

Definitions

Professional (short definition):

An expert who has made a commitment to being trustworthy.

Professional (longer definition):

- Someone whose practice is based on a substantial body of theory requiring multiple years of university study for basic mastery,
- Someone who has a considerable degree of autonomy and self-direction in the conduct of her professional work,
- Someone who has committed to putting the interests of her clients or employers before her interests or those of her colleagues,
- Someone who will generally view her work as more than a job, most often as a career that will be a life-long pursuit, &
- Someone who is recognized under law as having a special duty of care as a result of being a professional.

Profession:

- A recognized social group all of whose members are recognized as professionals,
- A self-governing body recognized by the state as containing professionals,
- A social group that establishes and enforces a Code of Professional Conduct,
- A social group with clear, self-established rules governing membership,
- A social group whose members put no interest ahead of the public interest, &
- A social group all of whose members are granted exclusive rights to practice.

Comments: There are obvious modifications to cover *Computing Professionals* and the *Computing Profession*. Note that the Computing Profession may not exist, (it's not clear that it will ever exist). Note also that many people employed in computing fail to be "professionals" either because their practice is not based on a substantial body of theory, or because they do not enjoy considerable autonomy and self-direction in their work.

Business-focused IT Professionals:

Those Computing Professionals whose work is substantially involved with information or communication systems used by business. Only a subset of those employed working with business information or communication systems will be Professionals, and only they will be called Business-focused IT Professionals.

Body of Knowledge:

An outline to the knowledge in an area whose mastery must be demonstrated by anyone wishing to be recognized and accepted as a professional in that area. There would be multiple BOKs for Computing Professionals; there are likely to be several BOKs for Business-focused IT Professionals. A BOK does not actually contain the knowledge, rather it points to where that knowledge can be found.

Core Business-focused BOK

The intersection of the accepted BOKs for Business-focused IT Professionals.

Mastery:

The “mastery” that must be demonstrated by the aspiring professional needs an operational definition. What can, what must, the aspiring professional do in order to demonstrate the requisite mastery of her professional Body of Knowledge?

Comment: Different acts may be allowed or required for mastery of a Core BOK as opposed to those acts allowed or required for mastery of the remaining portions of the professional BOK.

Other Definitions:

I would not attempt a definition of a Union or Universal BOK. Michael Polanyi (see *The Study of Man*) points out some of the difficulty with such a concept. He solves the problem by focusing on tacit knowledge. We could take a similar approach, but I fear this would take us down philosophical paths that would seem foreign to most committee members.

For a different reason, I would hold off defining a (universal) Core BOK. One Core BOK for all Computing Professionals may have very little content. And there is really no need to introduce a single Core BOK for all Computing Professionals. Let’s develop a Core BOK for Business-focused IT Professionals and then see how, if, or the degree to which it is relevant for other Computing Professionals.

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