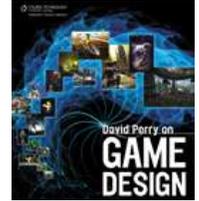# How to Become a Video Game Designer

Job Description

Video Game Designers write and debug computer code to develop games for a variety of platforms. They determine the concept and design of the game, sketch and storyboard what the game will look like, and create a limited version of the audio and video of their game. Video Game Designers maintain flow charts of the activities and people involved in the design and development, and each version of the game is redesigned and tested until all the problems and flaws are eliminated.

Video Game Designing involves specialists who help create a video game. These include: Programmer, Writer, Audio Programmer, Level Designer, Animator, Modeler, License Support Engineer, and Software Engineer.

Work Environment

Video Game Designers work indoors in offices or rooms where specialized machines and tools are available, such as computers, graphics, and audio and sound equipment. Designing a video game takes a long time, and some programmers who work alone have a difficult time with the lengthy process. Overtime may be expected with very long hours necessary to meet deadlines. Typically, a person may work alone in an office or a home office, and interaction with people increases with advancement.

Career Outlook

The Bureau of Labor Statistics expects a decline in jobs for Computer Programmers through 2016 with 417,605 jobs expected in 2016. Many jobs are off-shore with game design studios through Europe and Asia

Income

Income varies by type of employer, level of education, and geographic area. Job seekers with a graduate degree usually earn a higher entry-level salary than those with a Bachelor's Degree. A Computer Programmer's salary ranges from entry-level ($5,000/month) to experienced ($8,650/month). It is common for a recent graduate to work at a low paying position to gain experience and recognition in the field.

Education Requirements

Most employers prefer a job applicant to have a Bachelor's degree in Computer Science or Computer Engineering. One to two years of programming experience is essential. Individuals with a Master's Degree in Computer Science have a better job outlook. Employers prefer candidates to have experience in various programming languages. A love of video games is a plus.

Typical courses may include: Computer Applications, Database Management, English Composition, Fundamentals of Computer Programming, Intermediate Algebra, Introduction to C++, Introduction to Computer Science, Introduction to Systems Design and Analysis, Introduction to Visual Basics, Network Design and Topologies, and Operating

Systems.

Local Colleges:
State Colleges
CPSU San Luis Obispo
    B.S./M.S. Degree, Computer Science

CSU East Bay
    B.S./M.S. Degree, Computer Science
    B.S./M.B.A. Degree, Computer information Systems

CSU Sacramento
    B.S./M.S. Degree, Computer Science

CSU San Francisco State University
    B.S./M.S. Degree, Computer Science

CSU San Jose State University
    B.S./M.S. Degree, Computer Science

Private Schools
ITT Technical Institute, Anaheim
    B.S. Degree, Digital Entertainment and Game Design

The Art Institute of California, San Francisco
    B.S. Degree, Visual and Game Programming

University of Southern California
    B.S. Degree, Computer Science
    M.S. Degree, Computer Science (emphasis: Game Development)
    Minor, Video Game Design and Management
    Minor, Video Game Programming

Westwood College of Technology, Anaheim
    B.S. Degree, Game Software Development

University of California Schools
UC Berkeley
    B.A./M.S./Ph.D. Degree, Computer Science

UC Davis
    B.S./M.S./Ph.D. Degree, Computer Science

Community Colleges
Foothill College

How to Become a Video Game Designer

A.S. Degree/Certificate, Video and Computer Game Design
Non-Technical Skill Set

Foundation Skills - skills people bring to a job, also known as transferable skills
1. Basic Skills

      Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Speaking Listening

2. Thinking Skills

      Creative thinking, Decision-making, Problem solving, Knowing how to learn

3. Personal Qualities

      Responsibility, Social skills, Self-management, Integrity/honesty

Functional Skills
Function Skills – skills specific to the function workers perform doing their job
4. Resources

      Manages time, manages money, manages material and facility resources, manages human resources

5. Systems & Technology

      Understands systems, uses technology

6. Informational Skills

      Acquires and evaluates information, organizes and maintains information, interprets and communicates information

7. Interpersonal Skills

      Participates as a member of a team, teaches others, serves clients, serves customers, exercises leadership, works with cultural diversity

Sources of Additional Information

Academy of Interactive Arts & Sciences (AIAS)
www.interactive.org

Association for Information Technology Professionals
www.aitp.org

Association of Computing Machinery (ACM)
www.acm.org

Association of Information Technology Professionals (AITP)
www.aitp.org

How to Become a Video Game Designer

Edge Magazine (Videogame Culture)
edge@futurenet.com
www.next-gen.biz

Entertainment Software Association: http://www.theesa.com

FlipCode, Game Development News & Resources: www.flipcode.com

Gamedev.net: www.gamedev.net

International Game Developer Association (IGDA): www.igda.org

Indy Game Development Association: http://www.meetup.com/IVGDA-IN

National Video Game Association: www.nvgaonline.com

National Workforce Center for Emerging Technologies (NWCET): www.nwcet.org

North Bay Multimedia Association: www.nbma.com

Orange County Multimedia Association: www.ocmma.org

Occupational Outlook Handbook 2010-2011
http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos078.htm

Eureka: The California Career Information System, www.eureka.org
Site Code: For current Foothill students only, please contact the Career Center

Career Center Resource Library
Room 8329; (650) 949-7229

Links to Look at for Jobs/Info

http://lionhead.com/Jobs_Contract.aspx

www.idga.org

www.nvgaonline.com

www.mlgpro.com

www.vectorg.com/cga/CGA.htm

www.theesa.com/gamesindailylife/education.asp