

Freelancing in the Creative & Performing Arts Industries

Department



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Freelancing in the Creative Industries?

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Advertising and marketing



Architecture



Crafts



Design (product, graphic, fashion)



Film, TV, video, radio and photography



IT, software and computer services ('creative tech')



Publishing



Museums, galleries and libraries



Music, performing and visual arts



Animation and VFX (visual effects)



Video games



Heritage

- 35% creative workers are self-employed, compared with 15% across the workforce as whole.
- 89% of people in TV production are freelance (BAFTA)
(Creative Industries federation.com)

What we'll cover

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- **What does it mean to be a freelancer?**
- **Why Freelance? – positives and negatives**
- **How do you find freelance work?**
- **The importance of your personal brand**
- **Selling yourself and winning business**
- **Managing Money**
- **Where to find out more?**



What does it mean to be a freelancer?

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Freelancer

Associate

Independent

Consultant

Self-employed

Contractor

“The Gig Economy”

You are not employed by one company.

You are free to take short-term employment opportunities from anywhere

You take payment for your work on a hourly, daily or weekly rate etc

OR

You are paid an agreed rate to complete an agreed piece of work

The rise of freelancing in the Creative Industries

In 2016, over 3 million (3,034,000) people worked in the creative economy.

Creative jobs are future-proof jobs: **87% of creative jobs** are at low or no risk of automation.

There are more than 284,000 businesses in the creative industries, Creative industries businesses account for 11.8% of all businesses in the UK.

Almost 95% (94.8%) of creative industries businesses are micro businesses (less than 10 employees).

68.6% of creative industries businesses have a turnover of less than £100,000, which is higher than the 55.2% for UK businesses a whole.

You can freelance doing almost anything.....

- Writing – features, news, scripts, programmes, content for social media
- Copywriting, translating
- Digital Media Production/Creative
- Market Research, promoting events, projects
- Event management
- Performance – music, theatre, festivals etc
- TV/Film ; location managing, production etc
- TV/Film post-production, visual effects
- Teaching/lecturing/training

And many more.....

The benefits ?

You are your own boss (no politics etc)

- Work/life balance
- You keep more of what you earn
- Variety of work and experiences
- Do what you love and shape your own career
- Rewarding
- Freelance work increasingly common (particularly in the creative industries)

Freelancers spend 20% more time exercising than those who are employed!



The challenges



- Unstable/irregular work
- Finances can be irregular
- No sick pay/holiday pay/employer pension contributions*
- Can be lonely
- It can be difficult to maintain work/life balance
- Winning work and getting clients – can be time consuming
- Establishing and maintaining pay rates/competition
- Staying professionally relevant – keeping skills up to date
- **Motivation levels – not for procrastinators!**

Selling yourself and winning business

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- **Build a network** and regularly connect with as many people as you can (use LinkedIn and other professional networks)
- Join **relevant local or industry groups** and attend events and meet-ups. Face to face meetings are powerful and memorable eg
- Write speculative emails, make phone calls - and follow up. But don't be a nuisance. People are busy! **Keep trying!**
- Online recruitment
 - Subscribe regularly and visit forums , hubs websites and production blogs
 - Sign up to as many recruitment resources as you can find (some free)
Coming to the end of a contract? If there is an HR/Talent team, go and see them – make a good impression!
- Attend **industry/trade events** and network like mad
- **Collaborate** with others to offer a joined-up or wider service

9 Regularly **update your CV** and update it **everywhere** you have uploaded/sent it

Your personal brand is EVERYTHING!

- YOU are the company/the brand. What is your **USP** (unique selling point) or expertise?
- Your **personal and professional reputation is vital** – protect and invest in it
- Decide on your values and stick to them
 - **Do what you say you will do**
 - Communicate well
 - Do what you do **WELL (exceed expectations)**
- Build your own **website** and add endorsements, case-studies, portfolios, testimonials etc (check and register domain name !)
- Keep your **LinkedIn Profile** up to date
 - Endorse/recommend others
 - Ask for endorsement and recommendations yourself



Agencies and Agents (for performers/writers)

- Target individual agents and tell them why you want to be with them. Who are the clients they already have?
- “Don’t send emails at 2am, regardless of how in the zone you feel. They will almost always be totally indecipherable.
- Ask questions. If the agent just expects you to sit at the end of the phone and wait, will that work for you? How do they feel about your part-time job to feed yourself? Take advice. Not just from your university, but from colleagues, peers, alumni and professionals you have contact with. Remember, it has to work for you. As Rawlins says: “In the end, you need to be in charge of the actual decision. It’s your career, after all.”
- Don’t be put off by rejection – keep going

Using Freelancer websites

- Rapidly growing area
- Find the ones relevant to your sector
- Beware fees – commission or fixed rate
- Can be bidding against people internationally (rates can be low)
- Importance of really strong profile



Looking for a Videographer for NYC Billboards

Hourly - Intermediate (\$\$) - Est. Time: More than 6 months, 10-30 hrs/week - Posted 14 days ago

SILVERCAST Media is a Manhattan-based independent media company specializing in outdoor advertising in the form of premier digital and static oversized billboard Spectaculars. ... SILVERCAST Media is a Manhattan-based independent media company spec ... [more](#)

Video Creator / Editor for Social Media Videos

Hourly - Intermediate (\$\$) - Est. Time: More than 6 months, Less than 10 hrs/week - Posted 15 days ago

I have a digital marketing agency in Newcastle, Australia <https://vicinity.marketing> and I also head up marketing at Camplify the Airbnb for caravans and motorhomes in Australia and now in the UK <https://www.camplify.co.uk>. ... We have lots of writt ... [more](#)

Skills: [Video Editing](#) [Video Production](#) [Videography](#)

Join Industry Hubs for showcasing yourself

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Elance | An Upwork Company

Browse Categories ▾

Search Jobs ▾

Go

Tour the new way to work

[I Want to Work »](#)

Summary

Creating Your Profile

Finding Clients

Collaborating

Tracking Progress

Getting Paid

Market your services to the world

Creating a stellar profile is the first step to getting hired on Elance. Publish your best work, test your skills, verify your credentials and you'll be well on your way to building a great list of clients.

[Learn more »](#)



Win new clients

Thousands of businesses are posting new jobs on Elance every day. Propose your services to the right opportunities and get hired.

[Learn more »](#)

Join Industry Forums and Hubs?

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www.the-dots.com

Search this site for live jobs in the creative industries

Upload your portfolio

The screenshot displays the 'The-Dots' website interface. On the left, a sidebar contains search filters for 'Professions', 'Job title', 'Freelance', 'Full Time', 'Internship', 'Junior', 'Mid Level', 'Senior', 'Location', 'Industry', and 'Company'. The main content area features a navigation bar with 'Projects', 'Jobs', 'People', 'Companies', and 'Create v'. Below this is a 'Post A Job' button and a 'Popular Searches' section with tags for 'Freelance', 'Internships', 'Account Manager', 'Art Director', 'Copywriter', 'Creative Director', 'Digital Marketing', and 'Project Manager'. The 'Copywriter' tag is circled in red, with a red arrow pointing from the text 'Search this site for live jobs in the creative industries' to it. Below the popular searches, the page shows 'Internships — 58' and a list of job listings. The first listing is 'YouTube Talent Management Intern' at 'Ziggurat XYZ Ltd', with details for 'Level: Junior' and 'Type: Internship'. The second listing is 'Project Management Intern' at 'YCN', with details for 'Level: Junior' and 'Type: Internship'. The third listing is 'Merchandising & Marketing Intern' at 'Antibad Store', with details for 'Level: Junior' and 'Type: Internship'. A 'shutterstock' logo is visible at the bottom left of the screenshot.

How do freelancers avoid isolation?

- Shared workspaces and hubs eg The Hospital Club
- Online Forums
- Local business networking events, expos, fairs, industry events
- Sector networking update meetings
- Build a network of freelancing friends – arrange regular lunches/coffees
- Work from a coffee shop or library

- Don't rule out meetings (they can break up your day)

Agree terms and conditions

- day rate vs “rate for entire job”
- get a contract (or at least an email confirming agreement)
- be clear about exactly what is expected and when
- make sure you have a purchase order number for your job
- ensure that you understand payment terms (30- 60 days is common!)

Submit **accurate** invoices on time

- make friends with the finance department
- don't be afraid to follow-up/chase for payment
- consider building a “late payment penalty” into your contract

Keep records

- copies of invoices, purchase orders
- you might want to hire an accountant
- keep your personal and business finances separate

Put your tax money away every month and start a pension

- you will need to submit an annual tax return
- Register as self-employed with the Inland Revenue

Professional Insurance....(your employers may insist)

- professional indemnity insurance (in case you make mistakes!)
- public liability insurance (for moments of clumsiness!)

- Copyright – if you create something, be very clear about who has copyright in in
(unless you ASSIGN copyright to anyone, you own the copyright and are entitled to any ongoing revenue streams eg if content is syndicated or sold/shared with another party)
- Make sure your work is credited (for both legal and promotional purposes)
- Registering your domain name for your website

Words of wisdom from real Freelancers

- Always be polite and friendly!
- Never miss a deadline
- Set aside time every week/month to promote yourself – update your website, approach some new clients, find a way to extend your network
- Communication is vital – if the client asks for more work, carefully explain that more time is more money!
- The TV/Media production industry is small – your reputation matters. Protect it.
- Modesty is madness – you need to sell yourself
- Network – go to the pub after work with colleagues. Relationships matter and the more people know you the more likely they are to think of you when new opportunities come up

When is the right time to start freelancing?

Straight away?

- It may be the only option (industry norm)
- It may take time to build a network and regular stream of work
- Consider how you will manage financially
- Flexibility can lead to great opportunities and varied experience

Later

- Work in the industry first
- Learn how things work
- Develop your skills/Build confidence
- Prove yourself and build a network

Where to find out more?

www.ipse.co.uk The Association of Independent Professionals and Self-employed

<https://www.gov.uk/business-finance-support> - advice on getting started, including some grant/funding sources

www.bectu.org.uk Media and Entertainment Industry Union – has useful tax guide for freelancers and runs courses on financial management for sole traders

<https://www.gov.uk/working-for-yourself> - UK government advice about legal and tax regulations and laws

www.crunch.co.uk – Accountancy Software for freelancers

Creative industries federation

We are here to help!



Careers &
Employability

Come and See Us!

1:1 Appointments available

Support with applications and interviews

Check out resources on moodle

Careers Centre, Davison Building

www.royalholloway.ac.uk/careers

@rhcareers

