



Career spotlight

Career in Big Data



Source : <https://www.futureoftech.org/big-data/6-careers-in-big-data/>

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics says the number of big data jobs, which require a range of education and experience, is increasing more quickly than jobs in other occupational sectors. Are you creative? A problem solver? If so, read on to see which big data job might be right for you.

Software Developer

Meet Kristen, a software developer. While growing up, she had a creative streak. She found a new outlet for that creativity when she discovered computer programming. In college, Kristen majored in computer science. Classes on software development piqued her interest the most, and she set her sights on developing applications. During her junior year, she landed a summer internship with a national retail store. Although some software development positions require a master's degree, Kristen's experience led to a full-time job developing software applications that make shopping easier for consumers and more profitable for retailers.

The median annual wage for system software developers, who create the underlying systems that run computer devices or control networks, was slightly higher, at \$107,600. The growing demand for computer software means employers need more people to fill these jobs with each day that passes. The Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that more than 300,000 new jobs for software developers will be created between 2016 and 2026, a growth rate of 24 percent.

Operations Research Analyst

It was the opportunity to use his advanced math and analytical skills that drew Carter to operations research analysis, another field projected to see a growth spurt over the next decade. Carter liked solving problems by dissecting and investigating them, and he wanted a career that afforded him the opportunity to help organizations make better decisions. In college, he majored in mathematics, although research analysts study a range of technical disciplines, including engineering and analytics. He was



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recently hired by a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit to analyze nationwide environmental data.

What's one of the things Carter likes most? The chance to keep learning. Continuing education is vital for operations research analysts, who have to keep up with advances in technology, software tools and analytical methods. As of 2017, the median salary for these types of roles is \$81,390.

Market Research Analyst

Market research analysts deal with numbers, too, but with a focus on market conditions. That appealed to Leanna, whose job includes examining potential sales and services, and helping companies better understand which products consumers want—and at what price. Sound interesting? You'll need a degree in market research or a related field. Essential courses for this kind of work include statistics, research methods and marketing. You can round out your skills and training by learning about economics and consumer behavior.

The median annual wage for a market research analyst is just over \$63,000. However, if you're looking for a more leadership-focused role, consider obtaining a master's degree.

Financial Analyst

Financial analysts pore over financial data, especially data related to investing, to help companies make smarter, more effective decisions. In the future, the field of financial analysis should see growth, but at a slightly lower rate than the sectors listed above. However, that didn't stop Ashok from applying for a position at a New Jersey-based technology firm. He studied accounting in college and enjoyed studying the market to try to figure out where it was headed. He was also attracted to the median salary of \$84,300 for this type of position.

Backgrounds in economics, finance, statistics and mathematics are another pathway to a career in financial analysis. To help ensure his career advancement in the future, Ashok plans to earn his Chartered Financial Analyst certification from the CFA Institute.



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Statistician

Jamal was obsessed with statistics growing up, starting with those he found on the backs of his baseball cards. He was a natural statistician, another big data job for numbers people. Statisticians analyze data and apply mathematical and statistical techniques to help solve real-world problems in business, engineering, health care and other fields. Jamal earned his bachelor's in statistics and a master's in computer science before he began working for a transportation agency in Phoenix.

Other fields of study for statisticians include math and economics. Depending on the industry, however, it can help to have a targeted background. For instance, a background in biology is useful if you're working in pharmaceuticals. If you're considering a career as a statistician, math is what you'll need, starting with advanced courses in high school. In 2017, the median annual salary for statisticians was \$84,060.

Database Administrator

Angela is highly organized and has an eye for detail, so database administration was made for her. Applying order and structure to information came easily to Angela and was especially helpful for college projects. After graduating with an information sciences degree, she started working at her alma mater in the admissions department.

Database administrators use specialized software to store and organize data, such as financial information, customer shipping records and student records. They make those data available to users. They also protect data against unauthorized access. The median annual salary for database administrators is \$87,020.

Computer and Information Research Scientist

Nelson works at a geospatial startup company as a computer and information research scientist. His mission is to invent and design new approaches to computer technology. Research scientists also find innovative uses for existing technology, and



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they study and solve complex problems in computing. Nelson is good at his job because he has always been a problem solver.

With a master's in computer science and research experience he gained during school, Nelson had three companies competing for his talents. He chose the startup, where he thought he'd have the most room for innovation and career growth. Computer and information research scientists have a median annual salary of \$114,520.

