

**34,743  
JOBS**

# DIGITAL STORYTELLING

IN THE *Kansas City* METRO

## OCCUPATION AND WORKFORCE DATA, PROFILES AND RESOURCES



Advertising and Promotion



Educational Media



Multimedia Production



New Media Technology



News and Entertainment



Nonprofit and Advocacy



Video Production



Web, Mobile and Social Media

# Digital Storytelling

Digital Storytelling involves the use of computer, digital and web technologies to create narrative solutions that are enhanced by their creative use of media. Almost everything we see or hear on an electronic device — web pages, videos, games, apps, advertisements — tells some kind of a story, and nearly every industry employs people who create this content.

There are 34,743 Digital Storytelling jobs in the Kansas City region today, and that total is expected to grow by 15.2 percent by 2022.



## KEY TECHNOLOGIES AND DISCIPLINES

for Digital Storytelling careers

- Multimedia animation
- Scriptwriting and story editing
- Sound and sound editing
- Video and photography
- Media production
- Technical arts
- Web development
- Computer graphics engineering

## COMMON PRODUCTS

that use Digital Storytelling skills

- Animated features
- Stop-motion video
- Story-based ads
- E-cards
- Smartphone and tablet apps
- Story-based computer gaming
- Banner ads and motion graphics
- Personal digital stories

## NOTABLE AREA EMPLOYERS in the Digital Storytelling field



### ADVERTISING & PROMOTION

VML  
Barkley  
Global Prairie



### EDUCATIONAL MEDIA

Luna Moving Images  
Strong Ave. Studios  
Tall Oak Productions



### MULTIMEDIA PRODUCTION

Hallmark Cards  
T2 Studios  
Propaganda3



### NEW MEDIA TECHNOLOGY

Google Fiber  
SightDeck  
CandyCam Multimedia Robotics



### NEWS AND ENTERTAINMENT

AMC Theatres  
BraniFX  
Local Television Stations



### VIDEO PRODUCTION

Outpost Worldwide  
Substation K



### WEB, MOBILE & SOCIAL MEDIA

Sporting Innovations  
Intouch Solutions  
ThinkViral

# JOB SKILLS IN DEMAND

## Programming and Development Skills

- Microsoft SQL Server
- Microsoft Visual C# .NET
- Structured query language
- Java
- JavaScript
- Hypertext markup language
- Software development



## Software and Design Skills

- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe Illustrator
- Adobe InDesign
- Adobe After Effects
- 3D Graphics
- Microsoft Office
- Microsoft PowerPoint
- User Experience Design
- Graphical User Interface Design



## Other Skills

- Creative direction
- Marketing communications
- Work independently
- Troubleshooting
- Strong interpersonal skills
- Audio and video equipment

## MEDIAN HOURLY WAGES

Multimedia Artists & Animators	\$12.06	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Photographers	\$12.38	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Radio & Television Announcers	\$13.58	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Art Directors	\$17.67	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Camera Operators	\$17.92	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Broadcast Technicians	\$18.71	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Graphic Designers	\$19.45	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Sound Engineering Technicians	\$20.85	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Film & Video Editors	\$21.03	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Audio & Video Equipment Technicians	\$21.36	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Editors	\$22.14	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Producers & Directors	\$23.57	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Public Relations Specialists	\$25.01	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Computer Programmers	\$30.84	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Security Analysts, Web Developers & Network Architects	\$31.25	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Media & Communication Equipment Workers (All Other)	\$37.72	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Software Developers (Systems Software)	\$38.42	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
Software Developers (Applications)	\$39.03	\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$



Most Digital  
Storytelling  
careers require  
at least a  
bachelor's degree

SOURCES: The data in this report comes from EMSI and WANTED Analytics.

## JOBS & JOB GROWTH for Digital Storytelling and related fields

	2013 Jobs	Projected 2022 Jobs	Change
Software Developers (Systems Software)	4,490	5,430	+1,192
Software Developers (Applications)	5,471	6,351	+1,165
Photographers	5,814	6,576	+931
Security Analysts, Web Developers & Network Architects	3,244	3,548	+418
Graphic Designers	3,371	3,701	+369
Public Relations Specialists	2,522	2,825	+326
Computer Programmers	3,840	3,983	+291
Art Directors	1,441	1,558	+130
Multimedia Artists & Animators	959	1,050	+112
Audio & Video Equipment Technicians	392	424	+62
Producers & Directors	621	650	+50
Sound Engineering Technicians	147	166	+30
Radio & Television Announcers	423	435	+21
Camera Operators	196	210	+19
Film & Video Editors	196	199	+11
Media and Communication Equipment Workers (All Other)	75	76	+2
Editors	1,301	1,317	-5
Broadcast Technicians	242	232	-6
<b>Total</b>	<b>34,743</b>	<b>38,732</b>	<b>+5,117</b>

## TOP INDUSTRIES that employ Digital Storytelling workers



Visit [kcworkforce.com](http://kcworkforce.com) for more labor market information and industry data.

# Industry Profiles

## BRUCE BRANIT

**Visual Effects Artist, Branit FX**

**HOMETOWN:** Fairway, Kansas

**EDUCATION:** BFA in Industrial Design, University of Kansas

**BACKGROUND:** Bruce first worked in graphics for a t-shirt company in Lawrence and an ad agency in Topeka. He experimented with 3D animation and moved to Los Angeles, where he worked on shows such as The X-Files and Star Trek: Deep Space Nine. After a few years on other shows, Bruce and a partner developed an original short film, "405."

**COMPANY:** Bruce founded BranitFX in 2004. The company specializes in visual effects for television, feature film and commercial projects. Its project list includes the feature films Ghost Rider, Sin City and King Kong; and television projects such as Fringe, Hawaii Five-O, Lost, Breaking Bad and Star Trek: Enterprise.

**WEBSITE:** [branitfx.com](http://branitfx.com)



*"In my own creative work, I enjoy the challenge of crafting a story into life. It is like a magic trick, where every move is crucial. You have to break down a story from the overall theme to the shots, seconds and even frames to feed the audience and be sure they are always along for the ride but not getting too far ahead."*

*"In my visual effects work, I have the same opportunities but they are a little more restricted by the needs of the client. In many cases, we look at a script and say, 'How are we going to show this?' Solving that puzzle and later seeing your work on television brings a great sense of satisfaction."*

**BRUCE'S CAREER ADVICE:** Learn some tools like After Effects or Blender. Start testing your creativity. Find a way to start telling your own stories. Look at what others are doing, but grow your own style. No matter what tools you use, you must tell interesting stories.

*"In this industry you learn new things every day. People around here are genuine, helpful and not afraid to work hard. The community of artists and digital storytellers in Kansas City is superb."*

*"Watching an idea come to life and have a profound effect on someone or something is magical. With each project you are solving a different problem, for a different business, in a different way."*

*"Constant changes in technology and culture will always keep storytelling exciting."*

**TRAVIS' CAREER ADVICE:** Telling stories through digital media can be challenging, and it is not a nine-to-five gig. You will not be happy unless you are doing what you believe is great work. It takes a lot of things to do great work, but most of all, you need passion. If you don't love what you do, you will never be satisfied.

## TRAVIS SCHLITZER

**Creative Director, T2 Studios**

**HOMETOWN:** Hays, Kansas

**EDUCATION:** BFA and MFA in Graphic Design, Fort Hays State University

**BACKGROUND:** During college, Travis learned the tools and techniques of motion design and animation, but he says a lot of what he knows about storytelling was developed through informal education. After grad school, Travis was teaching design for a professor who was on sabbatical leave and looking for a permanent teaching job when a friend called with an opportunity — starting a motion design group within an advertising agency.

**COMPANY:** T2 Studios is a collective of storytellers, designers, editors, animators, developers, technologists and musicians who leverage design and technology for advertising, entertainment and promotion.

**WEBSITE:** [t2.tv](http://t2.tv)



## INDUSTRY PROFILES, continued

*"The only animation I had done before coming over to Hallmark.com was a series of animated gifs, each a few seconds long. Today, I enjoy a wide variety within my role as an artist at Hallmark. One day I can be animating and the next day I may be cutting paper for a complex pop-up card.*

*"The most interesting part of my work is problem solving. I used to enjoy being involved from beginning to end on any project, but now my focus and interest lie in the upfront problem-solving aspects of any given assignment."*

**MIKE'S CAREER ADVICE:** Like anything else, only do it if you are passionate about it. If you're in it to be famous or make a lot of money, your product is going to suffer. The best digital media out there contains the heart and soul of someone who cares and wants to reach an audience.

### **MIKE ADAIR** Master Artist, Hallmark

**HOMETOWN:** Grew up in Southern California

**EDUCATION:** BFA in Graphic Design, California State University at Fullerton

**BACKGROUND:** Mike was recruited out of college by Hallmark. About 10 years ago, after a stint in Shoebox cards, he had the opportunity to join a small group creating online e-cards. Mike is one of the creators of Hallmark's "hoops&yoyo" characters.



### **BOB HOLT** Master Artist, Hallmark



**HOMETOWN:** Mason City, Iowa

**EDUCATION:** Studied Illustration at Bethel University, Iowa State Hawkeye Institute of Technology and Iowa Lakes Community College.

**BACKGROUND:** Bob accepted a job at Hallmark right out of college. He started in Shoebox cards before transferring over to Hallmark.com's e-card studio. Bob is one of the creators of Hallmark's "hoops&yoyo" characters.

*"I had done very little animation before joining the Hallmark.com e-card studio. The best part of my work is connecting with fans of hoops&yoyo.*

*"It's a kick to hear how your creation has a small part in people's lives. I never get tired of hearing how we made someone laugh and smile. I don't think there's anything better."*

**BOB'S CAREER ADVICE:** Work very hard and engage with the people who digest your content. They give the most honest feedback.

**COMPANY:** Hallmark was founded more than a century ago by a teenage entrepreneur. Today, Hallmark is a \$4 billion business with greeting cards and other products sold in 39,000 retail stores across the U.S. and in 100 countries worldwide.

**HOOPS&YOYO:** hoops&yoyo are animated characters featured on Hallmark cards. They have a website that features e-cards, animated episodes, desktop and phone wallpapers, audio snippets, a blog, podcasts, games and interactive monthly calendars.

**WEBSITE:** [hallmark.com/online/hoopsandyoyo](http://hallmark.com/online/hoopsandyoyo)



# Resources

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## DIGITAL STORYTELLING TRAINING & EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR GREATER KANSAS CITY

### University of Missouri

The University of Missouri is in the final stages of plans to launch a four-year degree in digital storytelling in fall 2014. Mizzou's School of Journalism is recognized as one of the world's leading journalism schools. Students learn by actually producing news and feature stories for print, television, radio and other media. The school has its own newspaper (Columbia Missourian), website ([www.columbiamissourian.com](http://www.columbiamissourian.com)), magazine (Global Journalist), ad agency (MOJO Ad), radio station (KBIA), and commercial television station (KOMU).

The strengths of these programs led the university to create the Mizzou Advantage Media of the Future program, which explores new ways to communicate, educate and market information and entertainment using digital media.

**Contact:**

*Ron Green, Consultant, Media Advantage of the Future Program, [rroaldgreen@gmail.com](mailto:rroaldgreen@gmail.com)*

### Johnson County Community College

Johnson County Community College is working with educational, governmental and industry partners to help create a "mecca" for digital storytelling. JCCC has strong programs in interactive media, web technologies, desktop publishing, animation, and journalism and media communications. The school also offers several courses in digital imaging and video, web analytics, web design and development for the mobile web, and several Adobe trainings.

**Contact:**

*Kelly Gernhart, Assistant Dean, Computing Sciences & Information Technology, [gernhart@jccc.edu](mailto:gernhart@jccc.edu)*

### Kansas City Art Institute

KCAI offers four-year bachelor's degrees with an emphasis in these areas related to digital storytelling: animation, creative writing, digital film making, digital media, graphic design and photography.

**Contact:**

*Thomas J Lewis, Chair of Animation & Digital Media, [tlewis@kcai.edu](mailto:tlewis@kcai.edu)*

### University of Kansas

KU has a strong film & media studies program housed in Oldfather Studios, a fully operative production facility where students learn and develop their art and craft with a soundstage, sound- and film-editing suites, screening rooms and classrooms.

The KU School of the Arts has an expanded media program that includes digital imaging and inter-media training. KU's School of Architecture, Design and Planning offers design programs in photo media, visual communication and industrial design.

**Contact:**

*Tamara Falicov, Associate Professor of Film Studies, [tfalicov@ku.edu](mailto:tfalicov@ku.edu)*

### Metropolitan Community College

MCC has several courses to help individuals start careers in digital storytelling, including web development, digital media design and development, and digital video production courses.

The Penn Valley Art Department offers a two-year associate degree in graphic design and a graphic media (digital prepress) technician certification. Both prepare students for career tracks or continuing their education in four-year institutions.

**Contact:**

*Heather Perez, Director of Marketing, Maple Woods MCC, [heatherk.perez@mcckc.edu](mailto:heatherk.perez@mcckc.edu)*

### Kansas City Kansas Community College

KCKCC has a strong digital imaging design program with courses in Photoshop, Illustrator, graphic design and digital graphic design. The college also offers a multimedia program with courses in digital imaging, video production, animation, 3D modeling, web animation, game design and audio for video production.

**Contact:**

*Dr. Cherilee Walker, Dean of Humanities & Fine Arts, [cwalker@kckcc.edu](mailto:cwalker@kckcc.edu)*

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## DIGITAL STORYTELLING TRAINING & EDUCATION PROGRAMS, continued

### DeVry University Kansas City Campus

DeVry University's College of Media Arts & Technology offers degree programs focused on helping students build strong digital imaging skills, refine their design sensibilities and grasp diverse applications of artistic endeavors. Programs include an Associate of Applied Science in web graphic design and a Bachelor of Science in multimedia design and development, with specializations in graphic and multimedia design, graphics and multimedia management, web design and development and web game programming.

**Contact:**

*Kena Wolf, Executive Director of Admissions,  
kwolf@devry.edu*

### Park University

Park University offers academic programs in graphic design, communication arts and information and computer science.

**Contact:**

*Adam Potthast, Program Chair for Liberal Studies,  
adam.potthast@park.edu*

### University of Missouri Kansas City

UMKC's communication studies, film and media arts emphasis area combines the study of film history and theory with the art and practice of filmmaking. The school's production classes use a small-crew, independent-artist approach to filmmaking. Students gain experience in all phases of film production, including idea development, writing, pre-production planning, producing, directing, cinematography, sound design and editing.

In UMKC's communication studies, journalism and mass communication program, students learn and gain hands-on experience with newswriting and reporting for newspapers, magazines, the web, radio and TV, visual design, advertising and public relations in an urban environment.

UMKC's Master of Fine Arts in creative writing and media arts is an exciting studio-research program that combines intensive workshops with literature and craft classes to foster discovery and mastery in creative writing.

**Contact:**

*Michael McDonald, Ph.D., Department Chair,  
Communications Studies, mcdonaldmk@umkc.edu*



KC Accelerator focuses on increasing employment opportunities at the intersection of two industry clusters — advanced manufacturing and information technology. The project is funded by a Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration, and the Small Business Administration.

The Mid-America Regional Council serves as the administrator of the KC Accelerator grant. Project partners include the University of Missouri-Kansas City's Innovation Center and KCSOURCELINK; the Full Employment Council; the Workforce Partnership; Metropolitan Community College; Johnson County Community College; Kansas City Area Development Council; KC SmartPort; and PREP-KC.

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