

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 hub for interactive and digital media. More than 1,300 digital media companies are at the forefront of innovation in mobile apps, virtual and augmented reality, animation, visual effects, social media, interactive marketing and e-learning tools.

BC has highly skilled talent, comprehensive infrastructure (full studios and equipment), targeted incentives, and a creative atmosphere. The industry employs 16,500 people in BC and is valued at \$2.3 billion annually.

BC's digital media hub is one of the biggest in the world and growing every year...

Creative BC

Creative BC provides the following statistics:

- 152 interactive entertainment companies in BC
- 1,300 digital media companies in BC
- 500 full time employees in BC working in Virtual/Augmented Reality
- 14,740 employees work as computer programmers or interactive media developers

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

- **visual effects (VFX) & animation**
 - in Vancouver, over 100 studios make up the VFX and Animation industry, the world's largest cluster of domestic and foreign-owned studios.
 - BC's post production and visual effects facilities work on commercials, music videos, interactive game content, animation, films and TV series
- **interactive gaming and app development**
 - includes many leading companies including Electronic Arts (EA), Microsoft Studios, Relic Entertainment/SEGA, Nintendo, Klei Entertainment, and Kabam
- **augmented reality and virtual reality**
 - over 200 members within BC's AR/VR association

For more information see:

- **Creative BC, Impact Report 2018-19**
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1i36EIDXQZmF4yG91lkSMAJ6MAUGEiIT/view>
- **DigiBC**
<https://www.digibc.org/cpages/careersincreativetech>
- **VR/AR Association, Vancouver Chapter**
<https://www.thevrara.com/vancouver-chapter>
- **Animation and Visual Effects Alliance of BC**
<https://animvfxbc.ca/>
- **Vancouver Economic Commission, Digital Entertainment & Interactive**
<https://www.vancouvereconomic.com/focus/digital-entertainment-interactive/>
- **Annual Profile, Economic Report on Screen-based Media Production Industry in Canada** (Canadian Media Production Association CMPA)
<https://cmpa.ca/profile/>

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 over the next 10 years.

Digital Entertainment & Interactive Media Occupations in Demand in BC:

Occupation	Job Openings 2019-2029
Computer programmers and interactive media developers <i>includes game developers</i>	6,290
Graphic Designers & Illustrators <i>includes animation artists</i>	4,700
Graphics Arts Technicians <i>includes animation technicians, computer graphics technicians, digital effects specialists, multimedia sound specialists</i>	300

Source:

British Columbia 2019 Labour Market Outlook

<https://www.workbc.ca/labour-market-industry/labour-market-outlook.aspx>

Current Workforce:

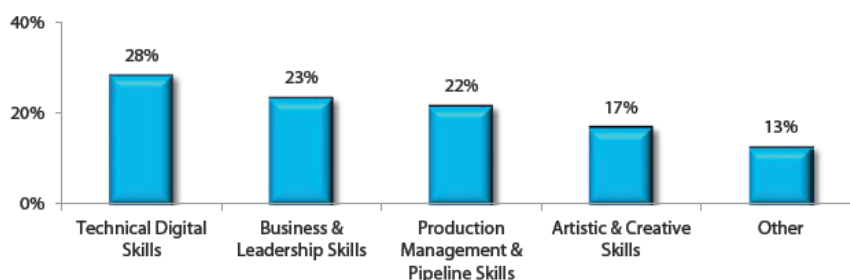
According to the Canadian Interactive Alliance, the majority of the *current* interactive digital media (IDM) workforce in Canada is employed in **technical (40% or creative positions (39%))** with the remainder in business/administration roles. In Canada's *current* IDM talent pool, the most lacking 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.

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

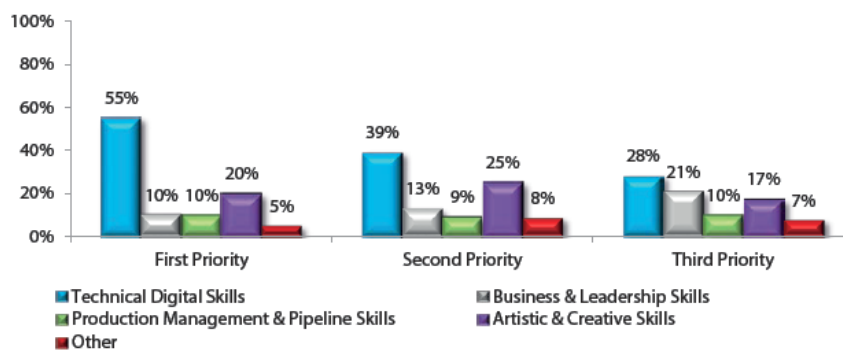
Source: 2012 CIIP Survey
 N=148



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://trends.cmf-fmc.ca/research-reports/canadian-interactive-industry-profile-2012/>

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

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- animation layout designer
- digital artist
- digital effects specialist
- digital graphics designer
- FX technical director
- game developer
- games monetization specialist
- 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**
<https://www.workbc.ca/plan-career/explore-careers> [search by job title]
- **DigiBC's Guide to Careers in the IDM Sector**
<https://www.digibc.org/cpages/careersincreativetech>
- **Careers in Culture: Digital Media**
<https://www.culturalhrc.ca/education-training-mentoring/digital-media>

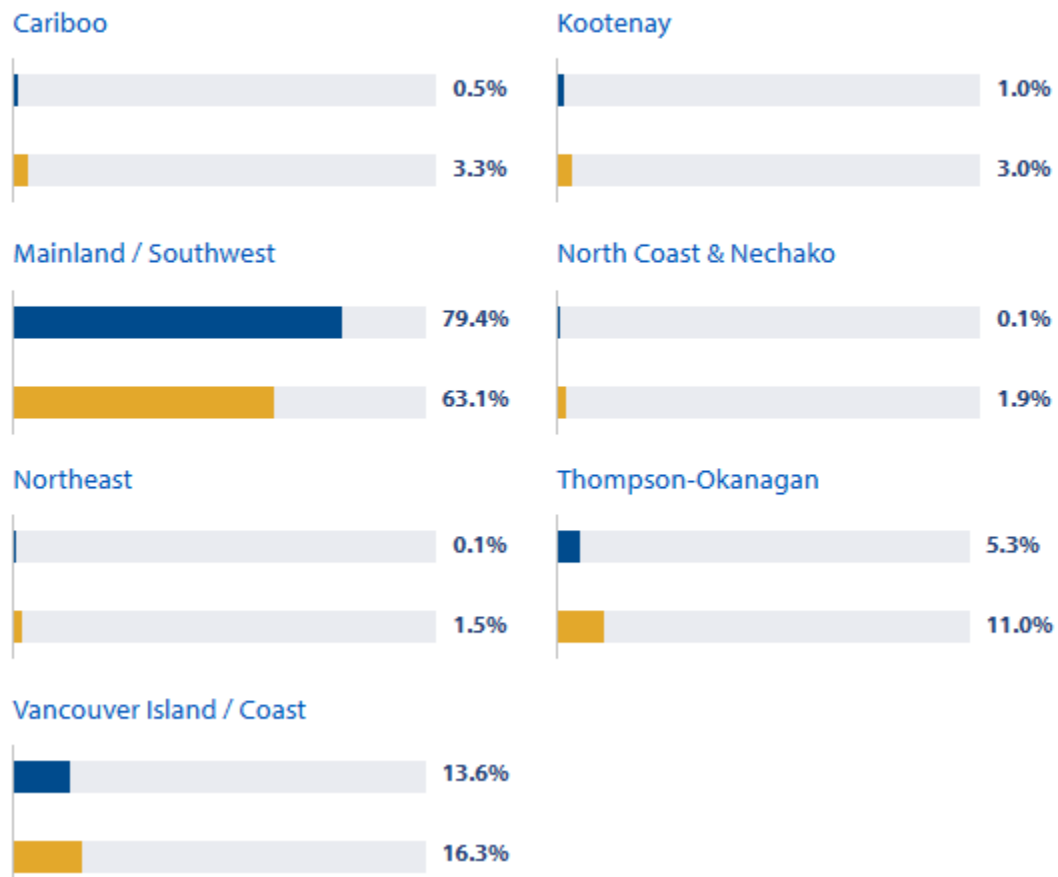
3. Hiring Forecast by Region

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

Employment by Region

Software Developers & Programmers/Interactive Media Developers

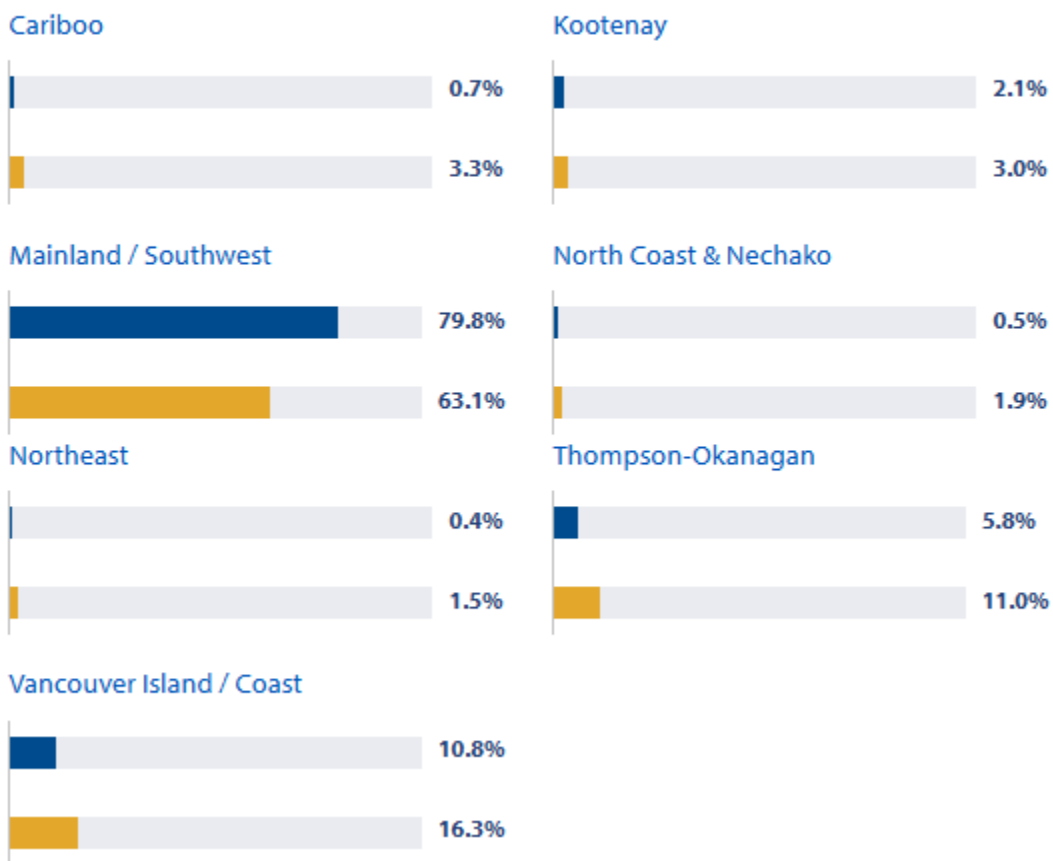
■ % employment of this occupation
 ■ % employment of all occupations



Source: WorkBC <https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/software-developers-and-programmers>

Graphic Designers & Illustrators

■ % employment of this occupation
 ■ % employment of all occupations



Source: WorkBC <https://www.workbc.ca/career-profiles/graphic-designers-and-illustrators>

A recent report from the **Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission** reveals that the digital media sector is growing in the Okanagan. The region has over 200 animation, film, and digital media firms, employing 2,450 people.

For more information see:

- **Sector Profile: Animation, Film, Digital Media, Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission**

[https://www.investkelowna.com/application/files/1515/5655/8960/Animation - Film - Digital Media Sector Profile.pdf](https://www.investkelowna.com/application/files/1515/5655/8960/Animation_-_Film_-_Digital_Media_Sector_Profile.pdf)

4. Finding Jobs

Online Job Postings

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

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.

- **Creative BC – Industry Contacts**
<https://knowledgehub.creativebc.com/s/industry-contacts/>
- **VR/AR Association Directory**
<https://thedirectory.thevrara.com> [search by city]

5. Additional Resources

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

- **DigiBC**
<https://www.digibc.org/cpages/home>
- **Creative BC**
<https://www.creativebc.com>
- **Entertainment Software Association of Canada**
<https://theesa.ca/>
- **Canadian Interactive Alliance**
<https://ciaic.ca/>
- **Spark CG Computer Graphics Society**
<https://sparkcg.org/>
- **Vancouver Post Alliance VPA – post-production industry in BC**
<https://vancouverpostalliance.com/>
- **Visual Effects Society, Vancouver Section – VES**
<https://www.vesglobal.org/group/vancouver/>
- **Animation and VFX Alliance of BC**
<https://animvfxbc.ca/>
- **Welcome BC**
<https://www.welcomebc.ca/>
- **Immigrant Employment Council of BC – Mentor Connect Program**
<https://iecbc.ca/our-work/programs/mentorconnect/>
 - brings together skilled immigrants and established professionals in occupation-specific mentoring relationships

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 <https://skilledimmigrants.vpl.ca/>.