Design Leaders Confident in Economy: Indicators Show Solid Growth from One Year Ago

The Design Leaders Confidence Index is captured quarterly by AIGA, the professional association for design, based on survey responses from hundreds of industry design leaders to gauge the health of the industry from an employer’s perspective. The index dipped below 100 in October of 2013 to 95.94, but in both January and April of 2014, the index measures over 101. Significantly, more than half of respondents to the survey indicated they believe business will be substantially or moderately better in 6 months, and roughly 42% indicate that their chances of hiring are greater today than it was 3 months ago.

Source: http://www.aiga.org/confidence-index
Digital Arts is a rapidly changing field. Industry and job growth are being driven by new technologies, the increase in mobile applications and usage, and the popularity of gaming and interactive products.

To prepare students for a career in the field, schools offer either a Bachelor of Arts in Design or a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design, Digital Design, or Digital Design & Technology.

Specializations are more exciting, and wide-ranging than ever before:

**AREAS OF FOCUS**
- 2D/Print
- 3D/Motion
- Advertising
- Animation
- Graphic Design
- Illustration
- Interactive Arts
- Video Game Design
- History of Animation
- Information Design
- Information Visualization
- Interactive Installation
- Introduction to Game Design
- Motion Dynamics
- Motion Graphics
- Narrative Storytelling
- Typography
- Vector and Raster Graphics
- Vector Imaging Techniques
- Video Editing
- Web Based Art

**SAMPLE COURSEWORK**
- Audio for Digital Media
- Character Design
- Digital Page and Web Graphics
- Drawing / Imaging
- Flash for Animators
- Graphics Programming
- History of Animation
- Information Design
- Information Visualization
- Interactive Installation
- Introduction to Game Design
- Motion Dynamics
- Motion Graphics
- Narrative Storytelling
- Typography
- Vector and Raster Graphics
- Vector Imaging Techniques
- Video Editing
- Web Based Art

**CAREER SPOTLIGHT:**
**Graphic Designer**

Graphic Designers are artists that apply their creative skills to develop graphics, images, and designs for promotional, marketing, and packaging purposes. Graphic Designers may work in a growing variety of media including print, web, and interactive forms.

**SALARY**
(Also see the salary table, pg.4)
Starting salaries for graphic designers vary based on medium and industry. For example, average salaries tend to be higher for web than for print. Of course those designers with expertise in more than one area may find more opportunities. The BLS published median wage is $44,150.

**INDUSTRIES**
With almost 200,000 graphic designers in the US, the top industries employing graphic designers are Specialized Design Services, Publishers, and Advertising and Public Relations firms. In 2012, about 24% of all graphic designers were self-employed.

With approximately 259,500 jobs in the field, BLS predicts 7% growth through 2022, with many opportunities focused in the computer systems design field.

**LOCATIONS**
The metropolitan areas with the most graphic designers are New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, Minneapolis, Washington DC, and Atlanta.

Continued on page 4
Be with the best!

Ranked by The Princeton Review as a Top School for Game Design for 5 consecutive years.

Program offerings:
- Game art
- Game development & programming
- Game audio
- Game script writing
- 3D modeling & animation
- Game production & management

More Points of Pride:
- Ranked for two consecutive years by the Animation Career Review, on its list of the “Top 50 Schools in the U.S. for Game Design and Development” and the “Top 20 Animation and Game Design Schools on the East Coast.”

Artwork by William Parker ’14

www.becker.edu

61 Sever Street | Worcester, MA 01609 | 508.373.9500 | Toll Free 877.523.2537
**WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A DIGITAL ARTS PROGRAM**

**Continued from page 2**

**WHAT YOU’LL LEARN IN DIGITAL ARTS**

Programs may prioritize any of the following concepts in varying degrees: aesthetics, conceptual sophistication, digital craftsmanship, foundation, theory and history, and a final project that will help build your portfolio. In addition to lectures, hands-on and studio time are critical in this field of study.

**CHOOSING YOUR PROGRAM**

Comparing different programs is a great way to evaluate each school’s facilities, technologies, and faculty strengths.

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**Design Salaries…**

**WHO MAKES WHAT IN THE DIGITAL DESIGN WORLD?**

As with any trade, salary range is dependent on geography, your area of focus, and the type of organization you work for (A non-profit? A big studio? Freelance?). We examined two different salary sources to help give you an idea of where you might fall when it comes to salary. Coupled with the Bureau of Labor and Statistics information about where designers live and what industries employ them, you can get a better idea of where your brightest prospects as a digital artist might be. Use this information for planning where you want to live and work, as well as a range when negotiating your salary.

*Note: not all job descriptions line up precisely…but we tried to match up potential equivalents.*

**AIGI, Aquent Survey of Design Salaries 2014**

| Art Director | $67,500 |
| Creative or Design Director: Agency | $100,000 |
| Creative or Design Director: In-house | $75,000 |
| Designer: Print and/or web/interactive | $46,000 |
| Senior Designer: Print and/or web/interactive | $62,500 |
| Motion Graphics Designer | $50,000 |

**Salary.com**

| Art Manager | $79,566 |
| Art Director | $90,863 |
| Creative Manager | $80,178 |
| Creative Director | $105,209 |
| Designer: Graphic Design Specialist | $50,764 |
| Senior Designer | $76,345 |
| Graphic Design Specialist, Senior | $63,468 |
| Cartoonist, Animator | $48,490 |

To view more salaries by job type and add the ability to filter by location or size of organization, visit [designsalaries.aiga.org](http://designsalaries.aiga.org) on the web.

Visit PrincetonReview.com to search for undergraduate and graduate programs in design, to take free practice tests or learn about test preparation.
Preparing for a Future in Digital Arts in High School

Need some practical advice as you think about an exciting future in the digital arts? First of all, the best way to nurture your interest is to find and talk with current digital artists if you can. That will give you the best insight into what it’s really like.

But there are some things you can do within your high school curriculum and beyond so your application (and especially your portfolio) look great.

In high school, focus on the fundamentals of art first. That means ‘traditional’ artistry. This “Artistry first” attitude helps build a foundation in traditional creative arts, like drawing and painting, that can then be applied through an array of technologies, like sound, animation, and other interactive media. This foundational education should include studying motion, color, lighting, and other basic principles that every artist needs to understand, regardless of their chosen medium.

Perhaps not so surprisingly, math and science can really help a developing artist, particularly in learning the principles that relate to motion, gravity, and friction (which you will have to depict and recreate in your work). Learning these essential concepts from physics and mathematics could help enhance your depth as an artist. The relationship between art and science goes way back - think of DaVinci’s drawings of the human body as an example. In fact, Digital Arts is considered to be the meeting place of artistry and technology. So studying each in some fundamental way will strengthen your skills, which will be applied to a variety of quickly changing technologies and media.

Beyond the raw artistry and design skills, Dr. Cotnoir offers some of the characteristics that make for a successful design student. “Outside of art and design, successful design students have a creative mind, the ability to solve problems that haven’t even been imagined yet, the willingness to add value to whatever they undertake, the ability to understand and be mindful of the needs of others and the skill of being able to think critically.”

According to the Director of Design Programs at Becker College, Dr. Paul Cotnoir,

“Regardless of the role you see yourself performing in the [industry], your high school transcript should include Math through college prep algebra and geometry, one or two lab science courses, traditional drawing and/or painting, digital imaging, 3D modeling, and game design if your school offers it.”
Information Design has everything to do with perception. While Information Design as a concept isn’t new in and of itself, the breadth and depth of information currently available has sparked new creativity in this field.

With companies competing for likes and shares on social media, imagery is a powerful way to capture their attention. For example, according to many social media gurus, posting pictures on Facebook that don’t need additional explanation are the ideas that get the most likes and shares. Think of the popularity of Infographics (see example of an Infographic at left).

The Digital Arts expands the potential beyond jpegs to include audio, video, interactive presentations and other design tools. Companies like Vine (owned by Facebook), which allow users to post short, 6-second videos, has over 40 million users and has sparked a flurry of similar apps and solutions to create videos or animated images. Instagram (owned by Twitter) supports video as well as picture.

If you are interested in Information Design, which is a very broad field, consider the following applications or careers for this concept—there are many directions to take:

**WEB DESIGN**
Information design is important in various aspects of web design, or how the user will perceive their experience based on the visual presentation and organization of information. User experience, as well as the visual aesthetics and usability of a website are all important foundations of usable and creative Web Design. Many graphic designers find careers as web designers.

**MOTION DESIGN**
Design concepts and implementation for Web, Television, Movies, and Presentation Software. Animation and film techniques such as 3D would fall under the Motion Design category, as well as flash and text effects for websites.

If you are interested in seeing the latest in motion design, Adobe has an informational website @adobe.com/motiondesign

**WAY-FINDING DESIGN**
How do you direct a first-time visitor through a train station or an airport? There are designers behind the signage, and even flow of people, through public spaces.
Graphic Designers are becoming increasingly important in the design and sale of products. In fact, the fastest growing area of employment for graphic designers is in “Computer systems design and related services”, where employment is expected to grow by 35% through 2022. (Bureau of Labor and Statistics, Occupational Outlook Handbook, published January 2014)

Author Daniel Pink discusses this growing sphere of influence among graphic designers in the business and technology world in his popular book, A Whole New Mind: Why Right Brainers Will Rule the Future. In Pink’s book, he promotes the idea that the future belongs to those with CREATIVITY. And who has creativity? ARTISTS. According to Pink’s website, “The era of “left brain” dominance, and the Information Age that it engendered, are giving way to a new world in which “right brain” qualities-inventiveness, empathy, meaning-predominate.”

Whether or not an “MFA is the new MBA”, businesses looking to stay competitive will seek creative minds who can communicate, think, and present information in dynamic and compelling ways to their consumers or audiences.

"An MFA is the new MBA”
— Daniel Pink, A Whole New Mind

CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE
Burlington, Vermont

RULE Nº 16
TO CREATE GREAT THINGS, FIRST YOU MUST STUDY THEM

Division of Communications & Creative Media
CHAMPLAIN.EDU/CCM

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• Filmmaking (BFA)
• Game Art & Animation
• Game Design
• Graphic Design & Digital Media (BFA)
• Professional Writing
• Public Relations

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Artwork courtesy Song Seunghyun, School of Graphic Design

Academy of Art University
Founded in San Francisco 1929

ph 888 680 8691 // www.academyart.edu
Most BFA programs require that you submit a portfolio of your work so they can evaluate your potential as an artist.

Applying to BFA Programs
How to Build Your Portfolio

While specific requirements for a portfolio vary from school to school, there are a few common things to know:

↗ The works you submit must be original to you. Some even specify that the drawing/painting/etc. is done from observation rather than from looking at a photo or going from memory. Schools are looking to evaluate your ability to translate the world to your own work.

↗ Many programs ask for at least 10, and more typically, 15 - 20 pieces of original artwork.

↗ For each piece you submit with your portfolio, you must include identifying information such as the date it was created (they are looking for recent samples—typically the past two years), the medium, and the dimensions of the piece.

The more you create in high school, the more options you will have to choose from for your portfolio. This can include work you do in Studio Art and other Digital Arts Courses that are part of your high school curriculum, through outside coursework, or in what you develop on your own at home. Student artists should keep a sketchbook and work in it every week. Advanced courses in Art (AP Studio Art) are also a great way to develop the piece you will need for your portfolio. If your high school doesn’t offer the Art Courses you need, many art centers will offer portfolio preparation courses. Also check local colleges and art schools for summer classes.

WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR PORTFOLIO

In almost every case you will need to create digital images of your work (i.e. a photograph of your painting), but the original work can be in any variety of media. Examples for a portfolio might include:

- painting
- drawing
- sculpture
- photography
- video
- digital art
- animation
- sound
- installation
- web design
- story boards

SUBMITTING YOUR PORTFOLIO

Be aware of the approved formats and size limitations for submission, which most schools list as part of their application requirements on the art department area of their websites. You may have to convert images to a specific program, like slideroom, or you may have to convert some items to the ‘acceptable’ formats.

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CAREER SPOTLIGHT:
Multimedia Artists and Animators

Multimedia Artists and Animators animate and create visual effects in 2D or 3D for television, movies, video games, and a variety of formats. These artists specialize in video, audio, film, computer, and other media. Some artists work by hand before transferring their work to a digital format, while others create their work on the computer, or even by writing their own software programs.

SALARY (Also see the salary table, pg. 4)

In 2012, multimedia artists and animators earned a mean salary of $61,370. As in any other field, pay varies by industry. The highest paying industry in this field is the motion picture and video industry, seeing a median salary of over $72,680.

INDUSTRIES

The leading industry for this field is the Motion picture and video industry, however, 57% of these artists are self-employed. Other industries employing multimedia artists and animators are advertising and PR firms, software publishers, and computer systems design firms.

LOCATIONS

By far, California employs the most artists in this field (think Skywalker Ranch, Pixar, Industrial Light and Magic, etc.). However the state of Washington has the highest concentration of these artists.
What Are Interactive Designers Thinking About Right Now?

In the world of interactive design (mobile, desktop and web)—innovative devices, screen sizes, and even the color and materials of the devices can influence the direction of interactive design. So what are interactive designers paying attention to right now?

THEMING AND COLORS
How is a color influenced by its surroundings? What colors should you design into your website and apps? And do you give the consumer the option to customize their color experience by choosing a theme that matches their phone color, their personal preference, or even their personality or mood that day or in that moment? While colors are always a critical element of every interactive design, customizing colors, as well as intuitive use of color (i.e. use red to delete), are integral parts of the latest interactive designs.

LAYERS/DEPTH/BLUR
The challenge of presenting information, but emphasizing some information over others without overwhelming the user, can be built into the design of an app, website, or tool. Designers are employing and improving upon techniques such as creating layers of information, giving the impression of depth in the designs with pseudo-3D environments, or even blurring out certain information, in order to communicate priority effectively while presenting an overall pleasing design.

TRANSITIONS AND DETAILS
Organizing information with color, layers, and even typeface design still requires the ability to navigate from one set of information to the next, particularly on smaller screens. Designing ‘transitions’ across the information is critical to the overall success of an app or website and the user’s experience.

As users become more sophisticated in the way they consume information and what they are willing to spend their precious time on, designers must think about ways to capture the attention of their fleeting audiences – why should they use this app, read this article, or browse this website? Enticing or useful details can be incorporated into designs, or even into the transitions so users can dive deeper into something that captures their interest. We commonly see this in the ways sites or apps allow users to easily share or comment across social networks, to see reviews or recommendations, or even understand how long it will take to read a blog or complete a survey.

Interactive designers creatively think about the next best thing in user experience to deliver engaging content regardless of the device on which it is viewed.

ON WHAT IT TAKES TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN DESIGN:
“Leadership and collaboration. These two qualities are invaluable for a student to succeed. One must have the leadership abilities to put forth their talents as well as work collaboratively with those in other disciplines. We look for people who can bring together different disciplines.” – Fran Flaherty, Digital Arts Studio Manager, CMU School of Art

“Successful design students are those who are willing to work hard and put in the time to make a project great. Participation in team-building experiences, like art club, yearbook, and summer programs...allow students to begin learning how to collaborate and critique. These are key functions as design students and as future designers who are looking to work at an agency or to work with clients through the design process.” – Melissa Huybrecht, Associate Vice President, Enrollment Management, MCAD

ON WHAT SOFTWARE TO LEARN, OR BE WILLING TO LEARN:
“In the Digital Arts Studio, we use the Adobe Suites, Rhino, Google Sketchup. Skills in these particular software programs are not required but what is needed is the willingness to learn, the ability to be flexible to the rapidly changing technologies.” – Fran Flaherty, Digital Arts Studio Manager, CMU School of Art

“Digital imaging software such as Photoshop and Illustrator, 3D Modeling tools, if your school offers it, like Zbrush and Maya, and for those interested in game design, explore Unity, Unreal, and GameMaker.” – Dr. Paul Cotnoir, Director of Design Programs, Becker College
Applying to BFA Programs
How to Build Your Portfolio

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Think about demonstrating your foundation in art with your strengths (drawing, painting, etc.) as well as featuring any of your digital works, like animation or video. Some digital arts programs require that you include samples of ‘traditional arts’, as they are looking more at your potential as a digital artist, not the polished samples that you would include in a job application. Fran Flaherty, Digital Studio Arts Manager at Carnegie Mellon University School of Art, offers this advice about the portfolio: “We are looking for innovative students who use a wide range of media, backgrounds, and artistic ability. Moreover, we look for people who can show their ability to synthesize different types of media, i.e.: combine traditional printmaking with digital printmaking, combining traditional sculpture with reverse engineering... In a portfolio we look for work that indicates a comprehensive background in the arts and what the arts mean to the students.”

A ‘digital arts’ portfolio might look something like this:

► 10-15-20 RECENTLY completed, ORIGINAL artwork samples
► logos, lettering, or typography samples
► completed projects or layouts for brochures, posters, web design, etc.
► a variety of media, depending on your experiences and your future interest: photography, film, multimedia, drafting
► again, original drawing samples may or may not be required, but are probably helpful

Ask your high school art teacher for help and guidance here! There is even a National Portfolio Day Association (http://portfolioday.net/), which sponsors free events around the country where representatives are on hand to review and comment on your portfolio.

FROM THEIR WEBSITE:
“National Portfolio Day is an event specifically for visual artists and designers. It is an opportunity for those who wish to pursue an education in the visual and related arts to meet with representatives from colleges accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design. Representatives will be available to review your artwork, discuss their programs and answer questions about professional careers in art. High school students, parents, teachers, guidance counselors and college transfer students are encouraged to attend.”

How is your portfolio evaluated?
Melissa Huybrecht, Associate Vice President of Enrollment Management at Minneapolis College of Art and Design, says, “At MCAD, the portfolio is evaluated on artistic and conceptual content, design and composition, technical skill, and creative potential. MCAD requires representation of four subjects—landscape, still life, interior space, and a self-portrait—and only one of the four subjects must be an observational drawing. Students are encouraged to think about including a full value scale (from light to dark), a full background, and to be aware of the composition, using their eyes, imagination, and creativity.”

Looking for More Resources?
Stay Informed...Get Connected

Here are some industry organizations and publications to familiarize yourself with or formally connect with online, or through conferences and membership.

AIGA, the professional association for design, www.aiga.org
Entertainment Software Association www.theesa.com
Gamasutra (formerly Game Developer Magazine) www.gamasutra.com
Graphic Arts Guild www.graphicartistsguild.org
International Digital Media and Arts Association idmaa.org
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