

Desirable ICT Graduate Attributes: Theory vs. Practice

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ABSTRACT

The majority of ICT graduates must begin their careers by successfully fulfilling the requirements advertised within online recruitment sites. Although considerable research into employer requirements is commonly undertaken when preparing curricula, studies investigating how well the graduate attributes on which curricula are based match those required by employers have been limited in terms of the techniques used. This study employs an innovative approach of analyzing online ICT employment advertisements in Australia and the United States to determine the key attributes sought by ICT employers, together with the most commonly required skill groupings. A position-based wrapper system was developed to extract the advertisement data, which was then analyzed using a text mining package. The results are benchmarked against those from standard ICT curricula produced by academic and professional bodies. The findings suggest that employers place greatest emphasis upon experience and technological skills; although current curricula meet these requirements, their emphases warrant revision. There also appear to be differences between professional body curricula and the ISCC '99 curriculum which was produced by industry and academia, with the latter appearing to match employment market demands more closely.

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