

Finding Fulfillment in Flexible Work

Famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright has said, “A professional is one who does his best work when he least feels like working.” Wright’s maxim about work takes on a different meaning when applied to the new trend of working from home. While we often hear that jobs in the service sector are on the rise, many of the most popular jobs are those that allow employees to work flexible hours, often from the comfort of their own home office chairs. The most common jobs that allow employees to work from home, and consequently find balance between their work and family lives, tend to be in engineering, education, and problem analysis.

Arguably, jobs in engineering, education, and problem analysis all seek solutions to problems. One of the most common fields of engineering that allows workers a flexible schedule is software engineering—a field that certainly does its share of problem solving. Software engineers not only enjoy the process of creating new programs for a variety of companies in many different countries; they also might be called in during a “software crisis” in which they must apply their skills to the demands of high-stakes technical problems. Like so many other coveted positions that allow workers the convenience of working from home, software engineers must complete a certification process in order to achieve professional status. These certifications include Certified Software Development Associate and Certified Software Development Professional.

The field of education, too, is not without its certifications, but as with the field of engineering, the certification process can pay off in flexible, convenient hours conducive to a demanding home life. After receiving a Bachelor’s and the certification to teach secondary school in a particular state, one might find a future teaching from home for a state virtual school. Getting a Bachelor’s and a Master’s in a particular field of study,

such as Psychology or History, may turn into part-time or full-time work for distance education programs for both public and private universities. The demand for online classes is high, and many seeking fulfilling work that gives them the freedom to determine their own working hours may prefer this route to traditional forms of classroom teaching.

The internet has not only changed the field of education, it has also created new needs among the private sector. These “needs” might actually be a euphemism for “problems,” and the new problems facing businesses are often solved by people in the field of analysis. Analysts, whether they are problem, systems, marketing, or business analysts, often detect the sources of problems and determine solutions from a single and very portable computing device. Thus, analysts’ work is as portable as their computer. Unlike engineers, analysts are not directly involved in the creation or development of computer hardware or software. Instead, they provide an informed perspective on the inner workings of a particular business or system.

At the turn of the nineteenth-century, Frank Lloyd Wright could not have anticipated all the ways professional aspirations would change in the twenty-first century. While his idea that a professional does her best work when she least feels like it might still be appropriate to modern lines of work, the flexibility allowed by many jobs certainly makes doing one’s best work when one *most* feels like it even easier. Although many fields have found they need good, reliable workers who want to work from home, some of the most common jobs are found in the fields of engineering, education, and analysis. Jobs in these fields can be as rewarding as they are convenient.