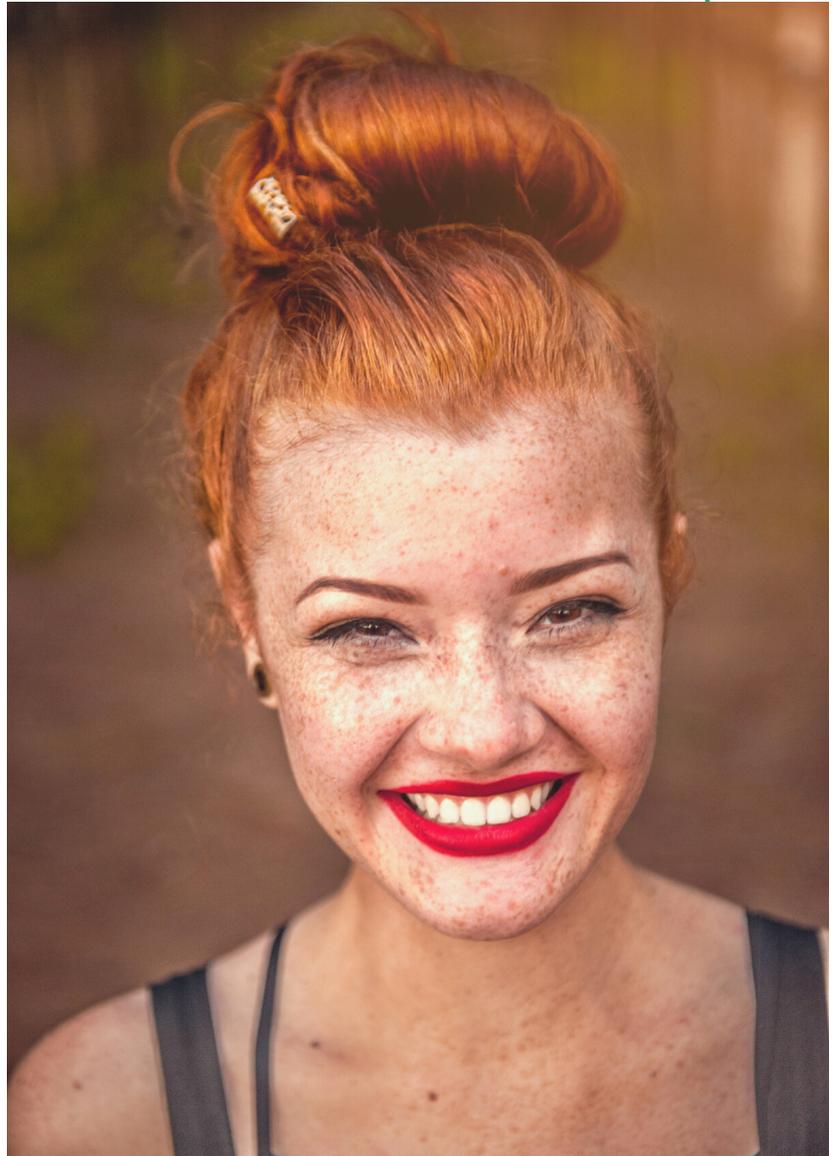


GUESS WHERE WRITERS ARE EARNING 6- FIGURE SALARIES?

(Hint: It's Not
Hollywood...)



YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A WORKING WRITER...

Now you are one YAS!

It's a dream come true.

But...it turns out this dream involves a lot of hard work.

If you're working in TV or film, you're writing spec scripts, taking a lot of meetings, chasing the next step - can I get an agent, can I get staffed on a show, can I sell this script...with all the stress and insecurity and "am I doing the right thing" feelings that comes along with the hustle.

If you're working in games, you're racing to do a job nobody really trained you to do - figuring out how to tell a story in a game; wrestling with design changes, trying to figure out what the player wants...with all anxiety and confusion that comes with learning on the job.

...UH, NOW WHAT?

A lot of these careers can feel like they come down to luck - if you can just meet the right person, get on the right team, find the magic mentor, things will work out.

Good news: you have more control over the process than you might think.

So let's talk about the kinds of opportunities you have as someone who loves both stories and games.

You may already work in the games industry, or you may be a professional writer exploring your options. Either way, the information in this guide can help.



WHAT IF THIS WAS YOUR JOB?

You could be the story lead on a new project at Bungie!

INCUBATION STORY LEAD

Bungie is looking for a passionate Story Lead to help build Bungie's next great IP. From early brainstorming and collaboration, to building and managing an internal and external narrative team, to editing the strings of the shipping game - this will be a fast paced, highly creative environment for an amazing Story Lead to make a mark on an exciting new project.

How about working as a narrative designer for a Star Wars project?

We're looking for a highly skilled Narrative Designer who will embrace our culture and share his/her hard-earned expertise to help us create an incredible Star Wars™ experience for our players in a fun, third-person action adventure setting. We're picturing an avid gamer who is passionate about this much beloved IP, and who will collaborate closely the design team and other departments to ensure seamless implementation of narrative-focused gameplay systems and content.

Or a writer for Insomniac, the studio that brought you Spider-Man:

Insomniac Games is looking for a passionate writer who'll be responsible for developing original interactive stories. Our writers are also responsible for communicating story to project team at all stages of development. They align cross-departmental work to maximize emotional impact of story. They author dialog, supervise recordings, and review implementation for in-game Voice Over (VO). Writers also author scenes, attend shoots, and provide feedback for cinematic sequences.

Sound like fun? Any of these jobs could be **your** job. Game developers are looking for writers who understand games - and gamers who can write.



Yes, you can do this work - and it can be surprisingly lucrative.

I'll show you the numbers.

HI, I'M SUSAN

And for the last 15 years, I've been writing stories for games.

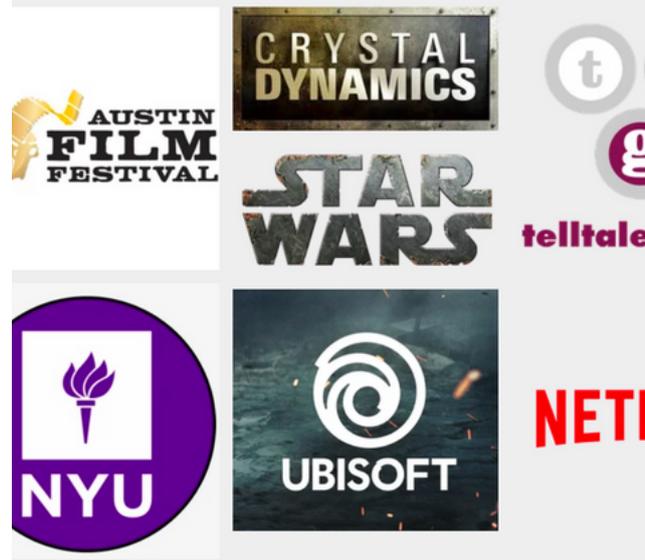
I've worked on over 25 projects, including titles in the BioShock, Far Cry, Tomb Raider and Star Wars franchises. Games in my portfolio have sold over 30 million units and generated over \$500 million in sales.

Some of my past clients include Ubisoft, Telltale Games, 2K, Crystal Dynamics, Microsoft, and Netflix.

I've presented talks at TEDx, the Austin Film Festival, and New York University. I founded the Game Narrative Summit at GDC.

I'm also an adjunct professor at the University of Texas at Austin, where I teach a course on how to write for games.

I love writing for games because, for storytellers, it's the new frontier. I'm committed to helping writers thrive in this new world.



WHAT DO STAFF WRITERS EARN?

Let's talk turkey!

Your potential income depends on a few factors, including the size of the studio, your level of expertise, and whether you are working as a freelancer or a staff writer.

Let's start with some baseline salary numbers, and go from there.

According to Glassdoor, game writer salaries range from \$42k to \$92k, with an average of \$63,275.

Now let's start climbing, by looking at some specifics.

On loveforgames.com, a website that compiles public records of salary data published by the US Department of Labor, we can see that a senior writer at Riot was earning between \$119,000 - 156,000 a year.

Riot Games Senior Writer \$119,517 - \$156,083 Santa Monica, CA 4/15/14 CERTIFIED

And according to Glassdoor, a narrative designer at Microsoft reports making between \$153k - \$163k.

(A senior narrative designer there would earn even more.)

So as you can see, the base numbers are just that - a base. They go up from there.

A narrative designer at Microsoft earns between \$153,000 and \$163,000 a year.

Salaries by Company Sort: Popular | Most Reports | Salary

Filter by Location Search for Specific Employer

City or Metro Area Search or Employer name Search

Company	Average Base Salaries in (USD)	Low	High
 Narrative Designer Microsoft 1 employee salary or estimate	About \$153K - \$166K	\$153K	\$166K
 Associate Narrative Designer Zynga 1 employee salary or estimate	\$69K - \$75K	\$69K	\$75K

- https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/game-writers-salary-SRCH_KO0,12.htm
- <https://www.loveforgames.com/salary/results.php#>
- <https://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/performance/cfm#dis>
- https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/narrative-designer-salary-SRCH_KO0,18.htm

WHAT ABOUT FREELANCERS?

Established game writers charge \$10,000 - \$15,000 a week. And studios are happy to pay those rates.

Some game writers are independent contractors who negotiate their fees, sometimes with the help of an agent. Factors in these negotiations include the scope of the work, the length of the assignment, and the general demand for the writer's services.

This is where the numbers are trickier to come by because freelancers are rarely included in salary surveys.

What I can tell you, based on my years of experience in the industry, is that there are some established game writers who charge **\$10,000 - \$15,000 a week** - and studios are happy to pay those rates.

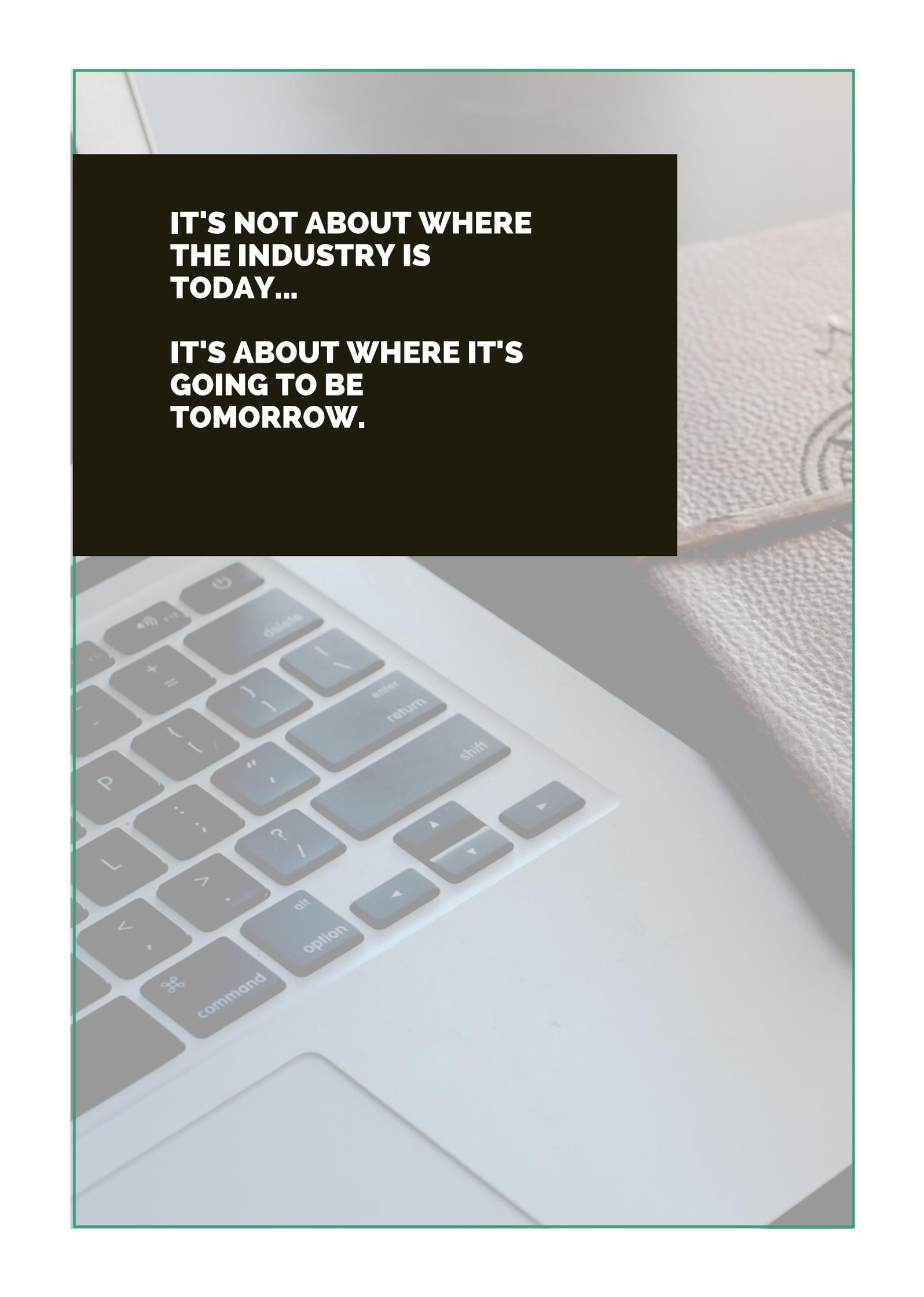
Why?

Because these writers are playing an essential role in an industry that's generating more revenue than Hollywood. They're delivering the one element that's becoming more and more important to gamers - and that's the story.

Game writers can grow their careers in the industry, and go on to run their own studios, where they operate as the gaming equivalent of TV showrunners (with the income to match).

It's a wild time. The ground is shifting.





**IT'S NOT ABOUT WHERE
THE INDUSTRY IS
TODAY...**

**IT'S ABOUT WHERE IT'S
GOING TO BE
TOMORROW.**

THESE NUMBERS ARE NOT TYPOS

According to the Entertainment Software Association, **consumers spent \$43.4 billion on games in 2018.**

(Worldwide box office was less - a lot less. Two billion dollars less, to be exact.)

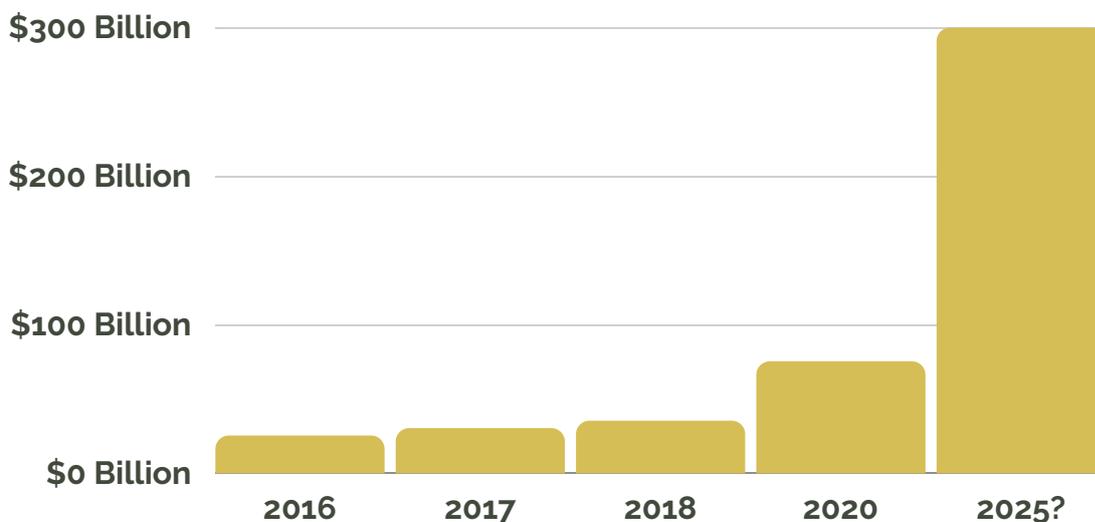
Over **164 million adults** in the United States play video games. (Average age? 33.)

And the numbers are growing, year after year. Between 2016 and 2018, consumer spending increased by **ten billion dollars in only 2 years!**



"Video Games Could Be a \$300 Billion Industry By 2025 (Report)"

- May 1, 2019



<https://www.theesa.com/esa-research/2019-essential-facts-about-the-computer-and-video-game-industry/>
<https://variety.com/2019/gaming/news/video-games-300-billion-industry-2025-report-1203202672/#!>

STORY IS THE KILLER APP

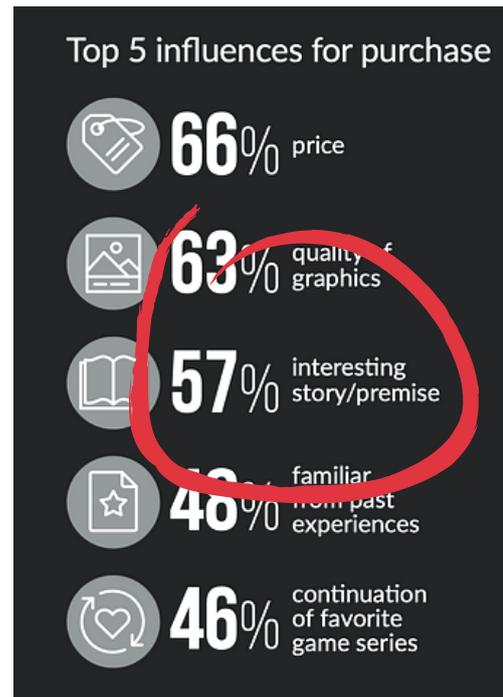
And when players are ready to buy a new game, what drives their decision? For over half the players out there, the answer is "story."

That means studios are eager to deliver great stories, in order to get the players they want.

There's a lot of money on the table, but it's not distributed evenly.

The studios that can deliver great emotional experiences are the ones that will win awards and generate huge sales.

And that's why studios are hiring.



WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

(Answer: Everywhere)



Unlike screenwriting and TV-writing jobs, which are mostly in LA, game writing jobs span the globe.

There are over **5,000 game studios worldwide** - 634 in California alone!

Want to work in France? You've got 278 studios to choose from. How about Sweden? You'll find 132 studios there.

Canada? 364 and counting.

If you want to stay closer to home, you'll find 162 studios in Washington state...137 in New York...you get the idea.



<https://gamedevmap.com/index.php>



They don't just want talented writers. They want talented writers that know how to write for games.

WHAT ARE GAME STUDIOS LOOKING FOR?

Developers have gone through a steep learning curve when it comes to writers.

For a long time, they weren't sure what they were looking for. For some high-profile AAA projects, the studios decided they needed to hire "real writers" - AKA Hollywood talent.

So they called CAA or UTA and found people who had plenty of TV & film credits on their resumes. The studios paid big bucks, the writers worked their tails off - and more often than not, the games flopped. Why?

For the same reason that some novelists from the 30s and 40s struggled with screenwriting.

It wasn't for lack of talent. It's just that movies are not novels, and games are not movies. Each medium is different and makes unique demands on writers.

Game studios in 2019 have a much better idea of what they're looking for.

It's not enough to find talented writers. They're looking for talented writers that understand how to write for games.



WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

The good news is, there's a world of opportunity.

But there's a disconnect.

On one side, we've got the audience - **hungry for great storytelling in every medium** - and that includes games.



On another side, we've got an industry that knows how important stories are - but **struggles to find writers who really know how to write for games**.

And on this side, we have you, the writer, **who has so much to offer** - talent and passion and fresh ideas that could help shape the industry, if you could just find the right opportunity.

Everyone's looking for each other, everyone's trying to complete the triangle, but the linking agent is missing.

If you want to explore this further, then let's talk. Because the shortcut to finding YOUR personalized career strategy is to start a conversation with someone who knows how to do what you're looking to do.

Book a Free Call
With Susan

Book a spot on my calendar here: <https://calendly.com/susano/writersroom>

And remember: video games need writers like you. If you love storytelling, and you love games, it's an exciting time, full of possibilities.

Here's to your success!