IT jobs of the future: data security roles set to dominate IT job opportunities in 2017

- 58% of Australian CIOs believe IT and data security roles will dominate IT job growth over the next five years, followed by applications development (43%) and data/database management (39%).
- 43% say software development is the most challenging area to source skilled IT professionals, followed by applications development (38%), IT and data security (36%) and data/database management (36%).

Sydney, 17 January 2017 – Independent research commissioned by specialised recruitment company Robert Half reveals the IT jobs of the future. Australian CIOs confirm demand for technology professionals specialised in IT and data security will dominate the technology job market the coming years, as concern increases in Australia's IT sector amid persistent cyber-security threats. Increased innovation and adoption of Big Data is also fuelling demand for applications development specialists and data/database management professionals.

However, the research suggests these roles are not only predicted to create the most jobs growth over the next several years, they are also the most difficult to recruit for amid a candidate-short market.

1. IT and data security

More than half (58%) of Chief Information Officers (CIOs) say IT and data security is the key functional area within IT and technology which will create the most jobs over the next five years. Specific roles that are in high demand within the security space are Cyber-Security Consultants, IT Risk Managers and IT Risk and Compliance Managers.

The demand for IT security specialists is supplemented by a PwC study revealing a 109% increase in detected security incidents and cyber-attacks in Australia in 2016[1], and Robert Half research confirms data abuse and data security is the number one security challenge cited by 49% of Australian CIOs.

David Jones, Senior Managing Director at Robert Half Asia Pacific said: "*The escalating cost and frequency of cyber-attacks has resulted in a number of organisations forming their own team of cyber-security experts, thereby allowing the enterprise to take a pre-emptive approach to discovering and tracking security issues. I is therefore not surprising that the main area of growth projected for IT jobs is within the IT and data security function.*"

"*Building an in-house team of IT security professionals can be a resource-heavy task, however there is growing evidence many organisations feel this cost outweighs the potential expense, disruption and reputational damage caused by cyber-attacks. Companies who seek more flexibility in their staffing policy rely on temporary IT professionals to manage any initial cyber-risks and install the proper IT defences against cyber-attacks.*"

2. Applications development

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[1] http://www.pwc.com.au/publications/global-information-security.html

Another area that is predicted to create significant IT jobs growth over the next five years is applications development (cited by 43% of CIOs). As companies become more innovative and consumer focused with the development of their own apps, there will be particular demand for Software Engineers, Software Developers and Software Development Managers. These professionals need to be proficient in Angular JS, PHP, Java and Node systems.

"As Australian companies increasingly adopt innovative methods, developing new technology tools to improve the customer experience will be a crucial factor driving their business agenda. Developing apps for businesses requires the correct expertise and qualified IT personal, a trend that will surge demand for IT professionals skilled in applications development," said **David Jones**.

3. Data/database management

The next area predicted for strong jobs creation is data/database management (cited by 39% of CIOs). The demand for IT professionals within these functional area can be attributed to the rise of companies increasing their advanced methodologies and adoption of Big Data practices. There will be particular demand for Database Administrators, Business Intelligence Developers and Data Analysts, all of whom will need to be skilled in SSIS, SSRS and SSAS systems.

"Companies are operating in an increasingly data-driven market, and by utilising Big Data businesses are able to make informed and strategic decisions. With the right IT talent to properly manage databases and maximise the potential of Big Data analytics, organisations can focus more on their customer needs, identify new trends and unlock new business opportunities. Because of this, IT professionals who specialise in Big Data will find themselves in increasing demand over the next few years," added **David Jones**.

Australian CIOs were asked:

	Which functional areas within IT and technology will most jobs be created in the next five years?	In which function areas is it most challenging to find skilled IT professionals?
IT and data security	58%	36%
Applications development	43%	38%
Data/database management	39%	36%
Networking	34%	30%
Software development	34%	43%
Help desk/technical support	28%	14%
Systems administration	21%	26%
Web development or web design	13%	21%

Source: Independent survey commissioned by Robert Half among 160 CIOs – multiple answers allowed.

The IT roles most likely to experience strong demand in 2017 are also some of the most difficult to recruit for, pointing to a supply/demand imbalance of skilled technology professionals. Just under half (43%) of CIOs surveyed say software development is the hardest area to recruit for, followed by applications development (38%), IT and data security (36%), and data/database management (36%).

"The technology sector in Australia has grown faster than the IT candidate market. To offset the potential impact of a talent shortage, organisations have the option of upskilling existing IT staff or using the services of contract IT professionals or external consultants, which can all be cost-effective strategies. The importance of having measures in place to protect the integrity of IT systems, as well as the right IT talent who specialise in specific areas of IT, should not be underestimated in an increasingly competitive market," concluded **David Jones***.*

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Notes to editors

About the research
The annual study was developed by Robert Half Australia and is conducted in April 2016 by an independent research company. The study is based on 160 interviews with CIOs/CTOs from companies across Australia, with the results segmented by company size, sector and geographic location.

About Robert Half
Robert Half is the world's first and largest specialised recruitment consultancy and member of the S&P 500. Founded in 1948, the company has over 325 offices worldwide providing temporary, interim and permanent recruitment solutions for accounting and finance, financial services, technology, and administrative professionals. Robert Half Australia has offices in Brisbane, Melbourne, Mount Waverley, Perth and Sydney. More information on roberthalf.com.au.

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