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# New study reveals most important skills for students

October 15, 2013

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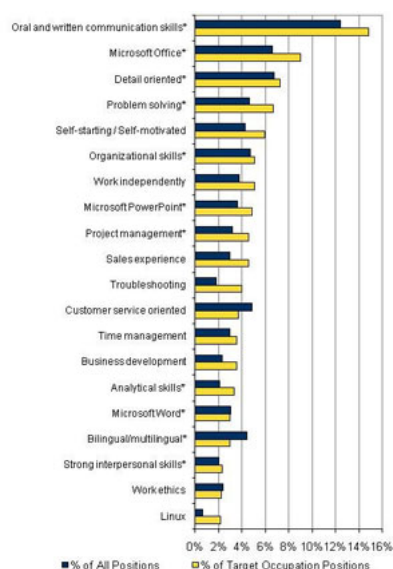
**REDMOND, Wash. — Oct. 15, 2013** — Top candidates for current and future jobs will be measured by capabilities and competencies, with 20 distinct skills bubbling up to the top in millions of high-growth, high-paying job postings, according to a white paper commissioned by Microsoft Corp. and released by IDC. The study provides insight into the skills students need for the top 60 high-growth, high-wage occupations that will account for 11.5 million new hires and 28 percent of job growth by 2020. Out of those skills, oral and written communication, detail orientation, and Microsoft Office proficiency top the list.

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### IDC Study: Top Skills Comparison

October 14, 2013

IDC Study: Top Skills Comparison – High-Growth/High-Wage Positions Versus All Occupations (\*  
 Indicates Communication, Integration, or Presentation skill; Source: IDC, based on Wanted  
 Analytics and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Data, October 2013)

With technology and innovation booming, the global economy is changing and business needs are evolving. IDC research found that although a number of positions require technical skills, even more require knowledge and cognitive skills.

“Educators need to focus on teaching a breadth of skills. IT skills are important, but soft skills, while not evaluated in school, are fundamental to every job students are pursuing today and in the future,” said Anthony Salcito, vice president of Worldwide Public Sector Education at Microsoft. “IDC’s research reveals that although a number of positions require technical skills, even more require knowledge and cognitive skills gained from use of personal productivity applications and services. For this reason, Microsoft is committed to investing in students around the world to ensure they have access to the tools that teach these skills.”

## **IDC 'Skill Requirements for Tomorrow's Best Jobs' key findings**

In looking at the job skills of the future, both hard and soft skills are important, according to IDC and Microsoft's "Skill Requirements for Tomorrow's Best Jobs: Helping Educators Provide Students with Skills and Tools They Need" white paper. By leveraging job and skill requirements from 14.6 million job postings from the second and third quarters of 2013, IDC identified the 20 most common skills required for those positions. To validate the importance of those skills, IDC examined 60 occupations that have above average growth potential and salary potential between 2013 and 2020.

"Of the more than 11,000 skills we examined, it is interesting to see the play between hard and soft skills," said Cushing Anderson, program vice president of Project-Based Services at IDC. "Many of the top 20 skills reinforce the other; the skills we identified are not taken in isolation but rather are a golden set of skills that are consistently important. Seventy percent of the high-growth, high-wage occupations frequently require at least one of the top 20 skills."

Key findings from this research include the following:

- The 60 high-growth occupations include jobs in medical support and nursing; sales and marketing professionals; education, teaching, and instruction; computer programming and specialists; and office managers/business operations.
- These high-growth, high-wage positions are in demand across multinational companies, with more than 53,000 companies looking for them on a recent weekday. Global companies posting for these positions include financial services firms like CITI and Santander; consulting and accounting firms like Deloitte and PwC; manufacturers like General Dynamics, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon Corp.; and retail giants like Home Depot and Advanced AutoParts.
- Communication, integration and presentation skills (CIPs) are required for about 40 percent of all positions and make up 11 of the top 20 skills that are required by 39 percent of the fastest growing, highest paying positions.
- The only software package called out within the top 20 skills across all occupations is Microsoft Office, explicitly required in 15 percent of high-growth, high-salary positions. Microsoft Office is No. 3 on the list of skills most required, and Microsoft PowerPoint and Word are No. 11 and No. 13 most required skills.
- Assessments should be used to demonstrate students' mastery of material and help improve the teaching and learning process. IDC calls for programs to include formative adaptive assessments, performance-based tasks to demonstrate CIPs capabilities, and appropriate technologies to facilitate consistent administration and evaluation of assessments.

### **Student advantage**

In an effort to help prepare students for the technology skills required in the workforce, Microsoft on Tuesday announced Student Advantage, a new benefit to qualifying institutions that brings Microsoft Office 365 Education to more students worldwide. Microsoft Office 365 Education, an always-up-to-date cloud productivity service, is currently used by 110 million students, faculty and staff around the world. Office 365 Education enables students to communicate and collaborate more efficiently, access assignments in shared workspaces, have notes synchronized in OneNote and have familiar Office applications such as Word, PowerPoint and Excel anywhere, across virtually any device.

Beginning Dec. 1, 2013, any institution worldwide that licenses Office 365 ProPlus or Office Professional Plus for staff and faculty can provide access to Office 365 ProPlus for students at no additional cost. Today, more than 35,000 institutions are automatically eligible to deliver the Student Advantage benefit to their students. Office 365 ProPlus includes all the familiar and full Office applications — locally installed on up to five devices and available offline. When a school combines Student Advantage with Microsoft's other cloud services, Exchange Online, SharePoint Online and Lync Online, all available free through Office 365 Education, students have access to the same set of gold-standard productivity tools and services used by Fortune 500 companies all over the world.

"Students use Office every day for school work and activities that are most important to them. Office not only helps students stay organized and get their work done today but at the same time develops skills that will be required when they enter the work force. In fact, no other software or services show up in the top 20 most important skills identified in the research report," Salcito said. "We are thrilled to offer Student Advantage to schools across the globe so students have access to the latest, most up-to-date version of the world's leading set of productivity tools in order to give them a competitive advantage when entering the workforce."

Nearly 98 percent of students using productivity software currently use Office. Student Advantage enables students to access the familiar experience of Office in an always-up-to-date cloud service across their compatible PCs, tablets and phones.

#### **IDC methodology**

The research was conducted by scanning 14.6 million job postings from April to September 2013 supplied by WANTEDAnalytics, a provider of real-time business intelligence for the talent marketplace. Of those jobs, IDC analyzed the posting and identified the 20 most common skills required for those positions. IDC also leveraged data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, including data on 2010 employment and forecasts for 2020. IDC analyzed employment data for 748 Standard Occupational Classifications and selected the most attractive classifications according to three criteria: size, growth and wages.

#### **About Microsoft in Education**

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