



Amy E. Hissom

Career Plan

**Survey of Information
Technology**

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1. Introduction

This paper is a compilation of information concerning the career fields I am interested in, my current skills and knowledge, interviews with individuals who have careers in Information Technology, my career and professional goals, and the plan of action I will take to reach my goals.

"Whatever you vividly imagine, ardently desire, sincerely believe, and enthusiastically act upon... must inevitably come to pass!" -**Paul J. Meyer**

2. Fields of Interest

The following is a summary of each field I am interested in pursuing. I already have some hands-on experience in these particular areas of concentration. I have not yet decided as to whether I want to use these skills to offer services, become a teacher of them, or both. This is something that I will decide throughout the growth of my career.

2.1 Website/Graphic Design

Description: Graphic Designers are those who plan, analyze, and create visual solutions to communication problems. They decide what the most effective way is to get a message across in print, electronic, and film media. They do this by using a variety of methods such as color, type, illustration, photography, animation, and various print and layout techniques for magazines, newspapers, marketing brochures, and logos, along with many other types of publications. Some even develop multimedia projects and interactive media to be used in Web pages. The best opportunities are

available to graphic designers who hold a bachelor's degree, have knowledge of computer design software, and have experience with Web site design and animation.

Requirements: Most entry-level and advanced graphic design positions require a bachelor's of fine arts degree. The curriculum to obtain this particular degree includes Principles of Design, Computerized Design, Studio Art, Commercial Graphics Production, Printing Techniques, and Web Site Design. To be a good graphic designer, it is best to have education in Liberal Arts or courses in Art History, Writing, Psychology, Sociology, Foreign Languages, Cultural Studies, Marketing, and Business. Graphic designers must be able to communicate effectively to a variety of audiences. Also, these courses are most useful in helping designers work effectively with the content of their work.

Notes: Because of the demand for graphic design for advertisers, publishers, and computer design firms, employment for this particular field is expected to increase as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2014. Statistics show that in the year 2005, graphic designers with ownership or partnership interests in a firm or who were principals of the firm in some other capacity, were the highest paid, and earning \$100,000.

2.2 Desktop Publishing

Description: Desktop Publishers use computer software to combine visual graphic elements such as photographs and charts, along with text and/or numerical data to create publication-ready material. Some projects may require the publisher to create graphics or convert photographs and drawings into digital format so that they can

manipulate them. Desktop publishers design page layouts, create proposals, develop presentations, typeset, and do color separation. They produce materials such as business cards, newsletters, magazine pages, brochures, calendars, restaurant menus, and so on.

Requirements: You can qualify as a Desktop Publisher by taking classes or completing certificate programs at vocational schools. Most certificate programs last about a year. Some desktop publishers develop the necessary skills through on-the-job training. Other requirements include good communication skills, basic computer skills, and a strong work ethic. Artistic ability is also a plus.

Notes: You don't necessarily need a degree to become a Desktop Publisher, but those who do obtain a degree, have a better chance at being hired. In the year 2004, statistics showed that the highest paid Desktop Publisher made over \$52,000.

3. Interviews

I had the opportunity to talk with three very positive and successful individuals who I would most definitely like to have on my board of directors. The following are summaries of my interviews with each one of them.

3.1 Bill Crawford, Director of Information Systems, Hall China Company

Bill Crawford is a friend of mine through the Friends of Thompson Park Committee. He is also the Director of Information Systems for the Hall China Company, which is located in East Liverpool, Ohio. Mr. Crawford told me that his first IT job was as a Systems Analyst. He told me that back in the early 80's that was the hot job

description. He said he chose it because it was semi-local and good IT jobs were hard to come by. When asked about the requirements needed to get to where he is today he told me that as usual, education is important, but there is no substitute for experience. It also helps to be responsible, reliable, diligent and personable.

Mr. Crawford told me that the physical conditions of his workplace provide a safe, secure, climate-controlled, comfortable office environment. He stated that working with computers typically means comfortable conditions year-round, which is a definite plus. He said that being outdoors is nice, but you don't find many computer installations outside! He said that he works very consistent hours, 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday, lunch from 12 to 1. Hall China is a small family-owned business, and he is the entire IT staff, but said hopefully he has the potential for advancing into upper management while still running the IT department.

When I asked him what satisfaction and enjoyment he gains from his job based on the people he works with and his overall attitude and feel of the company he works for, he told me that being able to help and teach others who don't have the same technical skills is rewarding. And working for a small family-owned company perhaps has its advantages over a similar position in a Fortune 500 company.

When asked if he had reached his goals in his chosen career, he said he is content, but certainly feels there is more he could achieve career-wise. He told me that opportunities are limited in this geographical area, but family and friends are sometimes more important than career goals, at least that's his philosophy.

3.2 Margarite Nedreberg, Adjunct Instructor of Mathematics, Visual Basic and C++ Programming, Kent State University and Youngstown State University

Mrs. Nedreberg is my instructor in Visual Basic programming at Kent State University's East Liverpool Campus. She is a very personable, knowledgeable, and caring lady who I feel is an inspiration to all students who have had the opportunity to attend any one of her classes. To get where she is today in her career, she has obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education, a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics, and a Master's Degree in Mathematics with Computer Science concentration.

When asked about her working conditions, she stated that the physical conditions of the classrooms she utilizes are great; however, she does miss having her own office at Kent State University. Mrs. Nedreberg told me that the people she works with are very pleasant and care very much about the students' success. She is largely autonomous in her position, meaning she is pretty much her own boss. She explained to me that she is given a task to teach and that she is to teach that task using the required textbook and whatever other means necessary. She also explained to me that each class she teaches provides for something new to her as well. This is because, being an instructor of programming languages for beginners, she must also keep up-to-date with operating systems, applications, computing environments, and so on. She told me that keeping up-to-date has been the most challenging part of her career, which started twelve years ago.

Mrs. Nedreberg told me that she started out substituting and that she has made more money being a part-time teacher opposed to being a full-time substitute. Although she has set hours for the classes she teaches, she spends a lot of her own time

preparing for those classes. She is very dedicated in her job. I asked her what satisfaction and enjoyment she gained from her job working in both colleges. She replied by telling me that she always enjoyed working in academia more than public schools, but above all, she enjoys the reward she gains in knowing that she made a difference in someone else's life. With tears in her eyes, she talked of a student she had years ago, when he was just starting out. She followed him through his career and told me that he recently obtained his PhD. Once he obtained his PhD, she was surprised with a visit from him. Listening to her story made me wonder if maybe I would be as good a teacher as she is. She has definitely made me think about my career goals. I just might change them yet! What could be more rewarding than knowing you made an inspirational difference to someone else? Perhaps maybe I could teach Web site and graphic design instead of offering them as a service. This is definitely something I need to think about!

Mrs. Nedreberg's advice to those who want to pursue a career in teaching should definitely obtain a PhD. When asked if she had reached her career goals, she said yes! She said that although she could use her knowledge in industry, she is a teacher first!

3.3 Shawn Golden, Professor of Computer Technology, Kent State University

Not only has Shawn Golden been a great instructor for me, but he has also been a great help for my career by being my advisor, and I also consider him a wonderful friend. Mr. Golden has helped me so much by referring me for a variety of jobs. When speaking with Shawn Golden I asked him what particular career in Information Technology did he choose and why. He told me that he chose to teach about

computers. He said at first he had planned on teaching math, but the opportunity to teach computer appeared and he took it. He says he is happy that he gets to learn about new technologies and then teach others about them. He explained to me that a Master's Degree in some area of computers is required to become a Professor of Computer Technology.

Mr. Golden works in an educational environment where he sometimes teaches in a traditional classroom, but sometimes his classes are held online. I then asked him how the physical environment of his position plays a factor in his overall career enjoyment. He told me that the physical environment of teaching has actually changed since he began ten years ago. More and more classes seem to be taught online. In the future, it will be interesting to him to see if this trend continues. When asked what satisfaction and enjoyment he gains from his job based on the people he works with and his overall attitude and feel of the company he works for, he said he enjoys when he can inform others of an idea that he knows will be of use to them in their classes or for their future or current career.

Mr. Golden told me that he feels that he works longer hours in some areas than others because he has to constantly be learning new programs and technologies in order to teach them. He often jokes that he should have been an English teacher since the language rarely changes. He says that actually, anyone who teaches needs to always be changing their approach to the profession. My last question to Mr. Golden was whether or not he had reached his goals in his career. He replied by saying that he hopes to earn his PhD within the next five years, but he never wants to be "satisfied"

with his career. He said that this is because he thinks he will always be learning new ideas and will always want to move up in positions and responsibilities.

4. Career and Professional Goals

My career goal is to obtain the knowledge needed to become a highly qualified Web site and graphic design artist with the added ability to create desktop publications and digital photography. My professional long-term goal is to use what I have learned and will learn to build my own business or firm that offers these particular services to a variety of individuals, businesses, and organizations and/or to become an instructor in these particular areas.

5. Current Skills and Interests

I am the kind of person who enjoys being methodical, conscientious, and efficient. I also enjoy work where I have to set a high standard for myself and for others. I take pride in accuracy and in the ability to pay attention to details. While I enjoy being organized, I also like the creative side of things. I prefer work environments that are structured, ordered and well-organized. I enjoy the computer based aspects of most work situations along with occupations that have a creative aspect to them. The following is a list of my current skills and interests.

- Kent State University Sophomore Student Majoring in Computer Technology
- East Liverpool Campus Computer Technology Club- *Member/Webmaster*
- Friends of Thompson Park Committee – thompsonpark.org – *Webmaster*
- Freelance Web site design, digital photography, and desktop publishing

6. Action Plan

- Bachelor's Degree/Master's Degree
 - Continue with my education through Kent State University
 - Research what requirements are needed to become and instructor of Web site and graphic design
- Job Experience
 - Continue freelance work in Web site design, desktop publishing, and digital photography
 - Continue volunteer design and maintenance of the Thompson Park and Computer Technology Club Web sites.
 - Seek internships through Kent State University and word-of-mouth
- Networking
 - Join campus organizations for computer and information technology students
 - Continue building my online portfolio

7. Sources of Research

1. www.bls.gov
2. mapping-your-future.org
3. www.lmabayarea.org, Creating Your Career Plan
4. The IT Career Builder's Toolkit, Matthew Moran: Cisco Press, Indianapolis, Indiana; 2005
5. Bill Crawford, Director of Information Systems; Hall China Company
6. Margarite Nedreberg, Adjunct Instructor, KSU and YSU
7. Shawn Golden, Professor of Computer Technology, KSU