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Information tech hiring rises

Computer network, database field grow.

Forecast for big growth in IT security jobs.

By **Laura Raines**
For the AJC

In early January, the German-based global integrated materials and technology company ThyssenKrupp announced plans to locate its IT headquarters in Alpharetta.

The company's new North American IT Shared Services facility will serve all its North American operations, including an elevator products manufacturing operation and four other divisions in Georgia.

It also will bring a \$30 million investment and 110 jobs to Georgia.

ThyssenKrupp's announcement is a good example of what experts are predicting for 2011 — employment in information technology is on the upswing. Computer network, systems and database administrators will have excellent job prospects, with employment growth projected at 30 percent from 2008 to 2018, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"With businesses more and more dependent on

information technology, and the industry changing so fast, there is going to be a premium placed on higher-end IT skills," said Brian Barnier, a writer, business and technology adviser and member of ISACA, the international organization that provides practical guidance, benchmarks and training for all enterprises that use information systems.

"The greatest growth is going to be in information security jobs," Barnier said. "With IT integrated into business operations, companies are challenged to take the risk out of using technology systems. Many of the new jobs will be in that area."

Dice.com, a career hub for IT professionals, predicted a 69 percent increase in information security jobs this year. High job growth is expected in network security, application security, forensics and security engineer positions.

Barnier said several factors are driving IT jobs in this direction, including the exploding amounts of data at risk due to increasingly complex technology systems; lean operations that leave companies more vulnerable to risk; and an increase in regulation in data privacy.

"Health care must be even more concerned

IT continued G2



"With businesses more and more dependent on information technology ... there is going to be a premium placed on higher-end IT skills," said Brian Barnier (left), with Stacy Gensler, ISACA chapter president. *Leita Cowart Special*



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IT continued from G3

with HIPAA regulations with more hospitals and doctors offices moving to electronic medical records; and the new Dodd-Frank legislation will have a huge impact on the banking industry," he said.

Financial institutions and other corporations must also protect themselves from cybercrime and an increasing number of malicious attacks that cause information system failure or leaked data.

"Companies and recruiters look to us [ISACA] to help them create job descriptions that fit their changing IT needs, and job seekers are hungry to know the skills that will be most in demand in the future," said Stacy Gensler, manager of internal audit with Cousins Properties Inc. and president of the Atlanta chapter of ISACA. "We keep our members and educational institutions aware of the trends and provide the information and training professionals need to grow their careers."

The Atlanta chapter of ISACA has more than 1,150 members, with 60 percent holding CISA (Certified Information Systems Auditor) certification. In 2010, the chapter hosted 10 educational events and sponsored its third annual Geek Week conference to let IT professionals network and learn from each other.

"The key growth areas now are risk, security management and IT governance," Gensler said.

"Savvy technology professionals are acquiring the skills and knowledge to meet the new demands."

More than 4,800 professionals worldwide have earned ISACA's new Certified in Risk and Information Systems Control (CRISC) certification since April.

"The information technology professional's role is changing," said David Barton, a principal with UHY Advisors, one of the nation's top 20 tax and business consulting companies and a member of the Atlanta chapter of ISACA. "It's no longer enough to be a good technologist. IT professionals need to understand the business they're in and know how to manage and adapt technology within their industry."

Companies need more than a network engineer who knows how to click things together and make them work, Barnier said.

"The network engineer needs to understand the business value of that net-

"The key growth areas now are risk, security management and IT governance."

Stacy Gensler
President ISACA

work," he said.

Gensler is seeing more IT people sitting on leadership teams and telling companies how to buy and manage technology in order to meet their bottom-line objectives.

"The shift is from trained professional to manager, as more companies align their IT and overall business operations and goals," she said.

For that reason, soft skills are needed as much as hard skills. IT professionals need to know about business operations, how to communicate and how to manage people.

"We tell people who ask how they can find a job and make more money to acquire more management skills," Gensler said.

Barton sees another paradigm shift coming with cloud computing [virtual servers available over the Internet]. Instead of storing their data on their own servers, more companies are storing data on the Web.

"When businesses need to share information from one office to another, it's fast and efficient to use Google Docs, but the risk goes up," Barton said.

"All it takes is one mistake by an infrastructure manager to expose huge amounts of data."

Yet, with companies squeezed to the bone, security is not as high a priority as productivity. If workers can do more work through wireless mobile devices and cloud computing, then many companies will be willing to take that risk, Barton said.

"Not only will cloud service providers be hiring, but we are going to need people within businesses who can weigh those risks and meet the challenges that come with cloud computing," he said. "That's a snowball that is accelerating rapidly."

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