

The success stories: girls who went against the trend and chose to study IT degree courses.

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Abstract

In an environment of declining female enrolments in higher education IT degree courses, this investigative study reports on trends apparent from interviews with under-graduate students who have chosen to study IT degrees: the success stories. This Australian study is part of a wider study to determine what factors influence student choice in relation to education and careers, with particular emphasis on IT. Young men and women have been interviewed; their responses analysed and compared, to determine if there are overriding differences in choice factors and temporal decision-making points between the genders. Initial trends indicate that females enter IT via different pathways, sometimes after attempting another degree. Both women and men interviewed tended to lack focus in their career plans. Interestingly, despite many years of promotion and advertisements to counteract negative stereotypes of computer students being lonely and isolated, the stereotype is alive and well in the opinion of women interviewed, with the coda that it does not apply to them.