

Data analytics and virtual assistant skills most sought after by employers, global report says

15 October, 2019: As the US Labour Department reports [a slowing in hiring of traditional jobs](#) and the [Conference Board's Help Wanted OnLine Index](#) 1.3% during the month of September, Freelancer.com releases its Q3 Fast 50, a quarterly index of the most sought after skills, showing key skills like data analytics and virtual assistants are experiencing the biggest employer demand with growth in these fields soaring 58.9% and 55.6% respectively in the quarter.

Freelancer.com is the world's largest freelancing and crowdsourcing marketplace globally by users and number of jobs posted:

- During Q3 2019 **473,000** jobs were posted globally on Freelancer.com.
- Freelancer.com ends Q3 2019 with over **38 million users globally** and
 - **4.6 million users in the USA**, more than twice the number of employees working for [Walmart](#) and [close to double the number](#) of service members in the US Department of Defense.
 - **1.1 million users in the UK**, [catching up](#) to the UK's single biggest employer, the NHS with 1.7 million employees.
 - **660,000 users in Australia**, more than twice the number of employees working right across Agriculture, Forestry and Farming, [Australia's biggest industries combined](#).

The Freelancer.com Fast 50 Report charts the quarterly movement of the top 50 fastest growing and declining job type categories within Freelancer.com's global online marketplace, which today includes more than 38 million people across 247 countries, regions and territories around the world. The Freelancer Fast 50 data is the leading forward indicator of trends in online jobs related to industries, technologies, products, and companies.

The key takeouts from the Freelancer.com Q3 2019 Fast 50 Report include:

- 58.9% growth in demand for **Data Analytics**, from 1114 to 1770 jobs, demonstrates an increasing need for employers to seek skilled workers to analyse and interpret data and identify emerging trends.

- Q3 saw a 55.6% increase in jobs, from 7,925 to 12,329, for **Virtual Assistants**, rising from tenth to second fastest growing skill in demand, with tasks from data entry to social media posting being sought.
- Quarterly demand for **Matlab and Mathematica, Mechanical Engineering, Algorithm declined** but is expected to rebound as demand for all **artificial intelligence** skills increase globally.
- **Book Writing and Translation** services emerged as trends to watch. **Book Writing** is an interesting outlier in the Q3 2019 Fast 50, with demand growing 29.6% (2,134 to 2,766) to place it 19th in the fastest growing list. It was the only creative arts skills to crack the top 25. Translation skills in **Russian** shot into the number 7 spot, accompanied by English, Spanish and French at numbers 20, 21 and 24 respectively.

“Large and small businesses are still hiring but not always in traditional ways. Forward thinking, innovative companies - especially those looking to streamline and scale - are increasingly looking to crowdsourcing markets like Freelancer.com to build an elastic labour force that’s on demand, high quality, speedy, and often filling gaps in niche skills requirements,” Freelancer CEO and founder Matt Barrie says.

“The demand from data analytics indicates more savvy businesses are seeking these highly specialised freelancers to help determine business decisions that increase revenue, improve operations, respond to emerging market trends and gain a competitive edge, while virtual assistants are streamlining processes and creating efficiencies and cost savings.”

The Top Freelancing Jobs of the Third Quarter of 2019

The top 10 jobs which have shot up the scale this quarter are **Data Analytics, Virtual Assistant, Microsoft Office, Copy Typing, Transcription, Word, Russian Translation, Bookkeeping, Email Handling** and **Customer Support**. **Russian Translation** was another interesting outlier in the top 10, but **English, Spanish** and **French Translation** also saw strong gains over the quarter, indicating that freelance translators are in high demand.

1. Data Analytics

From using [big data to understand cryptocurrency](#) to [improve firefighting](#) it’s no surprise **Data Analytics** shot into the number one most in demand skill during Q3 2019 as companies grapple with making sense of increasing volumes of data. With the data analytics market forecast to grow to [USD\\$275 billion](#) by 2023, the 58.9% growth (from 1114 to 1770 jobs) in demand on Freelancer.com during the third quarter indicates a significant demand for crowdsourcing skills in this field to draw interpretations from data. Projects on the Freelancer.com range from [developing trading strategies](#) to [understanding business trends](#). Despite dropping to 14th place in Q3 (from 5th in Q2 2019), demand for **Data Processing Skills** remains strong with continued growth at 38.6% in Q3, compared with Q2, 2019.

With most data scientists spending 80% of their time data 'wrangling'- the process of inputting and transforming "raw" data into a format more appropriate for processing, **Copy Typing** remains in the top 10 most in demand skills, growing 53% (6,988 to 10,692), taking fourth place. See these [projects](#) on freelancer.com for some examples.

2. Virtual Assistant

As all the biggest tech companies scramble to create smarter AI powered virtual assistants, like [Amazon Alexa](#), Microsoft Cortana, Apple Siri and [Google Duplex](#) to conquer business and home administration, nothing yet beats the artificial-artificial-intelligent assistant, that is, a human virtual assistant. Demand for these **Virtual Assistants** via Freelancer.com saw a strong 55.6% growth in Q3 2019, from 7,925 to 12,329, rising from the 10th fastest growing in Q2, to the second fastest growing in Q3 2019. Virtual Assistants can cover a wide range of tasks, with projects posted on Freelancer.com calling for expertise in everything from [providing customer service](#) to [social media marketing and blog posting](#). These jobs are ideal for those who'd like to [work from home or around hours required for other jobs](#). These versatile freelancers are well placed to see demand for their skills continue to rise as entrepreneurs, CEOs and senior management [delegate](#) administrative tasks to others so they can focus on growth.

3. Microsoft Office

The [resurgence of Microsoft Office](#) under the helm of Satya Nadella is evident in Microsoft Office shooting to the third most in demand skill this quarter. Since publishing the Freelancer Fast 50 Report, demand for **Microsoft Office** has been in decline until it made its first appearance in the Fast 50, growing 31.2% to place 15th in the second quarter this year (2018 to 2740) and rising a further 54.2% in Q3 (2,683 to 4,137). Volume of demand for Microsoft Excel remains higher than Microsoft Office and a similar growth trend is seen with demand for **Microsoft Excel** skills entering the Fast 50 in Q2 with 33.3% growth to 20th place (18,493 to 23,744) and further upward movement, 33.5% growth in Q3, to 16th place with (14,898 to 20,098). This skill set is often much more complex than just typing and data entry, with [one freelancer on the platform](#) using his Excel and programming skills to automate a task and reduce the time it took from 20 hours each week to just one hour.

4. Copy Typing

Although copy typing moves from second to fourth place, demand rose 53% (6,988 to 10,692), following a 50% rise in Q2, and remaining in the top 10 for the second quarter in a row. In addition to data cleaning, employers are seeking skilled freelancers who specialize in transferring handwritten notes into an editable format like this Australian employer needing [pdf files converted to word documents](#).

5. Transcription

While advances in machine translation accelerate, such as [facebook using mathematics for automatic translations of words](#), the need for human intervention is shown in [Unbabel recently receiving \\$60m funding](#) to adopt a blended machine and human approach to translations and

live **Transcription** services, demonstrated in this [project](#) requiring someone to understand multiple accents. Freelancers specializing in **Transcription** were hired for 3,981 projects in Q3 2019, up 52.2% from Q2.

The Freelance Jobs That Saw Demand Decline

Several skills in the Freelancer Fast 50 saw a decline in Q3, though these declines largely fell in job categories that saw significant rises in Q2, and could represent a reversion to the mean. The skills that saw the largest declines were **Matlab and Mathematica**, **Mechanical Engineering**, and **Algorithm**.

Matlab and Mathematica and **Algorithm** skills factor heavily into Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, so it's likely these skills will see a strong rebound in demand in the months ahead.

The overall picture provided by skills in decline is the fluidity of the freelancing marketplace. Skills that have seen strong rises in previous quarters saw demand fall off in Q3, while many skills that shrank in demand in previous quarters posted strong rises in Q3. While there may be some volatility in quarter-to-quarter demand, the freelance market overall remains vibrant and growing.

Rising stars: the emerging jobs to watch

Book Writing

Book Writing and **Ghost Writing** for fiction and non-fiction allowed the creative arts to crack the top 25, in an otherwise administrative and technology focused skills list. Book Writing saw a 229.6% growth (2,134 to 2,766), placing it in the 19th spot for the fastest growing skill in demand by employers on Freelancer.com. In contrast, **Academic Writing** dropped out of the Top 25 from its number four spot in Q2 2019 indicating a seasonal need for outsourcing academic writing jobs.

Translation

A variety of language skills were in hot demand in Q3 2019. **Russian** translation dropped into the number 7 spot of most in-demand skills with a 50.9% rise. **English** translation saw a 28.5% rise in demand over the quarter, from 20,402 to 26,215. **Spanish** and **French** also grew in demand by 26.5% and 24.7%, respectively.

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	Name	Job Count Q2 2019	Job Count Q3 2019	% Increase/ Decrease
1	Data Analytics	1114	1770	58.89%
2	Virtual Assistant	7925	12329	55.57%
3	Microsoft Office	2683	4137	54.19%
4	Copy Typing	6988	10692	53.01%
5	Transcription	2615	3981	52.24%
6	Word	3642	5512	51.35%
7	Russian	1371	2069	50.91%
8	Bookkeeping	1525	2234	46.49%
9	Email Handling	2134	3126	46.49%
10	Customer Support	2956	4229	43.06%
11	Freelance	1117	1573	40.82%
12	Data Entry	28706	39439	37.39%
13	Customer Service	2889	3927	35.93%
14	Data Processing	15017	20098	34.90%
15	Web Search	10610	14262	34.42%
16	Excel	23389	31233	33.54%
17	PDF	3122	4159	33.22%
18	React.js	2653	3450	30.04%
19	Book Writing	2134	2766	29.62%
20	English	20402	26215	28.49%
21	Spanish (Spain)	1223	1547	26.49%
22	Internet Research	2426	3051	25.76%
23	Digital Marketing	1419	1774	25.02%
24	French	2209	2754	24.67%
25	BPO	1428	1777	24.44%
26	C++ Programming	8060	7574	-6.03%
27	Civil Engineering	1041	970	-6.82%
28	Arduino	1814	1688	-6.95%
29	Adobe Flash	1270	1175	-7.48%
30	Machine Learning (ML)	2910	2683	-7.80%
31	Research Writing	14444	13228	-8.42%
32	Database Programming	1521	1390	-8.61%

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33	Swift	2291	2091	-8.73%
34	Programming	1425	1298	-8.91%
35	Statistics	2361	2142	-9.28%
36	PCB Layout	1317	1191	-9.57%
37	Mathematics	2712	2451	-9.62%
38	Electronics	3499	3147	-10.06%
39	Objective C	3388	3032	-10.51%
40	Shopping Carts	1398	1250	-10.59%
41	Microsoft Access	1034	914	-11.61%
42	Computer Security	1240	1094	-11.77%
43	Network Administration	2159	1901	-11.95%
44	Report Writing	6791	5955	-12.31%
45	Engineering	4764	4148	-12.93%
46	Electrical Engineering	3960	3444	-13.03%
47	Statistical Analysis	1664	1422	-14.54%
48	Algorithm	3270	2782	-14.92%
49	Mechanical Engineering	2605	2093	-19.65%
50	Matlab and Mathematica	3322	2531	-23.81%

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