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BEST JOBS IN AMERICA

MONEY Magazine and Salary.com rate careers on salary and job prospects.

By Tara Kalwarski, Daphne Mosher, Janet Paskin and Donna Rosato



Salary wizard

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ZIP Code: **OR, State / Metro Area:**

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Top 10 best jobs

MONEY Magazine and Salary.com researched hundreds of jobs, considering their growth, pay, stress-levels and other factors. These careers ranked highest. ([more](#))

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Software Engineer | 6. Market research analyst |
| 2. College professor | 7. Computer IT analyst |
| 3. Financial adviser | 8. Real Estate Appraiser |
| 4. Human Resources Manager | 9. Pharmacist |
| 5. Physician assistant | 10. Psychologist |

• [The top 50 best jobs ... see the list, get a report](#)



This man has the best job in America

We graded jobs on stress level, flexibility in work environment and hours, creativity, and ease of entry and advancement in the field -- this guy's job scored highest. See what it is. ([more](#))

• [How MONEY picked the best jobs](#)
PHOTO: GREGG SEGAL



How does your job stack up?

See stats on 166 job titles, and see how they compare with the top 50. Get job-demand potential for the next 10 years and salary ranges. ([more](#))



Extreme extras: 8 perks you're not getting

A nice paycheck, a boss who respects you – those things are fine, but how about some free stuff. Can your company match these? ([more](#))

The Next Berkshire Hathaway



In 1957, Bill and Carol Angle invested half their life savings with Warren Buffett. Today, their shares in his company are worth over \$300 million. According to Forbes, another early investor, Malcolm Chace, piled up \$850 million.

You know the Berkshire miracle can't possibly come along more than once in a lifetime. But suppose you could do even half as well?

One stock looks uncannily similar to an early Berkshire Hathaway.

[Click here to get its name in a new free report from The Motley Fool](#)



MORE STORIES

Most satisfied employees work longer

Plus other key findings on American workers' attitudes toward vacation time, telecommuting, and stress -- from an exclusive survey by MONEY Magazine and Salary.com. ([more](#))

Big jobs that pay badly

Some careers cost time and money to take up. But don't expect a big paycheck. ([more](#))

6-FIGURE JOBS

Organize this

Only neatniks and efficiency experts need apply to become a professional organizer. ([more](#))

- Crime scene cleaner
- Auctioneer

QUICK QUIZ

Do you deserve a raise? Before plucking up the nerve to go in and ask for a raise, know what your assets and vulnerabilities are.

1. If you left the company, how easy or hard would it be for the company to replace you?

Easy Hard

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BEST COMPANIES TO WORK FOR

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* : Time reflects local markets trading time. † - Intraday data delayed 15 minutes for Nasdaq, and 20 minutes for other exchanges. Disclaimer

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The Top 50

[More jobs: Stats on 166 titles](#)

[How MONEY picked the best jobs](#)

Rank	Career (click for CNNMoney.com snapshot)	Job growth (10-yr forecast)	Average pay (salary and bonus)
1	Software engineer	46.07%	\$80,427
2	College professor	31.39%	\$81,491
3	Financial advisor	25.92%	\$122,462
4	Human resources manager	23.47%	\$73,731
5	Physician assistant	49.65%	\$75,117
6	Market research analyst	20.19%	\$82,317
7	Computer/IT analyst	36.10%	\$83,427
8	Real estate appraiser	22.78%	\$66,216
9	Pharmacist	24.57%	\$91,998
10	Psychologist	19.14%	\$66,359
11	Advertising manager	20.34%	\$107,049
12	Physical therapist	36.74%	\$54,883
13	Technical writer	23.22%	\$57,841
14	Chiropractor	22.40%	\$84,996

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Job Category:

Accounting

ZIP Code:

OR, State / Metro Area:

U.S. National Average

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1988





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Software Engineer

Rank: 1 of 50

Top job in field: [Release Engineer](#)

GRADES: **Stress: B / Flexibility: B / Creativity: A / Difficulty: C**

Average pay: \$80,427

	Salary	Total compensation (includes bonus)
75% in this career make more than:	\$67,362	\$70,369
50% in this career make more than:	\$76,294	\$78,518
25% in this career make more than:	\$86,530	\$89,822
Top potential compensation (5% make more):		\$147,338

10-year job growth: 46.07%

Total jobs 2004:	800,050
Forecast 2014:	1,168,639
Average annual growth (including new jobs and net replacement):	44,770

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Job Category:

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Career description

Computer software engineers apply the principles and techniques of computer science, engineering, and mathematical analysis to the design, development, testing, and evaluation of the software and systems that enable computers to perform their many applications.

Top 10: Highest-paying careers

	Average salary
Chief Executives	\$254,643
Physician/Surgeon	\$247,536
Oral and maxillofacial surgeons	\$211,766
Lawyer	\$153,923
Sales manager	\$135,903
Financial services sales agents	\$130,385
Financial managers	\$128,910
Dentist	\$122,883
Financial advisor	\$122,462
Natural sciences managers	\$116,504

Top 10: Fastest-growing fields

	Job growth
Physician assistant	49.65%
Software engineer	46.07%
Physical therapist assistants	44.20%
Dental hygienists	43.32%
Physical therapist	36.74%
Forensic science technicians	36.40%
Computer/IT analyst	36.10%
Veterinary technologists and technicians	35.32%
Occupational therapist assistants	34.10%
Medical scientist	34.06%



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Computer/IT Analyst

Rank: 7 of 50

Top job in field: [Network Operations Director](#)

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GRADES: **Stress: C / Flexibility: C / Creativity: D / Difficulty: B**

Average pay: \$83,427

	Salary	Total compensation (includes bonus)
75% in this career make more than:	\$67,919	\$70,629
50% in this career make more than:	\$77,084	\$80,713
25% in this career make more than:	\$88,105	\$93,608
Top potential compensation (5% make more):		\$252,106

10-year job growth: 36.10%

Total jobs 2004:	1,380,873
Forecast 2014:	1,879,407
Average annual growth (including new jobs and net replacement):	67,340

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Career description

Analysts - Analyze science, engineering, business, and all other data processing problems for application to electronic data processing systems. Analyze user requirements, procedures, and problems to automate or improve existing systems and review computer system capabilities, workflow, and scheduling limitations. May analyze or recommend commercially available software. May supervise computer programmers. Managers - Plan, direct, or coordinate activities in such fields as electronic data processing, information systems, systems analysis, and computer programming. Administrators - Coordinate changes to computer databases, test and implement the database applying knowledge of database management systems. May plan, coordinate, and implement security measures to safeguard computer databases. Install, configure, and support an organization's local area network (LAN), wide area network (WAN), and Internet system or a segment of a network system. Maintain network hardware and software. Monitor network to ensure network availability to all system users and perform necessary maintenance to support network availability. May supervise other network support and client server specialists and plan, coordinate, and implement network security measures.



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	Job growth
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Physical therapist assistants	44.20%
Dental hygienists	43.32%
Physical therapist	36.74%
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Computer/IT analyst	36.10%
Veterinary technologists and technicians	35.32%
Occupational therapist assistants	34.10%
Medical scientist	34.06%

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- Irrational
- Plausible

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This man has the best job in America

Don't hate Mark Dochtermann just because he's happy.

April 12, 2006: 8:27 AM EDT

Money

NEW YORK (MONEY Magazine) - Mark Dochtermann, 34, director of technology, Electronic Arts: "When I saw my first computer, it was love at first sight. As a kid I spent a lot of time on a Commodore 64, writing my own programs, figuring out games, hacking.

You can learn an awful lot about programming doing that. I majored in computer engineering but never thought I could work in the game industry -- it was a dream job.

After college I sent one of my creations to a small game company. Next thing I knew, I was their programmer.

Since then I've built a career in the "first-person shooter" category with games like Duke Nukem 3D. During the tech boom, when others left games for the money in start-ups, I stayed.

I make a good living, and I'd rather work on a game I don't care for than write code for a financial company. I'm building a product that entertains. Unlike engineers in commerce or aerospace, I can push the envelope without someone getting hurt.

Still, there's stress. The worst is a bug or defect. And you can't waste time tweaking that last whiz-bang feature, given the market pressures.

But there's no better feeling than seeing your game on the shelves.

Today I manage a team of 65. The hours remain a challenge, and I still do a lot of coding. It's important to work with the group, and it's the best way to stay on the cutting edge."

- [Top 50 best jobs in America](#)
- [Compensation and growth stats on 166 other titles](#)
- [Extreme Extras: 8 best perks](#)



PHOTO: GREGG SEGAL

Mark Dochtermann

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