The games industry

The sale of video games is now higher than both music and video combined, making it the UK's most important and fastest growing entertainment industry.

In 2018, games sales reached a record £8.3bn, an increase of 9% on the previous year, representing more than a doubling of sales since the industry took root with the home video game console in the early 1980s. Despite global economic growth too - by more than 27% - virtual reality (VR) grew by 23% in all games sales, driven largely by retailer demand for virtual reality headsets and the production of immersive virtual reality content.

This means the UK games industry is flourishing and needs an ever increasing number of skilled employees to ensure it can continue to grow and succeed.

The UK industry

The UK's games industry began in the 1980s and has since grown to be one of the largest in Europe. There are currently 1,200 companies developing and publishing games, and in 2018, the UK's games industry spent £2.4bn on R&D (research and development).

The industry's annual trade shows and interactive experiences across all digital platforms attract visitors from more than 30 countries, among them computer, home and hand-held consoles, mobile and tablets, along with technology like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR).

The growth of mobile applications (apps) like Candy Crush and new and innovative games like Oscar, have added a new world of players to the UK's games world, making the industry one of the UK's five largest export markets.

In 2017, 76% of the UK population owned a mobile device, with 32 million people playing video games in the UK alone. In 2016, video games became the largest entertainment industry in the UK (49% of the population), making this the biggest and most lucrative digital market in the world.

What do games employees earn? The industry is one of the UK's most diverse and the variety of roles available on offer mean there are wide variations in salary depending on what interests or expertise you may have. Jobs in the games industry are broad and varied, with large and small teams including Manchester City and West Ham United, who have both used video games to prepare for games.

The UK and US games industries are considered to be very strong, with high salaries for many roles. The average salary for a games industry employee is £30,000 per year, with the top 10% earning over £60,000.

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