

Salary Surveys: Money, Money, Money

I'm not a big fan of salary surveys. One of the reasons why is that every time I run across one that even remotely applies to what I do, I end up getting in trouble. For instance, when I recently pointed one survey out to the boss, her response was "Can you say 'Do you want fries with that?'," followed by "Quit your whining and get back to work."

Still, salary surveys have their place, particularly when organizations are planning budgets for the coming year(s), or when you're considering your future. But it is important to keep in mind all of the variables involved. Location, longevity, skill sets, and the like all factor in. Some of these you can control. Other variables -- such as how the economy or the organization are doing, financially speaking -- you have no control over.

But there is purpose and place for every survey, even if for curiosity if nothing else. [EE Times](#), [Information Week](#), and [CRN](#), all of which like Dr. Dobb's are part of CMP, conduct annual surveys. Certainly [TechCareers](#), an online career resource center that's also part of CMP, relies in part on salary surveys such as these.

The most recent salary survey I've run across is the "Robert Half Technology 2007 Salary Guide," conducted by (you guessed it) [Robert Half Technology](#). Like all surveys, however, it would seem that there are variables and caveats to keep in mind. For one thing, Robert Half Technology is a staffing firm. Which means that the company probably generates revenue from commissions paid when hooking up employees with employers. So in a business like this, churn is good. Likewise, there's every likelihood that the amount of fees paid to placement firms depend on the salaries. So in a business like this, high salaries are good too. There's nothing wrong with this at all, of course. Just more variables to keep in mind.

So according to the Robert Half Technology 2007 Salary Guide, IT professionals in the U.S. can expect starting salaries in 2007 to increase an average of 2.8 percent over 2006.

In the realm of application development:

- **software architects** can expect a 4.0 percent increase, upwards of \$112,750.
- **Lead application developers** can bank on a 2.8 percent increase, to between \$75,000 and \$100,000 annually.
- Moreover, developers with **C++** skills can add 5 percent to this.
- **Java** skills add 7 percent
- **Visual Basic** 5 percent
- **C#** development skills can add 10 percent.
- **Visual Basic .NET** skills bring in an additional 10 percent.

In the database arena:

- **database developers** can expect an increase of 3.2 percent, to about \$103,000 a year
- 10 percent can be added for **Oracle** skills
- 10 percent for Microsoft SQL Server skills
- 7 percent for **DB2** skills.

On the Internet and e-commerce front:

- **Web developers** are looking at a 4.2 percent increase
- with **Java** skill garnering 7 percent more
- **Java 2 Enterprise Edition** skills getting 10 percent more
- **ColdFusion** skills 5 percent
- **Web services** getting 7 percent more
- **C#** developers can expect 10 percent more
- **Visual Basic .NET** skills will bring 10 percent more
- **Weblogic clustering admin** skills will bring home 5 percent more.

Needless to say, the Robert Half Technology 2007 Salary Guide goes into more detail than what I've sketched out here, including North American regional issues.

In the meantime, I'll be talking to the boss -- and asking her if she wants cream and sugar with that coffee.