

10 Things

10 signs that you aren't cut out for IT

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Takeaway: IT pros often complain about the downsides of their jobs. But what if you really AREN'T meant for an IT career?

It's a tough world out there. Anyone who's ever worked in IT knows just how tough it is. And if you're not totally [up for the challenge](#), there will always be someone else who is. But for anyone considering getting into the world of IT, or for those considering [getting out of IT](#)... how do you know? How do you know whether you are really cut out for the career that chews up and spits out its young? Well, I have a handy list of signs that maybe IT isn't the best fit for you.

1: You lack patience

Patience is most certainly a virtue in IT. When some problems strike, they strike with vengeance and most often require a good deal of time to resolve. If you are without patience, you'll either give up, lose your mind, or pull out all your hair. But the need for patience doesn't end at dealing with problems. Many times, end users will test your patience more than the technology will. If that's the case, I recommend that you either get away from having to deal with end users or (if that's not possible), leave IT immediately.

2: You have no desire to continue your education

IT is an ever-evolving field and without the desire to continue learning, you're already way behind the curve. This is one of those fields where you must be okay with constantly learning something new. That might mean taking a class or attending a workshop or just hitting the books on your own. But no matter how you slice that education, you must be willing to continue to learn.

3: You refuse to work outside 9-to-5

Technology doesn't adhere to a set schedule. Servers go down whenever they want and business must go on. So you must be willing to wake up in the middle of the night, work long hours during the week, and work weekends. If you're someone who refuses to let your workweek interfere with your personal life — well, the writing on the wall is pretty clear.

4: You don't like people

Do I really need to expand on this one? Yes? Fine. The reason IT pros have jobs is [to support end users](#) — aka people. If you don't like people (and I know plenty who don't), you really shouldn't consider a career in IT. The big irony of this is that I also know a lot of people who have been driven to dislike people BECAUSE of IT.

5: You give up quickly

How many times have you had an issue really test your abilities? Did you give up or did you forge on until you managed to best that problem? If you gave up, you did so knowing that you left something broken. That is not an acceptable work ethic in IT, and if you're okay with that, it's time to reconsider. Oh sure, there will be times when something is beyond repair or an issue goes above your skill set. But if that's the case, it's your responsibility to replace the broken tech or hire someone in to fix the issue.

6: You're easily frustrated

This is an industry that can frustrate even the most unflappable. But if your frustration boils to the surface right away, you will spend much of your day with high blood pressure. Although IT is a rewarding field, it can also be a frustrating one. If frustration often gets the best of you, you might want to consider a new career or stock in a therapist.

7: You can't multitask

At any given point in a day, I am doing three or four things at once. Sometimes, this is the only way I can actually get everything done in the given timeframe. If you insist on sticking to one task at a time, IT is going to be a tough career for you. That is not to say single-minded people can't succeed — but they will have a tougher time than those who can multitask.

8: You have dreams of climbing the corporate ladder

There isn't much room on the ladder within the IT department. If you have dreams of climbing up and perching yourself on top, you might want to consider a different field. Some IT departments do offer promotions, and maybe you can even climb your way up to CIO. But if CEO is in your dreams, IT is not the field for you.

9: You hate technology

This one should go without saying. But strangely enough, I know people in the IT field who actually HATE technology. If you consider yourself a technophobe, maybe being around servers, desktops, switches, routers, and other IT-centric hardware might not be the best place for you. Although it's perfectly possible to work in a field you despise, the added level of frustrations you will experience might end your time on this good green Earth earlier than you expected. Take a pass on IT.

10: You turn off your phone at night

This relates to your work hours. Many IT pros I work with are on call 24/7. Their lives completely revolve around their networks, and if they weren't willing to have such a life, they probably wouldn't have the jobs they have now. The IT job doesn't go away — it remains in the background all the time, waiting to pull you from sleep, family gatherings, the birth of your first child. If you're one to turn your phone off when you leave work, or even ignore those calls from the office (even when said office is blowing said phone up), it might be a good sign ~~the~~ that you and your career are not a good fit.

Tallying up the cons

Just because you suffer from one of two of these traits doesn't mean you should jump off the IT train and start flipping burgers. But if you recognize quite a few of these signs, you might want to [call it a career](#) and head back to school. To help balance the pros and cons, I'll follow up soon with a list of signs that IT is exactly where you need to be.

Additional reading

- [10 signs that you aren't cut out to be a CIO](#)
- [10 signs that you aren't cut out to be an IT manager](#)
- [10 signs that you aren't cut out to be a project manager](#)
- [10 signs that you aren't cut out to be a developer](#)
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