# How Does an IT Professional Keep Up with Changing Technology?

The information technology (IT) industry changes so quickly that IT professionals must create a continuous training plan to keep up with technology advancements. Also, many IT workers do not want to remain in the same roles for their entire careers so they strive to keep up with technology so that they can reinvent themselves for their next challenging IT role. Most people working in this field have above average analytical, problem solving and organizational abilities, and those are the same skills needed to plan out ways to periodically refresh their industry knowledge. The following are some popular ways IT professionals use to keep up with changing technology.

# Attend Training Classes

Taking training classes is an obvious way of keeping current with today’s fast-moving technology. Competition among education and training organizations help to make sure that students gain the latest knowledge about different IT tools and platforms. In addition to a variety of course offerings, these organizations have improved delivery options that allow students more flexible schedule choices than in the past. An example of a training course topic that is in demand by both industry and government IT service sectors is information security ([INFOSEC](http://www.tomsitpro.com/articles/it_certification-it_training-cisco-microsoft-networking,5-78-2.html)). Computing efficiency has increased, but that does not necessarily mean that a computer system’s data and its corresponding infrastructure is any more secure. INFOSEC training instructs IT professionals about how to run system audits, identify network vulnerabilities and mitigate network risks.  Further training can also be obtained by [online courses](http://www.computersciencedegreehub.com/best/online-masters-program/) and can even lead to an advanced degree.

# Gain Industry Certifications

Many IT workers gained entry into the IT job market because they invested time and finances into pursuing certifications for the positions that they wanted to fill. Many of these certifications become outdated within three years because some technology products are superseded by later, improved versions. Gaining understanding of new technology products that are of interest to IT workers now and in their professional futures may combine training with certification. Certification is a confirmation that one has mastered the necessary knowledge and skills about new technology; it is also a respected calling card for promotions to new jobs. Examples of trending certification topics are virtualization, virtual storage and cloud computing.

# Participate in IT Conferences and Trade Shows

The latest developments in technology are often unveiled at conferences and trade shows, and savvy IT professionals take time to attend the ones of interest to them and the companies for which they work. A schedule of these events are often found through professional associations that either host or endorse the events. Association membership is usually not required to attend the event, but it is likely rewarded with discounted rates for events.

# Subscribe to Trade Publications

IT journals and computing magazines often feature new IT tools, platforms and systems that catch the eye of IT professionals. While these educational mediums do not compare with full-fledged training classes, they introduce IT workers to the latest IT products, methods and processes so that they can do further research on their own time. The information about new IT products and services described in these relatively inexpensive trade publications can be just what IT workers need to solve particular problems with their company’s computing systems.

# Conclusion

While many of these professional development activities require employer sponsorship, some can be pursued by IT workers in their spare time with a little planning and organizing. However, most employers subsidize training and other professional development activities in support of IT workers who want to keep up with technology.