

## Why is there an explosion in UX jobs?

### **There has been a 320pc increase in user experience (UX) design jobs in the past five years and starting salaries rival the best-paid professions. What is going on?**

An analysis of the Irish hiring landscape for UX Designers by [Morgan McKinley](#) and the [UX Design Institute](#) shows them to be amongst the most sought-after tech professionals today, as companies continue to seek out digital opportunities and focus on exceptional end-user experience.

UX designers are to the software industry what architects are to construction. They provide high-level and detailed design that ensures websites, mobile apps and other software products are fit for purpose and easy to use.

“We’ve seen incredible growth in UX in the past five years with a threefold increase in the level of UX jobs we are being asked to service,” said Dara Boland, associate director at Global recruitment company Morgan McKinley.

“This is largely due to many companies rapidly growing their UX design teams – in some cases by 20 to 30 people – and businesses with no previous design culture beginning to appreciate the need to have at least 1 to 2 talented UX designers on site to remain competitive.”

According to the analysis, the average starting salary for UX designers now stands at €30,000 per annum, up from €25,000 three years ago. This puts graduate earnings higher than that of accountants (€26,468) and close to engineers (€30,527) and banking graduates (€30,550).

With demand so high, it doesn’t take long for salaries to progress upwards, with earnings increasing significantly as experience grows.

An analysis of salary data shows UX designers with 0 to 2 years’ experience typically earning between €30,000 and €35,000 in permanent roles. Salaries for those with two to four years’ experience will range from €35,000 to €60,000, while those with five years’ experience and more will jump to between €60,000 and €80,000.

## **Q&A with Coman Walsh, CEO of the UX Design Institute**

### **Why is there an increase in UX jobs?**

UX job opportunities are continuing to increase because companies in Ireland have realised a few things about software development.

The software behind the products and services in practically every industry in every sized organisation is increasingly critical to that organisations success. This software can be in the form of website, apps, internal systems, EPOS - the list goes on. Poor quality software is now a major competitive disadvantage.

Companies understand that in order to derive value from their software development spend they must allocate a percentage of that spend to design, in a similar way, bricks-and-mortar developers allocate a percentage to architecture. Good design helps reduce the risk of building the wrong thing, building it poorly and spending additional money to fix the resulting problems.

Up until recently many companies were happy for the “IT guys” to build and design their software. Now they realise that user experience design, or UX design, is a very specific skill that often doesn't fall within the expertise of traditional IT roles.

To use the construction analogy again - if you're building a new hotel you might be tempted to save money by not hiring a firm of architects. But in reality you wouldn't seriously consider spending millions on a building without getting designers involved.

### **What is UX and why does it matter to every business today?**

UX is a design methodology that plays a similar role in software development that architecture plays in the construction industry. It helps ensure that software products have a clear purpose, are fit for that purpose, and are easy and enjoyable to use. It's important for reasons already outlined. Software is now critical to almost every business and software that works and delivers results needs both design and technical.

### **If someone was already in a career and fancied upskilling to UX, what do they need to do?**

The majority of the UX Design Institute's students are people in their 30s and 40s looking to transition into UX design because they see the opportunities it affords.

As well as a good education in UX design, our advice is to immerse yourself in all things UX and to develop a portfolio of work that demonstrates your skills, thought processes and enthusiasm for UX design. It's not possible to get a job in UX without a portfolio of work be it from a course, personal projects or from professional work.

We would also encourage our students to network: go to UX meetups, meet other UX professionals for coffee and bide your time for the right opportunity. Skilled UX professionals are in such high demand that employers are willing to take risks and employ people with little or no professional background in UX.

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*Published: 11 November, 2019*