



WISCONSIN

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Demystifying Professional Certifications
Association of Information Systems Professionals
A UW-Madison Student Organization
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What is a Professional Certification?

- Neutral third party testimonial to knowledge
- Sets a baseline (minimum)
- Does not set a top bar (maximum)
- Good for popular careers
- Not good for extreme specialists



I Have a Degree

Why Do I Want a Certification?

- Resume searches – keywords
- Job requirements, especially government
- Employers love certifications, because it lowers their burden of verifying knowledge
- Increase your salary
- Differentiate you
- Professional recognition and respect



How do I get a Certification?

- Meet standards for work experience
- Study, independently or via a professional course
- Pass exam
- Demonstrate work experience
- Testimonials from co-workers
- Pay lots of money



How Much Does It Cost?

- Study materials
- Cost of exam
- Cost of classes
- Study on your own vs. enrolling in a prep course
- One time cost, vs. take the exam multiple times cost



How Do I Keep a Certification?

- CPEs, continuing professional education
- Seminars
- Guest lectures
- Conferences
- Articles
- Classes
- More certifications!



What Kinds of Certifications Do I want?

- In your area of expertise
- Applicable
- Look for trends in your industry
- What do your peers have
- How common is the certification



What Certifications Do I Not Want?

- Ones which go in and out of fashion quickly
- Ones which are so highly technical that you may become obsolete
- Ones which require huge amounts of CPEs



Case in Point
Very Popular in 2000
Not Popular Now





How Many Certifications Do I Want

- One is nice
- A few is nicer
- Many makes you look like a test taker with no genuine interest in the subjects
- Less is more, to an extent



How Do I Keep My Certifications

- CPE credits
- Pay annual dues
- Don't lie about CPEs
- Don't do unethical things



Let's Look at 10 Top Certifications



Questions and Discussion

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