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Computer Operator Careers, Jobs, and Employment Information

Computer Operator Career and Job Highlights

- Types of training vary according to the relative experience and skills of workers. Most computer operators receive first-hand training at the job site.
- Technological improvements are likely to reduce employment opportunities.
- The most qualified job candidates will have previous experience or education in computer or systems-oriented fields.

Computer Operator Career Overview

Computer operators operate and manage the use of hardware systems, mainframes, networks, minicomputers, and other types of systems. They should be proficient at solving technical problems.

Responsibilities for computer operators differ depending on policy and size factors set by the employer. They basically control a single or group of mainframe computers, setting functional controls and codes as instructed by programmers.

Computer operators load equipment and manage the central consoles that monitor the operation of a particular computer or computers. Computers send specification and task messages to the operator, who then solves the problem. In addition, operators manage the records of existing jobs and problems that were encountered. They also work with analysts and programmers in testing programs.

The rise in the use of personal computers is a direct result of vast networking developments. Consequently, organizations that use many computers are employing network systems to connect workers' computers to each other. Thus, computer operators will be in increasingly high demand in order to manage these network systems.

Automated and robotic software programs are assuming greater control over productivity and tasks formerly handled by computer operators. As a result, many computer operators are moving to other types of operations, including those for networks, databases, and user support.

Career Training and Qualifications

Many jobs provide initial training for computer programs to become familiar with employer's expectations. Employers typically prefer to hire workers with previous experience in related technology use. This is nearly essential to finding job placement in a larger organization. Formal training is also highly recommended, either through an established educational or technical institution or the U.S. Armed Forces. This education is becoming increasingly important as technology continues to evolve, especially through software automation, and demands become more unique. A bachelor's degree will help qualify a job candidate for management or other advancement positions.

A flexible attitude is required of operators due to the nature technology. Many experts in areas of technical analysis will be needed to handle special problems, in addition to those who can communicate well with others, particularly other operators, users, and programmers. The occupation generally offers a lot of independence without supervision, so job seekers should keep this in mind.

Most managerial positions require having at least a bachelor's degree. With experience come greater opportunities for jobs in areas such as programming and network operation and analysis. Because of growing job requirements competition is becoming keen.

Job and Employment Opportunities for Computer Operators

Computer operating jobs are likely to decrease over the next decade. As more workers move to other fields or occupations, operators will have to compete in filling these jobs. Those best qualified to fill these jobs will need to have the relevant education and current technological knowledge.

While the costs of computer production have decreased, data storing capacity and processing has dramatically increased. Most, if not all, industries use computer automated computer systems that are easy for users to function. Consequently, fewer operators are needed to perform typical duties of monitoring and problem solving.

If an operator is "bumped" from his job due to automation, he/she may become assistant or operational maintenance personnel. Be staying abreast of new technology and training, operators can move on to networking or administrating jobs. Others still can train to supervise, analyze, or maintain various computer operations and software package development. Because the nature of operating careers is evolving, job seekers will have to gain greater knowledge relating to such things as graphics, client/server environments, open systems, and automation software.