TREND WATCH

Gamers might be the next best people to fill tech jobs.
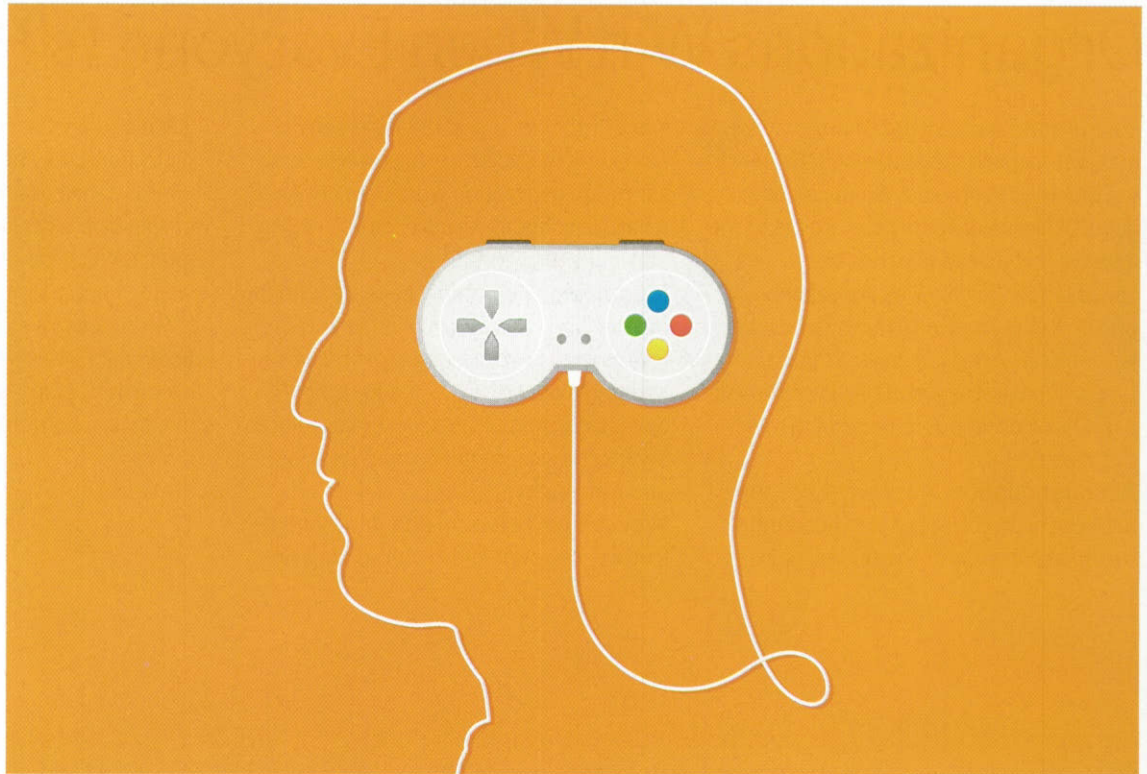
Turning Gamers' Hobbies Into IT Careers

BY ALEX MOORE

According to a 2017 Korn Ferry Hay Group survey of more than 2,100 U.S. companies, 42 percent of organizations can't find qualified candidates for their open IT jobs. And in an April 2017 survey by Robert Half, 24 percent of responding chief information officers listed playing or developing video games as a hobby that could increase the appeal of entry-level IT job seekers. That made it the second-most appealing hobby after web development. So, some people without traditional IT backgrounds might be (literally) gaming themselves into opportunities to train for these positions.

Apparently, playing video games can cultivate many of the skills a person will use in an IT career. According to John Reed, senior executive director for Robert Half Technology, when gamers spend their time trying to beat new levels and unlock new challenges, it "requires a lot of trial and error, a lot of problem solving." Those capabilities, in turn, "translate directly into the technology field, where you're often using technology to figure out how you solve business problems."

For example, you might have an IT job that requires someone to work independently, someone who can take business problems and find a solution on their own without much instruction. "A person who loves puzzle games might be great for that role because they've already shown that they love to work on their own to solve complex problems," Reed explains. In another example, he describes an IT role that requires a lot of long-distance, virtual teamwork. "People who enjoy collaborative online multiplayer games like World of Warcraft might excel here," he says. "They already have a lot of experience connecting with people across the web, and that's valuable in an IT setting."

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