

# Emerging Occupations: How Times Change



In past eras, a ticket writer hand wrote or painted price tickets on goods displayed for sale and painted window display signs, creating an aesthetically pleasing and informative work of art in a store window. A hair seat merchant dealt in horsehair stuffing used in upholstery. Today we have pricing tickets that are electronically printed and scanned and chair seats that are cushioned with man-made polyester fill. These are only two “old” occupations that illustrate how much evolution and change occurs in occupations--they certainly are not static.

As defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), which determines whether an occupation should be added to government publications, an emerging occupation is one that has been recognized in small numbers that have continued to grow. Occupations usually emerge from advancement in technology, changes in laws and regulations, and demographics. Recently they have derived from war and terrorism, natural disasters and global competition also. According to BLS, small companies--those with fewer than 50 employees--generate the greatest percentage of emerging occupations since they can respond more quickly to consumer trends and technological advances than large corporations.

Two examples of emerging occupations are search engine optimization (SEO) and data miners. SEO analysts test and analyze keywords, titles and copy for search engines and directories and track and present web metrics to show a company’s return on investment. SEO is established enough to have its own association and trade group. Data miners search database applications for hidden patterns in order to predict future behavior. A web search is never just a web search, is it?

Emerging occupations are unfolding as multi-disciplinary, specialized and international. For instance, geographic

information system analysts must be educated in GIS software, geography, city planning, cartography and geology. Because of the diversity of educational background required, many college students are now earning multiple majors.

How does an occupation get a listing with BLS? Adding a new job title can be confusing and elusive. Is it a variation of duties similar to an existing title or is there a true departure from existing skills that would warrant the addition of an occupation? The biennial Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey conducted by BLS in partnership with all the state workforce agencies, measures employment and wages for existing occupations. Most responses from employers will fall under existing Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes. Where a SOC code does not apply, research analysts at the state level determine whether the occupation fits into an existing SOC code. If it doesn’t it is recorded in a residual “all other” category and passed along, with explanation, to BLS employees at the regional and national level for review. New and emerging occupations are determined based on these reviews.

In 2010 the SOC was revised to include information security analysts and web developers in the major group Computer and Mathematical Science Occupations (15-0000). Neither occupation had been specifically named in the 2000 version of SOC. Some occupations were moved from one major group to another. SOC is the measurement of long-existing, new and emerging occupations; it is dynamic and reflects the ever-changing face of occupations in the U.S. ●

*Other Resources:*

- [www.bls.gov/oco/](http://www.bls.gov/oco/)
- [www.jobweb.com](http://www.jobweb.com)
- National Association of Colleges and Employers
- <http://www.utah.gov/careers/explore.html>
- <http://www.utah.gov/careers/investigate.html>

### Number of New Job Titles in 2010

