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Canada's Association of Information Technology (IT) Professionals

Resident Bloggers

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IT Labour Shortages, Jobs on the Rise: Need for Professionalism--professional certification

I'm seeing a rise in job demand and an IT labour shortage. Increased productivity, efficiency, collaboration, business agility, and globalization are all fueled by ICT adoption. We are now past the sector correction that occurred post Y2K and on the curve upwards. This bodes well for you and for IT in general. This also means there is increased need for professionalism or professional certification—in essence credentialing to move IT practitioners into a profession.

There is clearly a rising demand for business analysts and business intelligence specialists that speaks to the Canadian IT Manager blogs on being a [versatilist](#) or multi-specialist with business acumen. At INFORMATICS 2006, John Boufford, President of the Canadian Information Processing Society (CIPS), described how being a versatilist maps to the CIPS IT Body of Knowledge and professionalism. The CIPS I.S.P. (Information Systems Professional) professional designation is geared for these labour trends and the new demands placed by employers on IT professionals.

I was at the CIPS INFORMATICS symposium this past week where all these areas were explored and caught the keynotes and discussions highlighted in [Martin Slofstra's editorial](#) in [www.itbusiness.ca](#). I recommend you read the piece!

Here are excerpts from Martin's editorial:

Unlike previous skills shortages focused on technical skills, the current shortage will be in business-related IT occupations such as business analysts and directors of technical implementation.

"The other issue is IT complexity," said Dave Nikolejsin, CIO of the [province of B.C.](#) in an interview after his keynote. "We need people with 15 to 20 years experience who truly understand business and IT, and we don't have anybody in the pipeline."

Bruce Diemert, director of recruiting firm [Robert Half International](#)'s operations in Vancouver, confirmed there is need for IT people with soft skills, specifically in communicating, writing and speaking. What CIOs are really looking for, however, is "how well you work in at team" and anyone who can "bridge the gap between business and technology." "There is no shortage of technical skills. You get source this from anywhere in the world," he said. "But jobs such as business analysts and in areas like business intelligence are going begging."

Paul Swinwood, president of the [Software Human Resource Council](#), which tracks 27 different IT job categories, said that renewed warnings of skills shortages are not surprising.

John Boufford, vice-president [2006/2007 President] of [CIPS](#), said the industry faces a challenge in that many senior IT people with business backgrounds are retiring or leaving at a time when the industry really needs them. He says the association is looking at a number of ways to bolster the profession especially in the area of curriculum development. At the conference, CIPS announced a revamping of its professional designation for IT workers called the Information Systems Professional (ISP) by making it available to academics, IT leaders and "experienced IT professionals" (those who have experience but not a traditional IT degree.) Previously, the three groups were not eligible for the designation. CIPS also announced the creation of a Body of Knowledge and the revision of its Code of Ethics, which will be of great interest given increased awareness of governance and accountability, said Kerry Augustine, director of the IS Career Centre for [Great West Life](#) in Winnipeg. Unlike the Y2K problem when the industry was being reactive, the profession wants to be ready in areas of current compliance laws, ethical behaviour and risk management, or, for that matter, "anywhere you are dealing with the unknown," he said.

Best regards,
Stephen Ibaraki, FCIPS, I.S.P.

Published Friday, June 02, 2006 2:11 PM by [cdnitmqr](#)

Filed Under: [Stephen Ibaraki](#), [Guest Bloggers](#)

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Comments**# re: IT Labour Shortages, Jobs on the Rise: Need for Professionalism--professional certification**

Friday, June 02, 2006 7:45 PM by [Faye Lear](#)

I'm liking what I seeing here and Martin does a great piece writing about these events. Thank you to Martin. I want to hear more from cips about their work. It is the right time, right place, right moment in the industry for this kind of leadership.

re: IT Labour Shortages, Jobs on the Rise: Need for Professionalism--professional



John Oxley
Director IT Pro Evangelism
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certification

Monday, June 05, 2006 8:49 AM by [Stephen Ibaraki, FCIPS, I.S.P., sibaraki@cips.ca](#)

Faye,

Your analysis hits the mark: and I would add, the right time for CIPS (pronounced KIPS with a hard "C").

I recommend this link to delve into the details of the I.S.P.:
<http://www.cips.ca/standards/isp/>

CIPS also has a bi-weekly newsletter which discusses issues impacting professionals and the industry plus news for our members:
<http://www.cips.ca/news/>

I'm often asked, Who is CIPS?
CIPS is the largest, oldest, and most influential "Canadian" voice of the IT practitioner and a strong advocate of professionalism.

With its nearly 50-year history, CIPS is a founding member and board member of the IFIP (International Federation of Information Processing) which consists of the official IT societies in more than 60 countries. Moreover CIPS holds two board seats with the international US-based ICCP (Institute for the Certification of Computing Professionals); an affiliate membership with the South East Asia Regional Computer Federation; holds formal ties with the British, Australian, and New Zealand Computer Societies; has relationships with major associations, and accreditation groups. CIPS is also very well respected globally and for this reason CIPS was granted and then hosted the biennial IFIP World Computing Congress in 2002. With ties to this organization (IFIP) and to major government, industry, and academic bodies, the installation of new initiatives goes through a rigorous due diligence process since what CIPS does has implications that go far beyond the society. For example, actions CIPS' takes can affect new government legislation, international trade law, academic programs, employment standards, relations with other professional bodies, new industry initiatives, and even items like the GATS agreement and the EPA (Emergency Preparedness Act). CIPS also has the only government legislated professional designation (called the I.S.P.—Information Systems Professional) akin to the designations found in the accounting, legal, medical, and engineering professions. The I.S.P. (Information Systems Professional) designation/certification from CIPS integrates computer science, information systems, business, and demonstrated high-end professional-level practice and development. Moreover, CIPS has an accreditation program for universities and colleges. 44% of the membership are managers and officers in organizations and the membership represents more than 2000 corporations, government agencies, and other entities. In addition, CIPS hosts the largest educational professionalism conference in Canada for the IT Industry: INFORMATICS.

CIPS' long history integrating with all elements: IT professional, industry, education, media, and government provide a past strategic foundation for enabling the success of IT and business professionals, corporations and organizations.

Thank you,
Stephen Ibaraki, FCIPS, I.S.P.

re: IT Labour Shortages, Jobs on the Rise: Need for Professionalism--professional certification

Tuesday, June 06, 2006 6:29 PM by [Stephen Ibaraki, FCIPS, I.S.P., sibaraki@cips.ca](#)

(May 28, 2005)--The Canadian Information Processing Society (CIPS) announced the revamping of a professional designation for Information Technology (IT) workers. The Information Systems Professional (I.S.P.) of Canada designation is being strengthened and is now available to academics, IT leaders and experienced IT professionals, three groups of IT workers that were not eligible for the designation previously.

"The need for an IT designation that acknowledges senior executives and educators as well as the broad range of IT experts in our profession is vital in meeting today's technology demands. Considering the potential technology mishaps that can occur and may even endanger lives, these IT leaders need to take a leadership role in ensuring that those they direct and mentor act ethically and have the necessary education and experience to practice...and that they themselves are continuously keeping their IT knowledge current," said Dennis Hulme I.S.P., CIPS President (2005-2006).

CIPS will officially launch the new I.S.P. designation program during I.S.P. Week (October 16-23, 2006). While CIPS puts the finishing touches on the program, the association is starting a campaign to educate the industry about the benefits of the improved designation, starting at the INFORMATICS IT conference (May 28 to May 30, 2006).

Other key improvements to strengthen the I.S.P. designation include the creation of a Body of Knowledge and the revision of the Code of Ethics:

The CIPS Body of Knowledge is a tool to help employers to accurately assess the technical skills of IT workers. This will help companies to plan work assignments and help select the most appropriate employees for their needs.

The CIPS Code of Ethics is a newly revised guide to professional conduct for today's standards. The Code is designed to help guide IT workers in maintaining the highest level of ethical conduct, standards of practice and integrity with respect to their IT activities.

"I believe the new and improved I.S.P. designation, the Body of Knowledge and Code of Ethics, will help address current compliance laws, encourage ethical behaviour, help mitigate technology risk, and ensure that best security practices are followed," said Kerry Augustine I.S.P., a Director at Great West Life in Winnipeg.

Under the enhanced I.S.P. designation, there will be three new qualifications for IT workers:

New Qualification #1: Established Academics – This qualification is aimed at educators in Canadian universities or equivalent.

New Qualification #2: IT Leaders – This qualification is directed to senior IT leaders who are responsible for IT strategies, resources, and operations at their organization.

New Qualification #3: Established IT Professionals – This qualification is aimed at established IT professionals who possess professional IT experience but may not hold a traditional IT degree.

The new I.S.P. designation qualifications still maintain the high standards of the designation.

"We strongly urge chief technology and information officers to become I.S.P. holders under the new qualification #2: IT leaders. They need to lead by example. The designation is a way for them to demonstrate to their customers, clients and the public that their IT departments meet the highest of standards," added Hulme.

The I.S.P. is the only designation for IT professionals recognized by law in Canada. It was introduced in 1989 by CIPS, Canada's association of IT professionals and is legislated as a self regulating designation in six provinces: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Other provinces are working towards similar legislation through their provincial government.

Holders of the I.S.P. designation possess the education and experience to practice in the field of IT. Holders also abide by a Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice and are required to keep their professional knowledge current.

For more information about the I.S.P. designation, Body of Knowledge and Code of Ethics, visit the CIPS National Web site: www.cips.ca or www.cips.ca/standards.

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