

# Lies and statistics: 600,000 Chinese engineers

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 [devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20060613-59](http://devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20060613-59)

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Raymond Chen

Everybody “knows” that China produced 600,000 engineers in 2004 (as compared to 70,000 in the United States), but Carl Bialik at the *Wall Street Journal* [corrected 9:30am] smelled something funny, so he chased the source of the numbers to see whether this “fact” was indeed true. It wasn't. NPR interviewed a Duke professor whose class undertook their own investigation of these bogus numbers. The US number is really closer to 140,000. The count of Indian engineers? Nobody really knows. Deans of universities don't even know how many colleges belong to their university! China was even stranger.

The Chinese central government in Beijing had simply decided that 600,000 is the number of engineers they want China to graduate each year. “The government has told the provinces that they have to graduate more engineers, so the provinces tell the government what they want to hear.”

If the central government decrees that the country will produce 600,000 engineers, then by golly, that's what the official statistics will say, what a surprise.

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