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# Top 10 Skills in Demand in 2010

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## Introduction

In the Global Knowledge/TechRepublic 2010 Salary Survey, conducted at that end of last year, one of the questions put to respondents was "What skill set will your company be looking to add in 2010?" The skills listed by respondents include the perennial favorites: security, network administration, and Windows administration. Also included are virtualization/cloud computing and Web development. Meanwhile, an old favorite, business analysis, makes a come back. Here's the complete list, with the No. 1 skill listed being in the highest demand.

## 1. Project Management

As we emerge from the recession, organizations aren't likely to go back to the go-go days of throwing money at IT initiatives or taking risks and deploying without careful thought and planning. Organizations are putting pressure on IT to only implement projects that can show real return-on-investment. The first step to achieving a good ROI is professional project planning and implementation.

Project management skills often appear in top 10 skills lists, perhaps because some organizations got their fingers burned in the 1990s through the poor implementation of IT projects such as enterprise resource planning initiatives. But even though the profession is mature (in IT terms), project managers still have work to do to advance their status within organizations. According to an article on the Project Management Institute Web site, project managers still have to develop their people skills, organizational leadership, and individual professionalism.

## 2. Security

It's a never-ending game of cat and mouse for security professionals and 2009 proved to be another fun filled year. According to Symantec's Security and Storage Trends to Watch report, the number of spam messages containing malware increased nine-fold to represent more than 2% of e-mails, while other criminals manipulated people's love of social networking sites to launch attacks. Twitter, for example, spent much of 2009 battling DDoS and other attacks. Meanwhile, top headlines, such as the H1N1 flu and the death of Michael Jackson were used by criminals to lure people to download malware.

Symantec predicts more of the same in 2010, warning that attackers will continue to use social engineering to get to consumers' sensitive data, and criminals will take Windows 7 as a challenge for seeking and exploiting vulnerabilities in the new platform. Mac and smartphones will also be targeted more by malware authors, Symantec says.

Despite the economic challenges of '09, organizations continued to hire security pros. The most sought-after security skills were information risk management, operations security, certification and accreditation, security management practices, and security architecture and models, according to a survey last year of 1,500 U.S.-based security pros by security certification provider ISC2. 2010 is expected to be another busy year from security professionals.

### 3. Network Administration

Networking administration skills never lose their luster. It's the second most sought after skill in the Global Knowledge survey and it will be the top skill sought by CIOs in the first quarter of 2010, according to a survey of IT chiefs by Robert Half Technology. In 2010, organizations are expected to upgrade to Windows Server 2008 R2 and the Windows 7 client, and perhaps install Exchange Server 2010 and SharePoint 2010. Enterprises are going to need network administrators to ensure network traffic continues to move without a hitch.

Meanwhile, Cisco hopes to push more data-intensive traffic onto corporate networks. Video is a key focus for Cisco in 2010 as it works to finalize its control of video conferencing maker Tandberg and through its 2009 purchase of Pure Digital, developer of the Flip video camera. At the end of last year, Cisco introduced two TelePresence certifications: the Cisco TelePresence Solutions Specialist for midcareer voice or networking engineers seeking to specialize in the planning, design and implementation of Cisco TelePresence; and TelePresence Installation Specialist aimed at installation technicians.

### 4. Virtualization – Cloud

The projected cost savings and efficiencies are no-brainers for organizations seeking to implement virtualization and cloud computing. With the cloud computing space now taking shape it's difficult for enterprises to find pros with substantial relevant experience. Instead companies are drawing expertise from a range of IT skill sets, including storage, networks and desktop, according to a Network World article. Initially companies will set up cross-functional teams to buy and implement virtualization, but eventually cloud computing will be an expected skill set of systems administrators. In a few years, it could even be a standard skill set of all IT pros because it touches different aspects of IT.

For details about virtualization certifications from leading virtualization software vendors VMware, Citrix and Microsoft, see Global Knowledge's Top IT Certifications in Demand Today newsletter of June 2009.

### 5. Business Analysis

Business analysis roles were commonplace in many organizations in the 1990s when big projects, such as enterprise resource planning initiatives, required the critical thinking that business analysts could provide. But as businesses began moving at a faster pace, business analysis fell by the wayside. Factors such as the economic downturn and regulatory compliance have forced companies to take a step back and to think through business problems and their solutions, and business analysis is making a comeback, as a result. Kathleen Barret, president of the International Institute of Business Analysis says the discipline is a phoenix rising.

The IIBA describes the job of a BA as a “liaison among stakeholders in order to elicit, analyze, communicate, and validate requirements for changes to business processes, policies, and information systems.” IT pros are good candidates for BA jobs because they have a broad perspective of a company’s business, says Barret. There are three types of BAs: enterprise BAs who identify opportunities for business change and defines the work to be done; transition BAs who fine-tunes the plans; and project BAs who work on project teams that implement the changes. Annual salaries average around \$75,000 with enterprise and transition analysts earning more, Barret says.

For more about business analysis, see the IIBA’s *Guide to the Business Analysis Body of Knowledge*.

## 6. Business Process Improvement

With project management and business analysis skills appearing in this skills list, it’s no surprise that business process improvement skill is also here. Business process improvement and business analysis go hand-in-hand. Business analysts identify areas for improvements to business processes, while business process improvement or management pros use BPM techniques and technologies to help companies optimize their business processes.

A recent BPM survey by IT researchers, the Aberdeen Group says the top reasons business are driving BPM activity are the need to reduce operating costs and to improve cash flow. However, the top barrier to adoption was the lack of knowledge about BPM. According to Gartner, among the competencies required for successful BPM initiatives include process skills, tools and process assets, and transformation skills.

To learn more about BPM, go to the Web site of the Business Process Management Initiative (BPMI.org), which promotes the standardization of common business processes; and the BPMInstitute.org, which describes itself as a peer-to-peer exchange for business process management professionals.

## 7. Web Development

If you are—or you know friends who are—addicted to the FarmVille game on Facebook you’ll know the power of Web development. In just a few short months, FarmVille’s popularity has spread across the globe as Facebook fans tend to their farms and purchase virtual goods. The game, including others by FarmVille developer Zynga, has netted the start-up more than 200 million monthly unique users for its online apps. One financial analyst reckons Zynga could be valued at \$1 billion if it were to go IPO in mid-2010.

Developing Facebook games is just one extreme of the vast Web development spectrum. Building iPhone apps could also be very profitable, writes Web developer and blogger Glen Stansberry. As moderator of the Freelance Switch job board, Stansberry listed other popular Web development skills including Framework knowledge, widget development, content management system customizations (for small businesses looking to create a unique look to their standard Wordpress and Drupal blogs), and Javascript Plugin creation.

## 8. Database Management

Databases are the hearts of key business systems that drive payroll, manufacturing, sales, transaction processing, and more. Programmers must be able to build programs that quickly and efficiently interface with the

database management system (DBMS), while database administrators “must be able to bring the full power of database features to bear on business problems”, writes Oracle- and IBM-certified DBA Howard Fosdick in his whitepaper Database Skills Availability: Critical to Your Selection of Database. “DBA expertise can be the Achilles’ heel of database projects - many IT projects have failed due to the inability to secure DBA talent or successfully address DBA issues,” he adds.

The major database vendors are Oracle, IBM and Sybase. Oracle runs three main certification programs for database professionals. Oracle Certified Associate is the first rung of the Oracle certification ladder. Next is the flagship Oracle Certified Professional (OCP) credential, which certifies an individual’s ability to manage, develop, or implement enterprise-wide databases and other software. Oracle Certified Master (OCM) is Oracle most advanced accreditation. IBM offers a dizzying array of certifications surrounding its DB2 product series. The main credentials are IBM Certified Database Associate, Database Administrator, Application Developer, and Advanced Database Administrator. Sybase has two sets of certifications for its Adaptive Server Enterprise product: ASE Administrator Associate and ASE Administrator Professional; and ASE Developer Associate and ASE Developer Professional.

## 9. Windows Administration

As previously mentioned, Microsoft shops are expected in 2010 to upgrade to Windows Server 2008 R2 and the Windows 7 client, and perhaps install Exchange Server 2010 and SharePoint 2010 as well. Windows administration skills is going to be key for many enterprises implementing and maintaining existing and upgraded systems.

Microsoft Windows Server 2008 certifications at the MCTS level cover configurations for Active Directory, networking, and applications. Certifications available for the MCITP level are Server 2008 Server Administration, Enterprise Administration. In a November blog posting in Microsoft’s Born to Learn blog, the company wrote that the first of its Windows Server 2008 virtualization exams would be entering beta soon. The exams will cover server virtualization, desktop virtualization, and virtualization administration. Windows 7 pros can certify as MCTS: Windows 7 – Configuration, and MCITP: Enterprise Desktop Administrator 7.

## 10. Desktop Support

Our recent article “Top Certifications in Demand Today” listed desktop support as a hot skill. In Global Knowledge’s 2010 salary survey, it was named as the 10th most sought-after skill this year. In the June article, we quoted Robert Half Technology Executive Director Dave Willmer as saying that businesses will need desktop support personnel to support new workers as organizations begin hiring as the economy improves. The introduction of Microsoft Windows 7 is also expected to generate additional interest.

Microsoft currently provides the MCITP: Consumer Support Technician, and MCITP: Enterprise Support Technician certifications, but they are based on Windows Vista. Microsoft, in its Born to Learn blog, in November said that it is working on a MCITP: Windows 7, Enterprise Desktop Support Technician certification. Prospective candidates are advised to prepare for 680: Win 7, Configuring and 685: Win 7, EDST.

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## About the Author

Linda Leung is a senior IT journalist with 20 years' experience editing and writing news and features for online and print. She has extensive experience creating and launching news Web sites, including most recently independent communities for customers of Cisco Systems and Microsoft. As an experienced journalist in the U.S. and the U.K., she has led teams of journalists and industry experts to produce compelling content delivered via blogs, news, features and podcasts for all levels of technology executives.