

Computer Analyst Encyclopedia Article

Computer Analyst

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Computer Analyst

Computer analysts, also called systems analysts, plan and develop computer systems. Their work includes installing new systems or upgrading existing systems to meet changing business needs. They also computerize tasks that are still being done by hand or in some other less efficient way.

Computer analysts may either work for themselves or for computer and data processing companies. Also, they may work for government agencies, manufacturing companies, insurance companies, financial businesses, and universities. A computer analyst normally needs at least a bachelor's degree in computer science or in a related area such as management information systems. An advanced degree further increases the chance of finding a good job.

Computer analysts study whatever problems a company might be having and then design new solutions using computer technology. This process includes meeting with people to discuss the problems and needs of their company. Analysts then use techniques, such as structured analysis, data modeling, mathematical modeling, and cost accounting, to plan systems. They may select both hardware and software to implement their plans.

Analysts then prepare reports, generally using charts and diagrams, to present the proposed system to the people who will use it. Analysts may prepare cost-benefit analyses to help management decide whether the system is acceptable. All of these tasks usually involve complex mathematics.

Once a system is chosen, the equipment is purchased and installed. Then the analyst must make sure that the entire system works correctly. The analyst prepares diagrams and instructions so that computer programmers can write the code necessary to make the parts operate as a system.

Some analysts are programmers, too. As the programs are written, analysts set up test runs of various parts of the system. After the new computer systems are in place, analysts may be asked to continue supporting the new systems for months or even years.

See Also

Computer Programmer.

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