

The New Information Professional

Your Guide to Careers in the Digital Age

NSCC-INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
LIBRARY
5685 LEEDS STREET
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA B3K 2T3

Judy Lawson, Joanna Kroll, and Kelly Kowatch

Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc.

Table of Contents

Published by Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc.
100 William St., Suite 2004
New York, NY 10038

Copyright © 2010 University of Michigan Board of Regents.

All rights reserved. Reproduction of this book, in whole or in part, without written permission of the publisher, is prohibited.

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Lawson, Judy.

The new information professional : your guide to careers in the digital age / Judy Lawson, Joanna Kroll, and Kelly Kowatch.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-55570-698-2 (alk. paper)

1. Information science—Vocational guidance. 2. Library science—Vocational guidance.
3. Information services industry—Vocational guidance. I. Kroll, Joanna. II. Kowatch, Kelly.
III. Title.

Z682.35.V62L39 2010
020.23—dc22

2010009306

List of Career Planning Diagrams	vii
Preface	ix
Acknowledgments	xv
Chapter 1. Archives and Preservation of Information	1
Introduction	1
Skills and Abilities	7
Professional Roles	9
Occupational Outlook	10
Salary Information	12
Profiles—Perspectives of New Professionals	13
Careers in Archives and Preservation: At a Glance	21
Resources for Further Information/Exploration	23
Education and Training	24
References	25
Chapter 2. Records Management	27
Introduction	27
Skills and Abilities	33
Professional Roles	36
Occupational Outlook	36
Salary Information	39
Profiles—Perspectives of New Professionals	39
Careers in Records Management: At a Glance	46
Resources for Further Information/Exploration	48
Education and Training	50
References	51

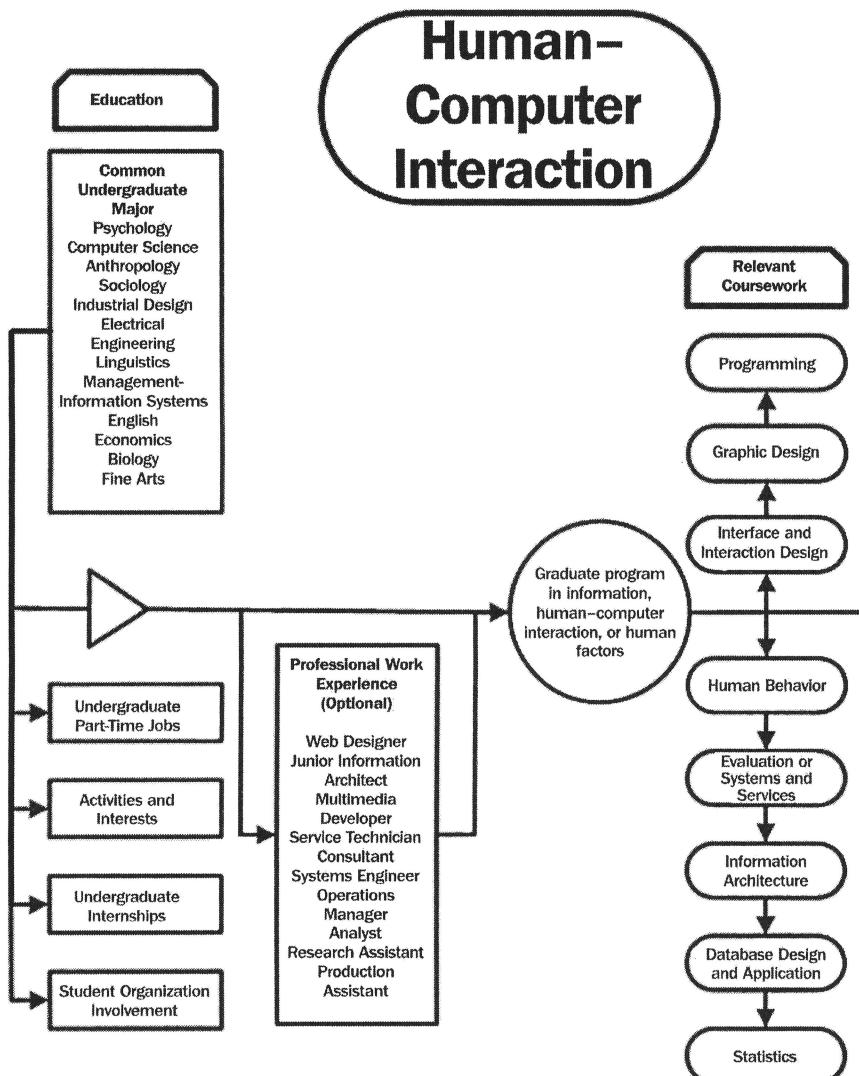
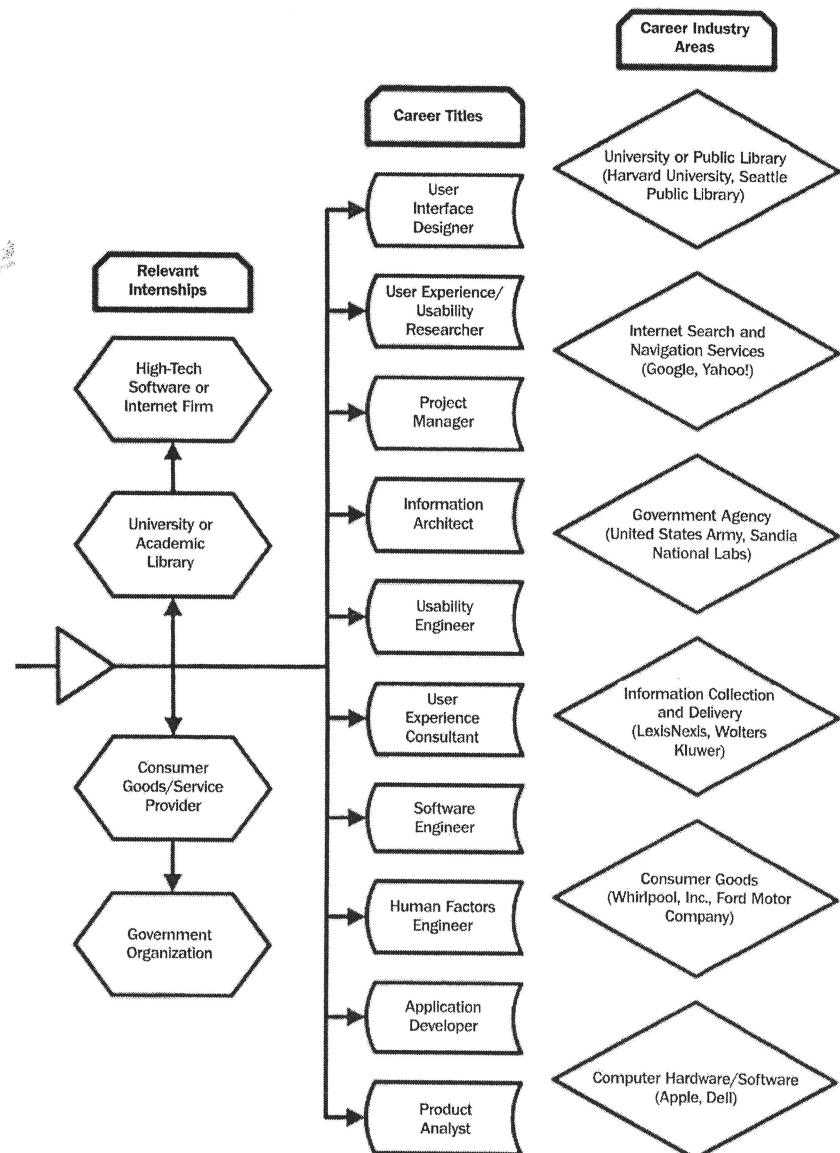


Figure 4. Human-Computer Interaction Career Map

This diagram demonstrates several of the potential paths associated with a career in the field of human-computer interaction.



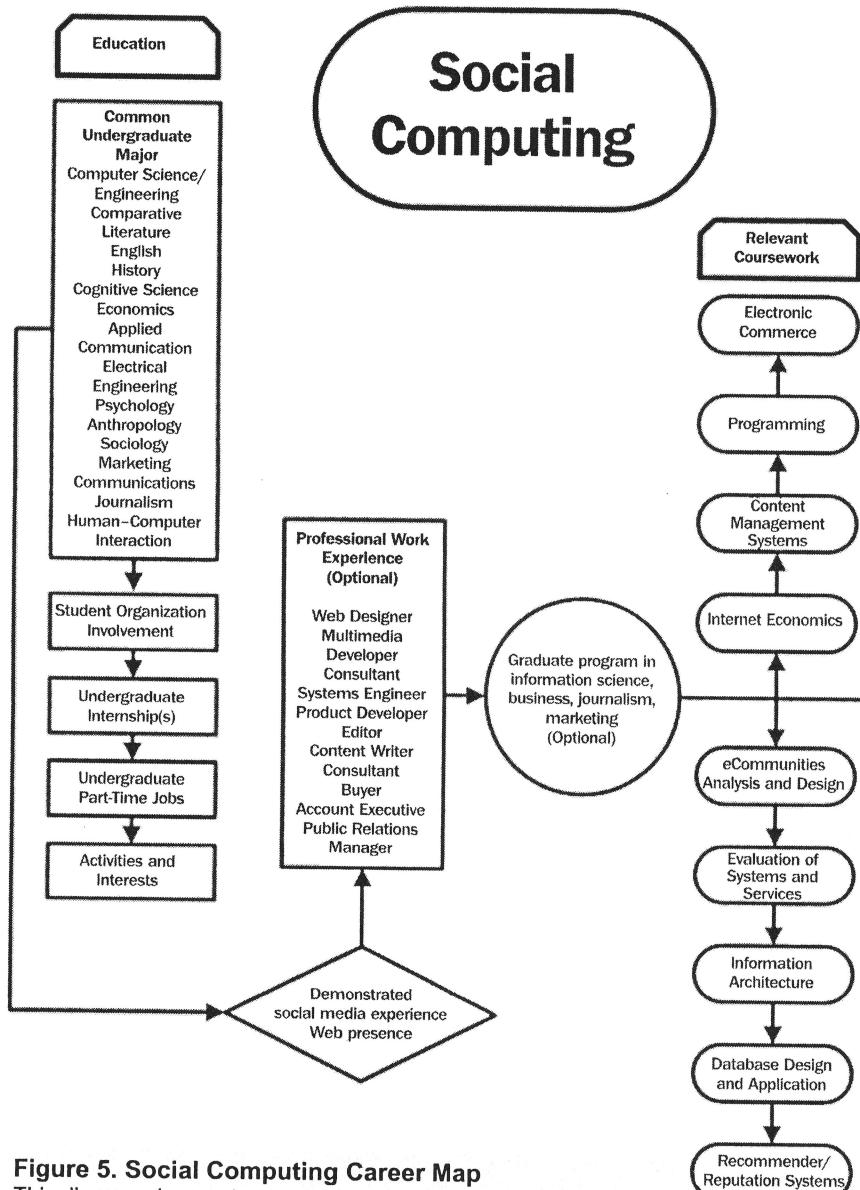
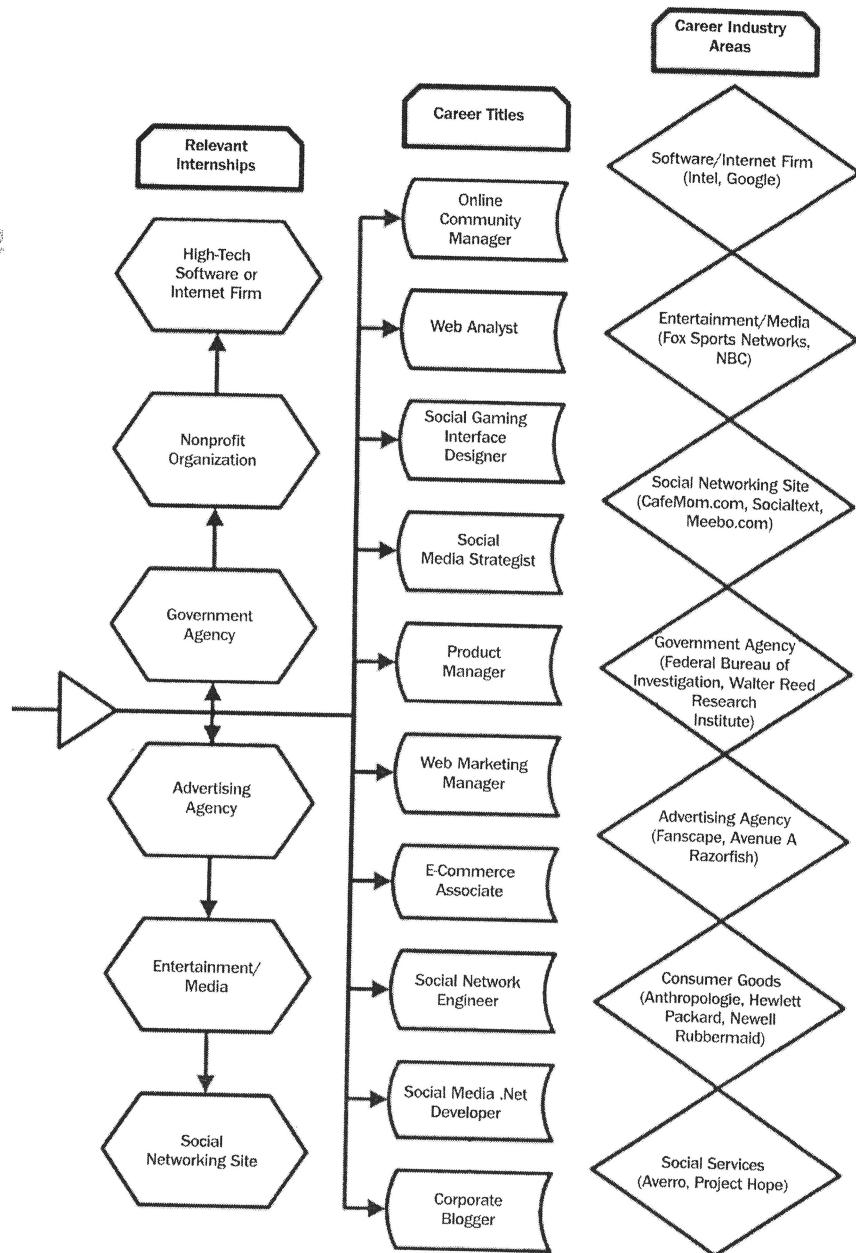


Figure 5. Social Computing Career Map

This diagram demonstrates several of the potential paths associated with a career in the field of social computing.



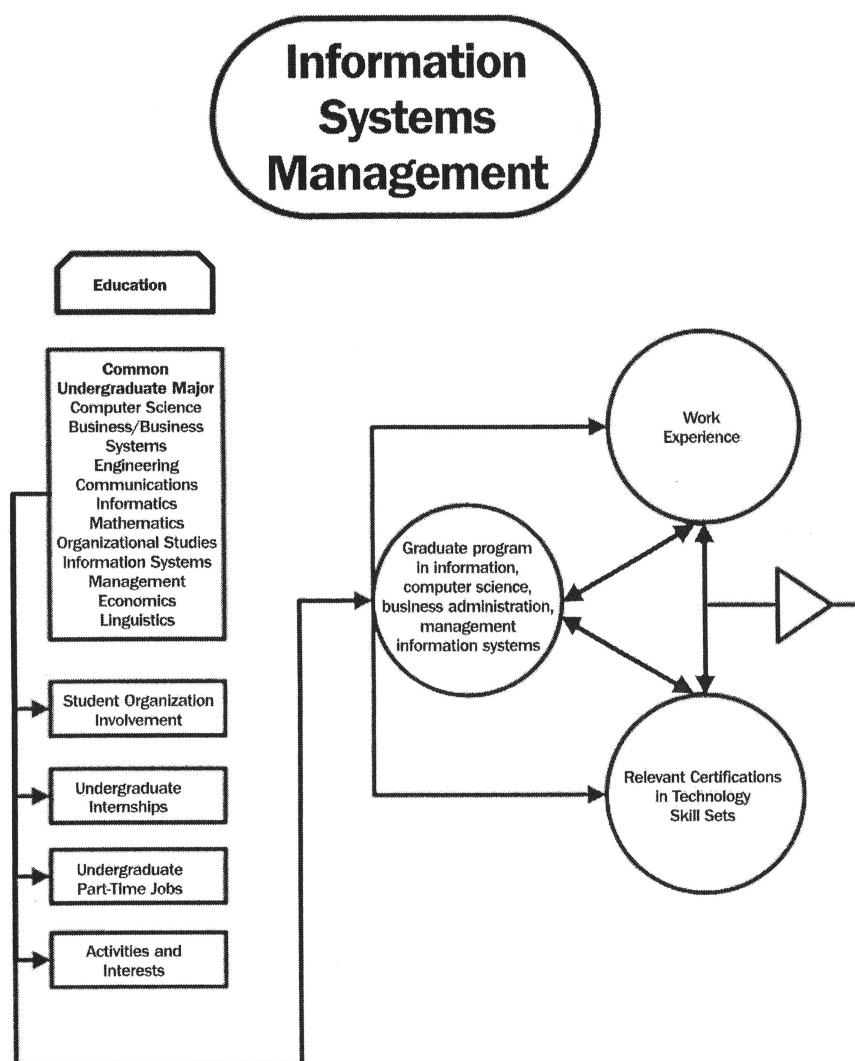
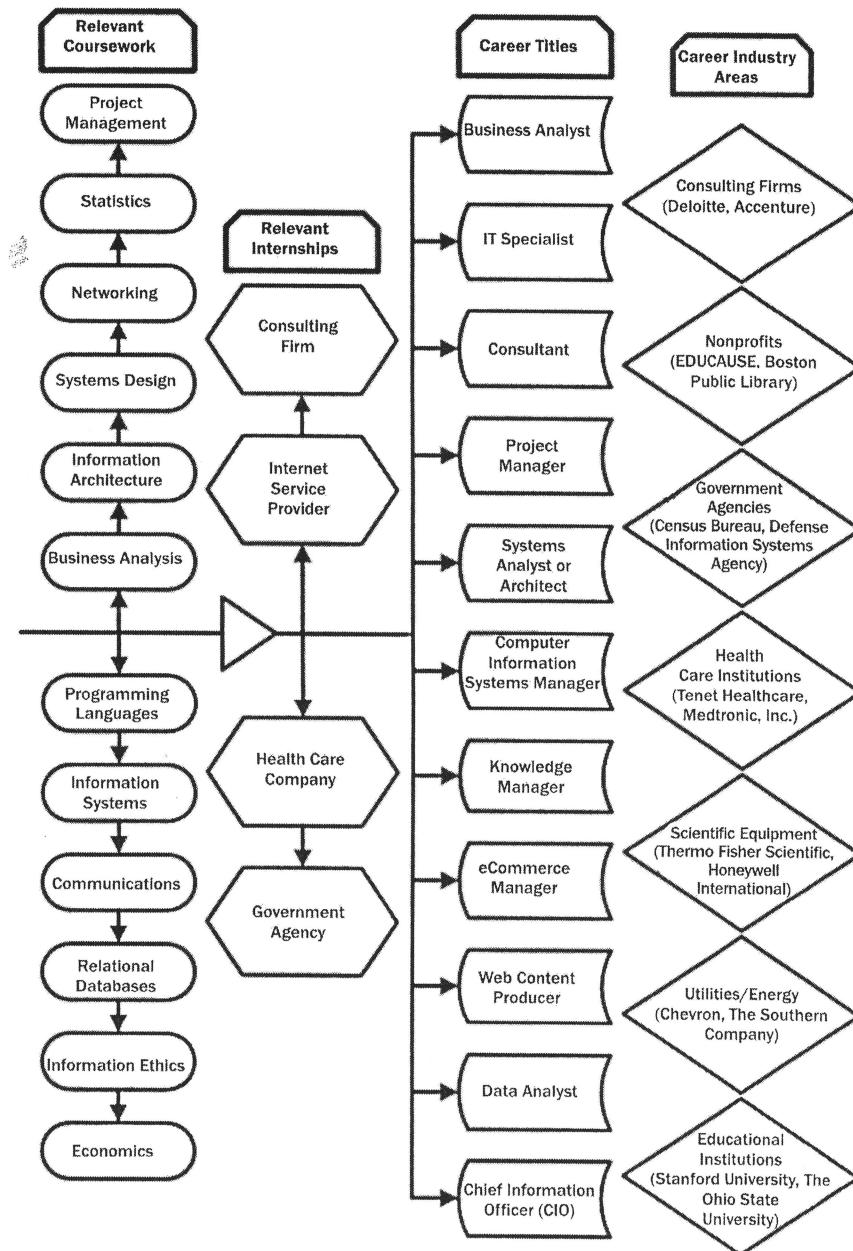
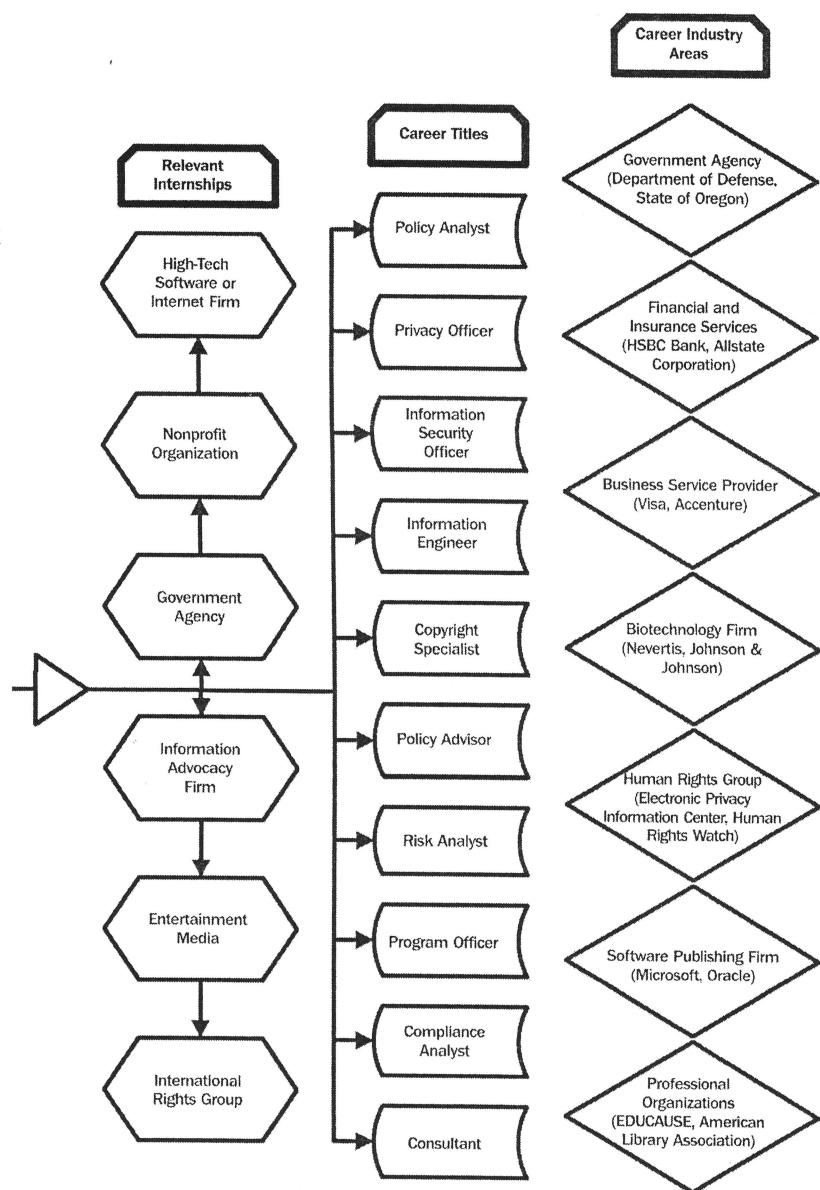
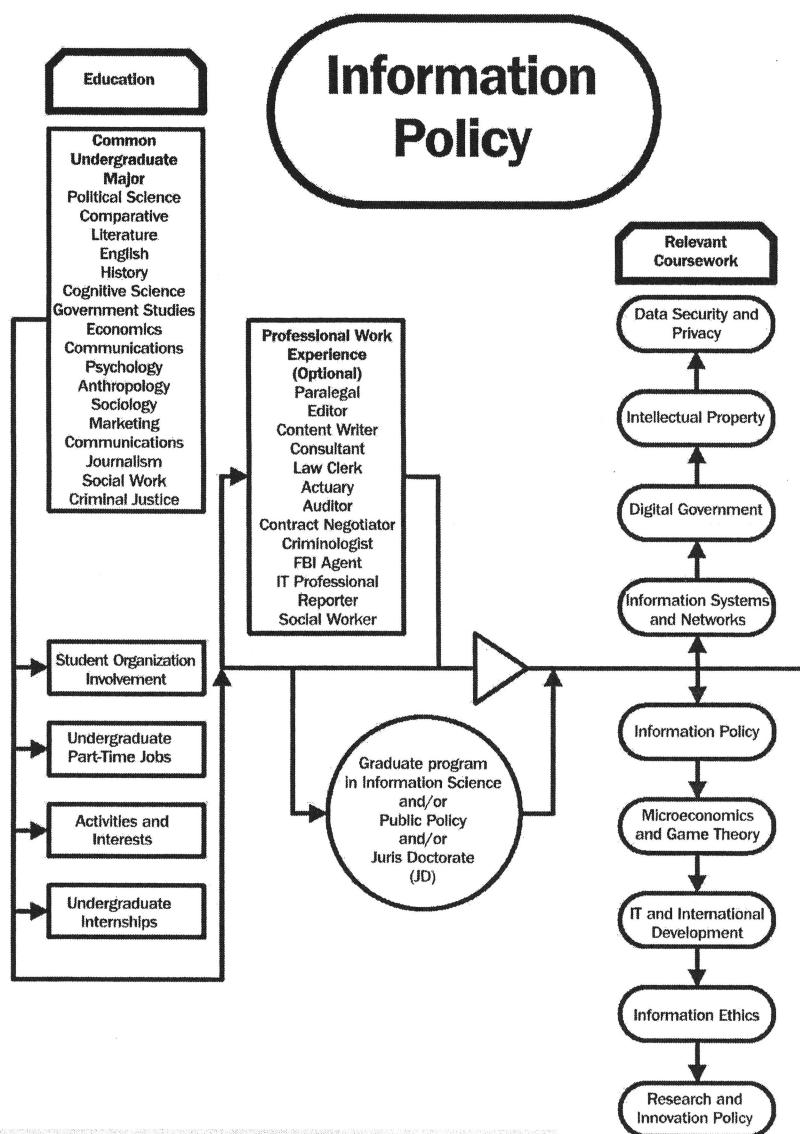


Figure 6. Information Systems Management Career Map

This diagram demonstrates several of the potential paths associated with a career in the field of information systems management.





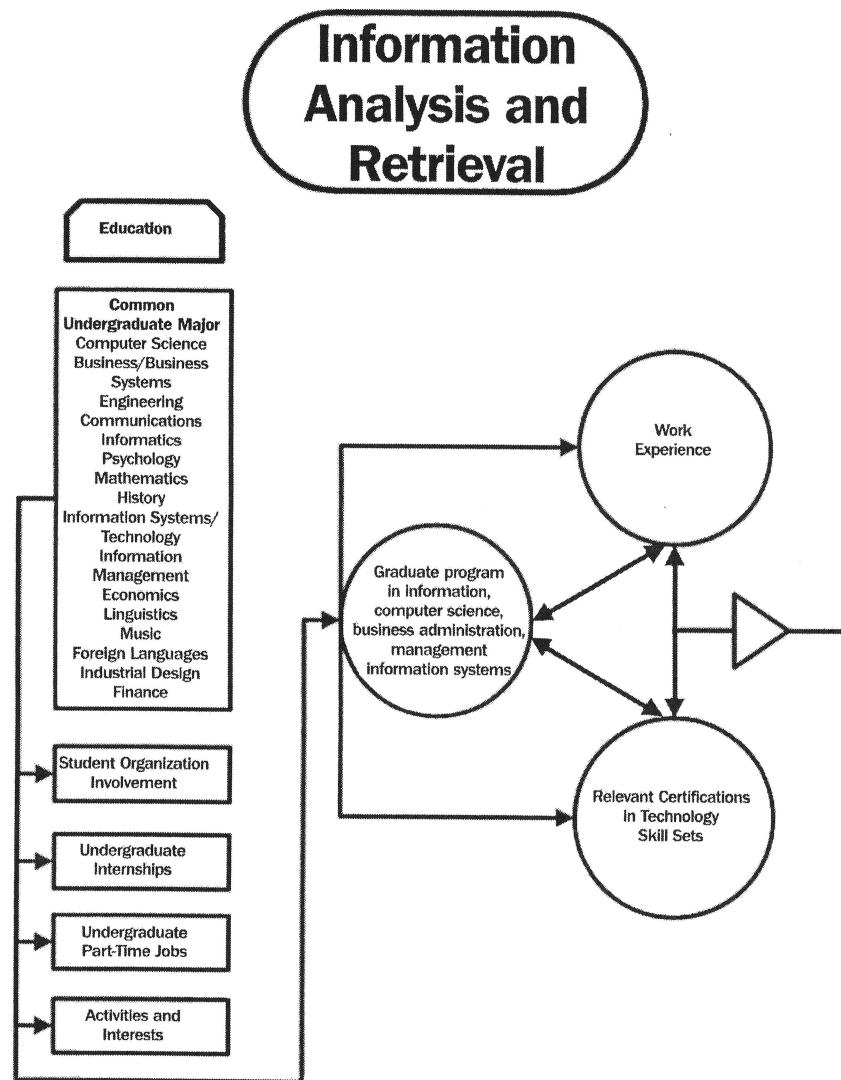
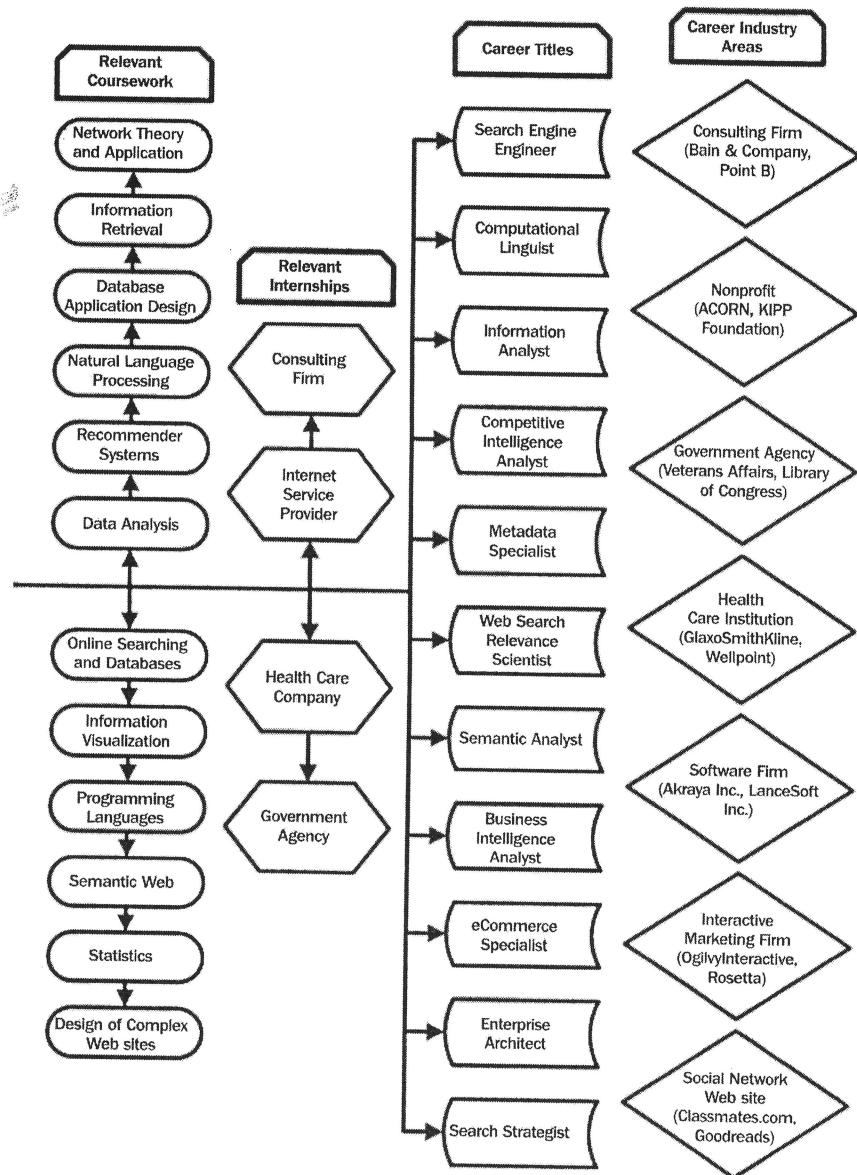


Figure 8. Information Analysis and Retrieval Career Map

This diagram demonstrates several of the potential paths associated with a career in the field of information analysis and retrieval.



- Smillie, Dirk. 2009. "A \$65 Billion Advertising Shift?" *Forbes.com*, July 21. Available: www.forbes.com/2009/07/21/advertising-marketing-business-media-stratigos.html (accessed August 10, 2009).
- University of Michigan School of Information. 2009. "Information Analysis and Retrieval (IAR) Specialization." Available: www.si.umich.edu/msi/iar.htm (accessed August 2009).
- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2009. *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, 2008–2009 ed. Available: www.bls.gov/oco/ (accessed August 2009).

Additional Source

- Wikipedia*. 2009. "Search Results: Information Analysis and Retrieval." Available: <http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Special%3ASearch&redirs=1&search=information+analysis+and+retrieval&fulltext=Search&ns0=1> (accessed April 2009).

Chapter 9

Planning for Your Career in Information

A Step-by-Step Guide to Career Fulfillment

Self-Assessment

The first step toward your career in information is self-assessment. Exploring your personal interests, values, skills, and environmental/cultural preferences can help ensure that you will make fulfilling career decisions now and in the future. There are many different opportunities across the information profession, but even if your career planning process takes you in a different direction, the most important thing is that you discover the path that is right for you.

This section will provide you with reflective questions to guide your exploration and will help you identify resources and strategies to build your awareness of potential career options. Consider your interests first and foremost. Your current hobbies may be a strong indicator of what it is that you like to do best, or you may have certain abilities that you enjoy using. What you wanted to do as a child may also be an indicator of some fundamental interest areas. Start by asking yourself the following questions to help determine what interests might lend well to shaping your career:

- As a child, what activities did I enjoy the most? What did I enjoy the least?
- In my youth, what did I see myself being when I grew up? Has that changed? If so, why?
- Who are the people I consider to be heroes or who I admire? What about them do I wish to emulate?
- What products or services do I use regularly? Which ones do I tell others about?

- In my work experiences, what work was interesting or exciting? What work did I find myself commonly putting off doing?

Considering your values is equally important in career exploration as interests, if not more so. Your personal emphasis on salary, lifestyle, and purpose can be critical in deciding what career area to pursue, as you may find yourself in a job function that you sincerely enjoy yet you still dread coming to work because your values are compromised. Ask yourself the following questions to help determine what is important to you in a career:

- Is it important for me that my work be dedicated toward making a contribution to society or helping others?
 - If it is important, is it good enough for me to work for an organization that has a positive societal mission, even though my work is not specifically in that area?
- Do I currently maintain or seek a lifestyle that will require a substantial salary?
- Does working at a prestigious organization matter to me?

Ability is also very important when considering your career choices. If you really aren't all that fond of calculus nor are you very talented at it, then a quantitative career is probably not for you. However, the possibilities for nonquantitative jobs are endless, and vice versa. Consider these questions to help you reflect on your skills and abilities.

- What do I think that I am good at?
- Are there things that I do that others commonly compliment me on?
- In past work or academic experiences, what work did I excel at or came much easier to me than it did other colleagues? (Consider both soft skills and hard skills.)
- In what areas have I been recognized with awards or for accomplishments?

Your preferred work culture is also a very important indicator of what sort of job is ideal for you. The following questions can provide direction for seeking a culture that is an ideal fit for your preferences:

- Do I prefer to work with people or alone?

- Do I work well under stress?
- Do I prefer to do things in a routine manner or do I prefer to be spontaneous?
- Would I prefer to work in an environment where I can exercise my artistic creativity?
- Do I seek an organization that promotes work-life balance or one that encourages a work-hard, play-hard culture?

As you read (or reread) *The New Information Professional*, keep these questions in mind and make notes on the career areas that seem to connect with your interests, skills, and values. Some of the positions and career tracks shared may match perfectly with your answers while others may be a good fit but the connection between your preferences and what's described will be less clear. Others may clearly not be a good fit for you.

There are many other reflective questions that you can ask yourself to help point you in the direction of an ideal career for you. Note that there is not one perfect job for everyone. For some, the career exploration process can be very exciting because they are able to distill information into a very realistic and appealing career option; others will be overwhelmed by choices that all sound very interesting or not at all.

This leads us to assessments. There are many very good assessments available that you can take that can provide you with great insight into your interests, values, skills, and cultural inclinations. The Strong Interest Inventory is one popular interest inventory. Another is the Self-Directed Search (SDS) by John Holland. You can contact a career counselor or utilize the Internet to administer these tests. A trained professional is suggested to guide you through the analysis to help you properly interpret the outcomes.

Last, consider talking with family, friends, classmates, colleagues, or mentors about these exploratory questions. Ask them what they perceive as a good fit for your interests, skills, and other preferences. Others' perception of yourself can be a very revealing and indicative perspective of what could be a good fit for you.

Researching Your Career Options

In this age of information overload, researching career options is not unlike any other area of information: there is an overwhelming amount of resources and options to consider. In fact, one of the main reasons that people find career dissatisfaction in their lives is because they did not thoroughly self-assess or do the proper research before they chose a career, often because there is too much information to

consider. Often we have a lot of information on one option and little on another. It is important to try to gather comparable information so that you can make an informed decision between a career that is already familiar to you and one that is new but has for some reason captured your interest.

Self-assessment should give some shape to what you foresee as your potential work environment, job function, and skill set to be developed or utilized. However, it is also important to weigh other factors such as job availability, economic trends, your geographic location, and educational requirements. Be sure to consider these questions as you explore the following resources:

- Does my field of interest have many jobs in my local area? If not, is it possible for me to move to an area that has more related careers?
- If I cannot move, are there companies in my area that offer both entry-level career options and career growth options for me in this field?
- Does the field that I am interested in require further education?
 - If so, does my current life situation allow me to pursue further education?
 - Is there a quality program in the area that will allow me to gain an accredited degree or the required training?
- Are there currently jobs in this area or is the field highly competitive?
- If I require further education or training for this career area, will there be positions when I am ready to secure a job?
- Beyond the entry-level position, are there many career opportunities, or is the field limited or lending itself to a flat organizational structure?

The following is a summary of various resources that you can utilize in your career exploration. You don't need to utilize all of these resources, but utilizing at least three is recommended.

Career Videos

Career videos are a relatively new way to gain some great information about potential career options. Companies like Google (www.youtube.com/lifeatgoogle) now have videos on YouTube or embedded in their Web site that show current employers talking about their work, the culture, and other relevant information to help you make a career choice. General career search Web sites such as CareerOneStop (www.acinet.org/videos_by_occuption.asp?id=&nodeid=28) have videos on a variety of different positions that you can view to gather information.

Career Guides or Books

By reading this guide, you are already utilizing this type of resource. Career guides provide an in-depth overview of certain fields and will provide you with a wide range of ideas and alternatives for careers that fit your ideal industry, skill set, or interests. Career guides come in a variety of types that include career fields (such as this one), industry types, trendy jobs, and jobs by skill sets, interests, and many other types. Your college career center and local public library are good sources for career resource books, or you can browse at your favorite bookstore.

Informational Interviews

Informational interviews are one of the best ways to explore careers. In an informational interview, you'll set up an appointment or phone call with current professionals and ask them questions about what it is that they do and how they got to where they are now. You can also ask for career advice and gain information on industry trends, organizations, and the outlook for the field. Informational interviews are also a great way to develop your network in your future career field, and you may be surprised at how eager people are to talk about their career with others and to share advice.

Company Web Sites

In this guide, a plethora of companies have been mentioned to consider for your future employment. Some you have probably heard of, some you probably have not. This is okay because this is a great place to start doing some research to learn about what jobs are out there, which ones fit your skills and interests, where they are located, and what they pay. Many of these sites have well-developed career pages that provide you with information on careers types, culture, and profiles of current employees. Furthermore, by simply visiting a company's careers Web site and doing a keyword search using any of the keywords or job titles that we've provided in the chapters before, you can generate a list of potential employment sites and gain an understanding of what is available. Note the pages that have interview hints and tips for later in your job search.

Online Job Boards

Hundreds of online job boards are available via the Internet; these are useful career exploration tools. By doing a quick search using keywords or job titles, you can gain timely information on available career types in your area and learn what companies are hiring, if your field of interest is available in your geographic area, and valuable salary information.

Career Exploration Web Sites

Myriad career exploration and career advice Web sites are available for you to use. One of the most authoritative career exploration Web sites available is O*Net Online, which is sponsored by the United States Department of Labor. This Web site lists over 800 occupational areas and provides information on new and emerging occupations and what is in demand currently. You can also search for careers by skills, tools, and technology. Vault.com is also a leading career resource Web site. The Web site lists thousands of companies and hundreds of both professions and industries to explore. Furthermore, a job board, information on salaries and reviews, and a surplus of other resources to peruse can keep you swimming in information on potential careers. The employer reviews are a fantastic resource for gaining insider information on career possibilities within certain organizations.

College or University Resources

Your current educational institution has trained staff and resources that can help you shape your career decision making. Make an appointment with the career services office to take an assessment and to discuss potential career outcomes that are related to what you learned during your self-assessment. If you have narrowed your area of interest, you can also make an appointment with an admissions office of a program related to your potential field to learn about the career outcomes of graduates.

Job Shadowing

One of the best ways to quickly learn if a career is a good fit for you is to try it on for size. Job shadowing a current professional at a local organization is a great way to see what it's really like to do a certain job and see if the environment and activities are a good fit for your preferences. Although some industries are more open to job shadowing than others due to work associated with confidential information, many current professionals are flattered to be asked to be shadowed and will welcome the opportunity to share with you what their day is like.

Volunteering

If you are ready to make more of a commitment to a potential career outcome, volunteering is one of the best methods to learn if a career is a good fit for you. Many local organizations including public libraries, start-ups, historical societies, museums, and nonprofits are always seeking assistance in information management areas. Although you may not be given professional level responsibilities, the opportunity to meet people who work in your desired field and gain hands-on experience can be incredibly revealing of whether this career area is right for you. You can volunteer for a single project or commit to a certain amount of time; either way, the experience will look great on your resume.

Social Networking Sites

Last, but not least, don't forget the world of Web 2.0 resources. LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) is an excellent resource to learn about companies that hire certain career titles, connect with current professionals, and identify common career paths from one position to the next. Facebook (www.facebook.com) also is a resource, although unintentionally, for career exploration. Many organizations have group pages or alumni groups. For example, the consulting firm Accenture has several Facebook groups, some of which are specifically focused on careers and recruitment, which allow users to explore and talk with recruiters about career opportunities. You can also connect with current employees to set up informational interviews. There are many other social and professional networking sites available that you can utilize for your career exploration.

Developing a Career Action Plan

Once you have evaluated your interests, skills, and values and have used these to evaluate the career options you have generated, the next step is to build a career action plan. If your decisions are still unclear or difficult to make, you can seek guidance from your college or university career center or from private career counselors, family members, or mentors. Remember that career decision making isn't a one shot deal. While the decisions you make today are important, there are many paths that can lead to success and happiness. You will continue to make career decisions over the course of your lifetime, and you will likely change jobs and directions many times along the way. Yet if you trust your instincts and thoroughly engage in the career planning process, you may well find that you are able to find an area of focus that will remain a part of your career trajectory for many years.

It may seem premature to start thinking in the long term about your career, especially if you're just getting started thinking about your career path. The best way to ensure success in your chosen field is to sketch a basic map of what you want to achieve throughout the course of your professional life—even if you haven't even picked a college, decided on a major, or landed your first professional job yet.

Career experts caution that by focusing exclusively on the here-and-now you may be shortchanging yourself and limiting your long term success. We're in the age of vision boards and self-reflection. Whether you are a person who cringes at the sound of these terms or if you are a person who embraces them, they are effective strategies for greater learning, increased self-awareness, and can ensure better odds for satisfaction and success in your future. Don't dread or skip this step in the process, as it is sure to be a liberating, fulfilling, and positive experience.

By this stage in your career planning process you've probably done a lot of self-exploration and self-reflection to assess your interests, skills, values, beliefs, likes, and dislikes, etc. You've researched career options and evaluated these against what you have come to understand about yourself. Now it's time to create your vision or career objective by designing a career action plan that will guide you to long-term career satisfaction and success.

A career action plan is a series of steps to help you attain a specific career objective. This objective is as individual as you are but could be about your dream occupation, your dream organization, or your dream salary level in ten years. The more specific a career action plan, the more effective it will be toward goal achievement. Although it should be specific, it should also allow for flexibility, as life has a funny way of throwing curveballs in the path of the best-laid plans. Life changes all the time, which is why your career action plan should be designed to allow for changes without completely throwing you off track in your progression to career fulfillment.

CREATING A CAREER ACTION PLAN

Step 1: Articulate Your Vision

Before you can articulate your vision or career objective, you must first assess where you are in the process today—your personal, educational and career pursuits. Start by asking yourself the following questions:

- Where am I today?
- What has it taken to make it to this point?
- Where would I like to be next year?
- What is it going to take to get to where I want to be in one year?
- What is it going to take to get where I want to be in five years?
- What will my dream job look like five years from now?

Step 2: Set Goals (short and long term)

It's important to set both short- and long-term goals for your career action plan. Short-term goals are ones that can be accomplished in one year or less. As the name implies, long-term goals will take longer to become a reality; generally speaking, you are looking at between three to five years for these to come to fruition.

Step 3: Define Concerns or Barriers

Be prepared for roadblocks along the way. It is important to identify and define concerns or potential barriers that may prevent you from reaching your goals. It's better to plan for these roadblocks ahead of time than to have them sneak up on you and prevent you from moving forward. Consider these statements to help you identify potential barriers:

- I have carefully reviewed and assessed my situation and where I am now in my personal, educational, and career pursuits, and the career pathway(s) I would like to explore further is . . .
- I am concerned about this career pathway because . . .
- The major facts that could become barriers to me pursuing this pathway are . . .

Step 4: Identify a Solution to Barriers

While some barriers might be harder to overcome than others, you can always seek and identify potential solutions to all barriers that may prevent you from reaching your goal. Even for substantial barriers that you think you could never overcome, while a direct solution might not always be apparent, you might surprise yourself with your know-how, creativity, and resourcefulness for facing each barrier head-on. Use these leading statements to help identify solutions to potential career barriers:

- The elements of my situation most amenable to change are . . .
- The elements of my situation least amenable to change are . . .
- I would use these indicators to consider my concerns to be satisfactorily resolved . . .
- The forces that I see as blocking my pursuits are . . .
- The solutions that I see to my concerns are . . .
- I see the time frame for my career action plan to be operative as follows . . .

Step 5: Set Time Lines

Set time lines to reach your stated goal. Allow for some flexibility in your timelines to allow for changes in circumstances. Give yourself a time range rather than a specific date to reach your goal.

Once you have completed steps one through five, it's now time to create your plan. Start by first developing your career objective, followed by charting out the specific steps to meet your objective.

Career Objective Examples

SHORT TERM

- To obtain an internship in the area of social networking for an advertising agency by next summer.
- To start a graduate program in the field of information that will lead me to the degree required for my chosen career field.

LONG TERM

- To obtain a full-time professional position as a social marketing specialist for a full-service interactive agency in New York City.
- To gain a master's degree in the field of information with a specialization in the areas of archives and electronic records management.

CAREER ACTION PLAN EXAMPLE 1				
Career Objective: To obtain an internship in the area of digital archives for an advertising agency by next summer.				
Goal #1	Action to be taken (short term)	Potential barriers	Solution to barriers	Deadline to reach goal
	Meet with academic advisor to identify the most relevant courses that will best prepare me for an internship.	Can't get into class. Class time conflicts with part-time job schedule.	Get on wait list and talk to faculty/instructor for permission to add class if another student drops. Talk with supervisor to discuss options for work schedule adjustments.	During preregistration time frame
Goal #2	Action to be taken (short term)	Potential barriers	Solution to barriers	Deadline to reach goal
	Identify and develop necessary skills for internship. Research careers and job trends in the field through professional publications.	Don't have contacts with anyone in the field.	Talk to career counselor or alumni relations to identify contacts in the field. Use LinkedIn to identify professionals in the field.	By Thanksgiving break
Action to be taken (ongoing/long term)	Potential barriers	Solution to barriers		
Volunteer at local organization to help build skills.	No free time!	Set up volunteer times during school breaks throughout the school year.	By summer	

CAREER ACTION PLAN EXAMPLE 2				
Career Objective: To obtain a full-time professional position as a social marketing specialist for a full-service interactive agency in New York City.				
Goal #1	Action to be taken (short term)	Potential barriers	Solution to barriers	Deadline to reach goal
	Complete degree requirements.	Meet with academic advisor to make sure I'm on track to graduate with the appropriate requirements.	Tuition	Meet with financial aid advisor to identify scholarships and other funding options.
Goal #2	Action to be taken (ongoing/long term)	Potential barriers	Solution to barriers	Deadline to reach goal
	Participate in second internship in the same field but in different industry.	Start internship search by updating resume and identifying internship opportunities.	The cost of relocation Have a lease that extends through summer.	Apply for paid internships only. Sublet apartment for the summer.

A customizable Career Action Plan Worksheet appears on page 226.

If you've followed all of the valuable tips and advice in this chapter, you should have an idea of whether you are in a position to pursue an active professional job search or pursue graduate programs that are in direct alignment with your career interests. Once you've reached the goals necessary to begin to implement your career plan—whether this is to pursue an advanced degree or to start your active job search—we've provided you with some basic steps for doing so effectively in the Career Planning Checklists on pages 227–228.

If you make career planning a regular part of your ongoing professional development, you are more likely to always have an awareness of where you want to go next in your career, and you will be comfortable with the steps you need to take and the resources available to help you reach that next professional goal as an information professional or in the field you find fits you best.

CAREER ACTION PLAN WORKSHEET				
Personal Career Action Plan				
Career Objective: _____				
Goal #1	Action to be taken (short term)	Potential barriers	Solution to barriers	Deadline to reach goal
	Action to be taken (ongoing/long term)			
Goal #2	Action to be taken (short term)	Potential barriers	Solution to barriers	Deadline to reach goal
	Action to be taken (ongoing/long term)			

CAREER PLANNING CHECKLISTS	
Job Search Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up an appointment with a career counselor/advisor in your college career center to discuss the most effective job search strategies and resources specific to your career objective. Create an effective resume and cover letter for your specific industry of choice. Have your resume reviewed by career counselor/advisor to ensure it is letter-perfect. Post your resume to online job posting boards such as Monster, Yahoo! Jobs, Careerbuilder, etc. Create an online portfolio to showcase your work or project samples. Online portfolios are not required or expected for all career fields. If your field of interest requires technical, Web, or design skills, it's likely that an online portfolio is required or preferred as part of the job application process (it's typically stated in the job description, but not always). Network with peers, faculty, past employers, family, friends—let everyone know you are job searching and what type of job you are seeking. Keep a record of your job applications. Follow up with all applications—if you have contact information. Prepare for interview. Receive job offer. Evaluate job offer and negotiate salary. Accept job—congratulations!
Graduate School Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further research and identify your graduate program(s) of choice. Meet with admissions counselor to identify criteria, requirements, and most effective application strategy. Apply to graduate school(s). Identify graduate school funding options. Once you have accepted an offer, set up an appointment with a career counselor to utilize all career resources available to you from day one in the program.
Annual Review	Review your career action plan every year. A lot can happen in a year. Most of us visit the doctor or dentist every year to review our health status, identify problems/concerns, and come up with solutions to avoid illness and to reach and maintain personal health goals. Why not make career planning an annual event to ensure the good health and positive status of your career goals?

(continued)

(continued)

- Map your path since your last career planning efforts.
- Reflect on your likes, dislikes, wants, and needs.
- Reflect on life circumstances or changes over the past year.
- Make note of your accomplishments over the past year.
- Identify new skills you have developed (don't forget about those very important transferrable skills).
- Review current career and job trends.
- Review career goals—Which goals have you accomplished? Which ones haven't been accomplished yet? Adjust goals, if needed.
- Identify potential barriers and solutions to barriers.
- Set deadlines—flexible ones—to reach your goal.

Appendix

Listing of Relevant Academic Programs

iSchools

The iSchools are a set of 24 schools focused on the relationships among people, information, and technology. Visit www.ischools.com to learn more and to link to the following programs.

- University of California, Berkeley, School of Information
- University of California, Irvine, The Donald Bren School of Information and Computer Sciences
- University of California, Los Angeles, Graduate School of Education and Information Studies
- Carnegie Mellon University, School of Information Systems and Management, Heinz College
- Drexel University, College of Information Science and Technology
- Florida State University, College of Communication and Information
- Georgia Institute of Technology, College of Computing
- Humboldt-Universitat zu Berlin, Berlin School of Library and Information Science
- University of Illinois, Graduate School of Library and Information Science
- Indiana University, School of Informatics and Computing
- University of Maryland, College of Information Studies
- University of Maryland Baltimore County, Department of Information Systems
- University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, School of Information
- University of North Carolina, School of Information and Library Science
- University of North Texas, College of Information