

Fastest Growing Industries: Digital Entertainment / Interactive Media

A guide for newcomers to British Columbia



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1. Overview of the Digital Entertainment / Interactive Media Industry

Introduction

British Columbia is an international digital entertainment centre for console and mobile game production, Internet, and app design. BC has highly skilled talent, comprehensive infrastructure (full studios and equipment), targeted incentives, and a creative atmosphere. A thriving interactive media sector extends beyond games and digital design to include film, video, social media, interactive marketing, and e-learning.

BC's Interactive + Digital media sector is one of the most dynamic engines in the BC economy and is a key driver of skilled jobs that will define the future of the province.

Creative BC

- Digital Entertainment / Interactive Media (DE/IM) industry includes Visual Effects (VFX) & Animation, Digital Media, Video Games Development and other Interactive Media, Film & TV Production.
- over 1,300 companies involved in BC's Digital Entertainment / Interactive Media (DE/IM) sector, creating innovative products in wireless and mobile, video gaming, animation and VFX, web 2.0, social media, interactive marketing and e-learning.
- 600 digital media companies, employing about 16,000 people in BC and generating \$2.3 billion in annual sales.

Three sectors are responsible for majority of activity within Digital Entertainment / Interactive Media:

- **visual effects (VFX) & animation**

- in Vancouver, over 60 studios make up the VFX and Animation industry, the world's largest cluster of domestic and foreign-owned studios.

- dollar value of salary and wages resulting from digital animation and visual effects activity in 2013/14 was \$270 million

- (http://www.creativebc.com/database/files/library/CreativeBC_ActivityReport_20132014_secure.pdf)

- BC's post production and visual effects facilities works on commercials, music videos, interactive game content, animation, films and TV series

- BC's animation companies are some of the most prolific production developers of computer animation for TV and long-form CGI for feature films, commercials and interactive entertainment.

- **video games & interactive media**

- over 170 video game development studios (highest in Canada) including Electronic Arts (EA), Microsoft Studios, Relic Entertainment/SEGA, Capcom Vancouver, Roadhouse Interactive, Klei Entertainment, BANDAI NAMCO Entertainment, United Front Games and Kabam

- although the majority of overall resources is *currently* dedicated to *console* games by a small number of leading companies, *85% of game development companies are now developing games for smart phones and tablets*

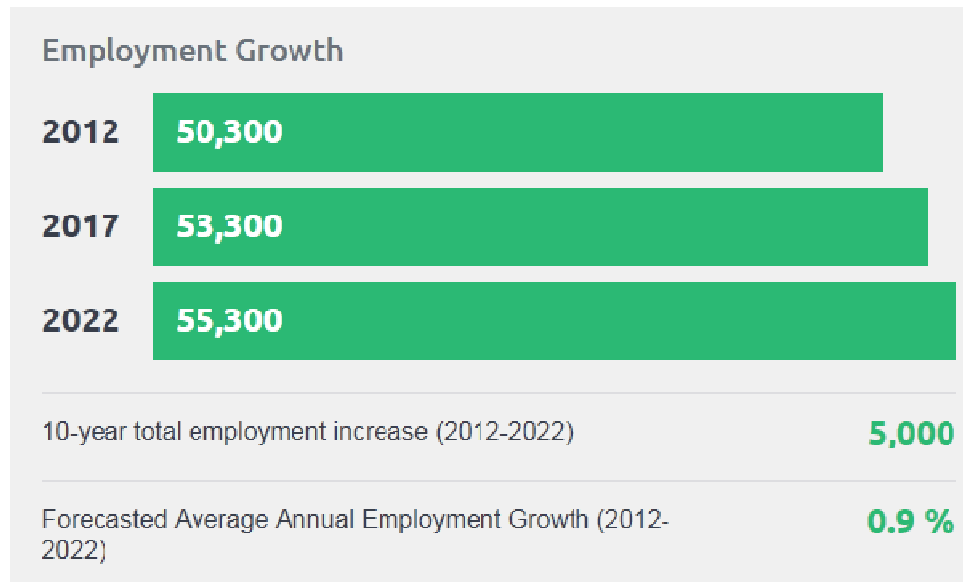
- **film & television production**

- over 34,000 direct and indirect jobs are generated by film & TV production in BC, with more than 80 per cent located in Metro Vancouver

- in 2013/2015, film & TV production in BC was valued at \$1,611 billion dollars (Profile 2014, Economic Report on Screen-based Media Production Industry in Canada, http://www.cmpa.ca/sites/default/files/documents/industry-information/profile/CMPA_2014_eng.pdf)

Trending Industries Information, Culture & Recreation

Expected growth in employment



Common occupations in this industry

- Computer programmers and interactive media developers (NOC 2174)
- Producers, directors, choreographers and related occupations (NOC 5131)
- Graphic designers and illustrators (NOC 5241)
- Program leaders and instructors in recreation, sport and fitness (NOC 5254)
- Telecommunications installation and repair workers (NOC 7246)

Source: WorkBC, Labour Market Navigator

<https://www.workbc.ca/Navigator/TrendingIndustries#>

For more information see:

- Creative BC, Annual Activity Report, 2013/2014
http://www.creativebc.com/database/files/library/CreativeBC_ActivityReport_20132014_secure.pdf
- Vancouver Economic Commission, Digital Entertainment & Interactive
<http://www.vancouvereconomic.com/focus/digital-entertainment-interactive/>

- Profile 2014, Economic Report on Screen-based Media Production Industry in Canada (Canadian Media Production Association CMPA, BC Producers Branch)
<http://www.cmpa.ca/industry-information/profile>
- Immigrant Employment Council of BC – Mentor Connect Program
<http://www.iecbc.ca/our-initiatives/mentorconnect>
 - brings together skilled immigrants and established professionals in occupation-specific mentoring relationships
 - program provides for 24 hours of mentoring over a four month period and meetings take place in person, online and by telephone.

2. Occupations in the Digital Entertainment/Interactive Media Industry

New immigrants to BC are projected to fill more than 30 per cent of all job openings in the province by 2020.

Digital Entertainment & Interactive Media Occupations in Demand in BC:

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Cumulative Number of Jobs* 2012-2022</i>
Computer & information systems professionals (NOC 217), including: computer programmers and interactive media developers** <i>Also includes game developers</i>	11,900
Creative Designers & Craftspersons (NOC 524), including: Graphic Designers & Illustrators <i>Also includes animation artists</i>	6,800
Graphics Arts Technicians, Photographers, & Tech. Occupations in Media including Audio and video recording technicians (NOC 522) <i>Also includes animation technicians, computer graphics technicians, digital effects specialists, multimedia sound specialists</i>	3,200

** number of jobs is combination of replacement jobs and newly created jobs*

*** Computer programmers and interactive media developers rank 25th in the top 60 "Jobs In Demand" identified by the BC 2012-2022 Labour Market Outlook*

Sources:

WorkBC Labour Market Navigator <http://www.workbc.ca/Navigator>

British Columbia 2022 Labour Market Outlook

<https://www.workbc.ca/WorkBC/media/WorkBC/Documents/Docs/BC-LM-Outlook-2012-2022.pdf>

Current Workforce:

According to the Canadian Interactive Alliance, the majority of the *current* interactive digital media (IDM) workforce in Canada is employed in ***technical (40% or creative positions (39%))*** with the remainder in business/administration roles. In Canada's *current* IDM talent pool, the most lacking skills are ranked as: (1) ***technical digital skills***, followed by (2) business & leadership skills and (3) production management & pipeline skills (ability to work in integrated process flow and collaborate with colleagues).

Future Workforce:

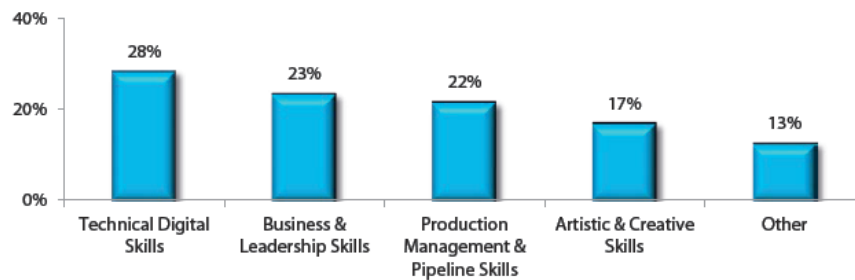
In terms of *future demand*, the highest frequency of ***projected future hires*** among Interactive Digital Media (IDM) companies in Canada is ***for creative talent*** at the intermediate level and ***technical talent*** at the intermediate and senior levels. Looking ahead to future demand for ***key skills***, IDM companies in Canada anticipate that the top in-demand skills will be technical digital skills, artistic & creative skills, and business & leadership skills.

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Figure 44 – Key skills gaps¹⁴ (frequency by % of respondent companies) (Canada, 2011)

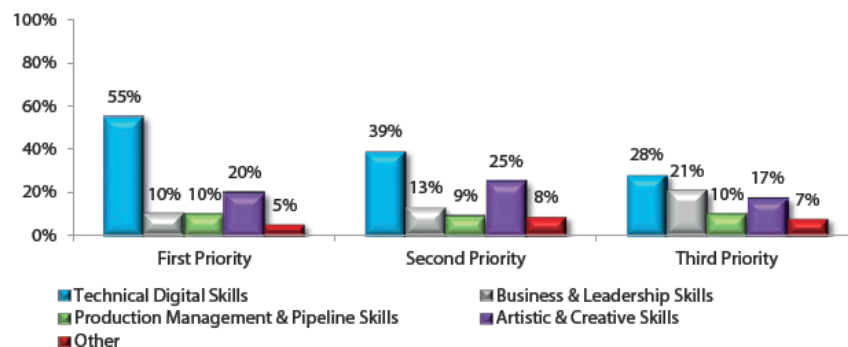
Source: 2012 CIIP Survey
N=148



Looking ahead to future demand for key skills, core IDM companies in Canada anticipate that the top in-demand skills will be technical digital skills, artistic and creative skills, and business and leadership skills. As the chart below illustrates, companies' first and second priorities tend to be technical and creative skills. On the other hand, the third priority is more frequently technical skills and business and leadership skills.

Figure 45 – Projected future demand for key skills (frequency by % of respondent companies) (Canada, 2011)

Source: 2012 CIIP Survey
N=110



Source: 2012 Canadian Interactive Industry Profile Final Research Report

<https://ciaic.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/ciip-report-english-r5-final.pdf>

New employment opportunities are also emerging in the digital entertainment & interactive media industry. These include a wide range of occupations such as:

- 3D character animator
- 3D generalist
- 3D graphics developer
- animation artist
- animation layout designer
- digital artist
- digital effects specialist
- digital graphics designer
- FX technical director
- game developer
- games monetization specialist

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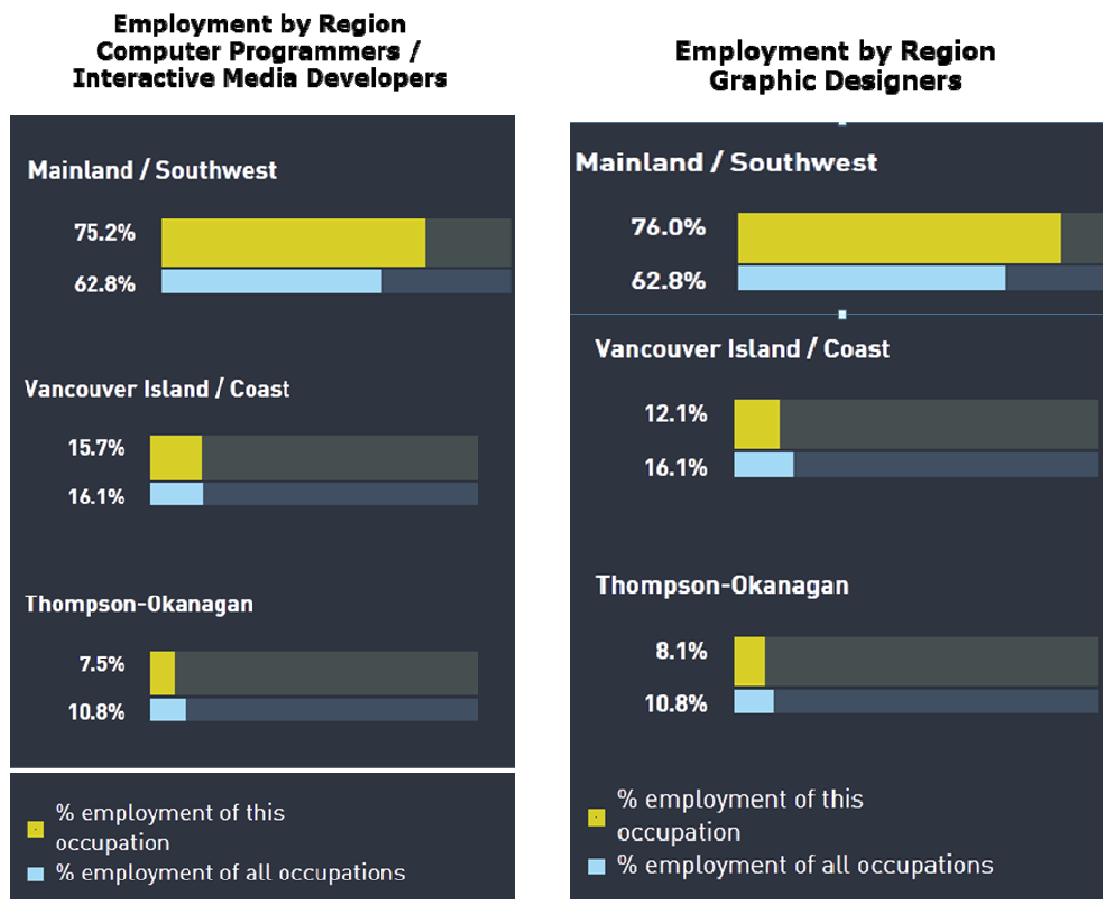
- graphic designer (multimedia, interactive)
- interactive media developer
- mobile developer
- multimedia developer
- render wrangler
- shading artist
- technical animator
- unity developer / unity 3D game developer
- user experience designer
- Visual effects (VFX) artist

For more information, see:

- **WorkBC Career Profiles**
<http://www.workbc.ca/> [search by job title]

3. Hiring Forecast by Region

The majority of jobs in the digital entertainment & interactive media economy are found in Metro Vancouver/Lower Mainland, Victoria/Vancouver Island and Thompson-Okanagan / Southern Interior (primarily in the region surrounding Kelowna).



Source: WorkBC Career Profiles

<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/2174>

<https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/5241>

A recent survey of **Okanagan** companies involved in the technology sector, found that about 33% of all respondents named **New Media & Internet Technology** as

a primary focus (dominant line of business revenue) with interactive media, gaming, and web design and development being the dominant areas of work.

For more information see:

- Accelerate Okanagan: Economic Impact of the Okanagan Technology Sector
https://www.accelerateokanagan.com/files/6314/2066/9441/Okanagan_Economic_Impact_Report.pdf
- WorkBC Career Profiles, <https://www.workbc.ca/Job-Seekers/Career-Profiles/>

4. Finding Jobs

Online Job Postings

- **VFX Vancouver Job Board**
<http://vfxvancouver.com/>
- **DigiBC – Digital Media & Wireless Association of BC**
<http://www.digibc.org/jobs>
- **Playback.ca**
<http://playbackonline.ca/careers/>
Careers in film production, broadcasting and interactive media across Canada
- **Accelerate Okanagan**
<https://www.accelerateokanagan.com/community/job-board/>
Jobs in Okanagan/Southern Interior region of BC (Kelowna and surrounding region)

Creating a List of Potential Employers

You can use directories to produce lists of employers in the digital entertainment & interactive media industry in British Columbia. Contact them directly to find out if they're hiring.

- **Reel West Digest. Membership Directory**
<http://reelwest.com/digest>

over 1400 companies, organizations and individuals that provide services and facilities for production in the film, video, internet and digital production industry in Western Canada

- **Creative BC – Interactive & Digital Media Industry Contacts**
<http://www.creativebc.com/industry-sectors/industry-contacts/interactive-and-digital-media>
- **Creative BC – Post Production Contacts**
<http://www.creativebc.com/industry-sectors/motion-picture/post-and-digital-visual-effects> [click on 'post production']
- **Creative BC - Digital VFX Contacts**
<http://www.creativebc.com/industry-sectors/motion-picture/post-and-digital-visual-effects> [click on 'Digital VFX']

5. Additional Resources

Still looking for more information? Try looking at the following resources:

- **DigiBC – Digital Media & Wireless Association of BC**
<http://www.digibc.org/>
represents companies working in mobile & wireless, video games, animation & special effects, social media, online marketing and emerging next gen technologies
- **bci - BC Interactive – association for the BC Video Game Industry**
<http://www.bcinteractive.ca/>
- **Canadian Media Production Association, BC Producers Branch – CMPABC**
<http://cmpabc.com/>
- **Creative BC** (independent non-profit BC government agency)
<http://www.creativebc.com/>
(formerly known as B.C. Film Commission and B.C. Film + Media)
promoting the development of creative industries in British Columbia and providing a single point of access for industry programming, production support services, tax credit administration, international marketing and policy development.

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- **Spark CG Computer Graphics Society**
<http://sparkfx.ca/>
- **Vancouver Economic Commission: Digital Entertainment & Interactive**
<http://www.vancouvereconomic.com/focus/digital-entertainment-interactive/>
- **Vancouver Post Alliance VPA – association for post production industry in BC**
<http://www.vancouverpostalliance.com/>
- **Visual Effects Society, Vancouver Section – VES**
<http://vesvancouver.com/>
visual effects practitioners: artists, technologists, model makers, educators, studio leaders in film, television, commercials, music videos and games
- **British Columbia Canada: Creative industries converge here**
<http://www.britishcolumbia.ca/invest/documents/bc-gaming-mit.aspx>
- **Welcome BC. Job Profiles for Immigrants**
<http://www.welcomebc.ca/Work/fqr/occupational-guides.aspx>

Questions? Please ask the Information Staff at the Central Library or telephone 604-331-3603.

Please note that the information in this guide is also available online through the Skilled Immigrant InfoCentre website at <http://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.