

Computer Support & Network Specialist

Professional Activities

Computer support specialists provide help and advice to people and organizations using computer software or equipment. The computer support specialist usually assists non-IT users who are having computer problems, whereas computer network specialist, support information technology (IT) within their organizations. Computer support specialists are also called help-desk technicians.

Computer support specialists typically do the following:

- Pay attention to customers when they describe their computer problems
- Ask customers questions to properly diagnose the problem
- Walk customers through the recommended problem-solving steps
- Set up or repair computer equipment and related devices
- Train users to work with new computer hardware or software, such as printers, word-processing software, and email
- Assist users in installing software
- Provide others in the organization with information about what gives customers the most trouble and about other concerns customers have

Computer network support specialists typically do the following:

- Test and evaluate existing network systems
- Perform regular maintenance to ensure that networks operate correctly
- Troubleshoot local area networks (LANs), wide area networks (WANs), and Internet systems

Educational Requirements

Because of the wide range of skills used in different computer support jobs, there are many paths into the occupation. A bachelor's degree is required for some computer support specialist positions, but an associate's degree or postsecondary classes may be enough for others. Computer user support specialist jobs require some computer knowledge. Applicants who have taken some computer-related classes are often qualified. For computer network support specialists, many employers accept applicants with an associate's degree, although some prefer applicants to have a bachelor's degree. More technical positions are likely to require a degree in a field such as computer science, engineering, or information science. To keep up with changes in technology, many computer support specialists continue their education throughout their careers.

Academic Programs

[Augustana College](#)

[Aurora University](#)

[Benedictine University](#)

[Blackhawk College](#)

[Bradley University](#)

[City Colleges of Chicago-Harry S. Truman](#)

[DePaul University](#)

[Elgin Community College](#)

[Elmhurst College](#)

[Governors State University](#)

[Illinois College](#)

[Illinois Institute of Technology](#)

[Illinois State University](#)

[Lake Forest College](#)

[Lewis University](#)

[Loyola University of Chicago](#)

[McKendree University](#)

[Monmouth College](#)

[Northeastern Illinois University](#)

[Northern University](#)

[Northwestern University](#)

[North Central College](#)

[Olivet Nazarene University](#)
[Quincy University](#)
[Roosevelt University](#)
[St. Francis](#)
[Saint Xavier University](#)
[Southern Illinois University-Carbondale](#)

[Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville](#)
[Trinity Christian College](#)
[University of Chicago](#)
[University of St. Francis](#)
[University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign](#)
[Wheaton College](#)

Employment/Salary Outlook

More support services will be needed as organizations upgrade their computer equipment and software. Computer support staff will be needed to respond to the installation and repair requirements of increasingly complex computer equipment and software.

Most computer support and network specialists have full-time work schedules; however, many do not work typical 9-to-5 jobs. Because computer support is important for businesses, they must be available 24 hours a day. As a result, many must work nights or weekends.

State and National Wages (Computer User Support Specialists)

Location	Pay Period	2021		
		Low	Median	High
United States	Hourly	\$16.45	\$23.93	\$43.78
	Annual	\$34,220	\$49,770	\$91,060
Illinois	Hourly	\$12.99	\$23.26	\$38.08
	Annual	\$27,020	\$48,380	\$79,200

State and National Trends (Computer User Support Specialists)

United States	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2020	2030		
Computer User Supports Specialists	654,800	712,800	9%	54,800
Illinois	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2018	2028		
Computer User Support Specialists	25,740	27,570	+7%	2,370

¹Job Openings refers to the average annual job openings due to growth and net replacement.

State and National Wages (Computer Network Support Specialists)

Location	Pay Period	2021		
		Low	Median	High
United States	Hourly	\$18.54	\$30.17	\$49.24
	Annual	\$38,560	\$62,760	\$102,410
Illinois	Hourly	\$18.64	\$31.26	\$48.46
	Annual	\$38,760	\$65,010	\$101,620

State and National Trends (Computer Network Support Specialists)

United States	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2020	2030		
Computer User Supports Specialists	189,800	204,000	8%	15,500
Illinois	Employment		Percent Change	Job Openings ¹
	2018	2028		
Computer User Support Specialists	10,330	10,590	+3%	880

¹Job Openings refers to the average annual job openings due to growth and net replacement.

Professional Organizations

Technology Services Industry Association (tsia.com)

Association of Support Professionals (asponline.com)

References

Occupational Outlook Handbook, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

(<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/computer-support-specialists.htm>)

O*Net OnLine (<http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/15-1151.00> and

<http://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/15-1152.00>)

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