

# 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".

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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.

? [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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