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past has left it with reports.

The IT job market began recovering in 2004 and the outlook is now positive, according to the Winter '06 Technology report from recruitment firm Ambition.

Businesses are increasingly seeing investment in technology as crucial to maintaining a competitive edge, with the biggest long-term problem facing the sector expected to be skills shortages, the report says.

Technology skills are in demand across many industries, with more job opportunities opening up at graduate level, says Ambition's managing director, Paul Lyons.

Training for a career in IT can be done through TAFE, university and private colleges and all can provide a good starting point, Lyons says. However,

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most employers will be more interested in your demonstrated skills than your qualifications.

Lyons recommends trying a few roles, such as help-desk support, Unix and business analysis, in the first few years of your IT career to build strong skills. But don't neglect your communication skills.

"There are far fewer back-office technical roles where you can afford not to talk to anybody," he says. "Whether you're in banking, insurance or recruitment you need to be able to translate business problems into technology and back again."

Employment opportunities for IT graduates have "picked up quite a bit", Davis says. Demand is strong for skills in networks and information systems; but to maximise their career prospects students are recommended to take two or three majors rather than specialise too narrowly.

"There's increasing concern from employers that they need more and better graduates," he says. "It's not too bad at the moment, but if trends continue we'll be seeing difficulties in producing enough skilled people."



Photo: Angela Brkic

creative computing

Terri Dittman, web designer

Terri Dittman's introduction to information technology more than 20 years ago was accidental. A partner in the accountancy firm where she was working bought a computer and needed someone to teach the staff how to use it. Dittman volunteered.

"I enjoyed working with computers," says Dittman, 48. "I first learnt basic office skills, then data entry. It's taken me a while to realise IT is so broad I could move into a more creative area."

Since that first experience with computers, she has studied at TAFE Sydney Institute, the Computer Graphics College and the University of Technology, Sydney, where she is midway through a bachelor of science in IT.

She now specialises in web design and works part-time while building her own business, www.webgarden.com.au.

"I have a creative side but I also have a very practical side," she says. "Web design is a great way to combine the two."

Websites

IT Careers
www.itcareers.acs.org.au
Females in Information
Technology and
Telecommunications
www.fitf.org.au