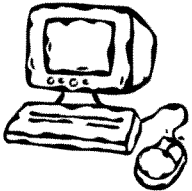


	Current Number of Workers 2006	Projected Number of Workers 2016	% Change to 2016	Average Annual Openings	 Computer Support Specialists SOC # 15-1041	
Regional	500	600	20.00%	25		
Texas	42,950	51,600	20.10%	2190		
Education/ Training Time	Is License Required?	Wage Rate \$/Hr. 2008 Regionally	Percent Female	Average Age	Job Turnover	Why Most Job Openings Occur
Associate	Industry Certificates	\$22.29	28.6%	38.1	High	Replacement

JOB DESCRIPTION

Provide technical assistance to computer system users. Answer questions or resolve computer problems for clients in person, via telephone or from remote location. May provide assistance concerning the use of computer hardware and software, including printing, installation, word processing, electronic mail, and operating systems.

WHERE DO WORKERS FIND JOBS?

Computer Systems Design and Related Services
Professional and Commercial Equipment and Supplies
Merchant Wholesalers
Software Publishers
Elementary and Secondary Schools
Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services
Employment Services
Colleges, Universities, and Professional Schools
Insurance Carriers
Internet Service Providers and Web Search Portals
Local Government, Except Education
Depository Credit Intermediation
Electronics and Appliance Stores
General Medical and Surgical Hospitals
Junior Colleges
State Government, Except Education

RELATED COLLEGE PROGRAMS

Varied. Many pathways.

IMPORTANT KNOWLEDGE

ARTS AND HUMANITIES
* English Language
BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT
* Clerical
* Customer and Personal Service
COMMUNICATIONS
* Telecommunications
ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY
* Computers and Electronics
* Engineering and Technology

IMPORTANT SKILLS

COMPLEX PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS
* Complex Problem Solving * Active Listening
* Reading Comprehension * Speaking
PROCESS
* Critical Thinking

IMPORTANT ABILITIES

AUDITORY AND SPEECH ABILITIES
* Speech Clarity
IDEA GENERATION AND REASONING ABILITIES
* Deductive Reasoning * Inductive Reasoning
* Information Ordering * Problem Sensitivity
VERBAL ABILITIES
* Oral Comprehension * Oral Expression
* Written Comprehension
VISUAL ABILITIES
* Near Vision

NATURE OF THE WORK: Computer Support Specialists

In the last several decades, computers have become an integral part of everyday life, used for a variety of reasons at home, in the workplace, and at schools. Of course, almost every computer user encounters a problem occasionally, whether it is the disaster of a crashing hard drive or the annoyance of a forgotten password. The explosive use of computers has created a high demand for specialists to provide advice to users, as well as for day-to-day administration, maintenance, and support of computer systems and networks.

Computer support specialists provide technical assistance, support, and advice to customers and other users. This occupational group includes technical support specialists and help-desk technicians. These troubleshooters interpret problems and provide technical support for hardware, software, and systems. They answer telephone calls, analyze problems by using automated diagnostic programs, and resolve recurring difficulties. Support specialists may work either within a company that uses computer systems or directly for a computer hardware or software vendor. Increasingly, these specialists work for help-desk or support services firms, for which they provide computer support to clients on a contract basis.

Technical support specialists answer telephone calls from their organizations' computer users and may run automatic diagnostics programs to resolve problems. Working on monitors, keyboards, printers, and mice, they install, modify, clean, and repair computer hardware and software. They also may write training manuals and train computer users in how to use new computer hardware and software. In addition, technical support specialists oversee the daily performance of their company's computer systems and evaluate software programs with regard to their usefulness.

Help-desk technicians assist computer users with the inevitable hardware and software questions that are not addressed in a product's instruction manual. Help-desk technicians field telephone calls and e-mail messages from customers who are seeking guidance on technical problems. In responding to these requests for guidance, help-desk technicians must listen carefully to the customer, ask questions to diagnose the nature of the problem, and then patiently walk the customer through the problem-solving steps.

Help-desk technicians deal directly with customer issues, and companies value them as a source of feedback on their products. These technicians are consulted for information about what gives customers the most trouble, as well as other customer concerns. Most computer support specialists start out at the help desk.

Network administrators and computer systems administrators design, install, and support an organization's local-area network (LAN), wide-area network (WAN), network segment, Internet, or intranet system. They provide day-to-day onsite administrative support for software users in a variety of work environments, including professional offices, small businesses, government, and large corporations. They maintain network hardware and software, analyze problems, and monitor the network to ensure its availability to system users. These workers gather data to identify customer needs and then use the information to identify, interpret, and evaluate system and network requirements. Administrators also may plan, coordinate, and implement network security measures.

Systems administrators are the information technology employees responsible for the efficient use of networks by organizations. They ensure that the design of an organization's computer site allows all of the components, including computers, the network, and software, to fit together and work properly. Furthermore, they monitor and adjust the performance of existing networks and continually survey the current computer site to determine future network needs. Administrators also troubleshoot problems reported by users and by automated network monitoring systems and make recommendations for enhancements in the implementation of future servers and networks.

In some organizations, computer security specialists may plan, coordinate, and implement the organization's information security. These workers may be called upon to educate users about computer security, install security software, monitor the network for security breaches, respond to cyber attacks, and, in some cases, gather data and evidence to be used in prosecuting cyber crime. The responsibilities of computer security specialists has increased in recent years as there has been a large increase in the number of cyber attacks on data and networks. This and other growing specialty occupations reflect an increasing emphasis on client-server applications, the expansion of Internet and intranet applications, and the demand for more end-user support.