

KNOWLEDGE CAFÉ THE IT EDUCATOR'S PARADOX

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Abstract

After some 10-15 years of well above average growth and pretty positive job perception, IT work has lost its attractiveness. Undoubtedly strongly influenced by the recent recession and the dot.com bubble, the field has seen layoffs, reduced salary increases and external threats, such as offshoring.

Possibly as a result of this, enrolment in IT-related programs at college and university has seen a significant decline, in some cases threatening faculty jobs and even program existence. Yet, labor market analysis and projections for the next decade for both the US and Canada suggest that IT job growth will continue to be well above the average employment growth in each country.

So what are the reasons for this apparent paradox and what can be done to resolve it? Projections say the jobs will be there, yet many students are not buying in. Are the projections correct? Are there other market dynamics we have not addressed? What kind of jobs will be in demand? Needing what skills? Are we providing the right kind of education and training?

This session will provide a forum to discuss some of these issues. Following the Knowledge Café* format, it will consist of a short (10-15 minute presentation) outlining the key issues and presenting some of the underlying demographics, followed by small group discussion and a plenary session.

The Café will be facilitated by Prof. Kenneth A Grant, of the School of Information Technology Management, Ryerson University, Toronto – who has been involved in a number of studies on IT labor market trends over the last 20 years.

*For those not familiar with the Knowledge Café concept, it is a knowledge-sharing technique that facilitates learning from others and developing a deeper shared knowledge of a specific topic or issue, through conversation. Ideally used in groups from about 15 to 50, most of the time is spent in small group discussion on assigned topics with plenary feedback at the end.