

## Canada NewsWire

**Attention News/Technology/Business Editors:**

### **What's in a Name? Tech Sector battles Engineers on "software engineering"**

TORONTO, June 11 /CNW/ - The professional engineers, in their on-going dispute over use of the term, "software engineering," could restrict the design and creation of software systems to licensed engineers. This puts thousands of jobs at stake for information technology (IT) professionals, many of whom are involved in software development, says the Canadian Information Processing Society (CIPS). According to Statistics Canada, there are approximately 469,100 information and communications technology workers employed in Canada.(1)

CIPS, the association representing IT professionals, is urging the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE) to work amicably with the IT community in resolving the dispute over the usage and practice of "software engineering." CCPE has threatened to take legal action against those they declare are practicing "software engineering" without a license because it claims that "software engineering" is a branch of engineering and not computer science.

"This is not true. Not only is "software engineering" not exclusively in engineering, it originated in computer science and developed connections to engineering only much later. Clearly, the consequences of strictly enforcing the practice of "software engineering" to only licensed engineers would be disastrous," said Paul Bassett, I.S.P., CIPS Spokesperson. "Legally enforced measures could harm the public by excluding vital software systems expertise and skills that thousands of IT professionals possess."

CIPS is defending the rights of "software engineers" through lobbying efforts to the government and the IT community. It recently published a position paper with recommendations on how to make a lasting resolution to the "software engineering" issue.

"We need in Canada what other countries are doing to solve this dispute between engineers and IT professionals. In Australia, for example, the Australian Computer Society and the Institution of Engineers have set up a joint Software Engineering Board that oversees the awarding of software engineering degrees," said Bassett. "CIPS encourages IT professionals and engineers to share "software engineering" programs wherever possible. It can only be a 'win-win' for both parties in the end."

Software engineers design, construct and evolve software systems. To date, there is no commonly accepted body of knowledge for the practice of "software engineering." Until such a body of knowledge is developed and shown to be essential for competent practice in the field, imposing legal restrictions on software developers is counterproductive.

A copy of CIPS's recent position paper on "software engineering" can be found on the CIPS national web site: <http://www.cips.ca/it/position/softeng>.

Founded in 1958, CIPS is Canada's association of IT professionals representing the interests of IT professionals to industry and government.

Through the volunteer efforts of its members, CIPS is involved in a number of initiatives relating to setting standards within the IT profession and assisting its community. I.S.P., Information Systems Professional, is a CIPS-administered designation awarded to IT professionals who have met the required education and industry experience and have demonstrated a commitment to professional ethics and standards of conduct.

1 Information and Communications Technologies in Canada: A Statistical Profile of the ICT Sector. (2001, December) Statistics Canada, 15.

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