

1 Executive Summary

We live in the era of global sourcing. Companies can transfer professional activities around the world – IT services have become a global industry. In 2004, BCS set up a working party to review the offshoring trend and to consider how the UK's IT profession might best respond. The group analysed the profession's competitive strengths compared to the best in the world; devised a new career model for the new era of global sourcing; looked at ways of helping IT professionals displaced by offshoring; and considered how the UK might benefit from offshoring without succumbing to the risks and pitfalls. The working party's first report was published in November 2004 (BCS Working Party on Offshoring, 2004).

This second report focuses on the very wide range of BCS activities that will help the UK's IT profession meet the challenges and exploit the opportunities of globalization. It also includes contributions from individuals who are carving out successful careers in a world of global sourcing, celebrates UK achievements and looks at how other organizations are responding to offshoring. The report is aimed at today's UK-based IT professionals, and those considering a career in IT, who may be concerned about the impact of globalization and want to learn more about how they can develop their careers and what the BCS is doing to help them.

PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Today's UK IT professionals need to gear up for the globalization of the IT services industry. BCS is promoting professionalism both in the UK and internationally. Current initiatives include:

- Professionalism in IT, a ground-breaking programme to raise professional standards and improve the ability of organizations to exploit the potential of IT effectively and consistently;
- development of the Chartered IT Professional (CITP) designation, designed to act as the gold standard for the IT profession and an integral part of building a mature profession;
- development of the TickIT quality management scheme to combine the best features of both TickIT and the Capability Maturity Model Integration (CMMi), the quality scheme widely implemented in the offshore industry;
- support for the UK Council for Health Informatics Professions (UKCHIP) registration scheme, recognizing experience levels, qualifications and job roles, for professionals working in the health sector in the NHS, private medicine, academic sector and service-provider industry;
- involvement in international bodies, promoting the UK IT sector and encouraging the adoption of professional standards and qualifications.

RECRUITING AND EDUCATING IT PROFESSIONALS FOR THE FUTURE

To sustain the UK's competitiveness we need to recruit and educate IT professionals who add value by understanding how IT can be used to deliver business benefits and by combining technical with interpersonal skills. BCS is seeking to increase recruitment into the profession and continues to develop its world-class qualifications to meet 21st century needs.

- BCS is leading an initiative, supported by the Higher Education Funding Council, to increase the number of students studying computing and IT at school, college and university.
- BCS's very successful Information Systems Examination Board (ISEB) qualification scheme is being expanded into new IT management areas and has been re-aligned into a more cohesive structure, highlighting the links across different subject areas.
- A BCS group is examining where effort is needed to improve the standard of IT management. A competency framework is being developed and postgraduate degree courses reviewed worldwide.
- BCS's scouts badge continues to capture the interest of young people, encouraging them to consider pursuing a career in IT.

DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL CAREERS

In this era of global sourcing, IT professionals need to focus on developing those skills that continue to be required in the UK. Employers report a shortage of skilled IT workers who combine technical expertise with project management skills and an understanding of how to deliver business benefit through IT. BCS offers an increasing range of services to help individual professionals develop their careers successfully in the UK.

- The Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) provides a model for describing IT professional roles that can be used to benchmark the skills required for particular jobs or career paths. A new version of the framework, released in November 2005, caters more effectively for organizations managing outsourcing relationships, business change roles and service management.
- The online Career Builder service helps professionals drive their own career-development programmes.
- Free mentoring services are available to members through BCS.
- The online Career Centre service enables BCS members to create, edit and manage their CVs and apply for jobs through the Monster network.
- BCSWomen has set up a CV Advice Team that provides support and feedback on CVs, covering letters, career advice and mentoring.
- UKCHIP is developing a continuing professional development scheme for health informaticians.
- BCS continues to offer networking opportunities through its many and varied specialist groups and branches.
- The new BCS website includes extensive editorial sections and an enhanced online library service for members, offering access to books, journal and magazine databases and selected Forrester reports.
- BCS's new book-publishing programme contains titles explicitly aimed at the IT professional looking to improve skills, prospects and job options.

WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT

Government initiatives that support IT innovation, education, training and employment all contribute to building a strong IT profession against a background of increasing globalization. BCS has a role to play in ensuring that these policy initiatives are coordinated and effective.

- The BCS Government Relations Group exists to develop mutually beneficial relationships between BCS and government bodies; to provide a focus for submissions to government; and to initiate programmes to inform government on IT-related issues.
- BCS is represented on a panel that advises government on skills shortages in the UK IT workforce. BCS developed the methodology for assessing the level of IT skills shortages and has recently been contributing to discussions on a new managed migration strategy and the work permits issued to IT professionals from offshore IT service providers.
- Members of the BCS Health Informatics Forum contribute to advisory groups, think tanks and consultations on NHS initiatives.

WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS

Offshoring is a reality of business life today. BCS is committed to raising professional standards; deriving and promulgating best practice; encouraging the adoption of quality standards; and promoting good security management. Effective governance arrangements help ensure that offshore outsourcing relationships meet expectations and evolve to meet changing business needs. Data Protection Act principles provide critical safety measures for UK citizens when personal data are transferred between countries. The security strategy should bring together personnel, physical and technical factors. Many operational security functions need to be based locally, at offshore locations where appropriate.

BCS offers a range of professional products to help employers develop the IT expertise of their staff:

- a professional development accreditation scheme, which provides external benchmarking and validation by BCS;
- the Career Developer service that helps employers define, manage and develop the IT skills within their organization;
- the Skills Manager software solution, which helps organizations identify and manage IT skills and match business requirements against current skills levels;
- the IT Job Descriptor browser-based solution.

BCS is also committed to raising national IT literacy standards and offers a range of qualifications for all employees.

SUPPORTING INNOVATION AND CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE

Never has it been so important for UK-based IT professionals to use their skills and knowledge to exploit the possibilities that IT offers, to innovate and improve. This places new demands on us. IT professionals can provide the bridge between technology and business experts, helping to stimulate the innovation that helps companies succeed. BCS is a key sponsor of the Centre for Innovation in IT, which was set up to promote thought leadership in the delivery of innovation through IT.

BCS award schemes have been recognizing outstanding achievement in IT and IT management for more than 30 years. Award categories cover technology, business achievement, individual excellence, women in IT, mobile computing and investment in security.

As the learned society for computing and computer science, BCS plays a significant role in the development of the academic discipline and research carried out in the UK. BCS is determined to do everything possible to assist in setting and sustaining the UK's research agenda. In 2006 BCS will play a key role in a new international review of ICT research in the UK and also organize the third in a series of conferences, *Grand Challenges in Computing*, dedicated to setting the research agenda for the next decade.

BCS THOUGHT LEADERSHIP ROLE

BCS has a pivotal role to play in the IT profession's response to globalization. As the leading learned and professional society for IT, BCS aims to ensure that it is always at the forefront in thought leadership and promoting the underlying science, techniques and applications of IT. It does this by providing opportunities for experts from research and practice to exchange views, including thought leadership debates, forums, specialist groups, the Learned Society Awards programme, prestige public lectures and publishing.

A debate in January 2006 considered what the UK might do to avoid losing out to the Far East in the knowledge-based economy. The discussion was very positive, highlighting that the UK is currently in a strong position. Innovation, learning, professional standards and a business-friendly environment, supported and encouraged by government measures, will all help the UK to sustain its competitive edge in the global IT economy.

BCS is commissioning a research study to look at the effect of computing developments on the UK economy and its society over the next 20 years, addressing three challenges:

- Do we want the UK to be G8 or G20 in 20 years time?
- Computing will dictate many more forms of work in the future. How should BCS influence computing-related employment?
- How should BCS ensure that people can reach their full potential in a technical and information-rich society?

The BCS case studies initiative is drawing on lessons learnt by Professional IT Award winners and medallists to develop a range of material to guide, inform and help raise standards of professionalism.