What is Applied Computing Technology (ACT)?

If you’re interested in a computer science career or you have a business that provides computer systems support, you may be asking “what is applied computing technology?” ACT is a field of Information Technology that focuses on the practical aspects of computer science, such as network administration, Web development and systems analysis. Many colleges are offering this major as an alternative to a business-track computer science degree.

A degree in applied computing technology provides opportunities for graduates in a large number of careers as well as preparing students for a post-graduate degree. Most of the careers available for ACT majors are in IT fields that require specialized knowledge of computer science and training in real-world systems applications. Companies often hire outside ACT specialists to provide network and systems support for clients or internal departments.

Since an ACT degree provides a very broad, generalized perspective of IT and computer science, students have a lot of freedom to choose complementary electives or pursue a minor or second major. On its own, an ACT degree doesn’t sufficiently prepare students for careers in application development or software engineering.

# What Careers Are Available for ACT Majors?

ACT graduates can find work in computer network architecture, computer systems analysis, database administration, network and computer systems administration and Web development. According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/home.htm), these occupations are expected to grow quite quickly over the next decade. Network and computer systems administration will increase about as quickly as average (12 percent), while computer systems analysis will increase much more quickly than average (25 percent).

The range of median annual salaries for these occupations is around $60,000 to $90,000. Web developers earn the lowest median annual salary out of the IT-related occupations because most of these positions only require an associate’s degree. Computer network architects earn a median annual salary of $91,000, with the top 10 percent earning at least $141,590.

# What Types of Companies Hire ACT Graduates?

Depending on the type of career you pursue, you can find positions with companies that provide cloud computing solutions, wireless network service, mobile and Web application development and data storage. Most of the expansion in these fields will be due to the increased need for wireless, mobile and cloud application services.

With the exception of Web development, ACT careers require a strong familiarity with network installation and maintenance. Most companies employ network and systems administrators to update and maintain existing local area networks, wide area networks and intranets. Many companies also need [computer network architecture specialists](http://www.bls.gov/ooh/computer-and-information-technology/computer-network-architects.htm) to design and install these systems as efficiently as possible. Database administrators ensure that data stored on a server is available to all clients on the network.

Web developers with an education in applied computing technology can take on more responsibility than those with only an associate’s degree. In addition to designing websites and providing routine administration, these professionals perform server software maintenance, database administration and mobile integration for large websites.

While many people think of computer science as a standard route to becoming an application developer or software engineer, there are actually quite a few more occupations required to keep computer systems functioning properly. Consider the growing need for businesses to meet changing consumer demands when asking “what is applied computing technology?”

For more information on obtaining your computer science degree, please see [Top 10 Best Online Computer Science Degree Programs](http://www.computersciencedegreehub.com/best/online-bachelors-programs/).