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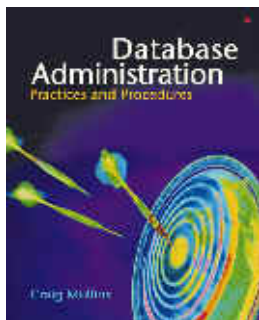
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The DBA Corner
by Craig S. Mullins

An Update on Data Professional's Salaries

My salary-related columns always seem to be some of the most popular ones, so with that in mind, I thought I'd examine the results of a recent salary survey conducted by [Certification Magazine](#). Let's start our examination at a high level. Over 35,000 IT professionals responded to the Certification Magazine 2007 Salary Survey and their average salary is up over 8.5% from $68,820 in 2006 to $74,730 in 2007. That is a nice trend as it shows salary growth for IT professional outpacing inflation.

While that is, indeed, good news, this column's readers work with data and database systems, so what did the survey tell us about data-focused jobs? Perhaps most interesting is the section that breaks down average salary by job specification. Here we find that the average salary for DBAs is $83,160 and the average salary for those focused on database design and implementation is $85,810.

These are somewhat strange results, but that is not uncommon for surveys such as this. For those of us who specialize in database administration and data management it is difficult to distinguish between these two categories. Don't DBAs design and implement databases? The two categories are most likely the surveyor's method of delineating between DBAs and data architects (or data modelers), but that is not at all clear.

So what of those salaries? Are they good, bad, or indifferent? Let's compare them to the salaries in the 2007 IT Salary Survey conducted earlier in 2007 by Janco Associates, Inc. Janco's salary survey is based on over 50,000 data points collected from survey forms sent to businesses throughout the United States and Canada. It will be a bit difficult to compare because, once again, there were quite a few different titles to slog through to get to meaningful results for data professionals. The three most pertinent job titles in the study were Manager - Data Warehouse, Manager - Database, and Database Specialist. We probably can assume that Manager - Database is close enough to DBA Manager and Database Specialist is akin to a DBA. There were additional data points in the Janco survey, too, so here are the results for those three job titles:

Title	Large Co Salary	Percentage	Small Co Salary	Percentage
Manager - Data Warehouse	$107,226	up 8.2 pct	$56,712	down 4.36 pct
Manager - Database	$99,717	up 2.6 pct	$92,980	up 3.49 pct
Database Specialist	$86,116	up 1.32 pct	$73,856	down 0.6 pct

This review shows some level of consistency between the two surveys, with DBAs earning in the mid-80's, at least for large companies. The Janco survey tells us that data warehousing professionals should work for larger companies to secure a higher salary; DBA managers do well regardless of company size; and database specialists earn less at smaller companies, but that might have something to do with what DBMSes are being used at those sites. Earlier surveys indicate that Microsoft SQL Server DBAs earn less than DB2 and Oracle DBAs, and the smaller the company, the better the chance that the DBMS in use is SQL Server.

OK, let's turn our attention to another aspect of the Certification Magazine survey and their breakdown of salaries by level of certification. Here are the results for the certifications we'd care about:

- IBM Certified DBA / Application Developer - $87,390
- Microsoft MCDBA - $78,420
- Oracle DBA OCA - $79,730
- Oracle DBA OCP - $84,520
- Oracle Developer OCP - $78,250

What do these results tell us? I think it shows that there might be a premium associated with being DB2 certified and for the "higher" Oracle certification. I say "might" because, again, these results could also show that there is a premium associated with managing larger environments. The DB2 numbers would have the mainframe environment as a component, which is larger than the Unix that is closely associated with Oracle, which is larger than the Windows world of Microsoft SQL Server. And that analysis pans out if you compare these salaries to the salaries for those certified to manage each environment. For example, according to the survey, Sun certified professionals earn larger salaries (on average) than do Microsoft certified professionals.

If you want to read more details about the Certification Magazine salary survey you can find it by clicking on this link .

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