

Take control of your professional credibility...

No matter what stage of your career you happen to be in, with today's uncertainty and challenging economic climate, it is imperative for everyone to stop for a minute and think carefully about your own situation. What are you doing to ensure your position in the corporate world? Does your manager really understand what strengths you have to offer, what credentials your knowledge is based upon, or the efforts you have made to stay current in your field of expertise?

In general, all industry and the corporate business world in particular, are looking for measures to provide greater efficiency, productivity, and improved quality to their business model. If there is an opportunity to move ahead of your competition, provide enhanced products and services to your customers, or channel new energy into customer retention and loyalty projects, management will look favourably upon individuals who have the required knowledge, skills, and expertise to carry out these ideas.

Professional certification recognition

For those who have been in the electronic document industry for a number of years, you may be aware of the various professional certification programmes available to demonstrate your knowledge and skill set. These certifications abound—it is like going into the ice cream shop to check out the 'flavour of the month.'

Certifications offered by vendors have increased exponentially over the years and you have the option for any number of this type such as those offered by Microsoft, Cisco, Oracle, Linux, etc. These vendor certifications are quite specific for a specialised functionality and can be an important asset when seeking employment or for maintaining current positions.

The vendor/hardware/software certifications are based on skill sets such as management, security, networks, operating systems, database, servers, web development—to name a few. These certifications are often exam-based and may be offered by vendors or third-party training groups.

An important aspect for individuals to consider is the continued enhancement of your knowledge and skills even after securing a good position. It is vital for your corporate survival to frequently upgrade and improve your knowledge base. The electronic document industry has changed dramatically over the last 25 years to its current state of digital communications, and will continue to evolve as technology changes. To stay in the game, you must broaden your skill set to align with technology innovations and the industry.

Xplor International EDP certification programme

More than 20 years ago, Xplor International established the Electronic Document Professional (EDP) certification programme to recognise specialists with the skills to lead electronic document initiatives, manage production processes, or provide subject matter expertise. This certification acknowledges an individual with a broad knowledge of and experience in digital communication—whether in print, over internal networks, or online—from document creation to distribution. Successful candidates are required to demonstrate their level of excellence, knowledge, and expertise by a thorough examination of their work, their business ethics, and overall contributions to the industry.

While the EDP certification is not exam-based, it has an exhaustive evaluation process. Evaluators are peers in the industry—people with extensive and honoured experience in all phases of digital printing and document technology management. As the industry evolves and technologies change, the criteria for EDP certification have been refined under the direction of the EDP Commission and in response to new trends in the industry.

Since the first class of EDP-certified professionals was honoured in 1990, more than 500 individuals worldwide have been awarded this prestigious designation. Initially EDP certifications were primarily awarded to a North American contingent but in the last ten years, certifications have increased dramatically in Western Europe along with other areas in the Pacific Rim. There are currently eight EDPs in the UK and Ireland.

Requirements for EDP certification

The basic requirements for professional certification, open to Xplor members as well as non-members, include:

- Five years experience in the electronic document industry and be currently employed in the field
- Accept the Code of Ethics
- Demonstrate a commitment to continued learning and current awareness in the industry by earning at least 100 education credits and supplying supporting documentation
- Completion of three work examples demonstrating the depth and breadth of your expertise and skills

...prove you're an expert in your field!

To meet the requirement for 100 education credits, you earn credits for higher education degrees; professional certifications directly related to the electronic document industry; attendance at conferences, courses, seminars, webinars, and certificate programmes sponsored by educational institutions, professional or trade associations, vendors, government agencies, consulting firms, and other entities directly related to the electronic document industry.

Although this seems like a daunting task, those who have worked in this industry more than five years often find they have sufficient qualifications once they begin organising and assembling the requested information.

The process of completing the eligibility application and the work examples serves as a reminder and personal reinforcement of projects you have managed, educational events you attended, and the true extent of your expertise in this industry. The personal satisfaction gained from this self-examination exercise is an acknowledged consequence of the certification process.

New entry-level EDA designation

Xplor International has recently announced the launch of a new programme—the Electronic Document Associate (EDA)—which is a professional designation developed to provide entry-level introduction to Xplor’s well-respected and internationally known EDP certification programme.

The EDA designation, open to Xplor members as well as non-members, is achieved through the following requirements:

- Minimum two years experience in the electronic document industry and be currently employed in the field
- Accept the Code of Ethics
- Demonstrate a commitment to continued learning and current awareness in the industry by earning at least 50 education credits and supplying supporting documentation

The EDA candidate’s applications will be reviewed for qualification purposes, and you will be notified of the result. Upon acceptance an EDA designation certificate will be issued, an EDP mentor will be assigned, you will be recognised on an EDA roster found on the Xplor website (www.xplor.org/edp), you will be recognised in Xplor publications, and you will also receive group recognition at the Xplor annual conference.

EDA applications may be submitted with the appropriate fee at any time during the year to Xplor Headquarters, and results will be provided on an ongoing basis. When an EDA designation is awarded, it is valid for a period of five years.

The intention of the new EDA designation as developed by the EDP Commission, is to encourage individuals to begin the process of professional certification in a less daunting atmosphere. It is hoped that the majority of EDAs will use their time in the five year period to pursue the formal EDP certification.

Summary

Education is a vital component of our professional lives, far beyond the university degree or other accreditations we earn. To maintain and enhance our careers, it is important to continue our efforts to enhance the basic levels of knowledge and truly become experts in the field of digital communications.

Professional certification programmes such as Xplor’s EDP certification and EDA designation will promote and enhance the industry through continued individual education, knowledge sharing, and mentoring others in the certification process.

It is hoped that the introduction of the EDA designation will encourage many more individuals to take that first step on the road to the professional certification level. The process will be beneficial to you as an individual, to your company in verifying your credibility in digital communications, and to the industry as a whole as the network of acknowledged experts continues to grow.

Frank Romano edp, Professor Emeritus, School of Print Media, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY USA—sometimes referred to as the ‘Godfather’ of the printing industry—shares the following comments:

“Xplor helped to create a profession and EDP keeps it professional. The world of electronic communication is vast and complex and Xplor members are at the forefront of new technology.

EDP is a certification of professional standards in the application of that technology. EDP is the commitment to higher learning by the people of our industry.

The EDP designation is an affirmation of your professional achievements. Wear it proudly because it says that you are respected by your peers and by your industry.”

If you or any of your colleagues are interested in EDP certification or the new EDA designation program, now is the time to take a closer look. You could be joining the other professionals who signify a high standard of knowledge, expertise, and ethics in the digital document systems industry. Certification brings you recognition, career enhancement, financial opportunities, and personal satisfaction—just do it—take control of your future.



For any questions or more detailed information on the EDP certification program including the new EDA designation, visit www.xplor.org/edp

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