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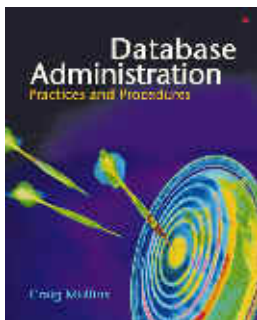
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## The DBA Corner

*by Craig S. Mullins*



### **Data Professional's Salaries**

DBA salaries are assumed to be among the highest in IT. Is this accurate? If so, is it fair?

Talking about salary issues is a sure fire way to get people excited. Everyone has an opinion on salaries. Usually, if it is your job we're talking about, you'll think salaries are too low, or not rising fast enough. If it is your

employer looking at the same exact numbers though, they'll think that salaries are too high or rising too fast. With this in mind, let's talk about DBA salaries.

According to a [recent survey](#) by Enterprise Systems, DBA salaries are among the highest in IT. The survey cites an average DBA salary in 2005 to be \$70,500. This is the highest of the IT staff positions surveyed (second highest was systems analyst at \$67,900).

But all was not rosy for DBAs in this survey. The average DBA salary for 2005 actually decreased 1.3% from 2004 (when it was \$71,400). Systems programmers and systems analysts also experienced year over year salary decreases. Why is this happening? Well, it could just be the composition of the survey respondents. If different people responded to the survey in different years the salary difference could cause the disparity. Of course, it could also be a real trend.

DBA is a strange position in that there are so many different types of DBAs. Salary disparity could arise given the difference in pay between an application DBA and a data architect - both of whom could reasonably be called a DBA. Additionally, there is the platform coverage that needs to be factored in. According to the Enterprise Systems survey, IMS DBAs outearned all others (on average) at \$75,100 per year. The platforms followed in this order: DB2 (\$73,500), Sybase (\$72,900), Oracle (\$72,500), SQL Server (\$69,100), and finally MySQL (\$67,800).

What does this mean? As far as I can tell, it means that mainframe DBAs out-earn distributed systems DBAs. It also seems to imply that there is a premium on DBAs for lesser-used DBMS platforms (e.g. Sybase). So, if you are an IMS DBA or a Sybase DBA who has been told for years that your expertise is going out of style perhaps you shouldn't worry quite so much. Chances are you're out-earning those naysayers.

You may not want to pay heed to a single survey though. In that case, you should check out the [IT Salary Survey](#) conducted by Certification Magazine. The average DBA salary in this survey is listed as \$78,640. That sounds better if you're a DBA.

[Software Development](#) magazine also recently published the results of its 2005 Salary Survey results. Although this magazine is mostly for programmers and developers, there is a nugget of data on DBA salaries in there. In the section that details average staff salary by title, Database Administrator is listed at \$79K. This salary comes in above the salary of titles such as Systems Analyst, Webmaster, and Network Engineer... but below titles such as Software Developer, Software Engineer, and Project Leader.

Yet another article, this time in PC Magazine, attacks the salary issue. The article titled [Top Ten Tech Jobs, Wages Released](#) highlights some interesting basic statistics. The main point seems to be that IT pay is improving. Indeed, the article states that "according to the Yoh Index of Technology

Wages, hourly pay increased by 3.1 percent to an average of \$30.27 per hour between October 10, 2005 and November 6, 2005.”

Even though this may be true, many of the folks I speak with on a daily basis seem to indicate that pay is stagnant. How can both of these *trends* can be true? Perhaps pay does increase for those bold enough to venture out and seek new jobs. But for those who stay the course with their present company raises are likely to be anemic. Of course, I have no hard facts to prove this - it just seems *right* based on anecdotal evidence.

And what did PC Magazine have to say about the pay for data professionals? It seems that data-focused professions have a higher average pay than the average worker. For example, the survey indicates that Data Managers earn \$45.06/hour. Now, I'm not exactly sure I know what a “data manager” is, but I can guess that he or she “manages data.” I don't know that I've ever come across this job title in my many years in the business, though. Anyone out there know what the responsibilities for this job might be?

Some other titles with higher pay rates are Data Warehouse Architects at \$69.03/hour and Oracle DBAs at \$55.82/hour. Ah, yes, the much in-demand Oracle DBA. Everyone wants to know him (or her); many want to be her (or him). It seems like the pay is still good for this position. Assuming 40 hours per week and 50 weeks a year we get a salary of over \$111,000. Not bad for a DBA. Of course, we all know that 40 hours a week is a dream, DBAs work longer hours; we also know that a full-time

employee is not paid an hourly rate, but a salary. So it might be wise to do a little bit of due diligence on how these numbers were compiled before using them to set a salary.

Other interesting statistics can be gleaned from the [High Tech Employment report published by the Monthly Labor Review](#) in July 2005. It reports that the median salary for DBAs is \$60,650. That means 50 per cent earn more than that and 50 per cent earn less. So where do you fall along that spectrum?

Now what do you think: are DBAs under-paid or over-paid? And are **you** paid what you think you deserve?

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