

BLIZZARD GAMES TO LAYOFF 600 WORKERS



The odds are good that if you know Blizzard Entertainment then you know them for their work in virtual worlds, instead of for their actions in the real world. Blizzard Entertainment are the makers of the popular Massively Multiplayer Online Role-playing Game (MMORPG) World of Warcraft, what is arguably the most popular MMORPG in the world right now. They are also the makers of the Diablo and StarCraft games. This week however Blizzard Entertainment is in the news not for the newest expansion of their game, a panda race currently under development, but for the cuts that they are making to their staff. The company has announced that it is going to be cutting its staff back by about 600 workers. The company recently filed its notice and we know that about one third, or 200 of the workers will be coming from the payroll department. After that the next most cuts will come from in game service representatives, also known as the people players call when things are going wrong. Other job cuts will be made to account administration, the art department and technical services. The 600 layoffs are a significant portion of the 4,500 people that Blizzard Entertainment employs currently, so the company will be losing more than 10% of its overall staff. Interestingly enough the company did not choose to let any of the jobs go via attrition. They still have hiring listings for more than 100 workers on their jobs site. Of course Blizzard is not the only game company to get rid of staff in recent months. For those of you who missed out on our [earlier coverage](#) of cuts to staff at EA games here is an excerpt that will get you up to speed in no time at all: "EA is looking to get rid of workers in its Vancouver office, and while they are not big on a lot of the specifics, such as how many people are going to be out of a job, EA did issue the following statement about the layoffs through the site [IndustryGamers](#) : "EA in Vancouver is transforming its studio to align with EA's transformation to high-growth digital formats, including online, social gaming and free-to-play. Employees in our BC studio are learning new skills and working on digital games and services, and there are many examples. Developed at the EA SPORTS studio in Burnaby, the FIFA Soccer franchise represents the cutting edge of AAA gaming integrated with multiplatform extensions and online features. The Need for Speed World team in Burnaby is leading the digital transformation with 11 million registered players. As the BC studio makes this transformation, a small number of employees are being impacted while most others are being retrained, redeployed and rolling-on to new projects" Of course, EA is not the only game company to layoff workers in the past couple of months. THQ, "...the mastermind behind games such as: Saints Row: The Third, Warhammer® 40,000: Space Marine®, and Warhammer® 40,000®: Dawn of War II® – Retribution™. Despite the company's success in the games market, it is having some serious fiscal issues that may slow down, or even stop the flow of games from the company. THQ is getting ready to let go of about one dozen workers in their offices in Australia. They have also begun the process of closing down its offices in Japan, according to reports filed by the Japanese media."

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