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# Community Colleges Power Up Video Game Programs

From video game art to programming, students can enter the field with a community college degree.



A degree can help professionals stand out in the sometimes unsteady field.

By [Ellen Ryan](#)

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Industry-standard software includes Autodesk and Adobe. Future programmers can find jobs with large developers elsewhere, Borlongan says, or stay local to work for small to midsize gaming studios, firms creating "edutainment" titles or those "gamifying" curriculum for the [University of Phoenix](#) and [Grand Canyon University](#).

The Asian free-to-play trend has become the norm, Borlongan says. Every major publisher is "repositioning legacy titles for mobile platforms and removing the 'pay first' paradigm." This means new opportunities for programmers.

Also, "virtual reality and augmented reality will be tested this year, as several manufacturers release their long-awaited headsets." If those prove successful, he says "we can look forward to publishers and developers rolling out entirely new games as well as repositioning existing properties." Businesses from defense to football are also interested in creating virtual reality simulations.

The Gamasutra Salary Survey 2014 lists the average U.S. game programmer salary as \$70,637 for those with less than three years' experience.

Staber, the programmer/designer in Austin, says video game grads have an edge. "Rather than just learning skills on your own, a degree shows that you're educated: You've worked with a team; you've

learned well-rounded aspects of game development like task management and the ability to complete the whole project. Those are the skills employers are looking for. People who are easily hireable and get jobs that pay more have the degree."

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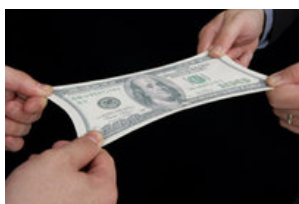
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