from company to company or become a self-employed consultant. Some developers move into training, education or technical writing.

Systems Development

Computing is essential to many areas: including business, education, and medicine. Mostly you will work in teams.

You will need to:

- Enjoy solving problems
- Communicate, so have skills in listening, speaking and writing
- Show attention to detail
- Enjoy making organisations or tasks more effective

Employers may be producers of computer systems (hardware or software), or even if it is not their main occupation, they will rely on IT to function effectively.

- Employers may be large or small
- You may be self-employed

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