



**Information Technology Workforce Project:**

**Freshman Forum Workshop**

*Moderator's guide*

Fall 2007

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## **SECTION 1: Welcome and overview of the workshop**

First of all, thank you very much for participating in this workshop. My name is Isabelle Fagnot and I will be facilitating this workshop today.

We are working on a project funded by the National Science Foundation under the direction of Dr. Jeffrey Stanton who is a professor at the School of Information Studies-Syracuse University. The goal of this project is contribute to a better understanding of the profession and ultimately, improve job satisfaction in the IT field. Our discussions, the clips you will watch and the exercises we will do will pertain to your career expectations about Information Technology (IT) jobs.

Today's workshop will last about 45 minutes. We are conducting this workshop as part of the freshman forum as we will provide you with information about the IT field. You may find this information useful when making decisions about your future as an IT professional.

Remember that there are no wrong answers, so say what is on your mind and keep the discussion as NATURAL as possible. I want everyone to get a chance to talk, so try to help me when I encourage everyone to join in the conversation.

Our research team will use information from this workshop's discussion to develop reports of our findings. You will not be identifiable in these reports.

Before we get started, I would need you to read and fill out the informed consent form if you are willing to participate in this workshop. If you do, please sign one copy; hand it to me and keep the other one for your records. If you wish not to participate, you may choose to leave or simply attend the workshop but not complete any instruments.

## **SECTION 2: Introduction to the IT field**

For the first part of this workshop, I would like to provide you with some facts about the IT field – e.g., briefly present possible career paths for students with an IT degree, provide information about our alumni: Job title, industry, etc.

## **SECTION 3: Video clips**

We are now going to watch several video clips of IT students discussing their ideas on the IT field. There will be an open discussion after each video clip.

### ***SEGMENT 1: Candice on Keeping Up with IT***

Transcription of the segment:

**DE:** How are you going to keep up? Because technology is constantly changing; how do you think once you get out into the IT world and you're working, how are you going to stay current?

**CS:** Well, that's another thing – reading, looking, going online, the news – you hear about new technology and sometimes the company may propose: “Well, you know, we'll send you the software out and you know we have training classes for you to learn it”. So if the job with the company with the boss, the CEO see that well this is a new software, or any package that you have and see that there is a new software out that can help, you know, your project or your task, they will offer training courses. And it's not to everyone but to certain people. Certain they feel have that those other basic needs that can help benefit the knowledge and understanding of the software. So if it's not to me, then give it to the other person and I can help them prepare for their next task. So the way I can be current is also on my free time reading the technology section or going online and reading – going to like “Business Enterprises” or also I can go to a meeting and my boss say: “Okay, there's a new software out, I want you all to learn it. Such and such is going to take training courses and every job is going to give you training courses. In order for the IT people to be up-to-date, they will pay for you to be up-to-date. They will pay for you to learn those skills and to be able to do your job better or to do another job. They will pay you so I'll be current just by the training and also any software that comes out and they want to do it, I'll learn it that way.

Possible follow-up questions:

- Do you agree or disagree with the speaker? Why or why not?
- How would you keep up with technology?
- How does keeping up with IT benefit you?
- Do you ever hear about new technology on the news?
- How do you see keeping up with IT helping you in the workplace?
- Do you read about IT in your spare time?
- What do you think about companies offering paid training?
- Would you take training classes to keep up with IT? Why or why not?

***SEGMENT 2: Anthony on IT Outside Work***

Transcription of the segment:

**DE:** Would you say that people that are your friends look at you and think that you are the IT guy?

**AR:** It's happened. Sure. I think I get more IT work sometimes outside of work than I get at inside of work. And I spend eight hours here! So, I think that there's always the friends you have who will always be calling you and say “Oops, I did something to my computer! How do I make this work? Or I would really like to create a video, I would

really like to create digital imaging, something like that.” And just don’t know how to do it and the perception is always that the IT guy knows everything. Of course! Somewhere along the line, we must have as IT people learn all there is to know about computers. But at the same time I think that everybody in this field loves to learn what they don’t know about computers and we have enough of a familiarity of how things work to kind of roll our sleeves, dive in and actually look like we know what we’re doing!

Possible follow-up questions:

- Do your friends ask you about IT related problems?
- Have you ever helped someone with a computer related problem?
- If yes, how did it make you feel?
- Do you enjoy helping others with their computers?
- Do you agree or disagree with Anthony?

### ***SEGMENT 3: Gordon on Geek***

Transcription of the segment:

**DE:** Have you ever been called by friends or others a geek or a nerd?

**GG:** Yes, I have. But you know I have no issue with that, because when their computer needs to be fixed I’m the first one to call. So, you know, you gotta take it with a shred. So, it really doesn’t bother me. If I am to be called a geek or a nerd, then I guess that’s what I am. But as long as I make one happy with what I am doing, it doesn’t make a difference. A label doesn’t bother me.

**DE:** How do you see geek or nerd?

**GG:** I see no negative connotation in it. I mean there could be negative connotations in the term geek or nerd, but it just means someone who’s focused on what they’re doing and knows a lot about a general subject. Sometimes maybe they put too much emphasis into that one topic but it’s really what a person decides to do with their life.

Possible follow-up questions:

- Do you agree or disagree with Gordon? Why or why not?
- Have you ever been called a geek/nerd? If yes, how did it make you feel?
- Do you see being called a geek/nerd as a positive or negative?
- What connotation is commonly associated with geek/nerd?
- Does Gordon look like a Geek to you? Why or why not?
- What is your definition of a geek?

## **SEGMENT 4: Kristan on Women in IT**

*N.B.: In case there is enough time*

### Transcription of the segment:

**DE:** So what would you say to students that feel they are not enough women in IT and don't see a lot of women in the class?

**KR:** I'll say that being a female in this program, you kind of stand out even more. People kind of see you as overcoming so much more because just being a girl... there is really not a huge female population in the school. But I would never get turned off by it. I've never felt like a professor looked down on me because I am the only girl in the class. If anything, they see me even more... like – oh! she's the girl! I don't even know if I can explain it. It's more like you stand out a little bit more. I actually kind of like it.

Possible follow-up questions:

- Do you agree or disagree with Kristan? Why or why not?
- Why do you think some women avoid IT?
- What do you feel women have to offer to IT?
- What would encourage women to participate in IT?
- Would you like to see more women in IT? Why?
- Do you think women stand out in IT?
- To the ladies – Are you the only girl in any of your classes?
- Do you think being the only girl in the class could be an advantage? Why or why not?

## **SECTION 4: Exit exercise**

*N.B.: This exercise will be done to make students realize that they already have knowledge about the IT field that could be very useful for an organization. This will give them a feeling of empowerment and students will leave the workshop on a positive note.*

Considering the information you received during this workshop, let's do a short team exercise. For that I am now going to assign you to small teams (teams of three to four students). There are three parts in this exercise:

- 1) Each group will pick an IT problem (in brown bag) and will discuss a possible solution with the group members
- 2) The problem will be exposed to attendees but the solution the team agreed on will not be revealed right away
- 3) Finally, the group will share its solution and discuss it with the rest of the other groups.

**We have now reached the end of the workshop. Thank you very for your time and participation in this workshop!**