

-GARTNER PRESS RELEASE-

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Gartner Says Organisations Should Leverage Social Sciences to Place Next-Generation Technology Jobs

Stamford, Conn., August 24, 2009 — As individuals and organisations progress in their adoption and leverage of the web, new work streams and needs will arise, resulting in companies utilising social sciences to fill next-generation technology jobs, according to Gartner, Inc.

The sprawling use of consumer technology is spurring the demand for new skills in the workplace. Gartner said that during the next five years, consumer adoption of technology will accelerate as individuals and groups become more comfortable and adept at using it to manage their family, social, and business relationships. At the same time, organisations will struggle to keep pace as they integrate rapidly changing behaviours and technology into an already established business culture and infrastructure.

“To succeed in ‘consumerising’ corporate technology, organisations will need new talent and skills that blend a deep understanding of the business; artistic talents in visual and social schemes that induce the desired behaviours and reactions from consumers; and expansive knowledge of how to invoke and leverage the power of web technology and models,” said Kathy Harris, vice president and distinguished analyst at Gartner. “Many emerging jobs and roles will not simply specialise in one skill area, but will blend business, artistic and technical skills.”

“Many of the needed technical capabilities originate in the social sciences and are aimed at usability and adoption of technology-related business services,” Ms Harris said. “These capabilities embody the notion of ‘action at the interface’ between the business and its markets or between business management and technology management. Therefore, organisations are likely to shift the responsibility for leveraging technology outside centralised IT organisations and into the business units responsible for growth and innovation of revenue, products, and services.”

Gartner envisions four key areas where new talent and expertise will be needed:

Web User Experience Roles

User experience roles enable users to effectively consume the applications and information delivered on the web. Although the role of interface designer has been around since the inception of computing, with consumerisation and the densely populated and competitive web environment, this role is often the critical success factor in a product or service. According to Gartner, key roles are rapidly evolving in three areas of user experience: user interface designers focused on enabling users to work stand-alone or to self-serve without assistance; virtual-assistant designers who create web beings that replicate the actions of a human being in providing agent services on the web; and interaction directors who produce web conversations among multiple people or between people and web beings in a structured web environment.

Behavioural Analysis Roles

These roles are aimed at understanding, responding to and exploiting human behaviour on the web and how it may mirror and differ from behaviours in the physical world. Some key roles that will interpret and leverage human behaviour are web psychologists who are becoming increasingly important to product development and marketing, community designers who are responsible for architecting organisation-owned communities, and web and social network miners and analysts who focus on discovering, understanding and exploiting the social and behavioural dynamics of web communities.

Information Specialists

With the volume and diversity of content generated, posted and modified on the web, there is a rising need for information anthropologists who trace the origin, history, and evolution of web content. Their objectives range from providing the history of content or information to spotting fraudulent or modified images, audio and texts. Information anthropologists may therefore contribute to legal analysis or to processes where intellectual property or information quality and integrity are at risk.

Digital Lifestyle Experts

These experts will aid individuals and groups (for example, executive management, technology or marketing teams) to become more digitally aware, connected, effective, and sophisticated. A digital lifestyle expert may also assist or stand in for their clients in their web endeavours — defining target digital profiles, building out a digital image or personal brand — as well as helping wired users achieve the digital status they aspire to. As such, key roles will include digital persona consultants and personal brand advisers.

“The future is solidly connected to the web and new work streams clearly need to arise to support this,” said Ms Harris. “Creative, artistic and clever people will develop the early iterations of these new jobs. This will enable businesses and government to take early advantage of new capabilities and develop them into mainstream skills.”

Additional information is available in the Gartner report “Social Science Meets Technology in Next-Generation Jobs.” The report is available on Gartner’s website at http://www.gartner.com/DisplayDocument?ref=g_search&id=1093112&subref=simplesearch.

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