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How not to get "offshored"

By [Robert L. Mitchell](#)
Mar 31 2006 - 12:12pm

Here's my three-step weekend reading program for IT folks who are concerned about offshoring and IT careers.

FIRST STOP: THE ACM REPORT

IT professionals interested in keeping ahead of the offshoring wave will want to read through the recently released [Globalization and Offshoring of Software](#), written by the [Association for Computing Machinery's \(ACM\) Job Migration Task Force](#). The executive summary is a **must read** for employers and IT professionals alike.

In addition to giving advice, the report, a collaborative effort by a global team of industry professionals and academics, includes some sobering statistics. But it interprets those critically rather than taking them at face value. For example,

"Some reports suggest that 12 to 14 million jobs are vulnerable to offshoring over the next 15 years. This number is, at best, an upper limit on the number of jobs at risk. To date, the annual job loss attributable to offshoring is approximately 2 to 3 percent of the IT workforce. But this number is small compared with the much higher level of job loss and creation that occurs every year in the United States."

Another point states that "Thirty percent of the world's largest 1,000 firms are offshoring work" and the diversity of work being offshored is increasing to include higher skill jobs in areas such as research - but most companies that do so also retain strong research operations in their home country.

The keys to survival include:

- Obtaining a strong foundational education
- Learning the technologies used in the global software industry
- Keeping skills up to date throughout your career
- Developing good teamwork and communication skills
- Becoming familiar with other cultures
- Managing careers so as to choose work in industries and job occupations less likely to be automated or sent to a low-wage country.

The last three items are what most people need to focus on. But the real trick is the last item: figuring out what industries and job occupations are "safe" isn't always obvious.

SECOND STOP: THE SIM STUDY

Read Eric Lai's Computerworld story, [You can lower the odds of being outsourced](#). Bottom line: "A [job] candidate's degree and technical skills might land him the interview. But his entrepreneurial skills and business savvy set him apart from the pack and bode best for his career, according to a new report released this week by the [Society for Information Management \(SIM\)](#)." You can download the executive summary for "The Information Technology Workforce: Trends and Implications 2005-2008" [here](#) and members have access to the full study. Perhaps it's time to join if you're not already a member.

THIRD STOP: THE AFCOM PRESENTATION

As I mentioned earlier in the week, [AFCOM's Data Center Institute](#) also released its own study, which was presented in a keynote speech at Data Center World the week of March 19th. View the full presentation in PDF format [here](#). I mentioned this study and a Computerworld story about it, in my recent blog, [The IT employment paradox](#).

Some key elements:

- By 2015 the qualified pool of qualified, senior level technical and management professionals will shrink by 45%.
- By 2010 more than half of all data centers will have to relocate to new facilities or outsource some applications.
- 55% of all IT workers with mainframe experience are over 50, yet 90% of companies have zero strategy in place to deal with this problem. (The presentation sources this to Meta

About Robert L. Mitchell

Robert Mitchell is a National Correspondent for Computerworld

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Group and was AFCOM's member survey. This subject will be part of an upcoming feature I am working on. That story - a follow up to the feature [Morphing the Mainframe](#) - will appear in the April 24th issue of Computerworld.)

If you do your reading this weekend I won't guarantee that you'll have all of the answers, but you'll certainly have a good grip on the issues and trends that could affect your career going forward.

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[April 1 foolishness \(and fact hunt\)](#)

from Computerworld Blogs on Mon, 04/03/2006 - 11:01am

If it's Monday, it must be IT Blogwatch, in which we miss April Fools day ... or did we? Not to mention some uncommon facts (many of which are, surprisingly, true) ...

[New jobs to get ready for](#)

from Offshore, Onshore: The Fuss about Outsourcing on Fri, 03/31/2006 - 4:08pm

Time for some predictions.... The Association for Computing Machinery says that some of the ways to decrease your chances of getting "offshored" are "obtaining a strong foundational education, learning the technologies used in the global software industry

[Technology and business makes a balanced match](#)

from Computerworld Blogs on Fri, 03/31/2006 - 1:31pm

Finally there's agreement that successful technology management requires more than just technology skills.

This article at Computerworld details a report released by the Society for Information Management that shows organizations are desperate for IT peo

[The IT employment paradox](#)

from Computerworld Blogs on Fri, 03/31/2006 - 1:14pm

In Aging Workers, Automation Portend IT Hiring Problems, Pat Thibodeau points out a paradox in the IT hiring space. An AFCOM study of 179 IT managers revealed that:

Nearly half said it takes takes them a minimum of three months to fill senior-level tec

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Offshoring or Oustourcing

Offshoring or Oustourcing for that matter is not something that is going away in the years to come. Though that is the case, practicing these methods that you mentioned could be a great help in order for a person not to lose a job because of such business trend.

By [elaine](#) (not verified) at Mon, 04/03/2006 - 9:17am | [reply](#)

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