

COMPUTER SKILLS IN THE JOB MARKET

In *Job Outlook 2000*, the National Association of Colleges & Employers asked employers to rate the importance of new-hire skills in college graduates. Their top seven are:

1. Interpersonal Skills	(4.54)
2. Teamwork	(4.51)
3. Verbal Communication	(4.51)
4. Analytical Skills	(4.24)
5. Computer Skills	(4.12)
6. Written Communication	(4.11)
7. Leadership	(3.94)

(5-point scale where 1=not important and 5=very important)

Employers say however, that it isn't the specific word processing or email programs that students know that will get them jobs and help them move up in their careers. According to a survey by Cornell University librarian Philip Davis, employers value the concepts students have mastered in using software programs and their ability to adapt to technology as it changes. Although technology drives the demand for graduates with technical and computer-related degrees, employers are willing to hire humanities and social science graduates who have basic computer-related skills and who are eager to continue testing the technology.

Davis discovered that almost all employers he surveyed (96%) said they look for word processing knowledge on candidates' resumes. Almost as many (93%) said new hires need email experience, and more than half (63%) said they expected new hires to know how to do Internet research and have online competence. Data-entry skills were considered a plus by more than four-fifths (83%) of respondents, and 86% cited the importance of having spreadsheet knowledge to perform basic and intermediate numerical data analysis. Further details of the Davis survey are below:

Importance of computer literacy in recent college graduates:

Not applicable	0 %
Not important	2 %
Somewhat important	5 %
Important	41 %
Very important	42 %

Importance of word processing skills:

Not relevant	1 %
None	3 %
Basic skills	40 %
Intermediate skills	45 %
Advanced skills	11 %

Importance of desktop publishing skills:

Not relevant	42 %
None	23 %
Basic skills	27 %
Intermediate skills	7 %
Advanced skills	1 %

Importance of graphics or presentation software skills:

Not relevant	7 %
None	16 %
Basic skills	46 %
Intermediate skills	25 %
Advanced skills	4 %

Importance of skills in creating Internet documents:

Not relevant	43 %
None	27 %
Basic skills	22 %
Intermediate skills	6 %
Advanced skills	2 %

Importance of ability to install or upgrade software:

Not relevant	31 %
None	10 %
Basic skills	41 %
Intermediate skills	10 %
Advanced skills	7 %

Importance of ability to create or modify programs or macros for individual use:

Not relevant	14 %
None	21 %
Basic skills	42 %
Intermediate skills	16 %
Advanced skills	7 %

Importance of ability to create commercial software:

Not relevant	63 %
None	14 %
Basic skills	18 %
Intermediate skills	6 %
Advanced skills	8 %

Importance of database entry and editing skills:

Not relevant	8 %
None	9 %
Basic skills	49 %
Intermediate skills	26 %
Advanced skills	8 %

Importance of ability to perform detailed analysis using spreadsheets:

Not relevant	5 %
None	9 %
Basic skills	39 %
Intermediate skills	33 %
Advanced skills	14 %

Importance of computer networking skills:

Email	93 %
Downloading	75 %
Internet/Online searching	63 %
Other (network configurations & software, etc.)	7 %

