

Take Charge of Your Career – You Don't Have a Choice

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By Richard Stoker

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A few months ago a high school student sent me an AllExperts question which boiled down to:

Which computer career pays the most money and has the most job security?

I was floored.

Job security?

Does this 16 year old kid write term papers on a typewriter? Call her friends on an AT&T Princess phone? Twirl a hula hoop? Listen to a transistor radio?

Make the most money?

Does anybody really give credence to those tables showing that in Boise ID the average programmer makes \$1544 more than the average networker?

Who cares? Do you want to be average? Is anybody average?

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The truth is, although it'd be irresponsible of me to have advised her to study COBOL, she'll make the most money at whatever career she enjoys, given some reasonable demand in the marketplace.

The more she works at giving her employers her best, the more money she'll make.

The more she uses her skills to solve more problems for more people — and this can and should be some activity far beyond normal

employment — the more money she'll make.

Chances are, by the time she graduates from college the highest paying computer skill will be something nobody has yet heard of.

In the long run, she'll make as much money as she sets out to make. No more and no less.

Some computer programmers are now on welfare.

Bill Gates is the richest man in the world.

The more you *create your own job* — whether you're formally an employee or not — the more security you have.

In *THE MILLIONAIRE NEXT DOOR*, Thomas Stanley and William Danko compare the "security" of employment with the "insecurity" of self-employment.

Work for a company and you get a paycheck at regular intervals, as long as the company needs you, does not go out of business and is not merged or bought out by another company.

However, the owner of a pest control business has irregular income, but from maybe 1000 or so different customers.

If one of those customers moves away or switches

to a competitor, the pest control owner still receives income from the other 999.

Given reasonable management and marketing, pest control businesses will survive as long as the world contains mice, roaches and others.

I wonder how many Enron employees now wish they were pest exterminators?

I don't expect techies to kill fleas.

I do expect that the techies who understand they must constantly search for new ways to help people — whether employers or customers — will make a lot of money in this the third millenium.

Techies who just want management to leave them alone to code will have a niche when the economy is booming as in 1999. In bad times, pray for good luck.

It's up to us to shape our futures by the actions we take now.

Do the minimum, reap the minimum.

Do a good job, receive your fair share.

Take the initiative and use your creativity and hard work to far beyond where you are now, and harvest the abundance of the Earth.

Your choice.

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