Freelancer.com reveals the fastest growing online jobs in 2018

SYDNEY, 15 January, 2019: The vital importance of an online presence in today's business landscape was driven home in 2018, with jobs aimed at developing, populating, promoting and marketing websites among the fastest growing areas of online work last year, according to Freelancer.com's latest Fast 50 Report.

The **Freelancer.com Fast 50 Report** charts the quarterly movement of the top 50 fastest growing and declining job categories on the Freelancer.com marketplace, which claims more than 31 million users around the world and has facilitated over 15 million jobs to date. This special edition of the **Freelancer.com Fast 50 Report** looks closely at the big job trends that dominated 2018 and also provides a snapshot of the fastest moving job types in Q4, 2018.

"Freelancer.com is the largest freelancing and crowdsourcing marketplace in the world by number of users and jobs posted, so the depth and breadth of data we are able to draw upon to uncover global online employment trends is unparalleled. This rich insight offers invaluable information to freelancers who want to maximise their skills and ensure they remain up to date and in step with the broader business market, which can be dynamic, with demand changing over time," said Freelancer.com CEO and Chairman Matt Barrie.

Analysis of nearly two million jobs posted on Freelancer.com in 2018 has revealed that online content was king in 2018, with both the first quarter and the final quarter of the year dominated by growth in jobs focused on the creation of websites and the content that populates them.

A surge in content-heavy jobs during the first three months of 2018 and again in the three months ending December 2018 saw the popularity of skills in writing, design and animation on the Freelancer.com marketplace rise dramatically during the year, compared to the year prior.

This trend appears to give some credence to the proclamation by Microsoft co-founder and former CEO Bill Gates in a 1996 essay entitled 'Content is King' that content is where he expected "much of the real money will be made on the Internet".[1]

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[1]
http://web.archive.org/web/20010126005200/http://www.microsoft.com/billgates/columns/1996essay/essay960103.asp

While Gates conceded in his essay that his definition of the term 'content' becomes very wide in the context of the Internet, he is clear that opportunities would abound for most companies in supplying information or entertainment online.

"The broad opportunities for most companies involve supplying information or entertainment," Gates wrote. "No company is too small to participate."

Now, over two decades later, jobs being done online to create content on the Internet are quickly becoming some of the most popular, fastest-growing jobs being done by freelancers on the Freelancer.com marketplace, demonstrating the dominance of content in today's online world.

Year in review: the fastest moving jobs in 2018

The case for content

A prominent online presence is one of the top currencies of value for organisations today, with more business being conducted online than ever before. This is evident in the sheer volume of new jobs done on the Freelancer.com marketplace in 2018 relating to web development and the creation of content for use online, along with jobs aimed at boosting the online presence of those websites.

Indeed, jobs aimed at getting compelling digital content online heavily populated the fastest growing job categories in 2018, with categories such as **Writing**, **2D Animation**, **Illustrator** and **After Effects** all dominating the list top 25 fastest growing jobs over the course of 2018.

Writing was by far the fastest growing job category in 2018, growing by 537.5% compared to the previous year. **Academic Writing** also saw substantial growth over the year, claiming a place in the top 10 fastest growing skills categories for 2018.

Two other important areas in the creation of online content that were in the top 20 fastest growing areas in 2018 were **Blog Writing** jobs, which grew by 146.6% year-on-year, to 4,537 jobs in the category in 2018, and **SEO Writing** -- such an important tool for businesses wanting to build their online presence -- which rose by 84.8%, claiming 2,590 jobs.

2D Animation, meanwhile was one of the top five fastest growing categories for the 12 months ending December 2018, seeing a 167.6% increase compared to the year ending December 2017, with 3,747 jobs done in the category.

After Effects, software typically used for digital visual effects and motion graphics, enjoyed an 83% year-on-year increase, with more than 26,000 jobs in the category being done in 2018. At the same time, jobs featuring **Illustrator**, Adobe's popular vector graphic editing software, rose by 84.3%, with more than 109,000 jobs in this category being done during 2018. Both **After Effects** and **Illustrator** were included in the top 20 fastest growing skills areas in 2018.

Jobs involving another popular Adobe product, **InDesign**, also rose during the year, claiming thousands of jobs. Indeed, jobs utilizing the desktop publishing and typesetting software increased by 65%, claiming more than 10,700 projects during 2018.

Where's your website?

If jobs involving the creation of digital content for online use were among the top growing areas during 2018, the it should come as no surprise that jobs involving the creation of the websites on which to put that content also dominated the top growing categories during the year.

Web Development, for example, grew by 92.3% during the year, with 9,632 jobs in the category being done during 2018.

Moreover, other jobs playing a major role in web development, such as **Django**, the open-source web framework used to create database-driven websites, were also fast growers during the year. **Django** jobs specifically rose by 68.3% year-on-year in 2018, with more than 4,500 jobs in the discipline being done during the year.
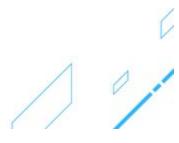
Likewise, **Express JS**, the web application framework for Node.js that it typically used for creating web and mobile applications, also grew markedly during the 12-month period, experiencing a 128.4% year-on-year rise in 2018, claiming over 2,600 jobs.

React.js, the open-source JavaScript library often used to develop user interfaces for mobile applications or single page applications (SPAs) on the web, meanwhile, grew by 81.4% during the year, claiming 7,604 jobs over the 12-month period.

Tying into web development is **API** (Application Programming Interface), which was the second fastest growing job category in 2018. Jobs involving **APIs** -- the set of tools and protocols used for building application software and also an important tool for the development of websites -- grew by 352.4% in 2018, claiming over 4,600 jobs during the year.

Also playing an increasingly important role in the development of e-commerce websites is the jobs category of **Shopify Templates**, which grew by 110.7% year-on-year, with over 6,300 jobs in the category. This growth appears to demonstrate the growing interest in e-commerce websites and the accompanying growing demands in services surrounding their development, in this case Shopify.

Of course, once a website is built and ready to go, organisations need to find ways to drive traffic to it; this is especially true for organisations that do the bulk of their business online, like online sellers and marketplaces. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the **Search Engine Marketing** job category grew so quickly during the year, seeing a 66% increasing while claiming 9,413 jobs in 2018.

Jobs on the slide

While jobs involving the creation of web content and the development of places to put it grew substantially during 2018, jobs in other software development areas actually saw a decrease in popularity over the year.

A major marker of this trend was the **Software Development** job category, which fell by 70.7%, with 9,212 jobs in 2018. By contrast, the **Software Development** category had over 31,000 jobs in 2017.

The **App Designer** category also experienced a 70.7% year-on-year fall, to 2,531 jobs in 2018. Likewise, **App Developer** jobs fell by 66.1%, to 6,070, during the year.

Jobs involving **Shopping Carts**, digital shopping systems typically used by e-commerce sites to facilitate purchasing by web customers, fell by 65.4% to 5,845, a marked fall from the 16,800 jobs the category enjoyed in 2017. At the same time, **Order Processing**, often involving the packing and delivery of products ordered online, dropped by 63.2% to 832 jobs in 2018.

The annual decrease in these two job categories may signal waning interest among users in building an e-commerce site from scratch and carrying out tasks manually, with people instead opting for full-service online e-commerce platforms that automate such processes, such as **Shopify**, an area that saw substantial job growth during the year.
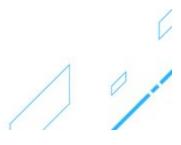
Among the other job areas that saw a substantial fall during the year was the **Industrial Design** category, which fell by 60% to 1,256. **Manufacturing**, meanwhile, fell by 59.7% to 1,808. At the same time, **Materials Engineering** fell by 57.7% claiming just 654 jobs over the course of the year.

Rising stars: the emerging jobs to watch

As noted earlier, e-commerce is an area of rapidly increasing growth in today's online world, with many businesses making the leap online to sell their goods into a broader, global market. This can be seen in the surge of jobs involving e-commerce platform **Shopify**, including **Shopify Templates**, which collectively saw some growing interest and volume in 2018.

Shopify jobs typically include things like managing inventory, HTML or CSS code editing and creating discount codes or coupons, while **Shopify Templates** jobs involve the creation of templates for online stores on the **Shopify** e-commerce platform.

While not in the top 25 fastest growing jobs in 2018, the **Shopify** category enjoyed a 21.7% year-on-year increase 2018, with 13,177 jobs done in the category. As noted previously, **Shopify Templates** jobs also saw rapid growth during the year.

Machine Learning is another area that is fast becoming a dominant skills area. **Machine Learning**, which plays a core role in the development of **Artificial Intelligence**, focuses on automatically recognizing complex patterns and making intelligent decisions based on available data. This branch of study develops algorithms for computers to evolve behaviors based on available data. **Machine Learning** jobs grew by 71.7% in 2018, with over 7,400 jobs being done in the category.

The **Blockchain** category, involving jobs dealing with the distributed digital ledger that is used to maintain the continuously growing list of records underpinning cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin and other applications in fields like finance and supply chain systems, also saw substantial growth in 2018.

Indeed, **Blockchain** jobs surged in popularity, becoming the second fastest-growing category during the year, rising by 300.8% compared to the previous year. In 2018, there were more than 5,400 jobs in the category, compared to just 1,361 in 2017.

Data Mining, the practice and process of deciphering and extracting patterns from data, is also an area to watch. **Data Mining** is becoming an invaluable tool for the increasingly large number of organisations doing business over the Internet, and often plays into the hands of **Machine Learning**, which typically makes use of rich, often exhaustive data sets to train software and help it 'learn' new behaviours. In 2018, **Data Mining** jobs enjoyed 37.1% growth, equating to 11,243 jobs in 2018.

The full **Freelancer.com** **Fast 50 Annual Report for 2018** can be found below:

The 50 Fastest Moving Jobs in 2018

Rank	Job Category	2017	2018	Change (%)
1	Writing	1343	8537	535.67 %
2	API	1037	4691	352.36 %
3	Blockchain	1361	5455	300.81 %
4	Academic Writing	2828	8644	205.66 %
5	2D Animation	1400	3747	167.64 %
6	Social Media Management	1069	2752	157.44 %
7	Blog Writing	1840	4537	146.58 %
8	Express JS	1144	2616	128.67 %
9	Shopify Templates	3015	6352	110.68 %

10	Drawing	1349	2711	100.96 %
11	Excel VBA	1202	2353	95.76 %
12	Web Development	5009	9632	92.29 %
13	Hindi	1522	2889	89.82 %
14	SEO Writing	1402	2590	84.74 %
15	Illustrator	59188	109056	84.25 %
16	After Effects	14395	26349	83.04 %
17	React.js	4191	7604	81.44 %
18	DNS	1201	2127	77.10 %
19	PhoneGap	2736	4753	73.72 %
20	English (US)	25179	43520	72.84 %
21	Machine Learning	4340	7452	71.71 %
22	Adobe Illustrator	6202	10590	70.75 %
23	Django	2710	4560	68.27 %
24	Search Engine Marketing	5672	9413	65.96 %
25	Adobe InDesign	6515	10752	65.03 %
26	Press Releases	2449	1145	-53.25 %
27	Cocoa	1239	574	-53.67 %
28	Nutrition	1030	468	-54.56 %
29	Psychology	1935	859	-55.61 %
30	Plugin	3330	1449	-56.49 %
31	Materials Engineering	1546	654	-57.70 %
32	Pattern Making	1256	526	-58.12 %
33	Label Design	2925	1195	-59.15 %
34	Weddings	1195	488	-59.16 %
35	Motion Graphics	4924	1991	-59.57 %
36	Manufacturing	4486	1808	-59.70 %
37	Industrial Design	3141	1256	-60.01 %
38	Logistics	1442	562	-61.03 %
39	Order Processing	2263	832	-63.23 %

40	Shopping Carts	16899	5845	-65.41 %
41	App Developer	17898	6070	-66.09 %
42	Payroll	3498	1134	-67.58 %
43	Pickup	2228	681	-69.43 %
44	CATIA	1010	306	-69.70 %
45	App Designer	8634	2531	-70.69 %
46	Software Development	31449	9212	-70.71 %
47	Journalist	1580	427	-72.97 %
48	Squarespace	1781	440	-75.29 %
49	Email Developer	4262	840	-80.29 %
50	LESS/Sass/SCSS	2697	514	-80.94 %

Quarterly snapshot: the fastest movers in Q4

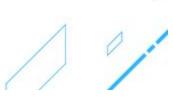The full **Freelancer.com** **Fast 50 Q4 2018 Report** ranking can be found below:

Freelancer.com's Fast 50 Report: The 50 Fastest Moving Jobs in Q4 2018

Rank	Job Category	2018 Q3	2018 Q4	Change (%)
1	Matlab and Mathematica	2261	3049	34.85 %
2	Statistical Analysis	1203	1616	34.33 %
3	Mathematics	2006	2630	31.11 %
4	Algorithm	2224	2902	30.49 %
5	Statistics	1695	2210	30.38 %
6	Report Writing	5245	6777	29.21 %
7	Academic Writing	1791	2246	25.40 %
8	Electrical Engineering	3002	3712	23.65 %
9	Machine Learning	1748	2087	19.39 %

10	Shopify Templates	1549	1839	18.72 %
11	Mechanical Engineering	1877	2175	15.88 %
12	Product Descriptions	1544	1784	15.54 %
13	Database Programming	1241	1428	15.07 %
14	eBooks	1570	1804	14.90 %
15	Data Mining	2501	2845	13.75 %
16	Poster Design	1023	1150	12.41 %
17	Electronics	2850	3198	12.21 %
18	Arduino	1329	1491	12.19 %
19	Research Writing	12647	14169	12.03 %
20	Microcontroller	1756	1964	11.85 %
21	Ubuntu	1058	1182	11.72 %
22	Database Administration	1147	1279	11.51 %
23	Shopify	3137	3465	10.46 %
24	Microsoft Office	1815	1997	10.03 %
25	Business Analysis	2611	2856	9.38 %
26	Graphic Design	126892	101544	-19.98 %
27	Arts & Crafts	1081	861	-20.35 %
28	Virtual Assistant	6028	4781	-20.69 %
29	Coding	1294	1025	-20.79 %
30	Sales	5319	4210	-20.85 %
31	Testing / QA	1096	850	-22.45 %
32	App Developer	1495	1155	-22.74 %
33	Joomla	1803	1378	-23.57 %
34	Programming	2188	1634	-25.32 %
35	Data Entry	27390	20443	-25.36 %
36	Data Processing	13517	9925	-26.57 %
37	Banner Design	10055	7351	-26.89 %
38	Excel	24039	17574	-26.89 %
39	Translation	15145	11005	-27.34 %

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40	CSS3	1150	827	-28.09 %
41	Adobe Illustrator	2462	1756	-28.68 %
42	Visual Basic	3702	2608	-29.55 %
43	Legal	1815	1256	-30.80 %
44	Windows Desktop	2961	2039	-31.14 %
45	Writing	2212	1502	-32.10 %
46	Project Management	1846	1216	-34.13 %
47	Adobe Flash	1921	1250	-34.93 %
48	Design	2110	1328	-37.06 %
49	XML	2038	1110	-45.53 %
50	ASP	2156	722	-66.51 %

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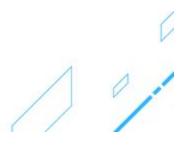+1 415 801 2271
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