

# Are YOU a Computer Wizard?

# Wizard



**H**ave you already checked Gizmodo today to make sure you haven't missed a blog about the latest Apple release? Did you wirelessly link and sync every device in your parents, your grandparents, and your great aunt's houses—including a bunch of devices they didn't even know they had and will never understand how to use? Then congratulations!

Your techno-wiz status is assured; and so is your future.

Yes, you're an IT genius—An early adapter...

An enabler of emerging technologies.

So why not turn your super powers into a career? There's an old saying that if something tastes good then it probably isn't good for you. This may or may not be true (it really depends on what foods you actually think "taste good"), but it certainly isn't a formula you can apply to all areas of life — especially when it comes to your future career. The truth is, what you enjoy the most is what you should consider pursuing as your life's work. And if you love computers, we have a lot of good news for you.

To begin with, the U.S. Department of Labor projects an increase of nearly 25 percent for computer related occupations between now and 2016.

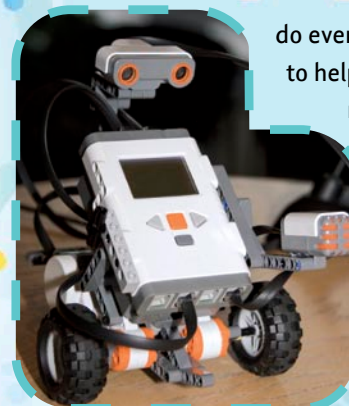
This represents more than 1.5 million job openings. Of course with advances in technology and the explosion of the web, new job categories are being created on a regular basis.

For instance, animators use computer technology to develop everything from interactive websites to computer games to blockbuster motion pictures. With training in such programs as Dreamweaver and Studio Pro and fine arts or graphic design skills, you can join this growing career field where the salaries currently average between \$32,000 and \$42,000 per year. In addition to high school classes in computer science and technology, be sure to add design or art appreciation to your schedule over the next four years.

Robotics is another exciting option for the computer savvy. In addition to creating smarter machines that can



ANIMATION



ROBOTICS

do everything from advanced manufacturing to helping the disabled more easily perform daily routines, engineers are now designing robots that can handle tasks considered too dangerous for humans like cleaning up hazardous waste sites or fixing satellites in space. Along with a strong background in math and mechanical science, your computer skills can earn you a salary that presently ranges from \$21,000 to \$31,000 for entry level technicians and up to \$50,000 for experienced workers.

One of the highest paid computer fields, and one that is expected to experience very significant job growth, is database administration. In general these professionals develop and oversee the platforms and systems that store and manage a corporation's key data such as customer records, inventory levels, and research and product development files. Because many databases are connected to the internet, administrators also ensure that all the information held by their system is secure from cyber-thieves and is regularly maintained through site checks and back-ups. This field requires a degree from a two or four year school and offers salaries ranging from about \$84,000 per year to more than \$116,000. Be sure to take lots of math and computer science classes in high school to prepare for this highly competitive field.

This is just a sampling of the jobs available now and in the future and, as we mentioned, new careers will open up in the coming years as technology continues to advance. Talk to your guidance counselor about schools in your area that have solid computer science programs. And don't forget to do your math homework. HTH (Hope That Helps!)

## STRANGE BUT TRUE COMPUTER JOBS

**Computer forensic investigators** recover and analyze computer data that will be used as evidence in a criminal case.

**Cryptanalysts** use computers to analyze and translate secret messages developed and used by criminals and foreign governments for law enforcement and military agencies.

**Health informaticists** are database designers who develop systems that integrate various record formats created by doctors, hospitals, pharmacists, and insurance companies.

**Unmanned vehicle operations specialists** are military personnel who use computers to guide remote controlled machines on land, in the air, or under the sea during missions considered too dangerous or too inaccessible for humans.



## Want to create computer software and hardware?

With a strong background in math and science and as a detail-oriented personality, you can have one of these great jobs. Software engineers develop the coding needed to run programs that will be used for various purposes by individuals, businesses, government agencies, or research facilities. Hardware engineers design, test, and install computer systems and peripheral items like printers, circuit boards, and modems. Salaries for these jobs are above average with software engineers earning between \$49,000 and over \$125,000 per year and hardware engineers averaging slightly more.

## Michael Guggenheim's

# SPLAT!

You may think of *splat* as a descriptive word for the sound a water balloon makes when it hits a sidewalk (or your best friend!)—and, actually, you'd be right. But *splat* means something entirely different to 13 year old Michael Guggenheim of Wildwood Middle School in Los Angeles, California. For Michael it's an acronym for Showing People Learning and Technology (or S.P.L.A.T.).

You see, Michael has *dysgraphia*, a learning disability that makes writing difficult. Most people with dysgraphia have very poor handwriting, make many spelling and punctuation errors, omit words in sentences, and generally are unable to express themselves with pen or pencil and paper. Everything changed for Michael when he learned how to type with a computer. He was now able to communicate his thoughts by tapping out letters on a keyboard.

Of course today, to be successful in school or on the job, you must be able to type. While Michael's world had been transformed, he was concerned about those who can't afford a PC or laptop computer. His mission through S.P.L.A.T. is to tutor children in shelters, low income residential projects, and community centers and provide them with computers and learning software once their family moves into a home.

On Track recently asked this busy humanitarian a few questions:



**What about your work inspires you the most?**

The most rewarding part of my work with S.P.L.A.T. and tutoring homeless kids is knowing how much it means to them and how they look forward to me coming every week. I love to see the smiles on their faces.

**What would you like to do when you grow up?**

I'm not sure exactly what I want to be when I grow up, but I'm thinking a job where I help people or maybe even a vet since I love animals.

**What are your favorite foods?**

Probably steak and pasta.

**Where can someone find out more about you on the Web?**

My blog is at <http://splatcharity.wordpress.com> and you can find interviews with me on YouTube by searching "Michael Guggenheim."

**Congratulations, Michael! You're off to a great start!**



Michael tutoring a student.