

The top 20 crisis-proof online jobs for the new global virtual economy

Which jobs have thrived and flourished in the COVID-19? This is what L'Atelier - an independent foresight company within the BNP Paribas Group - aimed to discover in their recent research looking at the "virtual economy".

Temps de lecture : minute

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This report revealed the job opportunities emerging positively in the fast-growing "virtual economy" in the face of economic collapse. Worth over \$100B a year, the virtual economy employs hundreds of thousands of people in online jobs, these jobs generate a total economic output of more than \$66B a year.

As Coronavirus has caused the 'real' economy to shut down, it has triggered a new wave of adoption and creativity within the virtual economy as individuals look for virtual ways to earn real income and deliver traditionally offline experiences online. Recent examples include:

- Revellers paying real money to attend virtual nightclubs.
- Fashion brand *100 Thieves* selling virtual versions of their clothes via the popular game *Animal Crossing: New Horizons*, and Deserted Island DevOps, a tech conference usually based in New York, using the game as a virtual venue.
- A teacher using the game *Half-Life: Alyx* to teach his students maths using an in-game virtual white board and markers.

L'Atelier's research has identified 20 of the most common jobs in the virtual economy employing hundreds of thousands of people globally, which include:

Farmers

Over 150K people globally earn up to \$25K per year by 'farming' and selling valuable in-game items. For example, significant numbers of people in Venezuela were known to 'farm' the in-game currency for online fantasy game *RuneScape*. This virtual currency was sold to other players for real money, earning farmers around \$40 per month in a country where unemployment is rife and the average wage is \$7.50 per month.

Esports

There are approximately 100K income-generating esports players worldwide. Thanks to the fast-growing esports market, these elite gamers can earn anywhere between \$25K and \$3M annually from tournament winnings, partnership deals, sponsorship, salary, and ad revenue. As esports becomes more professional, it is also creating additional job opportunities. Today, around 2K people, often retired esports players, earn up to \$140,000 per year by coaching and advising esports teams, and approximately 500 people work as 'shoutcasters' (commentators on esports matches), earning up to \$75K.

Digital asset creators

Creating digital assets for virtual worlds - for example, items for use in Second Life or furniture in Decentraland - is a major part of the virtual economy. Around 40K people currently work as digital asset creators, earning up to \$122K per year through direct sales and commission. There are also more than 100K modders, who create modifications for existing games - they earn between \$17K and \$40K from Patreon donations and direct support.

“Even as the global economy suffers the enormous impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the virtual economy continues to grow. The virtual economy is already huge: more than 2.5bn people participate in the platforms which make it up and it has a total value of well over \$100B a year, making it larger than the global film industry. It is also resistant to disruption in the physical economy, making it a powerful way for people to socialise, create and earn an income during lockdown. As a result, all manner of virtual jobs are becoming increasingly attractive to millions of people, from gamers and developers to teachers and entrepreneurs.” - John Egan, CEO, L’Atelier

Streamers

L’Atelier has found that about 50K people bring income - mainly from platform partnerships, viewer subscriptions and ads - by streaming gameplay to fans on social media platforms including Twitch, Mixer and YouTube. Earnings range from \$12K to more than \$1M per year.

Community managers

Around 400K people work as community managers within the virtual economy. They manage and maintain events schedules for a whole range of online communities on platforms including Twitter, Discord, Facebook, and Twitch. Typical earnings for these roles are between \$35K and \$80K per year.

Indie game developers

There are currently over 40K people generating income by developing games for digital distribution on independent marketplaces, such as Steam and Epic Store. A smaller number of developers work on games whose production is crowdfunded directly via Kickstarter or Patreon, and are not picked up or supported by a major studio or publisher.

JOB	DESCRIPTION	INCOME STREAMS	KEY PLATFORMS	NO. OF PEOPLE	INCOME (ANNUAL)	MIN ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION
STREAMER	An online game streamer focusing on a variety of game types and genres.	Patreon, StreamLabs, Partnership, Sponsorship, Direct Support, Ad Revenue, Affiliate Links	Twitch, Mixer, Facebook, YouTube	~50,000	\$12,000-\$100,000	\$600M
ESPORTS PRO PLAYER	A video game player who competes at a professional or semi-professional level in esports tournaments.	Tournament Winnings, Partnership, Sponsorship, Salary, Ad Revenue	Twitch, Mixer, Various esports games	~100,000	\$25,000-\$3,000,000	\$2.5BN
MODDER	A content creator who builds modifications for an existing game. This can come in the form of balance changes, questlines, characters, skins, model reworks, and map upgrades, among others.	Direct Support, Patreon	NexusMods, Patreon, Twitch, YouTube, Discord	~100,000	\$17,000-\$40,000	\$1.7BN
EVENTS COORDINATOR	An individual or a group of individuals who manage, plan and execute events either online or offline. In most cases, these events serve as hubs for various communities. This has turned them into channels for marketing and brand activation.	Sponsorship, Salary, Contract	IRL	~150,000	\$30,000-\$75,000	\$4.5BN
INDIE GAME DEVELOPER	An individual or a group of individuals who develop games for digital distribution on independent marketplaces. This job classification can also include games that are funded directly via Kickstarter or Patreon for the course of their development, and are not picked up or supported by a major studio or publisher.	Direct Support, Sales, Patreon	itch.io, Steam, Epic Store, Patreon, Humble Bundle	~40,000	\$7,000-\$100,000	\$280M
SHOUTCASTER	A commentator for esports matches.	Contract, Direct Support	Twitch, Mixer, Facebook, YouTube	~500	\$30,000-\$75,000	\$15M
CHANNEL EDITOR	An individual who is contracted by a content creator to curate and edit video content for an online channel.	Salary	Twitch, Mixer, Facebook, YouTube	~20,000	\$10,000-\$60,000	\$200M
COMMUNITY MANAGER	An individual who manages and maintains event schedules for communities of various sizes.	Salary	Twitter, Discord, Facebook, Twitch, Most major social media sites	~400,000	\$35,000-\$80,000	\$14BN
INFLUENCER	A content creator, writer or another online persona whose brand is primarily their personal lifestyle.	Sponsorship, Partnership, Patreon, Ad Revenue	Twitch, Mixer, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok	~800,000	\$40,000-\$1,250,000	\$32BN
ADULT CAM MODEL	A model who performs live on camera. The online channels for adult cam models tend to rise and fall quickly.	Direct Support, Commission, Partnership	Pornhub, Chaturbate, MyFreeCams, Cams.com, Camsoda	~300,000	\$12,000-\$120,000	\$3.6BN
LIFESTYLE VLOGGER	A content creator who produces video on demand or livestreamed content focused on day-to-day family life.	Patreon, Partnership, Sponsorship, Direct Support, Ad Revenue	YouTube, Instagram	~50,000	\$10,000-\$125,000	\$500M
SKIN DESIGNER	A content creator who designs cosmetic items for games.	Direct Support, Patreon, Partnership	Steam Workshop, ArtStation, Twitter, Patreon	~1000	\$10,000-\$60,000 per skin	\$10M
INFLUENCER TALENT MANAGER	An individual who manages brand and sponsor relationships for a streamer or a group of streamers. Talent managers and talent management agencies are becoming more common among top-tier streamers.	Salary	IRL	~10,000	\$28,000-\$94,000	\$280M
DIGITAL ASSET CREATOR	An individual who creates digital assets other than skins for virtual worlds or for distribution in resource bundles. Examples include Second Life items, Decentraland furniture, Unity assets, among others.	Sales, Commission	Steam Workshop, Twitter, ArtStation, Individual artist websites, Patreon	~40,000	\$17,500-\$122,000	\$700M
ESPORTS PARTNERSHIP MANAGER	An individual who manages sponsorships and brand partnerships in esports. They are often responsible for "selling" esports to non-endemic sponsors or securing relationships with endemic brands for events, teams, organisations and leagues.	Salary	B2B	~800	\$54,000-\$138,000	\$43.2M

ESPORTS COACH	A coach or advisor for an esports team who coordinates trainings, practice, and maintains team morale. Coaches are often retired esports players.	Salary, Tournament Winnings	IRL	~2,000	\$22,000-\$140,000	\$44M
GAME MASTER	Support staff who exist in a game world and are often called upon to deal with in-game issues or serve as chat and world monitors on an in-game level. They often have access to in-world moderation tools, such as player detention and inventory editing.	Salary, Contract	World of Warcraft, Final Fantasy XIV, Guild Wars 2, ArcheAge, almost all MMOs have Game Masters as part of their support and moderation staff	~2,000	\$21,000-\$96,000	\$42M
FARMER	An individual who farms valuable items, loot or currencies within a game world for resale purposes.	Direct Transaction	World of Warcraft, Final Fantasy XIV, Eve Online, ArcheAge, almost all MMOs have people who pursue this type of work in some capacity	~150,000	\$2,000-\$25,000	\$300M
ONLINE SEX WORKER	An individual who independently produces adult content online. They may also perform other services, such as camshows, private camshows, adult chat or online phone sex services. Income streams often include private social feed (Snapchat, Onlyfans, AVN Stars, etc.). They often produce and sell video content on open online marketplaces.	Direct Transaction, Partnership, Patreon, Direct Support	OnlyFans, Manyvids, Iwantclips, Niteflirt, Sextpanther, Pornhub, Twitter, Snapchat, Patreon, Reddit, Fetlife	~500,000	\$5,000-\$200,000	\$2.5BN
CONTENT MANAGER	An individual who curates, manages and organises the generation of content for a given community, organisation, website, or platform.	Salary, Contract	Any digital platform	~60,000	\$40,000-\$87,000	\$2.4BN

? [See the full list and research here.](#)

L'Atelier is a foresight business that identifies and contextualises future market opportunities that emerge from technological and societal change.



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