



Digital Designer—Freelancer

SALARY RANGE (2018): \$44,000–\$76,000

I am a digital designer who specializes in information that is displayed or interacted with through technology. The work I do includes screen design of various kinds, for example websites, mobile devices, tablets, and interactive appliances. It may be found at a small scale (such as mobile phones) or a large scale (such as interactive wall displays, or data trackers like flight data displays). As a self-employed digital designer, I work with individuals, small to large businesses, and public, private, and not-for-profit institutions and organizations.

The Tip: The future is not about a single medium, but about telling engaging stories across platforms. Invest today in storytelling skills of the future.

PRIORITY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

Management Skills

- Manage the design process
- Act in a responsible manner with regard to the needs of people, their communities, and society as a whole

Research & Insights Skills

- Apply a deep knowledge of human behaviour to understand usability
- Systems mapping and knowledge transfer

Communication Skills

- Translate content into meaningful information
- Apply content management strategy
- Use specialized software to prepare, edit and distribute content across multiple platforms

Design Skills

- Design branding and visual identity systems
- Apply visual design fundamentals
- Apply data visualization
- Build prototypes out of variety of materials
- Critique and improve design artifacts
- Use current digital design tools

Core Transferable Skills

Be an expert at all core transferable skills:

- Thinking skills
- Communications skills
- Organizational skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Technical literacy

BUILDING BLOCK EXPERIENCES:

<p>Education & Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bachelor of Communications (information design) with a minor in computer science● I got my Master of New Media going to school part time● I must stay current on all emerging digital technologies including design, web development and social distribution	<p>While studying information design, I took a minor in computer science. Doing my Master of New Media was critical for me to learn how to best apply the skills I developed in the information design program. The one thing that I have learned is that being complacent in this role is not an option. Technology and audiences' media consumption habits now evolve so quickly that being behind on trends is a career-killer.</p>
<p>Employment Experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Developed blog focused on student life. This blog generated \$300 per month in advertising revenue when I was in university.● Work one summer as a social media coordinator for a local media organization and was tasked with recommending strategies to connect with the 18 to 24-year-old audience● Following graduation, I was hired for a new digital media start-up as part of their content development and editorial team. The start-up has expanded, and I was promoted to editor after five years.● I continue to do freelance design and writing, primarily on LGBTQ issues, for a range of media outlets, building out my professional portfolio	<p>Writing my blog started out as a hobby and more of a rant, but when it started building an audience, I realized I might be able to make a living with my skills.</p> <p>Joining a digital start-up out of university was a huge break because I was given a wide scope from Day 1. It was a sink or swim kind of place, so I learned how to swim VERY fast. Five years later, I am now a freelance editor and going to work isn't work.</p>
<p>Community Experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● United Way event coordinator.	<p>I manage a team of volunteers. From this, I learned how to get tasks done with disparate individuals who aren't acting under traditional rewards or discipline.</p>
<p>Contextual Experiences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Became a parent	<p>Balancing life is difficult. Family gives you perspective.</p>
<p>Relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Member and volunteer for the Calgary Chapter of Society of Graphic Designers of Canada	<p>My advice is to find your communities and don't be shy. This is easier said than done, but remember, every single person has been where you have been. So just make that call. Whenever a student calls me for a coffee to talk about the profession, I never say no. Some of my best friends and professional colleagues came from cold calls.</p>