

HABITS OF MIND: HUMOR

multimedia artists

AND

animators

by Edward J. Lazaros



Figure 1.
Glenn Zimmerman
Director of Animation
at Paws Inc. standing
with Garfield.

introduction

Multimedia artists and animators must use humor and technology, such as CGI (Computer-Generated Images) or computer code to create visual effects and animation for television programming, movies, and many other forms of media.

responsibilities of multimedia artists and animators

Multimedia artists and animators typically specialize in one form of media. For example, one specialty area may be movies that are animated. Another specialty area may relate to generating the visual effects for a television program or a movie. There are those who specialize in CGI. With CGI, a multimedia artist and animator records the movements of an actor and creates three-dimensional animated characters based upon those movements. For those who are interested in video games, multimedia artists and animators are responsible for generating the different levels within video games and also the layout and features of the characters and scenery. Many multimedia artists and animators use computer software to generate their end products; however, there are multimedia artists and animators who enjoy painting and drawing by hand and then digitally convert the finished product into a computer software program. The use of storyboards, which look like comic strips, are often used to assist in the design process that multimedia artists and animators use (U.S. Department of Labor, 2014).

becoming a multimedia artist and animator

A bachelor's degree is often required for employment as a multimedia artist and animator. Typical major areas of study include animation, computer graphics, and fine art. Companies that employ multimedia artists and animators often want to see a portfolio of original work to better understand the proficiencies of the applicant (U.S. Department of Labor, 2014).

pay and benefits for a multimedia artist and animator

The U.S. Department of Labor (2014) reports compensation facts current as of 2012 for multimedia artists and animators. The 2012 median pay is \$61,370 per year. Salary.com (2014) reports the median annual salary for a cartoonist/animator as \$47,847 or an hourly wage of \$23.00 per hour. This reference indicated that bonuses, 401k/403B, disability insurance, healthcare insurance, pension, and time off are typical benefits that accompany the base compensation, which brings the total compensation from \$47,847 to \$73,142 annually.

job outlook for a multimedia artist and animator

The U.S. Department of Labor (2014) reports job outlook facts current as of 2012 regarding multimedia artists and animators. The number of jobs in 2012 was stated as 68,900. The job outlook



Figure 2. Glenn using the stylus to create a rough sketch of Nermal the cat.

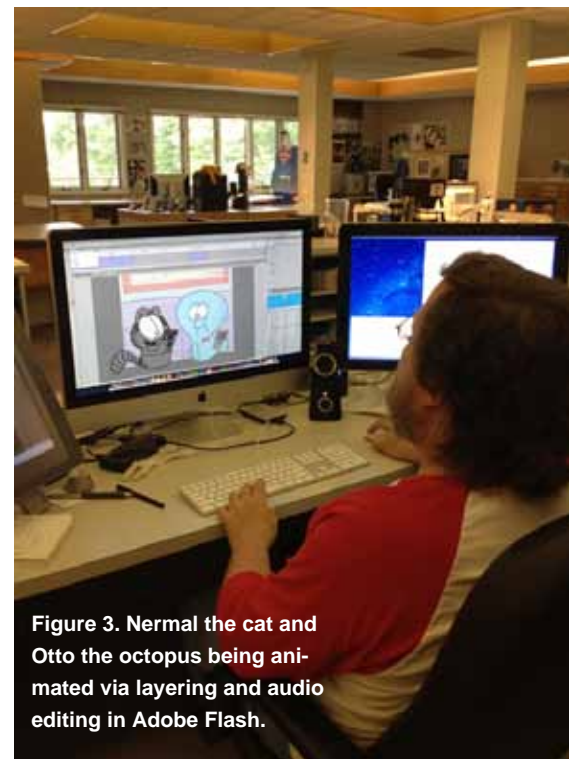


Figure 3. Nermal the cat and Otto the octopus being animated via layering and audio editing in Adobe Flash.

department career connections

from 2012-2022 has a growth rate of 6%, which is slower than the average when compared to all occupations. The employment change from 2012-2022 is estimated at 4,300.

interview with Glenn Zimmerman

Director of Animation
Paws Inc.
5440 East County Road 450 North
Albany, Indiana 47320
<http://garfield.com/paws-inc>

What kinds of fun technology do multimedia artists and animators get to use?

"I get to use Adobe Flash. It is used to cre-

ate the actual animation. It allows for the inking and painting of the artwork. It also allows for the layout and finishing of the product. I also get to use a Wacom Cintiq, which is a digital drawing tablet. I use it to draw directly into the computer. It can be used for sketches or for finished artwork. A stylus is used to draw directly on the Cintiq screen" (G. Zimmerman, personal communication, June 16, 2014).

What's the best part of being a multimedia artist and animator?

"The best part of my job is being creative and having creative freedom. The work is different each day. Because I am working with Garfield, it is a lot of fun" (G. Zimmerman, personal communication, June 16, 2014).

What will be the most challenging thing a recent graduate will encounter when trying to break into this industry?

"There are a lot of people out there wanting to be animators and not that many animation studios. Another challenge is having the same mentality as the employing company" (G. Zimmerman, personal communication, June 16, 2014).

How do you use humor in your career?

"A lot of material that I create is educational. The challenge is taking something educational and making it funny without losing the educational value. It is up to me to make the animations look funny on the screen. In one instance a writer wanted an octopus character. I had to figure out how to make an octopus look funny. Based on experience, I was able to make the octopus do things in the cartoon that made it humorous" (G. Zimmerman, personal communication, June 16, 2014).

conclusion

Students who enjoy using humor and computer technology and are willing to pursue a bachelor's degree in animation, computer graphics, or fine art, may want to consider becoming a multimedia artist and animator. With an employment outlook that is estimated to have a growth rate of 6% between 2012-2022 and a median annual salary ranging from \$47,847 to \$61,370 (depending on the data source), this is a career that students may want to consider researching further.

references

- U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2014). Retrieved from www.bls.gov/ooh/
- Salary.com. (2014). Retrieved from www.salary.com



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Figure 4. Close-up of the layer and audio editing tools in Adobe Flash used to animate Nermal the cat and Otto the octopus.

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