Why should young people consider careers in Information Technology?

Meaningful Work

Information Technology (IT) professionals work on creative teams to develop cutting-edge products and solutions that save lives, solve health problems, improve the environment, and keep us connected. IT technicians develop information systems and keep computers and networks operating. IT jobs are available in nearly every industry, even some that may surprise you, such as art, finance, healthcare, and entertainment.

Security and High Salaries through a Variety of Education Pathways

The U.S. Bureau of Labor predicts that IT jobs will be among the fastest-growing and highest-paying over the next decade. These jobs typically offer higher salaries than other jobs requiring similar levels of education. Plus, students can obtain these high-demand positions through a range of educational pathways, including military experience, professional certifications, and 2-year, 4-year, and graduate degrees.

Flexibility and Variety

Many IT careers offer flexible hours or telecommuting, making it easier to blend career and personal life. And IT professionals have skills that are useful in many different jobs.

What should you tell young people about careers in IT?

- **IT's important.** They can use their skills to help solve pressing problems in a variety of fields.

- **IT's creative.** They can use their creativity in many different jobs and roles; they will always find new challenges in their work.

- **IT's team-oriented.** They will do much more than use a computer. They will work with others as part of a creative team.

- **IT's valued, respected, and flexible.** They will enjoy challenging work in a well-respected field that pays well and often offers flexible hours.

- **IT's everywhere.** Most 2- and 4-year colleges offer programs in computing and related fields. Check out the programs nearest you, and start planning now.

How can students prepare now for a career in IT?

- **Get creative with computers.** Explore computer programming with Scratch or Alice (available for free at www.scratch.mit.edu or www.alice.org).

- **Keep taking math classes.** Math skills are important in many jobs. Taking these classes will help keep students' options open.

- **Take computer science or information technology (IT) courses.** If these classes are not offered at school, students may find them at a local community college.

- **Join after-school computing or technology clubs.** Also look for summer computing camps. IT is fun and opens up a world of possibilities.

Pictured Left: A team of Purdue University students won $15,000 for their Talk-a-Toy project, which teaches children English and math.

Join the Counselors for Computing (C4C) Campaign to get information and free pathways resources for advising young people — www.ncwit.org/c4c.