

Executive Summary

The SANS 2008 Salary and Certification Survey was conducted by Rob Kolstad of Delos Enterprises on behalf of the SANS Institute to examine salaries, the importance of certifications, and education trends among information security professionals as well as to present an outlook for 2009. The survey was conducted online in November, 2008 with a total of 2,120 respondents from a variety of industries.

New additions to the SANS Salary Survey include a detailed analysis of the most important certifications in the information security industry as well as a comprehensive examination of both formal and informal training.

This year's survey is divided into five sections: Demographics, Salary, Certifications, Continuing Education and a Twelve-month Outlook.

Essential findings from the survey:

- Salaries for information security professionals are high. Only 1.65% of respondents earn less than US \$40,000 per year and over 38% earn US \$100,000 or more per year.
- 81% of respondents with hiring responsibilities consider certification a factor in their hiring decisions.
- 41% of the respondents said their organizations use certifications as a factor when determining salary increases.
- In an overall certification assessment, 11 GIAC certifications were ranked in the top 15 very important certifications in the industry.
- The most experienced security professionals (those with 20+ years in the industry) ranked 15 GIAC certifications among the top 15 very important certifications.
- The overall mean funding for training was US \$2,854 per year with a median of US \$2,000 per year.
- Digital forensics, intrusion detection, and penetration testing are the technical topics respondents are most interested in learning in 2009.
- As of late November 2008, just over 79% of respondents forecast no information security personnel reductions in the next 12 months.
- Over 25% of respondents plan to deploy the following technologies in 2009:
 - Configuration Management
 - SIEM (Security Information and Event Management)
 - Storage Security
 - Wireless Security Solutions
- The top five reasons security professionals stay with their current employer:
 - Benefits (66%)
 - Flexible hours (51%)
 - Salary/compensation (50%)
 - Job security (49%)
 - Challenge (43%)
- The top five reasons security professionals would consider changing jobs:
 - Salary/compensation (78%)
 - Challenge (55%)
 - Benefits (53%)
 - Bonuses (52%)
 - Job security (52%)
- The best places to find an information security position are in the metro areas of Las Vegas, Nevada; Dallas, Texas; and Washington, DC.

I. Demographics

The demographics section examines respondents' gender, industry, title, metro area, education, employer's annual revenue, number of employees, years of experience, and years with current employer.

We began by asking the gender of those who participated in the survey. It came as no surprise to learn that information security remains a male-dominated industry. Only 1/6 of the respondents were female.

Gender		
Gender	# Resp	% Resp
Men	1752	82.6%
Women	368	17.4%

45 industries were represented in this survey, but the majority of respondents came from the categories of Finance, Education, Government, Healthcare, and Manufacturing.

Industry	
Title	% Resp
Banking • Finance • Insurance	14.4%
Education	12.5%
Government (Non-Military)	7.8%
Government - Contracting	7.0%
Healthcare • Medicine	6.7%
Government (Military)	4.6%
Manufacturing	4.2%

The information technology field has a multitude of job titles, however this survey concentrated on the 54 (general) titles. The most popular were Security Engineer/Architect (12%) followed by Information Security Analyst (12%), IT Director (9%), Systems Administrator (7%), Information Security Officer, Security Director (6%), and Network Administrator (6%).

Job Titles	
Title	% Resp
Security Engineering • Architect	12.2%
Information Security Analyst • Specialist	11.6%
IT Director • Manager	8.6%
Systems Administrator	7.2%
Information Security Officer	5.6%
Network Administrator	5.5%
Systems Engineer	4.4%
Analyst	4.1%
Security Administrator	3.4%
Auditor	2.8%
Chief Information Security Officer	2.2%
Security Auditor	2.1%
Director of Security	1.7%
Network Manager	1.7%
Project Leader	1.7%
Applications Programmer	1.4%
Engineer	1.2%
Forensic • Pen Test • Intrusion Detection Analyst	1.2%
Network Architect	1.1%

Annual Revenue

Both small and large companies were represented in the survey, with the largest number of respondents categorizing their company as earning \$1- \$4 billion in annual revenue:

