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IT Placement Data: What Can It Tell You About Educating the IT Workforce?

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IT Placement Data: What Can It Tell You About Educating the IT Workforce?

TREO Talk Paper

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Abstract

We seek to share and engage in discussion with colleagues about IT placement data at their institutions, the aggregated, the shared, the hidden, and the research studies explored or ignored.

We are seeing increasing interest in data about first destination jobs of our IT graduates, whether they are educated in business, computer science, engineering, or information schools (see NACE 2024). New and emerging technologies have challenged us and sometimes rocked us in recent years. Between COVID-19, political instabilities, generative AI, and all the shifts to virtual engagement, the employment picture has shifted for the IT workforce. These have affected students graduating into any occupation but are additionally challenging for those who wish to become part of the IT workforce. The outcomes of our educational efforts are often hard to measure and surprisingly are often not pursued strategically as sources of insights into curriculum, employer relations, or environmental conditions.

After a quick review of some existing IT placement initiatives, we will focus on what we have learned from the literature and our research. Building on our published research and work-in-progress, we will share some findings from two of our studies of IT graduates published eighteen years apart, some challenges, and potential opportunities of IT placement data for academic administrators, researchers, and others engaged in curricular or career development of the IT workforce (Kaarst-Brown & Guzman, 2005, 2023).

We have questions even as we offer suggestions. As a starting point, *do you know if your department/school/institution collects placement data in general and placement data specific to your IT graduate programs? Do you have access to the data, or do you only see aggregated reports? If you participate in curriculum and program discussions, has this data been brought to the forefront of discussions? Do you know who hires your graduates and what knowledge, skills, and abilities these employers seem to value? Are you working on research that might benefit from IT placement data?*

We hope to engage our colleagues in a discussion about IT placement data, why it is important to our goals of educating the IT workforce, and what we can learn from it.

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