

## ▶ Latest Trends in IT & Engineering Staffing and Solutions

### What Digital Truth Serum Reveals About Our World (and You)

Google knows your darkest secrets, and data scientist and author Seth Stephens-Davidowitz is mining them out. His work spotlights how search engine queries reveal our prejudices, desires and fears, which are often underreported on surveys. Stephens-Davidowitz taps into the phenomenon, known as social desirability bias, to study everything from religious intolerance and racism to behavior in our personal lives.

In his book, "Everybody Lies: What the Internet Can Tell Us About Who We Really Are," Stephens-Davidowitz cites more examples of our darkest thoughts, as revealed by Google searches. But do the data offer any insights that are a bit more warm and fuzzy? First, Google can provide some comfort in knowing you are not alone in your most private searches. The idea that, if you are thinking about it, someone else is probably wondering about it, too, can be reassuring.

Second, digital truth serum can expose areas where people are suffering. Stephens-Davidowitz's work has helped stigmatized groups find comfort with kindred spirits.

Finally, the data provide awareness and understanding, which Stephens-Davidowitz hopes will lead toward solutions. Only by truly knowing what is in peoples' hearts and minds (and not merely how they respond to surveys or what they tell pollsters), can we make progress on the most emotional and contentious issues of the day.

### The Gig Economy: Tech Workers Are On IT

The gig economy is having a moment. Are you a part of it?

A whopping 34% of the workforce operates as freelancers, contractors and temp workers. And those going gig are expected to rise in numbers, as that percentage grows to 43% by the year 2020.

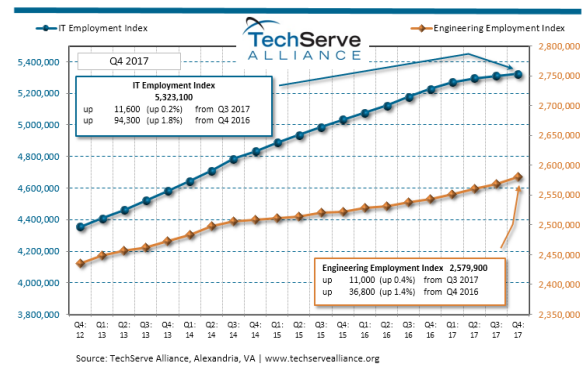
When you hear "gig," you may envision people driving total strangers around as a side hustle. However, technology workers are also embracing this new way of earning a paycheck. One reason is that the software development cycle has become more defined and compartmentalized, so it is easier to outsource. And the project-based nature of the gig economy has the same cadence many IT workers are used to.

Some of the top IT jobs in the gig economy are: web developer, software developer, computer programmer, information systems analyst and cybersecurity professional. Workers can work through staffing firms as well as locate and bid for projects on sites like Toptal, Smashing Jobs and Hireable.

Despite numerous benefits, outsourcing IT work to the gig economy requires managing security risks as workers use their own equipment and mobile devices. As with BYOD policies, though, using gig workers requires well defined security guidelines.

While already an attractive option for many, the recent tax law changes could encourage more IT consultants to offer their services as an independent contractor further accelerating the growth of the flexible workforce and 'gig' economy.

### Tight Labor Supply Limits IT & Eng. Job Growth



The number of IT jobs grew 0.03% sequentially last month to 5,325,300 according to TechServe Alliance, the national trade association of the IT & Engineering Staffing and Solutions industry. On a year-over-year basis, IT employment grew by 1.54% since December 2016 adding 80,900 IT workers.

Engineering employment increased by 0.07 percent sequentially to 2,583,100. On a year-over-year basis, growth in engineering employment increased by 1.50% since December 2016 or 38,200 engineering workers.

### Tax Bill Likely to Accelerate Growth of Flexible Workforce and ‘Gig’ Economy

Congress just passed the largest tax overhaul in recent years, and with it, may have further fueled a fast-growing trend in the labor market – the rise in independent contractors. The tax bill includes provisions pertaining to the treatment of independent contractors that could make owning their own business as an IT consultant much more attractive.

According to the new law, independent contractors who file their returns on a pass-through basis or as a sole proprietorship and make less than \$157,500 individually or \$315,000 jointly, qualify for a 20% tax deduction on qualified business income. Under some circumstances (with the exact contours of these rules still being determined), independent contractors who earn more than these amount can also be eligible for the deduction.

Previous iterations of the bill excluded many of the benefits that incentivize people to become independent contractors. For example, earlier iterations of the bill would have prohibited independent contractors from deducting health insurance premiums from their overall taxable income. In the final bill, the deductibility of health insurance premiums was preserved.

### Unemployment Rates Remain Low in Q4 for High Demand Technical Skill Sets

The unemployment rate for most IT skill sets is below the unemployment rate of the overall workforce; the unemployment rate for engineering occupations is more varied.

IT Occupations (Q4 2017)	
Computer and information systems managers	1.8%
Computer network architects	1.8
Computer occupations, all other	3.4
Computer programmers	3.9
Computer support specialists	3.2
Computer systems analysts	2.9
Information security analysts	2.2
Network and computer systems administrators	1.5
Software developers, applications and systems software	1.8
Web developers	1.6
Engineering Occupations (Q4 2017)	
Aerospace engineers	0.6
Civil engineers	1.0
Electrical and electronic engineers	2.9
Industrial engineers, including health and safety	4.9
Materials engineers	2.6
Mechanical engineers	1.1
Engineering technicians, except drafters	3.4
Engineers, all others	0.7
<i>Source: unpublished tabulations of Current Population Survey data furnished by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics</i>	