

The Pearson VUE 2016 Value of IT Certification Survey Results summary



Overview

The 2016 Value of IT Certification survey was conducted online from August to September, 2016. Survey invitations were emailed to individuals who took a certification exam in the last year and had opted-in to receive marketing communications from Pearson VUE. The survey yielded nearly 28,000 completed responses from around the globe. All tables included in the report are based on total responses unless otherwise stated.

Survey objectives

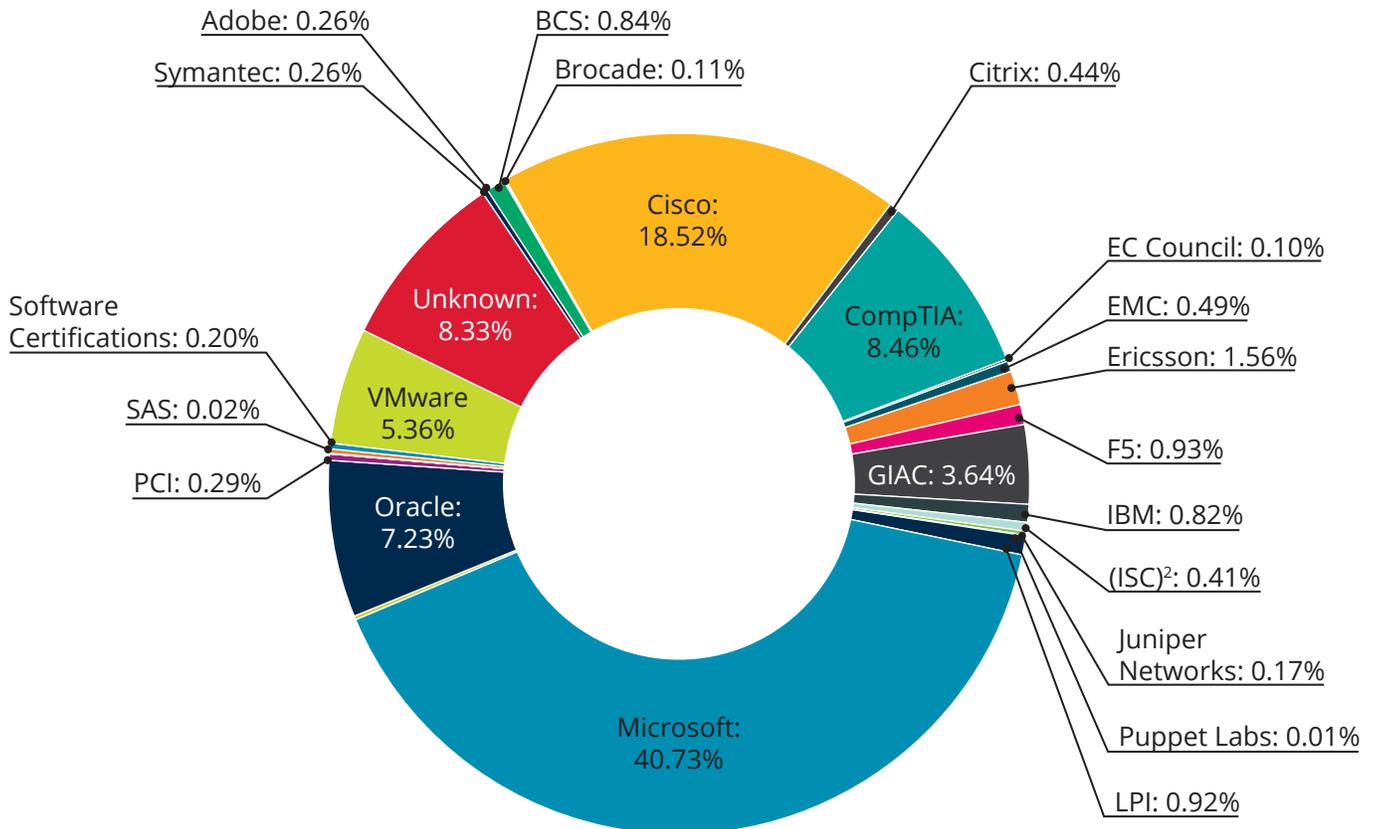
1. To learn more about study habits, reasons for taking training and obtaining a certification, purchasing behaviors, and intentions for future training and/or testing.
2. To gain insight into the value of IT certification for candidates.

Survey incentive

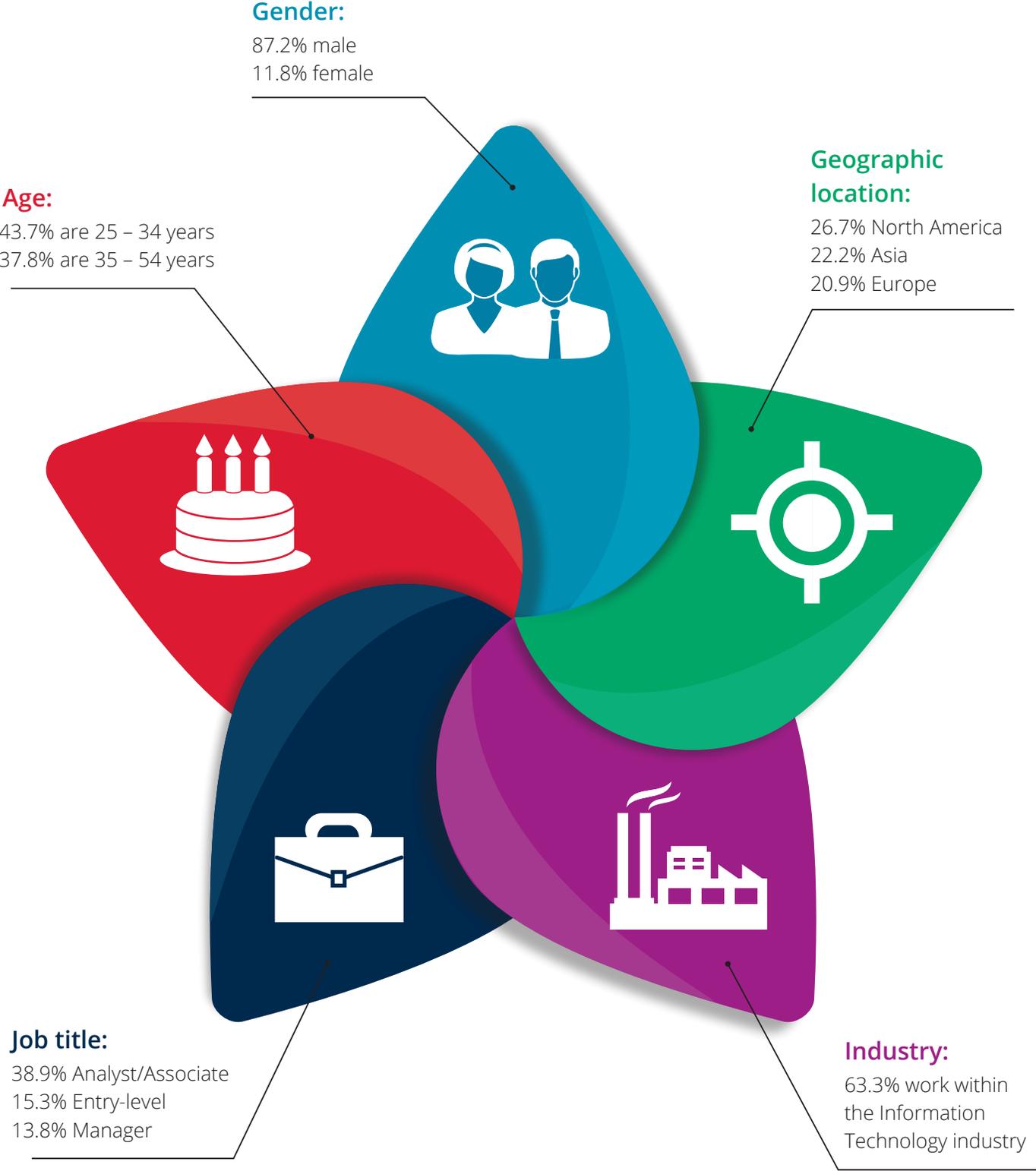
The first 100 respondents to complete the survey in each region (Americas; Europe, Middle East and Africa; and Asia-Pacific) received an Amazon gift card worth \$10 USD, or the appropriate currency equivalent.

IT professionals who completed the survey

Pearson VUE partnered with 26 leading IT organizations to conduct this survey using their exam registration data. The chart below represents the percentage of respondents from each organization who completed the survey in its entirety.



Respondent demographics



What is your gender?

Male	87.2%
Female	11.8%
Prefer not to answer/ Did not answer	1.0%

What is your age?

18 – 24	13.2%
25 – 34	43.7%
35 – 54	37.8%
55 – 64	3.3%
65+	0.4%
Prefer not to answer/ Did not answer	1.6%

What is your geographic region?

North America	26.7%
Asia	22.2%
Europe	20.9%
MENA	12.6%
Rest of Africa	8.1%
South America	5.0%
ANZ	1.9%
Russia	1.1%
Central America	0.7%
Caribbean Islands	0.6%

What is your current job title?

Analyst/Associate	39.0%
Entry-level	15.3%
Manager	13.8%
Student	8.6%
Unemployed	5.9%
Senior Manager	3.8%
Intern	2.9%
Owner	1.9%
Director	1.6%
C-Suite (CIO/CTO, etc.)	0.6%
Vice President	0.3%
Prefer not to answer/ Did not answer	6.3%

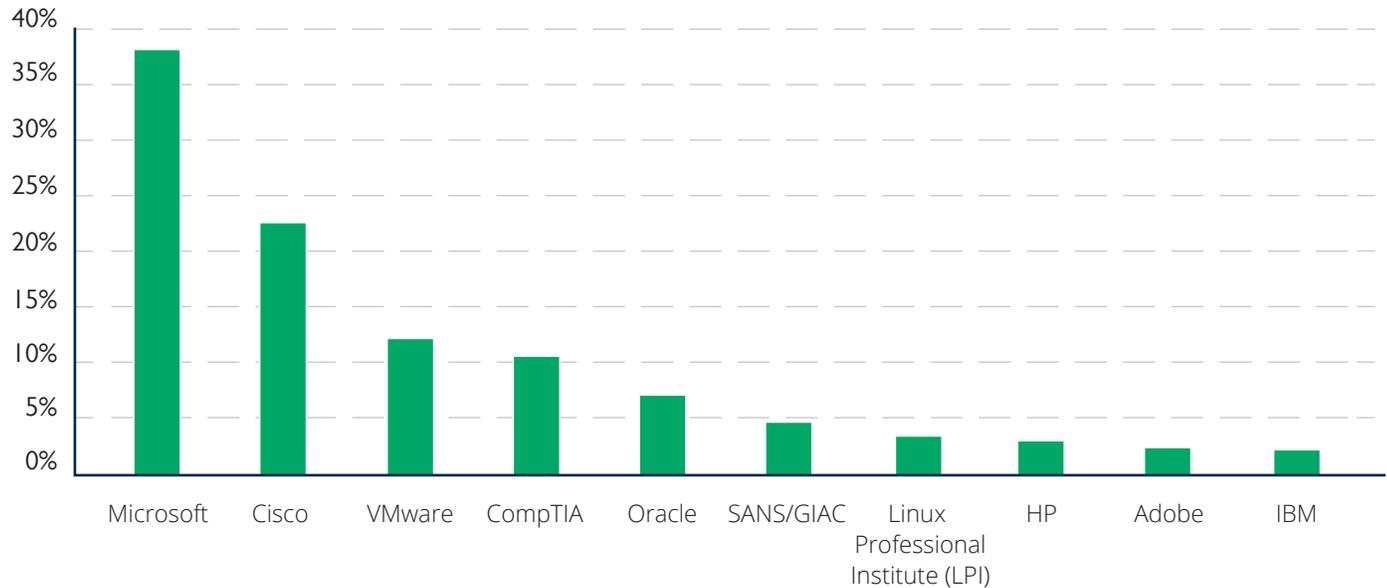
In what industry do you currently work?

Information Technology	63.3%	Manufacturing	2.0%	Media & Broadcasting	0.5%
Telecommunications	9.2%	Energy	1.3%	Hospitality	0.4%
Government	5.6%	Consumer Services	1.1%	Entertainment	0.3%
Financial Services	4.6%	Electronics	1.0%	Pharmaceuticals	0.3%
Education	3.4%	Construction	0.7%	Agriculture & Forestry	0.2%
Business Services	2.4%	Aerospace	0.5%	Real Estate	0.2%
Health Care	2.4%	Food & Drink	0.5%	Fishing, Mining & Extraction	0.1%

Training

86% of IT professionals took a **training** course (either through an instructor-led classroom, virtual classroom or digital training) in the past 12 months. Respondents trained on the following IT programs.

Top ten programs:



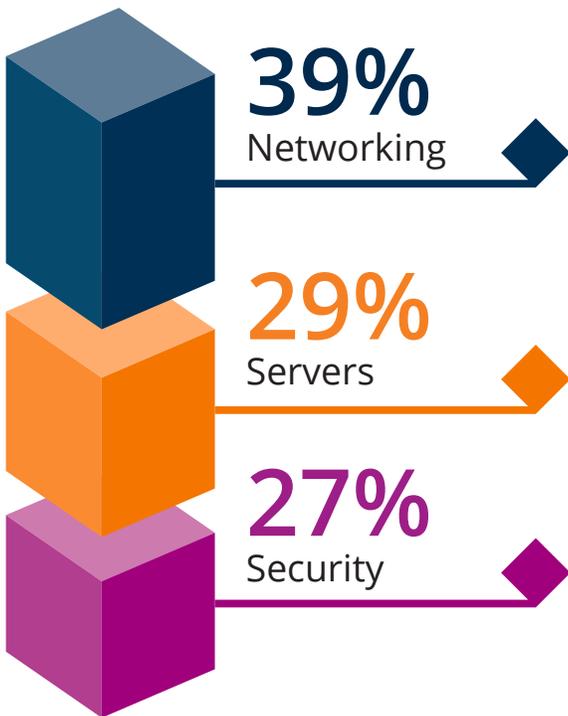
Adobe	2.26%	Citrix	2.20%	Google	2.18%	LPI	3.11%	SANS/GIAC	4.80%
Alcatel Lucent	0.36%	CIW	0.12%	HP	2.70%	Microsoft	38.37%	SAP	0.92%
Apple	1.27%	CompTIA	10.34%	IBM	2.29%	NetApp	1.03%	SAS	0.35%
AppSense	0.11%	Dassault	0.06%	IIBA	0.20%	Nokia	0.29%	Siemens	0.13%
Arista	0.16%	Dell	1.69%	IIST	0.06%	Oracle	7.44%	SQE	0.06%
ASQ	0.12%	EC Council	1.35%	ISACA	0.70%	Palo Alto	1.37%	Symantec	1.29%
Atlassian	0.36%	EMC	1.75%	(ISC) ²	1.72%	PCI	0.60%	Teradata	0.73%
Autodesk	0.42%	Ericsson	1.87%	ISQI	0.08%	PeopleCert	0.29%	Tibco	0.07%
Avaloq	0.06%	EXIN	1.94%	ISTQB	0.65%	PMI	1.58%	VMware	12.10%
BCS	0.47%	F5 Networks	1.95%	Juniper Networks	1.76%	Puppet Labs	0.21%	Other	8.33%
Brocade	0.53%	Facebook	0.85%	Lenovo	0.66%	QAI	0.13%	None	14.87%
Cisco	22.76%	Filemaker	0.09%	LinkedIn	1.22%	Ruijie Networks	0.06%		

Which task area(s) did your most recent training cover? Please select all that apply.

Security has increased as a popular area of study over prior year by 6%.

Networking	38.5%	Mobility and Wireless	7.7%
Servers	28.5%	Business Intelligence and Analysis	7.3%
Security	27.1%	Data Warehousing and Analytics	7.2%
Virtualization	23.9%	Project and Program Management	6.8%
Cloud	19.3%	Mobile Apps	5.0%
Network Management	19.3%	Business Process Improvement	4.1%
Software Development (General)	13.3%	Leadership and Professional Skills	4.5%
Storage	12.5%	Video and Web Conferencing	2.6%
Web Application Development	10.5%	Initiatives (BYOD, Social Media, etc.)	2.1%
Enterprise Architecture	9.2%	Other	8.4%

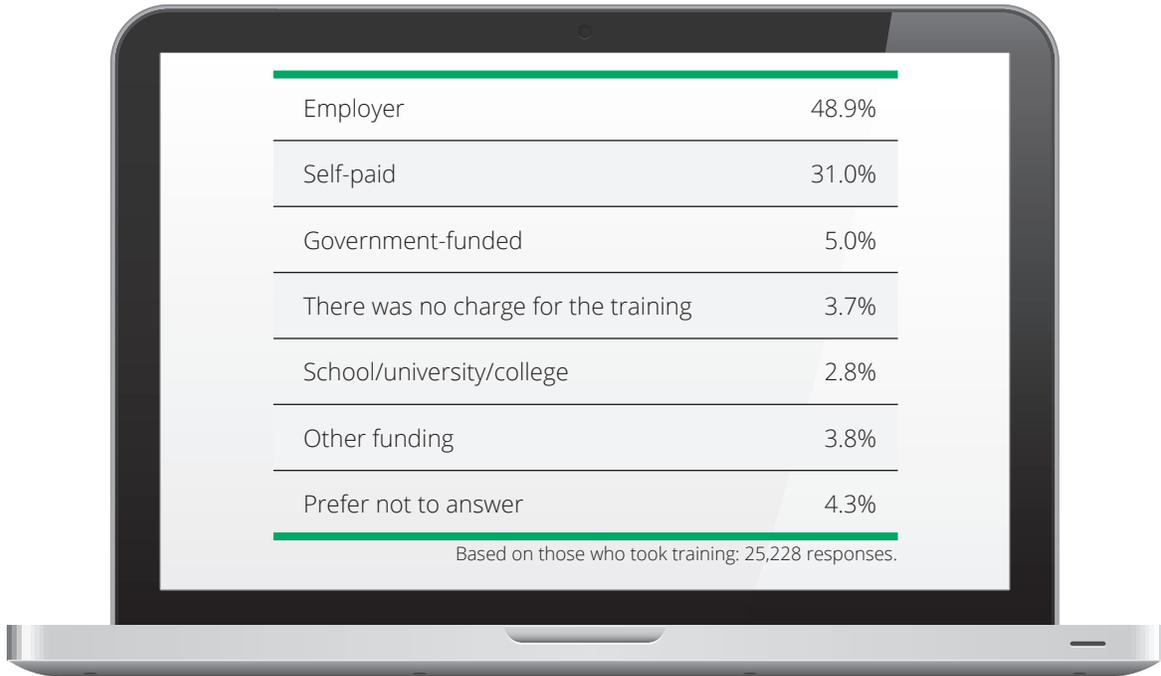
Based on those who took training: 22,807 responses.



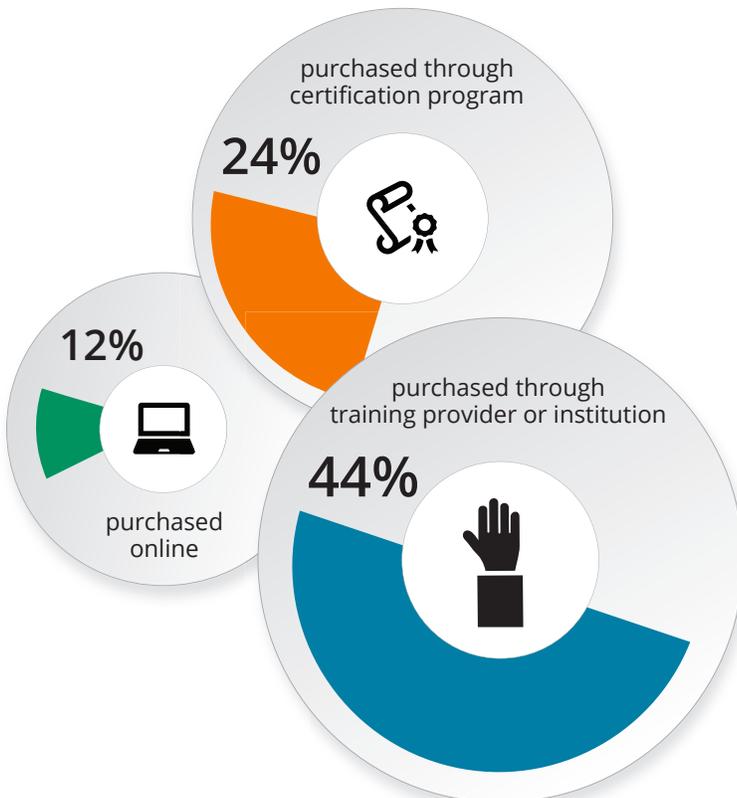
I would like certification training to be delivered via an online course.

Strongly agree	24.2%
Agree	42.7%
Neutral	23.3%
Disagree	5.8%
Strongly disagree	4.0%

If you undertook training (either via an instructor-led classroom, virtual classroom or digital training) within the last 12 months, who paid for that training?



Still thinking about the most recent training you undertook (either via an instructor-led classroom, virtual classroom or digital training), from where did you purchase?



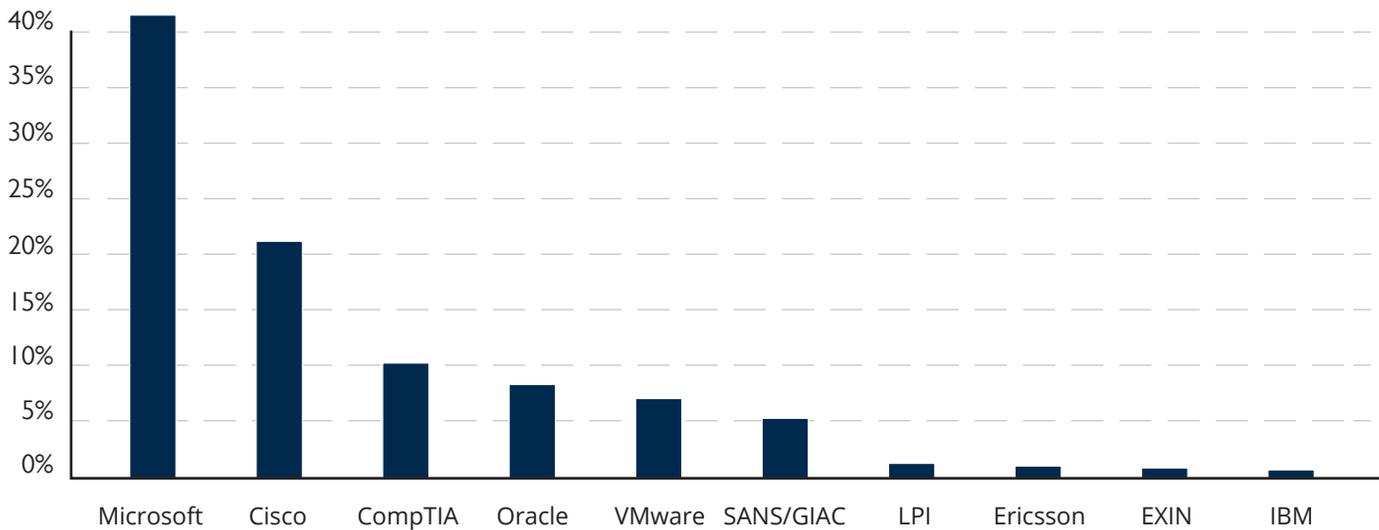
Training provider	30.5%
IT certification program	23.9%
Educational institution	12.6%
Amazon or online source	8.8%
Friend or colleague	3.6%
Employer or company	3.4%
mindhub.com, CompTIAstore.com, AdobeMarketplace.com or other certification e-commerce site	3.4%
Other	9.5%
Don't know	4.4%

Based on those who purchased training: 7,848 responses.

Certification exams

In the past 12 months, have you taken a **certification** exam for any of the following programs? Please select all that apply.

Top ten programs:



Adobe	0.71%	Citrix	0.94%	Google	0.44%	LPI	1.89%	SANS/GIAC	5.29%
Alcatel Lucent	0.16%	CIW	0.10%	HP	1.03%	Microsoft	41.63%	SAP	0.22%
Apple	0.33%	CompTIA	9.50%	IBM	1.31%	NetApp	0.44%	SAS	0.11%
AppSense	0.07%	Dassault	0.03%	IIBA	0.12%	Nokia	0.12%	Siemens	0.04%
Arista	0.07%	Dell	0.63%	IIST	0.04%	Oracle	7.53%	SQE	0.03%
ASQ	0.07%	EC Council	0.81%	ISACA	0.33%	Palo Alto	0.47%	Symantec	0.44%
Atlassian	0.04%	EMC	0.92%	(ISC) ²	1.12%	PCI Security Standards Council	0.40%	Teradata	0.79%
Autodesk	0.10%	Ericsson	1.76%	ISQI	0.05%	PeopleCert	0.26%	Tibco	0.03%
Avaloq	0.02%	EXIN	1.68%	ISTQB	0.62%	PMI	0.64%	VMware	7.06%
BCS	0.45%	F5 Networks	1.13%	Juniper Networks	0.91%	Puppet Labs	0.05%	None	5.75%
Brocade	0.26%	Facebook	0.17%	Lenovo	0.18%	QAI	0.17%	Other	4.81%
Cisco	20.66%	Filemaker	0.05%	LinkedIn	0.13%	Ruijie Networks	0.02%		

NOTE: Certification exam data only. See page 4 for training data.

Which task area(s) did your most recent certification exam cover? Please select all that apply.

As with training, the most popular task areas in which respondents certified were Networking and Servers. While these two categories ranked #1 and #2 in 2015, those percentages decreased this year (2% and 3% respectively).

Networking	32.8%	Storage	9.1%	Business Process Improvement	2.8%
Servers	25.1%	Web Application Development	8.1%	Mobile Apps	2.7%
Security	21.2%	Enterprise Architecture	6.4%	Leadership & Professional Skills	1.7%
Virtualization	16.0%	Data Warehousing and Analytics	5.5%	Video and Web Conferencing	1.5%
Network Management	14.6%	Mobility and Wireless	5.3%	Initiatives (BYOD, Social Media, etc.)	1.2%
Cloud	12.6%	Business Intelligence and Analysis	4.6%	Other	10.8%
Software Development	11.3%	Project and Program Management	3.6%		

Based on those who took certification exams in the last 12 months: 29,770 responses.

I would like the opportunity to take more specialized certifications (e.g. Security/Coding).

74% of IT professionals would like to earn more specialized certifications.

Strongly agree	31.3%
Agree	43.1%
Neutral	18.8%
Disagree	3.5%
Strongly disagree	3.3%



If you took an exam within the last 12 months, who paid for the most recent exam?

50% of exams were paid for by employers. This metric decreased 3% from 2015; however, self-paid is up 3% over prior year.

Employer	49.6%
Self-paid	37.1%
Government-funded	3.9%
Cost included in a school/university/college program	2.5%
There was no charge for the exam	1.4%
Other funding	2.7%
Prefer not to answer	2.7%

Based on those who took an exam: 29,770 responses.

For the most recent exam you took, where was this exam purchased?

71% of exams were purchased at the time of registration or directly from the training organization, a decrease of 2% from 2015.

Online while scheduling the exam on the website	47.3%
From the training organization	23.8%
Amazon or other online source	4.2%
Educational institution	3.7%
mindhub.com, CompTIAstore.com, AdobeMarketplace.com or other certification e-commerce site	4.1%
Cost of exam was included with training	3.1%
Provided by employer/company	2.0%
Other	8.0%
Don't know	3.8%

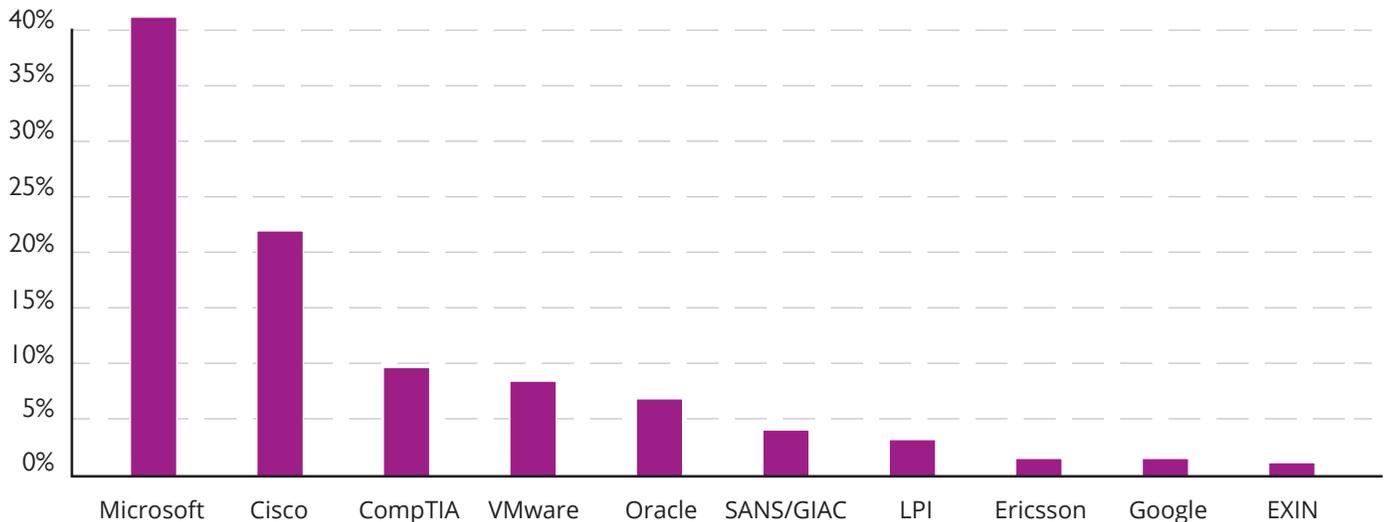
Based on 10,397 responses.



Self-study materials

For which of the following IT programs did you purchase **self-study materials** in the past 12 months? Please select all that apply.

Top ten programs:



Adobe	1.40%	Citrix	1.20%	Google	1.57%	LPI	3.01%	SANS/GIAC	4.26%
Alcatel Lucent	0.20%	CIW	0.09%	HP	1.29%	Microsoft	41.24%	SAP	0.50%
Apple	0.58%	CompTIA	9.55%	IBM	1.45%	NetApp	0.61%	SAS	0.18%
AppSense	0.09%	Dassault	0.03%	IIBA	0.17%	Nokia	0.14%	Siemens	0.09%
Arista	0.05%	Dell	0.75%	IIST	0.05%	Oracle	7.57%	SQE	0.06%
ASQ	0.05%	EC Council	0.98%	ISACA	0.47%	Palo Alto	0.59%	Symantec	0.68%
Atlassian	0.11%	EMC	1.09%	(ISC) ²	1.47%	PCI	0.37%	Teradata	0.76%
Autodesk	0.18%	Ericsson	1.57%	ISQI	0.09%	PeopleCert	0.24%	Tibco	0.04%
Avaloq	0.02%	EXIN	1.50%	ISTQB	0.61%	PMI	0.99%	VMware	8.14%
BCS	0.39%	F5 Networks	1.24%	Juniper Networks	1.28%	Puppet Labs	0.12%	Other	3.94%
Brocade	0.33%	Facebook	0.42%	Lenovo	0.30%	QAI	0.16%	None	4.81%
Cisco	21.90%	Filemaker	0.06%	LinkedIn	0.39%	Ruijie Networks	0.03%		

NOTE: Self-study data only. See page 4 for training and page 7 for certification data.

In the past 12 months, did you use any self-study materials to prepare for your exam?

9 in 10 candidates used self-study materials in the past 12 months.

 **90%**
Yes

 **10%**
No

If you did use self-study materials within the last 12 months, who paid for the most recent set of self-study materials you used?

Over half of respondents purchased their own study materials and 26% noted that materials were funded by their employer.

Self-paid	53.9%
Employer	26.0%
IT certification program	5.4%
Government-funded	2.1%
Included in a school/university/college program	2.1%
Other funding	5.5%
Prefer not to answer	4.7%

Based on those who used self-study materials: 26,628 responses.

Using self-study materials played a role in passing my certification exam (e.g. practice tests, eBooks etc.).

77% of IT professionals said self-study materials played a role in passing a certification exam.

Strongly agree	34.8%
Agree	42.4%
Neutral	15.7%
Disagree	3.5%
Strongly disagree	3.7%

Where did you purchase the most recent self-study materials you used?

39% of candidates purchased study materials online, an increase over the prior year.

Amazon or other online source	35.4%
Training provider	14.2%
IT certification program	13.2%
Friend or colleague	8.5%
Educational institution	4.0%
mindhub.com, CompTIAstore.com, AdobeMarketplace.com or other certification e-commerce site	3.5%
Employer or company	2.0%
Other	16.3%
Don't know	2.8%

Based on those who purchased self-study materials:
14,384 responses.

Using self-study materials gave me the confidence to sit for my certification exam.

74% said using self-study materials increased confidence.

Strongly agree	27.5%
Agree	45.9%
Neutral	18.7%
Disagree	4.4%
Strongly disagree	3.5%



Purchasing habits

If you did not use any self-study materials to prepare for your most recent certification exam, what was the PRIMARY reason?

Additional preparation was unnecessary	27.5%
Did not have time for self-study	21.4%
Could not afford added expense	18.9%
Relevant materials were not available	15.7%
Not interested in self-study	7.2%
Other	9.3%

Based on those who did not use self-study materials: 2,894 responses



Was the cost of the exam included with the instructor-led training?

- 30% Yes
- 27% Not applicable
- 42% No

Was the cost of the exam included with the study materials?

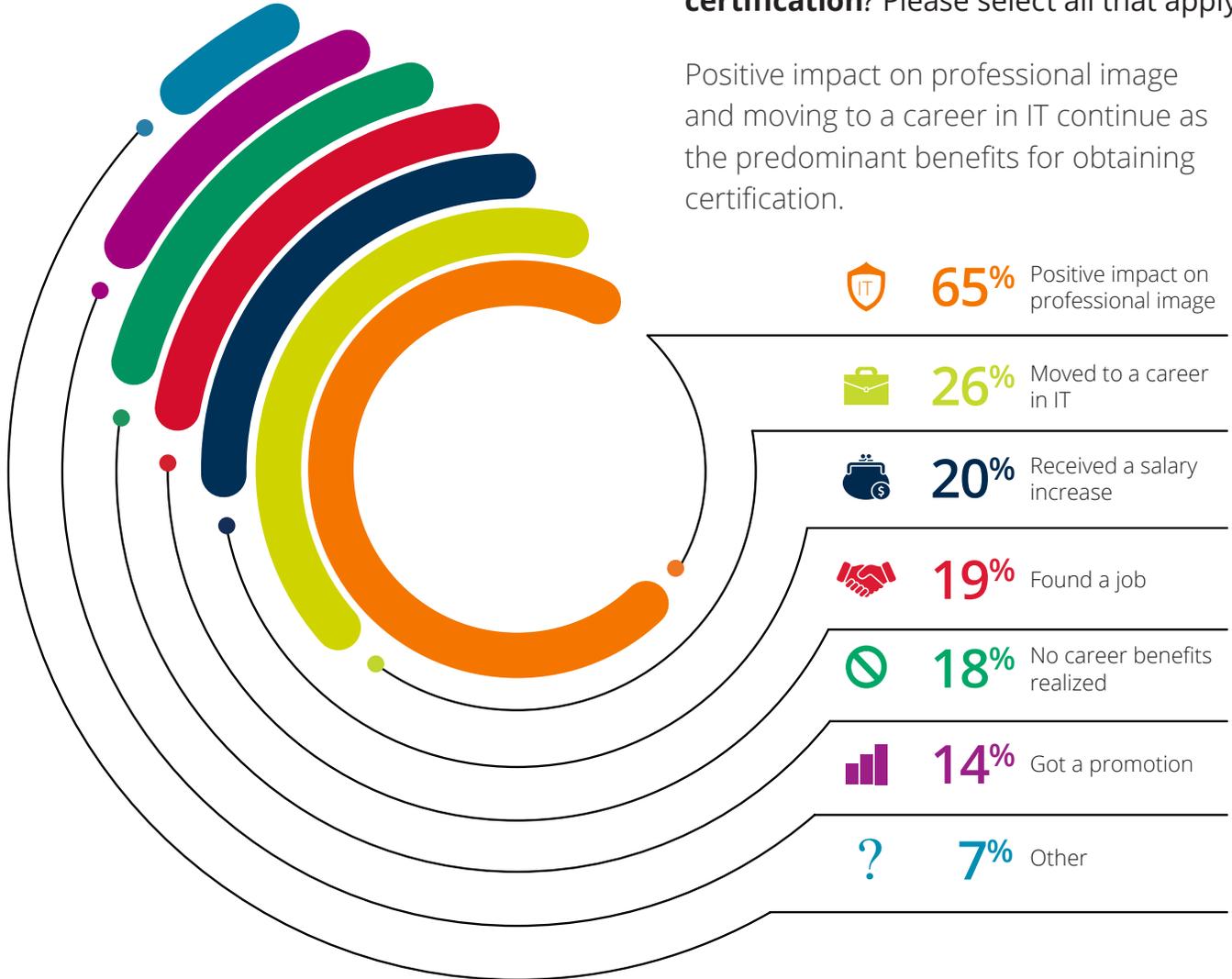
A 3% year-over-year increase in this metric.

- 34% Yes
- 18% Not applicable
- 48% No

Impact of certification

Which of the following benefits did you receive from completing your **certification**? Please select all that apply.

Positive impact on professional image and moving to a career in IT continue as the predominant benefits for obtaining certification.

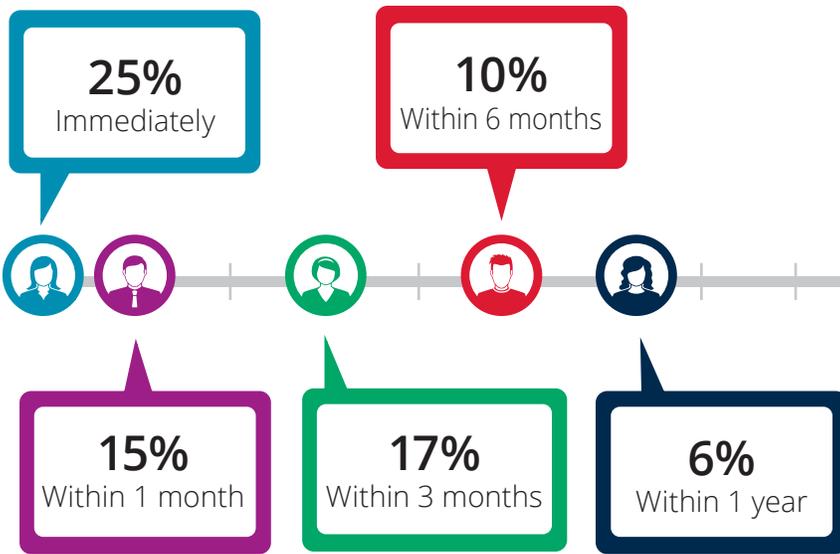


How did achieving a certification help you most in your job?

Nearly 4 out of 10 IT professionals said certification helped them perform complex tasks more confidently.

Helped me to perform complex tasks more confidently	38.0%
Helped me introduce efficiencies into my job role (e.g. time/budget)	21.2%
Helped improve the ratings I achieved in my performance review	21.1%
Helped me take on management responsibilities	8.2%
Other (please specify)	11.4%

How long after you achieved certification did you experience the first benefit?



Immediately	24.6%
Within 1 month	14.6%
Within 3 months	16.8%
Within 6 months	10.4%
Within 1 year	7.3%
Not applicable	18.3%
Prefer not to answer	8.0%

If you received a salary increase or a promotion after certification, by what percentage did your salary increase?

25% of respondents said they received a salary increase of up to 20% upon earning a certification.



Salary increase	% responded
Up to 5%	10.4%
6%–10%	9.1%
11%–20%	5.9%
21%–30%	3.4%
31%–50%	2.0%
51% or greater	1.3%
Prefer not to answer	19.1%
None	48.9%

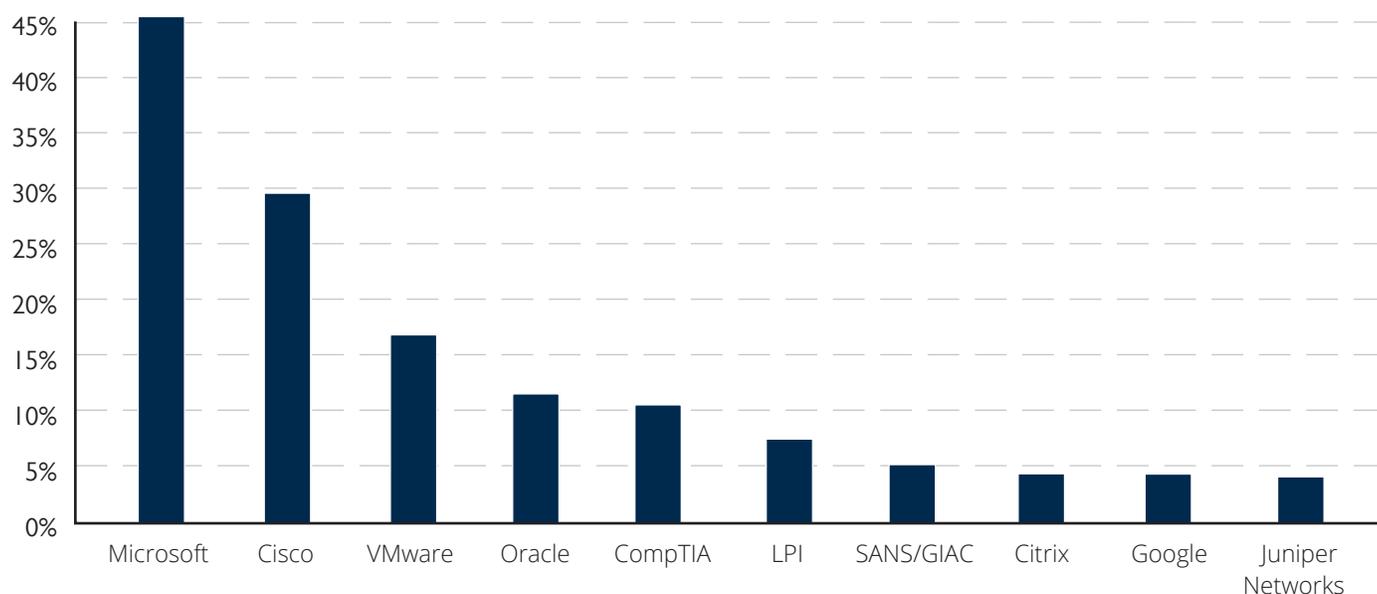
Would you recommend certification to a colleague?

88% of IT professionals said they would recommend certification to a colleague when discussing a career or advancement in IT.

Intentions & motivations

For which IT programs do you intend to take **training** courses (either via an instructor-led classroom, virtual classroom or digital training) in the next 12 months? Please select all that apply.

Top ten programs:



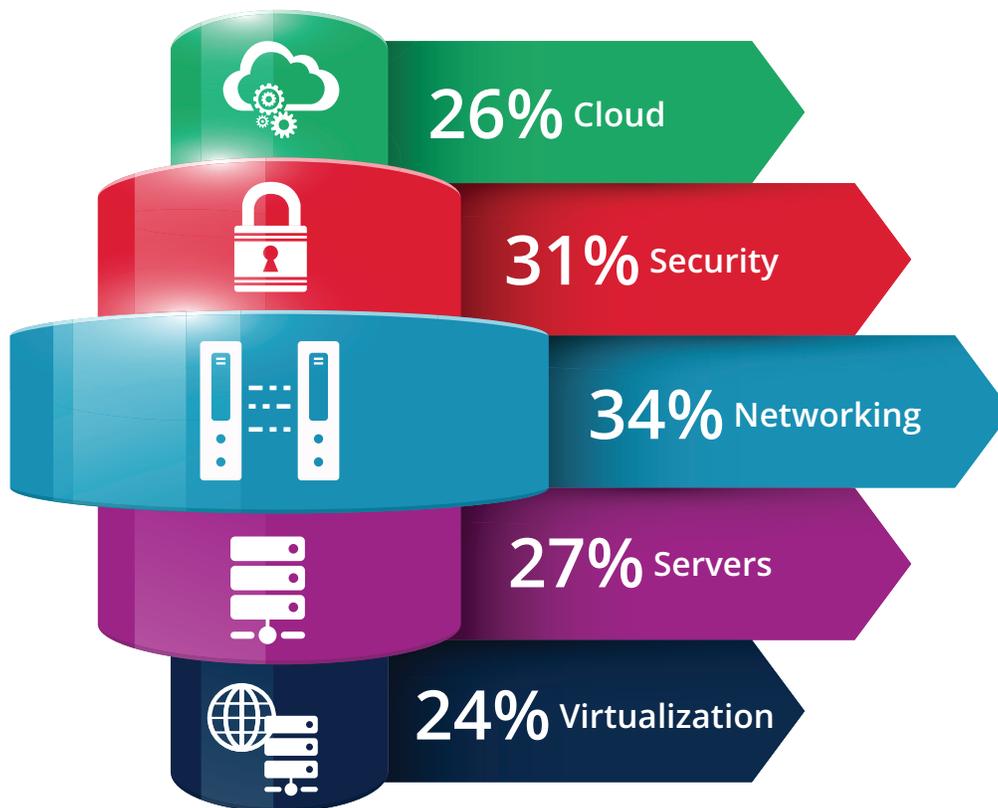
Adobe	2.49%	Citrix	3.79%	Google	3.79%	LPI	7.74%	SANS/GIAC	4.98%
Alcatel Lucent	0.49%	CIW	0.21%	HP	3.03%	Microsoft	45.07%	SAP	3.02%
Apple	2.97%	CompTIA	10.41%	IBM	3.62%	NetApp	1.95%	SAS	0.77%
AppSense	0.23%	Dassault	0.11%	IIBA	0.37%	Nokia	0.66%	Siemens	0.39%
Arista	0.27%	Dell	2.06%	IIST	0.15%	Oracle	11.22%	SQE	0.20%
ASQ	0.13%	EC Council	2.28%	ISACA	1.68%	Palo Alto	2.16%	Symantec	1.55%
Atlassian	0.35%	EMC	2.68%	(ISC) ²	3.23%	PCI	1.10%	Teradata	1.21%
Autodesk	0.55%	Ericsson	2.06%	ISQI	0.20%	PeopleCert	0.34%	Tibco	0.29%
Avaloq	0.10%	EXIN	1.84%	ISTQB	0.86%	PMI	3.02%	VMware	16.62%
BCS	0.42%	F5 Networks	3.15%	Juniper Networks	4.05%	Puppet Labs	0.43%	Other	5.60%
Brocade	0.81%	Facebook	1.18%	Lenovo	0.78%	QAI	0.21%	Don't know	9.19%
Cisco	29.60%	Filemaker	0.22%	LinkedIn	0.83%	Ruijie Networks	0.16%		

In which task area(s) do you plan to take **training** in the next 12 months?

Please select all that apply.

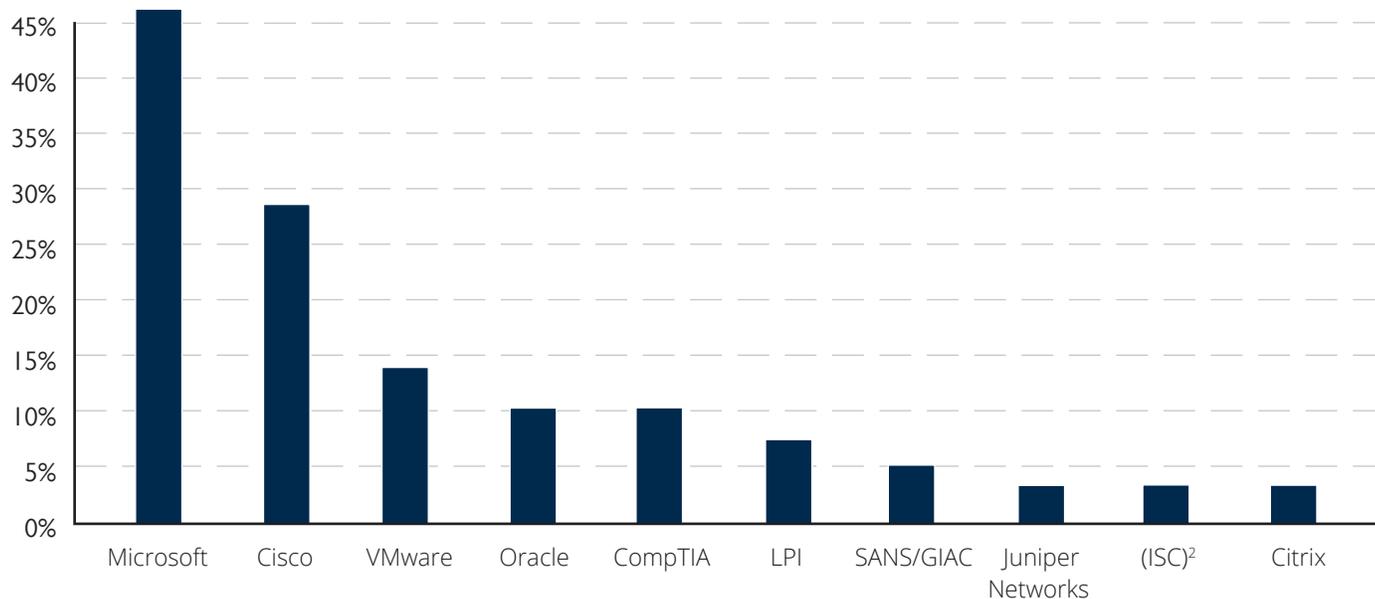
Networking and Servers continue to be disciplines of greatest interest to IT professionals who intend to take training in the coming year.

Networking	33.5%	Storage	12.4%	Mobile Apps	7.8%
Security	31.2%	Web Application Development	11.9%	Leadership and Professional Skills	6.7%
Servers	27.3%	Business Intelligence and Analysis	10.0%	Business Process Improvement	5.0%
Cloud	26.4%	Data Warehousing and Analytics	9.5%	Video and Web Conferencing	2.6%
Virtualization	23.8%	Project and Program Management	9.6%	Initiatives (BYOD, Social Media, etc.)	2.4%
Network Management	19.3%	Enterprise Architecture	9.7%	Don't know	9.1%
Software Development (General)	13.9%	Mobility and Wireless	8.4%	Other	4.6%



For which IT programs do you intend to take a **certification** exam in the next 12 months?
Please select all that apply.

Top ten programs:



Adobe	1.97%	Citrix	3.00%	Google	2.74%	LPI	6.99%	SANS/GIAC	4.72%
Alcatel Lucent	0.40%	CIW	0.19%	HP	2.28%	Microsoft	46.44%	SAP	2.25%
Apple	2.06%	CompTIA	10.00%	IBM	2.90%	NetApp	1.34%	SAS	0.64%
AppSense	0.23%	Dassault	0.09%	IIBA	0.37%	Nokia	0.49%	Siemens	0.25%
Arista	0.21%	Dell	1.46%	IIST	0.10%	Oracle	10.11%	SQE	0.16%
ASQ	0.13%	EC Council	2.01%	ISACA	1.52%	Palo Alto	1.41%	Symantec	1.18%
Atlassian	0.21%	EMC	2.14%	(ISC) ²	3.03%	PCI	0.83%	Teradata	1.08%
Autodesk	0.36%	Ericsson	1.94%	ISQI	0.18%	PeopleCert	0.33%	Tibco	0.25%
Avaloq	0.07%	EXIN	1.58%	ISTQB	0.85%	PMI	2.82%	VMware	13.80%
BCS	0.41%	F5 Networks	2.42%	Juniper Networks	3.31%	Puppet Labs	0.27%	Other	7.64%
Brocade	0.61%	Facebook	0.87%	Lenovo	0.60%	QAI	0.22%		
Cisco	28.45%	Filemaker	0.19%	LinkedIn	0.71%	Ruijie Networks	0.12%		

In which task area(s) do you plan to take a **certification** exam in the next 12 months? Please select all that apply.

Networking continues to be an area in which IT professionals intend to train; however, Security moved up to #2 this year (4% increase over prior year).

Networking	31.8%	Storage	10.4%	Mobile Apps	6.0%
Security	28.3%	Web Application Development	10.3%	Leadership and Professional Skills	4.7%
Servers	27.3%	Business Intelligence and Analysis	8.6%	Business Process Improvement	4.3%
Cloud	23.4%	Data Warehousing and Analytics	8.3%	Video and Web Conferencing	2.2%
Virtualization	20.4%	Project and Program Management	7.9%	Initiatives (BYOD, Social Media, etc.)	1.7%
Network Management	17.2%	Enterprise Architecture	7.8%	Don't Know	7.7%
Software Development (General)	12.2%	Mobility and Wireless	6.8%	Other	4.8%



When asked to rate how strongly they felt about a topic, respondents answered as follows:

It is important to improve the relevance of tests by also assessing soft skills (e.g. problem solving and time management), in addition to technical skills.

Strongly agree	21.8%
Agree	47.7%
Neutral	21.8%
Disagree	5.5%
Strongly disagree	3.6%

There is a need to explore new ways of assessing/validating knowledge and technical skills (e.g. gaming, remote labs and other performance-based testing).

Strongly agree	22.2%
Agree	45.8%
Neutral	24.4%
Disagree	4.4%
Strongly disagree	3.2%



Please rate the following statements on how well they describe your intentions for the next 12 months.

There is a commitment to ongoing professional development among candidates, with 93% responding they are likely or very likely to take a certification exam in the next 12 months. Additionally, nearly 60% are likely to undertake further instructor-led training and 72% intend to take an online course.

I will undertake instructor-led training.

Likely and very likely	60.1%
Unlikely and very unlikely	39.9%

I will purchase self-study materials.

Likely and very likely	72.3%
Unlikely and very unlikely	27.7%

I will take a certification exam.

Likely and very likely	89.9%
Unlikely and very unlikely	10.1%

I will take an online course.

Likely and very likely	73.2%
Unlikely and very unlikely	26.8%



What are your motivations for pursuing **certification**? Please select all that apply.

Employer and profession certification requirements are among the strongest motivations for pursuing a certification.

To recertify	42.4%
Certification is required by my employer	41.1%
Increase knowledge in a specific area	38.2%
Improve professional profile	35.6%
Certification is required by my profession	32.7%
Find a job	33.1%
Encouraged to take the exam by the instructor	29.5%
Recommended by a friend or colleague	27.3%
Get a raise or promotion	25.4%



Badging

Do you know what a digital badge is?

 **37%**
Yes

 **63%**
No

Do you currently use digital badges to represent your certification?

 **42%**
Yes

 **58%**
No

Has your badge created new opportunities for you?

26% of respondents said they received a job offer or promotion upon sharing their badge with a future employer.

Received a job offer after an employer verified my badge	17.9%
Received a promotion after an employer verified my badge	8.4%
Received positive feedback from my professional network after sharing my badge	35.0%
None of the above	37.7%
Other	1.0%

I would like the ability to share my credentials online via a badging community.

44% of IT professionals would like to share their credentials within a badging community.

Strongly agree	13.9%
Agree	30.0%
Neutral	39.1%
Disagree	9.6%
Strongly disagree	7.5%

Future research

The Pearson VUE 2016 Value of IT Certification Survey is part of an ongoing research effort. If your organization would like to participate in future surveys or for media inquiries related to this study, please contact market.research@pearson.com.