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The IT function and its people:

A guide for HR and IT professionals

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A. About this guide

HR people and others entering the IT function for the first time have lots of questions. Some are quite basic:

> *'What do all these different people actually do?'*
>
> *'What is ITIL [or the SDLC etc. etc.]?'*
>
> *'Why are there so many specialists who can't do each others' jobs?'*

Others are puzzled by more in-depth technical terms and their relevance to practical people management decisions:

> *'Do we really have to recruit SAP experts when we introduce SAP: can't our existing analyst programmers quickly retrain?'*
>
> *'How does an OpenView expert differ from a Tivoli expert when someone I've just talked to insists they do the same things?'*
>
> *'Should I be impressed by someone who's MCSE certified?'*
>
> *'What are Function Points and why does one of our IT managers say they can help us improve programmer productivity?'*

This guide outlines the essential facts about IT functions and their people and organizational arrangements, and the 'people' issues that arise within them. And, as the second set of sample questions above suggests, the guide also includes proprietary terms and specialized technical terms – *where these are relevant to people or skills issues*.

The guide will be useful to those entering the IT arena for the first time (whether they are IT HR people or even IT trainees) AND to those who have been around IT for years. No other publication explains IT terminology from a people, skills and organization point of view.

'No other publication explains IT terminology from a people, skills and organization point of view.'

The guide starts with an introduction to the IT function (how it is structured, the processes and the roles generally found within it, some technical facets) as this general content is best conveyed in narrative form and sits less comfortably in glossary form.

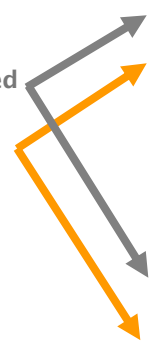
The glossary that follows includes:

- Technical terms that tend to appear in job descriptions, job ads, etc. with a short definition and most importantly some comments on their relevance to people and skills issues (see below), and
- Terms relating to the organization and management of IT.

HR terms that are in general use and technical terms that have little relevance to people or skills are omitted.

The Glossary:

Technical term **is** defined … before discussing its relevance to people



CSS: Cascading Style Sheets is a way of defining the look and appearance of a web page. Knowledge of CSS is necessary mostly in web developer jobs. It is not, on its own, enough to guarantee employability but is a very useful and often essential secondary skill set.

CTO or Chief Technology Officer: a somewhat variable term that can mean one of four types of job: (1) the person who looks after the technical infrastructure as opposed to the applications that run on that infrastructure (2) what others might call the ***CIO*** or IT Director (3) the role – wider than just IT – that heads up all technical functions in a technology-based company such as a telecoms company, where a CTO might also oversee the telecoms network (4) the product design head in a technology vendor.

CVS: Concurrent Versions System, an ***open source*** facility for controlling the many versions of software that are developed in the course of a software development project. Relevant to ***application*** developers and ***programmers*** and hence often specified in job ads, but is usually a 'nice to have' rather than an essential.

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