Do IT students get summer jobs?

Birgit R. Krogstie and Sondre Wold

> **It is important for students in study programs in information technology (IT) to get a relevant summer job. We conducted a survey among our IT students to get a picture of whether and when the students get a relevant summer job, and which characteristics of the students correlate with getting the job.**

For instance, is there a gender difference? Is there a correlation to grades? What about students' involvement with IT through side projects, their teaching assistant jobs and other, nonrelevant types of work? To investigate this, we collected data by use of a survey answered anonymously by approximately 400 IT students at NTNU.

Overall results from the study indicate that the students do get relevant summer jobs, and most of them have gotten the first one after their 3rd year as IT students. We were happy to see that among the 4th year students responding to our survey, 87% had signed a contract for a relevant summer job by the end of their 4th year. We see the high number as closely related to the state of the job market for IT professionals in Norway in 2018.

Results from the study, including the possible impact on summer job employment of gender, grades and various forms of prior experience is briefly discussed in the research paper presented at MNT2019 (Wold, Sondre, og Krogstie, Birgit R. «Getting a relevant summer job in IT». Tromsø, 28-29 March). Link to the papers from this conference can be found here: https://www.ntnu.no/ojs/index.php/njse/article/view/2992

Example findings from the paper include differences between male and female students with respect to when they got their first relevant summer job:
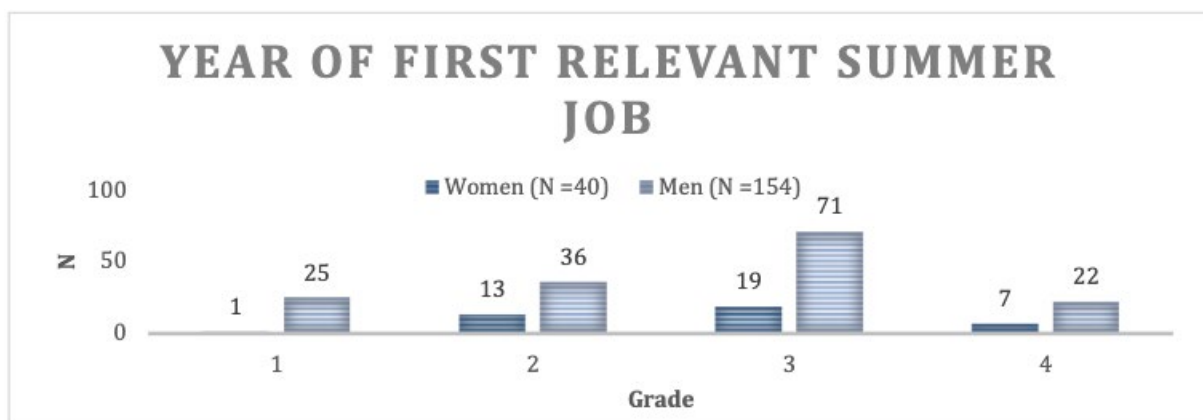

Figure 1: Year of first relevant summer job, vs gender

There are also big differences between male and female students with respect to engagement in side projects in IT, confirming our impression that more male students consider IT as their main hobby:
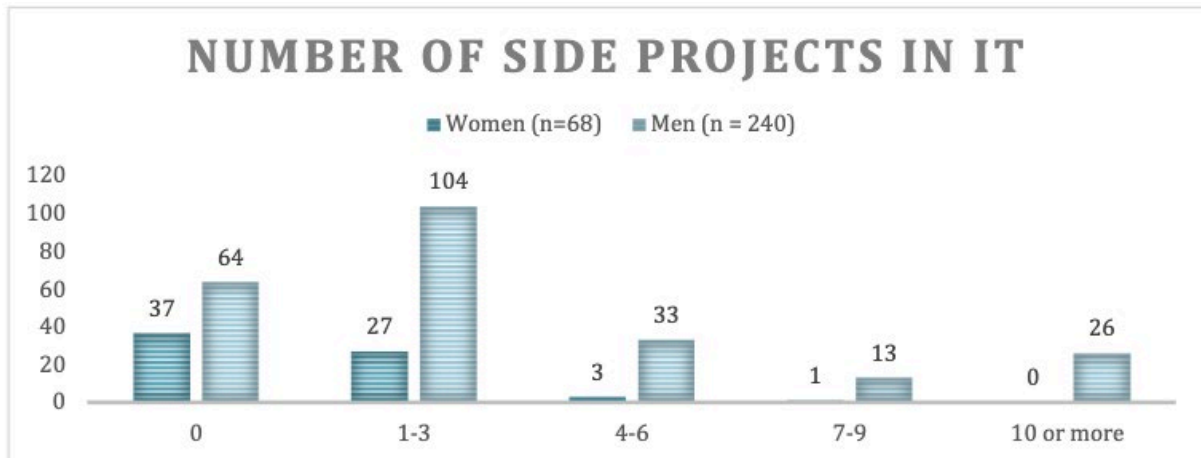

Figure 2: Number of side projects in IT, vs gender

The reason we look into side projects is that they are important to many IT students and might also give valuable experience that could be relevant for getting a summer job. Comparing to Figure 1, we see a possible connection between side projects and getting a relevant job already after the first year, which might not be surprising as those with many side projects in IT are likely to have a higher IT competence at that stage. It is however only a minority of students who get a relevant summer job after their first year.

We conducted the study in 2018 and plan to repeat it in 2021. We would also be interested in seeing others conduct similar surveys in their higher education institutions, in Norway or in other countries. Below we share the questionnaire used in our survey.

Summer job survey questionnaire
Answer alternatives are given in parentheses, e.g. (1,2,3,4,5)

Questions to all respondents:

1. Gender (F/M/prefer not to answer)
2. Age (17-19, 20-22, 23-25, over 25)
3. Present year of study (1,2,3,4,5)
4. Have you completed other education before entering the study program in IT? 1 year = 60 ECTS credits. (0, interrupted, 1, 2, 3, 4, more than 4 years)
5. Have you signed a contract for a relevant summer job during your studies? By relevant is meant summer jobs closely related to information technology, be it development, operations or planning. (Y/N)
    a. Which year of study were you in when you signed up with the employer? If more than one, choose the first summer job. (1,2,3,4)

6. Have you had a relevant side/part time job before applying for a summer job? By relevant is meant closely related to information technology, be it development, operations or planning. (Y/N)
7. Do you have general work experience from before you applied for a summer job? This could be any type of work, as long as a formal work contract was signed. (Y/N)
8. How many general jobs have you had?
9. Have you been, or are you, student assistant or teaching assistant at <our university> or another university? (Y/N)
10. How many IT project outside your studies, e.g. through roles in volunteer organizations or through your own initiative, have you been working with? It could be anything within IT, but with at least three days' amount of work. (0, 1-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10 or more)
11. What is your grade average, rounded up to the nearest half? A=5, E=1 (0,1,2,3,4,5) (answer not required)

Questions to those who answered yes to question 5

12. The year when you got your first relevant summer job, approximately how many applications did you submit?
13. How many job interviews did you attend the year you got your first relevant summer job?
14. Did you have a technical/case interview in the year that you got your first relevant summer job? If yes, how did you perceive that it turned out?
15. To what extent do you think your personal network was significant to being employed?
16. What do you think was the reason you got a relevant summer job? (open) <answer not required>

Questions to those who answered no to question 5

17. How many applications did you submit last time you tried to get a relevant summer job?
18. How many interviews did you go to last time you tried to get a relevant summer job?
19. Did you have one or more technical/case interviews last time you tried to get a relevant summer job?
20. Do you have a personal network that you think might <if you made use of it> have made it more likely for you to get a relevant summer job?
21. What do you think was the reason you did not get a relevant summer job? (open) <answer not required>

Final question
22. Do you have other relevant additional information or feedback to the survey questionnaire? (open) <answer not required>