

A report from the experts in
Business-Critical Continuity™

The Most Always-On IT Jobs



Always-On. Perpetually available. 24-7/365.

It's what we expect from technologies like smart phones and websites in this hyper-speed, hyper-connected world.

But what about you, the people who support those technologies? Do you have to be Always-On as well? That's the question we set out to answer in the first-ever "Most Always-On IT Jobs" report.

To get that answer we surveyed nearly 800 IT professionals in Asia, Europe, Latin America and the U.S. to determine the degree to which they have to be always available, always working at peak capacity, always accurate.

The results show that the top 10 Always-On jobs, as determined by respondents, can be the mental and emotional equivalent of sprinting uphill in the driving wind while juggling, wearing only one shoe. And some IT professionals thrive on this challenge.

Results Roundup

The top 10 ranking of Most Always-On IT Jobs is based on total score (from a possible 100 points) for each job category as determined by the respondents' answers to the survey.

And the top 10* are...

1. Executive Director/Administrator
2. IT Procurement
3. CIO
4. IT Manager/Director
5. IT Operations
6. Data Center Manager
7. Engineering
8. IT Security
9. Applications/Software Development
10. Database Management

*As determined by respondents' survey scores.

Our survey found that IT professionals need serious brain power and are called on to wear the hats of fire fighters, coaches, sprinters and marathoners, diplomats, and inventors. They are required at a moment's notice to be ready to serve, solve problems, fix mistakes, do the job right the first time. They work nights and weekends and take calls from the beach.

- The top 10 Most Always-On IT Jobs score closely, averaging 71 on a 0- to 100-point scale.
- On average, IT professionals are required to be available to work 119 hours in each 168-hour week.
- In general, the higher level the job, the more Always-On.

So, what determines the level of Always-On for any job category? The survey captured respondents' agreement to statements reflecting five dimensions of Always-On. These dimensions are weighted as shown in figure 1. (The statements from the survey are shown at the end of the report.)

Five Dimensions of Always-On

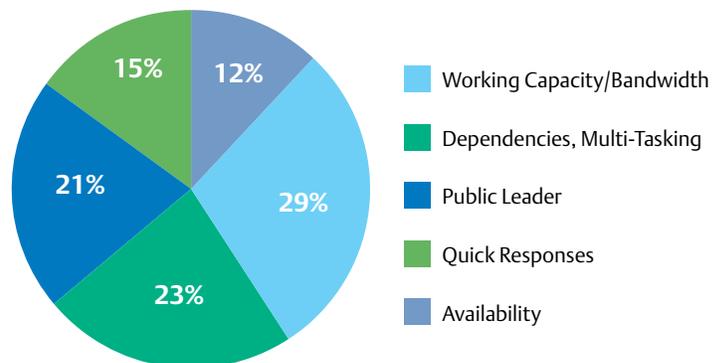


Figure 1. Five dimensions of Always-On. Percentage is the weight given to each dimension when calculating the Always-On score for each IT job.

“Always there, always there,
always there.”

Individual Contributor, Utilities, Europe

Work-life balance? Who, us?

The expression 24-7/365 is almost a cliché. But that's exactly how many IT professionals surveyed describe the demands of their jobs. Does that mean all IT pros are feeling tired and overworked? Frankly, it's impossible to say from our survey whether high Always-On means low job satisfaction. Some respondents take pride in doing great work in a tough job, and others even say "I love my job."

Following describes the roles, expectations and a sense of the daily drama for each of the top 10 Most Always-On IT Jobs.



1. Executive Director/Administrator

Titles provided by IT professionals in an executive director/administrator role included administrator, leader, department head and director. All survey respondents performing this high-level role agree they work on many projects at once, and that their work requires a high level of intelligence. Only 25% agree or strongly agree that success depends on things out of their control. In other words, they are accountable for success, and that translates into high job demands. As one director puts it, "I must always be available for any emergency, on alert and pushing the limit so we can deliver results to our clients."

These IT pros have their heads and hands into every aspect of the job: strategic, operational, technical. A director in banking/finance in Latin America speaks to the pressures of the job, saying, "You have to think of the best way to make sound decisions and above all meet deadlines."



2. IT Procurement

They identified themselves as analysts, buyers, representatives, supervisors, consultants, directors and leaders. But in spite of the diverse titles, more than half of respondents who say they do IT procurement are aligned in reporting they don't have control over their schedules and don't have time to do quality work.

These Always-On professionals point to multiple pressures: urgency, demanding clients (often in different international time zones), staying up on the latest equipment, filling pressing staffing needs. "I cannot switch off the ringing phone, even if I want to. Or if I'm having lunch but someone needs something from me. Or I have to stay longer in the office because of things that need to be done," remarks a procurement professional for a utility company in Europe.



3. Chief Information Officer (CIO)

According to the survey, the CIO scores highest on "dependencies and multi-tasking." Responses show particularly high requirements to work on many projects at once and make important decisions quickly. And those decisions can be required any time. "I have to be on call at night to do workday-quality work," says one U.S.

construction industry CIO. Other respondents mention they have to be available to take emergency calls and have been tracked down even on vacation.

Demands of the job also include motivating and orchestrating the work of others, making sure all team members are performing to their abilities and “getting everyone on the same page” for projects. As might be expected, CIOs also indicate more than did any other IT role that they are responsible for a large part of the company’s budget. One CIO in Asia notes that, “making sure technology is put to good use keeping [the] company’s cost in mind” is a typical Always-On situation.



4. IT Manager/Director

Professionals in this role might be called on to put out fires or do routine work at any time, including nights and weekends. One IT director for the banking/finance industry in Europe says, “A security breach meant I had to miss a night out with my wife. I do weekend work on upgrades and other projects.” Respondents say demands on the IT manager/director include juggling several projects at once, solving problems quickly and working at peak capacity at all times.

The IT manager/director job scores second highest on being a public leader. Respondents say they have responsibility for a large portion of the company’s budget and for leading the meetings he or she is in. So, it’s a good thing most report they have adequate time to prepare for meetings – not that they have a lot of free time. Considering comments like, “I have to be in the right place at the right time all the time,” mind reading and running a 4-minute mile may be desired abilities for this job.



5. IT Operations

Like those in IT procurement, respondents employed in IT operations give many titles, including technician, manager, analyst, operator and specialist. They report working on high-stress projects with constant time pressure and responding to after-hours incidents.

This comment from a senior computer operator is typical: “Server uptime has to always be on 24-7/365 days a year. So if you get paged that a server went down, you have to try to get to work to fix the problem. Also, when performing monthly operations you have to enter the data perfectly. If you don’t, interest calculations could be off for thousands of people.”



6. Data Center Manager

Like the executive directors/administrators surveyed, 100% of data center managers agree their job requires a high level of intelligence. We believe high intelligence is a necessity in a role encumbered with the multiple responsibilities and high-stress demands of this critical job. For example, data center managers were in the top three for “dependencies/multi-tasking,” the top four for “availability” and the top five for “quick response.” They

also scored more than 30% higher than average in agreeing they don't control their own schedule—70% for data center managers compared to 45% on average.

Some respondents compared themselves to servers, data centers and systems; for example, "I have to be on, the same way the system is required to run 24 hours every day and all year round." Job demands and responsibilities include working fast, handling confidential information, troubleshooting, managing budgets, hardware maintenance and "everything."



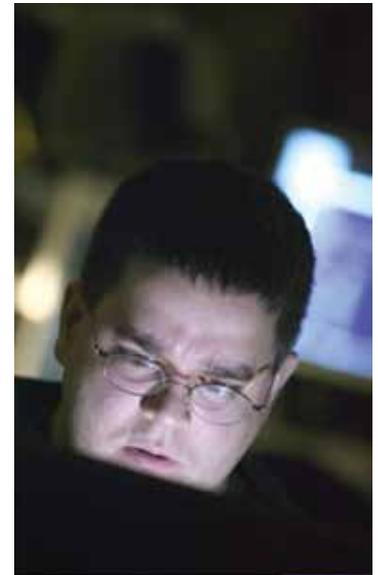
7. Engineering

Engineering professionals log high scores in "dependencies, multi-tasking" and "quick response." More than 80% agree or strongly agree that others depend on their work a great deal, 91% say they immediately read all messages received and 86% quickly respond to all inquiries. Notably, 30% of the respondents work for consulting engineering companies.

Perfection, quick response, good communication and time management skills, and the ability to work on structure and design are cited as job demands. A consulting engineer mentions this dramatic example of being Always-On: "Received a sudden call from one of our corporate customers to solve their software and networking problem instantly, as their national conference was adjourned for one hour due to the problems. They were using at least 80 computers at the conference. I received the call at around 11 a.m., and the problem had to be solved by 1 p.m." And it was.

8. IT Security

While in eighth position, responses from the IT security group show a high degree of Always-On. "Email is always crowded. Phone is always ringing," a government supervisor writes. Making emergency decisions is noted as a typical demand of the job. Likewise, 89% of the security pros agree or strongly agree they make important decisions quickly – the highest score of all the IT roles.



On the other hand, this group scores lowest on quick response. For example, 61% agree or strongly agree they quickly respond to all inquiries, but the average across the top 10 Always-On jobs is 76%. This puzzles us, and we're interested to hear the thoughts of IT security professionals. More than half (57%) of IT security respondents agree that success depends on things out of their control. While being in control and accountable can contribute to Always-On, we think lack of control can lead to frustration in a role that generally is Always-On.



9. Applications/Software Development

Professionals in this role are able to concentrate on their work and do the job well. One-third or less report having no time for quality work (33%) and no time to think things through (26%). The position is far from pressure-free, though. "The [company] I work for cannot run if their computers go down. Not even for a little bit. And they

work around the clock. So if something happens, I have to come in as quickly as possible and get the mess straightened out,” explains a U.S. junior technical advisor in IT. Notably, this group scores highest in quick response.

Demands of the job include developing new applications for the workplace or industry, some involving highly complex issues. So it’s not surprising that 87% of respondents agree that others depend on their work a great deal.



10. Database Management

The survey responses from database managers reveal an Always-On profile similar to applications/software developers. Like applications/software development professionals, 87% of database managers say others depend on their work a great deal. Where the two areas diverge is on certain indicators of working capacity/bandwidth. Over half (58%) of database managers agree they have no time for quality work, and 47% agree they have no time to think things through.

Those responses are consistent with the demands of the job. Database professionals express some frustration, saying, for example, “I have to work under pressure while troubleshooting any number of issues that come up on a daily basis,” and “there are strict timelines to finish projects while still working to put out fires.”

About the Survey

The online survey was conducted during February 2012 with IT professionals selected randomly from a list provided by sample supplier EMI. The sample was balanced and weighted by industry and company size to represent the real population of IT professionals in Asia, Europe, Latin America and U.S. Most questions designed to gauge Always-On used an agreement scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, and there were three open-ended questions:

- How many hours per week do you work at your IT job? Include paid and unpaid hours.
- What are the most demanding aspects of your IT job?
- Please describe one or two situations that best illustrate how your IT job requires you to be Always-On: always available, always working at peak capacity and always accurate.

Responses were received from 792 individuals representing 17 work roles, 18 industries and businesses of every size.

REGION	SAMPLE SIZE (unweighted)	ALWAYS-ON RANK
U.S.	202	1
Asia (China, India, Singapore, Australia)	204	2
Europe (UK, Germany, France, Italy)	196	3
Latin America (Mexico, Brazil)	190	4

Table 1. Responses by region.

COMPANY SIZE (number of employees)	ALWAYS-ON RANK
5,000 to 9,999	1
500 to 4,999	2
50 to 499	3
10,000+	4

Table 2. Always-On rank by company size.

Five Key Dimensions of Always-On

1. Working Capacity/Bandwidth

- No time for quality work
- No time to think things through
- Don't control my own schedule
- No prep time for meetings
- Success depends on things out of my control
- I do work I don't get paid for

2. Dependencies, Multi-Tasking

- Others depend on my work a great deal
- My work requires a high level of intelligence
- Working many projects at once
- Make important decisions quickly

3. Public Leader

- Frequently in the public eye
- Lead meetings I'm in
- Often make presentations
- Responsible for large part of company's budget

4. Quick Response

- Always answer telephone when it rings
- Immediately read all messages received
- Quickly respond to all inquiries

5. Availability

- What % of the time are you working and actively thinking about your IT job?
- What % of the time are you available to work when called upon?

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