Pearson

Emerging careers

eSports

Gaming has been a thriving industry since the introduction of home consoles in the 1980s. The past decade has seen a rise in the integration of gaming into K–12 curricula as educators embrace its ability to support STEM learning and build soft skills like teamwork, communication, and problem solving.[1] Now that competitive gaming (eSports) is booming as a massive worldwide industry, universities are getting involved. Athletic departments are developing players through official varsity teams and, on the academic side, institutions are starting to design curricula for those interested in general eSports careers.

Just as with traditional sports, players in the sport can earn millions of dollars, but few reach that elite level. Those willing to trade some of the glory for more stable prospects will find numerous career options in the industry. Job sectors include strategists (analysts, coaches), content creators (developers, journalists, streamers), entrepreneurs (marketing, business development), and 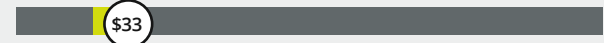organizers (event work, IT support, managers).[2] The skills candidates need depend on the sector — many requiring a degree in that specialty — but all demand passion for games and competitions.

Specialties[3,4]

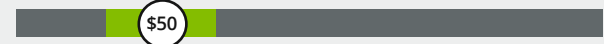**Data analyst** ($22–$150K)

$86

Event manager ($25K–$40K)

$33

Social media specialist ($25K–$42K)

$34

Marketing manager ($40K–$180K)

$110

Software engineer ($33K–$67K)

$50

| $0 | $25K | $50K | $75K | $100K | $125K | $150K | $175K | $200K |

Skills of the field
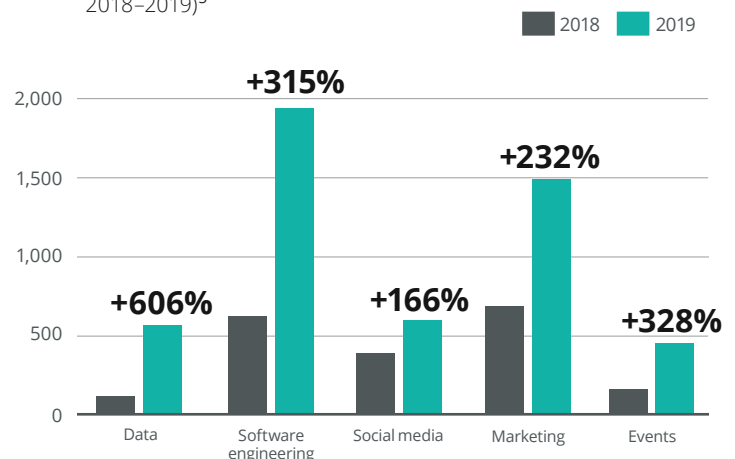
Technical skills

- Gaming expertise
- Information technology
- Data analysis
- Digital media communication
- Business

Soft skills

- Teamwork
- Sales & marketing
- Psychology
- Systems analysis

Job growth

Total number of global eSports jobs (aggregated by Hitmarker 2018–2019)[5]

■ 2018   ■ 2019

+606% Data
+315% Software engineering
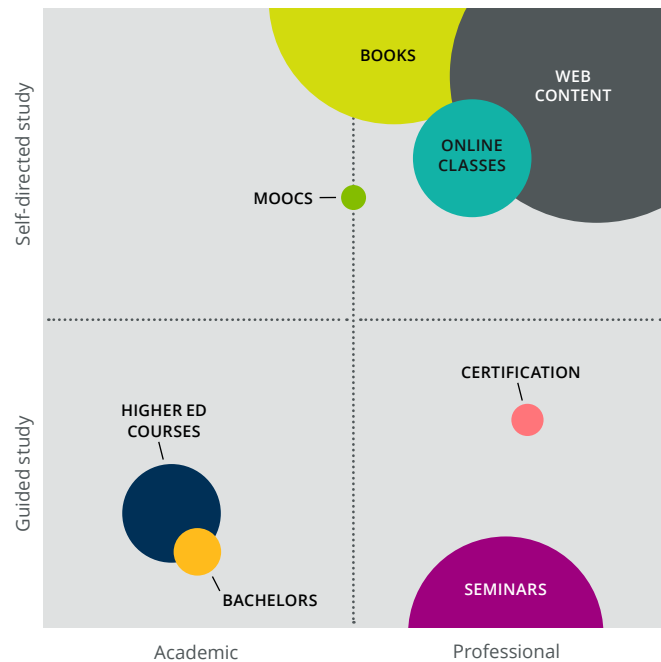**+166%** Social media
+232% Marketing
+328% Events

Study options available

The eSports industry is growing so rapidly— from $906 million in 2018 to a projected $1.65 billion by 2021 — that formal education is working hard to catch up.[6] For now, the best path to a career outside of gameplay is to pursue an education in one of the specialties (software engineering, event planning, marketing, business, etc.), develop general eSports expertise through gameplay and tournament involvement, and build a portfolio of work through social media or volunteer event work. However, for anyone looking to establish themselves in the field with a specialized education, there are at least 10 American universities offering undergraduate degrees in eSports — primarily focusing on eSports management — and at least a couple universities also have a masters curriculum currently in development.

Explore additional fast-growing professions that offer new opportunities for rewarding careers—with the right education and skills.

See the careers >

eSports Education options

Self-directed study

Guided study

BOOKS

WEB CONTENT

ONLINE CLASSES

MOOCS —

CERTIFICATION

HIGHER ED COURSES

BACHELORS

SEMINARS

Academic   Professional

Insider advice

"Social media is great for networking, but nothing replaces face to face communication… Even if your budget is tight, commit to making it to as many events as possible. Politely introduce yourself to influencers who are relevant to your career goals. Don't be shy. Attend the parties. Gather business cards. Ask questions. Make friends."[7]

- Jason Lake, Founder & CEO of @compLexity

Sources

[1] "eSports in K-12 and Post-Secondary Schools", Gregory Rothwell and Michael Shaffer
[2] "What the Research Tells Us: Digging into the Benefits of Scholastic Esports", Craig Anderson, Dr. Remy Cross, Je Seok Lee, Jason Reitman,Constance Steinkuehler, Minnie Wu
[3] "How Much Do eSports Players Make?" Brian O'Connell
[4] indeed.com
[5] "2019 Esports Jobs Report", Hitmarker
[6] "As pro gaming takes off, so do esports careers", Dean Takahashi
[7] "Advice for Landing Your Esports Dream Job", Jason Lake

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