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Game Animation Still A Field With Growing Jobs

The legendary animation director Chuck Jones, best known as the co-creator of Bugs Bunny and sole creator of the Roadrunner and Wile E. Coyote, once described his profession as "acting with pencil". It makes one wonder what he would think of his profession nowadays, considering how much the animation industry has exploded since the great artist passed away.

In other words, gaming animation has evolved at breakneck speed over the last few decades. This is due to two key factors; the lightning fast evolution of the computer, as well as [grants](#), which in turn caused the incredible growth of the video game industry itself. The video game industry grossed over \$20 billion in 2008, now making a major contributor to the nation's gross national product. In turn, this has created a new type of animator, one who specializes in gaming as opposed to more traditional TV or film.

From the outside, an animator who specializes in gaming has the same skill set as one who works in TV or film. One must be equally as skilled in front of a Mac, as with pen and ink. Both must also be good storytellers, understand the principles of acting, and such painting concepts of conveying depth, shadowing and the use of color. They also should know animation programming such as Flash.

In fact, these days it's also common for any respectable college-level art school to ask their applicants to not only provide a presentation portfolio, but also a demo reel or disk. They have to display how much about the production process they know.

What makes gaming animation different from others is what the animators work on. In traditional animation, the viewer is passive and just follows whatever is on the screen. A gamer is the extreme opposite, actively participating in the game's story through manipulating the lead character. Thus, the game animator has to create a scene for whatever the gamer can do with his console. This means a ton of repetition for each scene.

Financial aid for animators is pretty much on the same track as for any other art student, only with a number of studios like Disney, Sony and Dreamworks adding their revenues to the pot. It's not uncommon for Disney to lock up a particularly promising student with a full scholarship to Cal Arts (a school they founded). For those less blessed, there are the usual routes for grants, other [online degree](#) and loans out there. The best thing to do is consult with a financial aid advisor.

As it is, there really aren't that many working in the field. The Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates about 20,000 as of 2009, and it doesn't really differentiate between film and gaming that readily. What is known are over nearly half are employed in California, which also offers the best pay at nearly \$80,000 a year.

Still, when one think about it, if it wasn't for video gaming, animation in general would more than likely be a much smaller business. Earning a degree for this field at an [online school](#) will be no surprise as a great choice. It's a field to consider for those with a strong artistic bend. Finding [scholarships and grants](#) is just a click away.

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