Comparisons for Software Engineers

<u>Associations</u>

1. American institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA)
2. IEEE Computer Society

<u>Benefits & Events</u>

American Institute of Graphic Arts: AIGA is one of the premier professional associations for design and graphic design. While this is not completely on track with being a "software engineer," we often wear many hats as software engineers and/or game programmers.

AIGA is committed to advancing the value of design. It helps foster creatives at all stages of their careers both locally and globally.

In my area AIGA is highly active with the best design studios. They routinely put on events to assist the growth and develop of the design community.

AIGA routinely puts on conferences and contest locally and globally for its members. Other benefits include access to job listings, an AIGA profile, access to the AIGA Behance network, and discounts on conferences and contest.

IEEE Computer Society: IEEE Computer Society is the premier organization for computer science and technology. It offers a plethora of conferences, publications, education, and other resources.

Conferences are held worldwide throughout the year covering diverse computer science and technology related topics. Topics span from theoretical to the practical implementation of computer science and technology.

Currently, twelve magazines are released monthly for members to subscribe to. They cover topics from software, multimedia, science & engineering, and various other advanced computing science related topics.

Journals are routinely released covering 15+ topics and areas of computer science and technology. In addition, even more co-sponsored journals are release via IEEE Xplore.

Various other benefits include access to job postings, events, networking, access to the IEEE digital library, a newsletter, special discounts, and many other various benefits.

Membership Type(s) & Costs

American Institute of Graphic Arts: AIGA has give levels of membership for members in various stages of their careers. The five levels of membership at contributing, supporting, sustaining, leader, and trustee.

Contributing - is for students and designers early in their career. Annual fee of $50.

Supporting - is for junior designers with between 1-5 years of experience. Annual fee of $150.

Sustaining - is for mid-senior level designers that have an established career with between 5-15 years in the industry. Annual free of $250.

Leader - is for Senior design professionals with 15-25 years in the industry. Annual fee of $500.

Trustee - is for the Titans of the design industry. Annual fee of $2500.

Each level of membership allows various benefits. At the supporting level a member gets reduced event and competition fees, access to the AIGA job listings, the ability to participate in chapter activities, work featured on the AIGA Behance network, a member profile on AIGA.com, and various other discounts.

At the lowest level of membership, Contributing, you can contribute and volunteer in chapter activities. At the, supporting level you can serve on a chapter board. Stepping up to sustaining allows members to vote in addition to serving on a chapter board. At the leader and trustee levels members also get more opportunity to steer and plan activities with members, students, and the global community.

IEEE Computer Society: The IEEE Computer Society offers three levels of memberships with various price points between each depending on what the member wants access to.

Student – The student level of membership gives all the benefits of the preferred membership at a much lower rate. The student level starts at $20/year. It allows access to the CS Digital Library at no additional cost.

Basic – The Basic membership is for members just starting their careers in computing. The base price point is $63/year and goes up to $124/year with CS + IEEE Membership. Access to the CS Digital Library increases the cost another $65 to $189/year.

Preferred – The preferred membership is designed for industry leaders, professionals, and researchers. It starts at $78 a year. Adding both CS + IEEE Membership beings it to $134/year. Access to the CS Digital Library increases the cost by $65 bringing it up to $199/year.

The student discount offers the most benefit for the price. There is little difference between the basic and preferred memberships.

Magazines & Trade Publications

1. Smashing Magazine
2. Net Magazine

Content & Price

Smashing Magazine: Smashing Magazine is predominately an online publication, but recently got into publishing print magazines. In addition to both online and offline periodicals, Smashing Magazine publishes fantastic books for our industry centered around the most relevant and up to date trends, design patterns, and topics.

Smashing Magazine is primary geared towards front and backend web development, UI/UX, design, and industry best practices.

Both a monthly and yearly membership is offered for access to both the online and print publication.

There are three levels of memberships:

Supporter – Allows access to 1 monthly webinar, invites to Smashing Parties, discounts on printed publications, and various other benefits. Priced at $3/month or $30/year.

Member – All the benefits of supporter, but adds access to recordings of webinars, eBooks, early access to tickets and publications, and various discounts. Priced at $5/month or $50/year.

I Feel Smashing – Allows all the benefits of both the member and support level. It adds access to the entire eBook library for no additional cost, 2 printed magazines a year, a $100 discount on 1 conference or workshop, and lastly a $375 discount on 1 in-house training. Priced at $9/month or $90/year.

Net Magazine: Net Magazine is one of two monthly printed publications available to web-focused software engineers. Topics cover front-end and back-end web development, industry profiles, designer and engineer focused interviews, and code snippets.

Locally, Net Magazine is offered at select Barnes and Nobles at a price around $14-18 per magazine. The price point depends on various discounts depending on membership to Barnes and Noble or sales. Net magazine is offered online at a price point of $16.99 an issue.

Recommendations

Associations: Both organizations have something to offer students-senior level software engineers. Access to job postings, networking, events, and publications help at any level.

AIGA is only relevant if design also plays a role in your career. It may seem out of place to list this organization, but design plays an extremely important role in software engineer. As engineers we often wear many hats, one of them being a UI/UX professional. It is important to not only understand design but how to implement it as well. Staying in touch with current trends, user interaction, and usability only aids to improve the work of the software engineer. I would highly recommend this organization to engineers that have the bandwidth to be both a designer and developer.

The IEEE Computer Society strongly leans towards the theoretical and academic. It is important as an engineer to stay at the bleeding edge of technology. We routinely must react to the latest changes in languages, security practices, design patterns, and various other pieces of computing.

Attending conferences expands your network and will only aid you in developing strong industry ties. I also highly recommend this organization and its work.

Publications: Smashing Magazine is the preeminent source for up-to-date development trends and best practices. I highly recommend it for web professionals. The price point is also reasonable.

Net magazine is a fantastic publication, but it is extremely hard to find both in person and online. There are normally only a few issues on the stand and then only at select Barnes and Nobles. The content is relevant and professionally written. The price however is steep at $16.99 a month. I personally enjoy the content and purchase not only Net magazine but Web Design nearly monthly as well. I still enjoy the feel of a printed publication, so for me it is worth it!