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CAREERS IN FOCUS

No Experience Necessary?
The State of American Internships, 2015

Internships: Key Findings

For many college-educated Americans, an internship is the first step on the career ladder. Internships have become a key talent pipeline for employers, so where students intern and how well they perform can have a lasting impact on their career prospects.

For the second year, Burning Glass Technologies has used its ability to collect and analyze job postings to better understand the market for internships. Overall, we analyzed 214,953 U.S. internships posted online during 2014. Based on those postings, we found that employers have definite ideas about what interns should bring to the workplace.

- **Interns need to have specific skill sets just to get in the door.** Employers are quite particular about the skills interns need to have, often demanding expertise in specific software programs, advanced technical capabilities like risk management, or fields like market research and social media.

- **Manufacturing, retail, and professional services dominate the internship market**, accounting for 40% of all postings.

- **Most internships are still aimed at undergraduates**, but Science and IT Development postings are increasingly reserved for graduate students.

- **Today's interns are tomorrow's employees**, and in some industries account for a substantial percentage of all entry level job postings.

- **The 2015 internship season got off to a fast start.** Preliminary data suggests early internship recruiting outpaced the five-year average.

Ready to Work: Internships Demand Specific Skills

The nearly 215,000 online U.S. internship postings we analyzed run across a wide range of categories, from data warehousing to marketing. One element the categories have in common, however, is that they call for specific skills.

Internships, as a group, offer experience—but usually not training, at least not in certain basic software programs and business skills. Technology interns need to know programming languages like SQL and Java before they'll even be considered. And even in less-technical fields, experience with common software packages or hands-on skills like social media are a prerequisite.

Internship Type	Total Internship Postings	Distinguishing Skills		
Communications, Marketing, Social Media	31,326	Marketing	Social Media	Event Planning
Arts, Video, Graphic Design	24,159	Adobe Photoshop	Graphic Design	Adobe InDesign
Engineering	21,724	Electrical Engineering	Mechanical Engineering	AutoCAD
Finance	19,968	Accounting	Financial Analysis	Economics
Information Technology Development	19,104	JAVA	C++	Software Engineering
Administration	18,689	Administrative Support	Administrative Functions	Spreadsheets/Data Entry
Business Operations & Management	17,759	Business Administration	Supply Chain Management	Business Process
Sales	10,066	Sales Support	Outside Sales	Screening
Database Admin & Data Warehousing	9,444	SQL	SQL Server	Relational Databases
Science	7,530	Chemistry	Physics	Biology
Healthcare & Social Services	7,453	Patient Care	Pharmaceuticals	First Aid
Computer Networking & Information Security	4,579	JAVA	LINUX	System / Network Config.

Note: . Internship categories are not mutually exclusive. Internship types are categorized by groups of related skills, therefore, some job postings will fall into multiple categories.

The Essential Intern Skill Sets

Students looking for internships can improve their chances by anticipating the expectations of employers. The specific skills that firms want interns to have vary depending on the industry.

Key Skills Demanded by Internship Type

Communications, Marketing, Social Media	Arts, Video, Graphic Design	Engineering	Finance	Business Operations & Management	Information Technology Development
Social Media	Adobe Photoshop	Electrical Engineering	Accounting	Business Administration	JAVA
Marketing	Graphic Design	AutoCAD	Economics	Business Process	C++
Event Planning	Adobe Indesign	Mechanical Engineering	Financial Analysis	Procurement	Software Engineering
Journalism	Adobe Acrobat	Computer Aided Drafting/Design	Risk Management	Supply Chain Management	JavaScript
Blogging	JavaScript	Civil Engineering	Financial Reporting	Business Analysis	SQL
Business Development	Web Site Design	Construction Management	Asset Management	Logistics	Linux/UNIX
Market Research	Adobe Illustrator	Electrical Systems	Financial Statements	Business Planning	Computer Engineering
Public Relations	AutoCAD	Physics	Financial Modeling	Process Improvement	Python

March is Prime Recruitment Season for Interns

Landing an internship requires thinking ahead. If students don't have internships lined up by May, they may be out of luck. Prime recruiting time for interns spikes between February and May in anticipation of the summer internship season, and reaches its lowest point in July. Peak demand is in March, so students should plan ahead.

Monthly Internship Demand Relative to Annual Average: 2010-2014
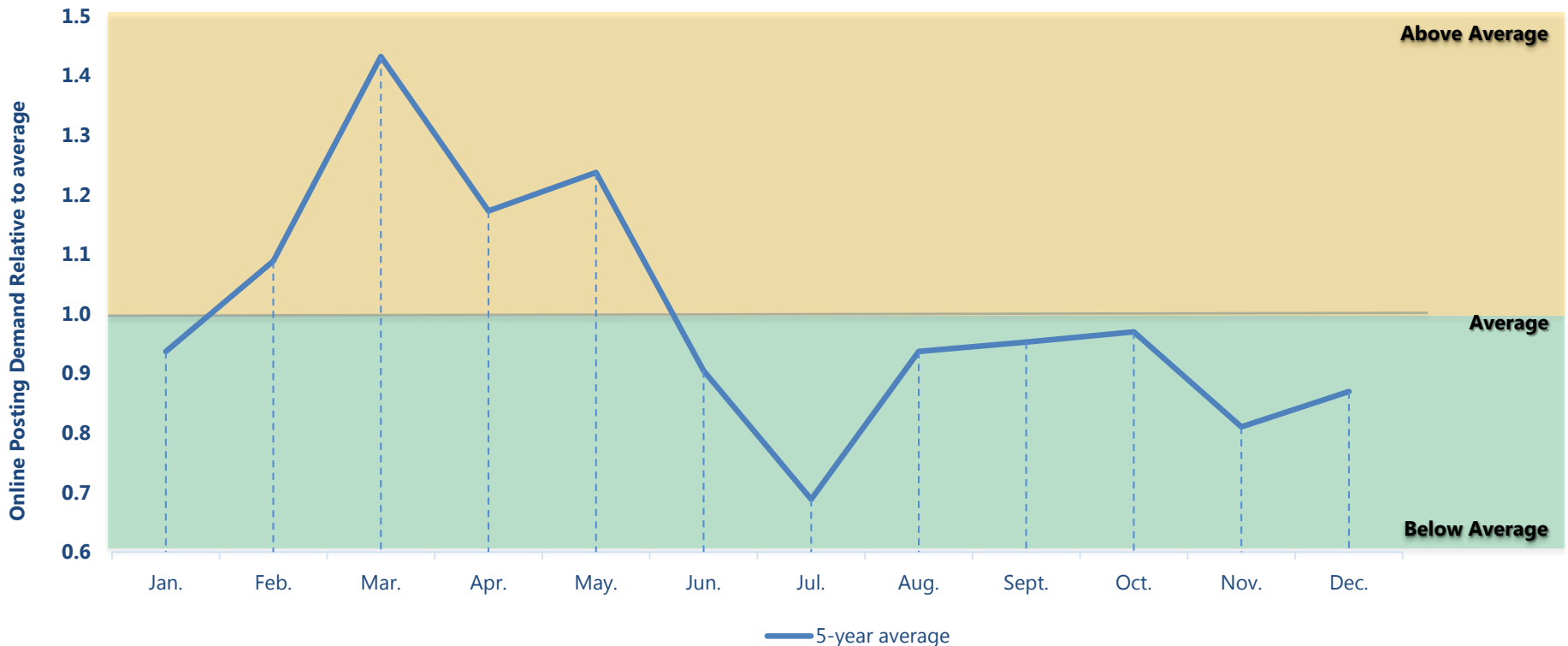
5-year average

Demand Strong in First Half of 2015 Internship Season

In the first three months of 2015, demand for interns was well above the five-year average, suggesting sustained growth in industry's desire for internships since 2010. In 2015, there were 19,825, 21,458, and 29,400 internship postings in January, February and March, respectively, compared to 20,412, 26,,335, and 26,492 internship postings in 2014.

Monthly Internship Demand Relative to Annual Average:
2010-2014
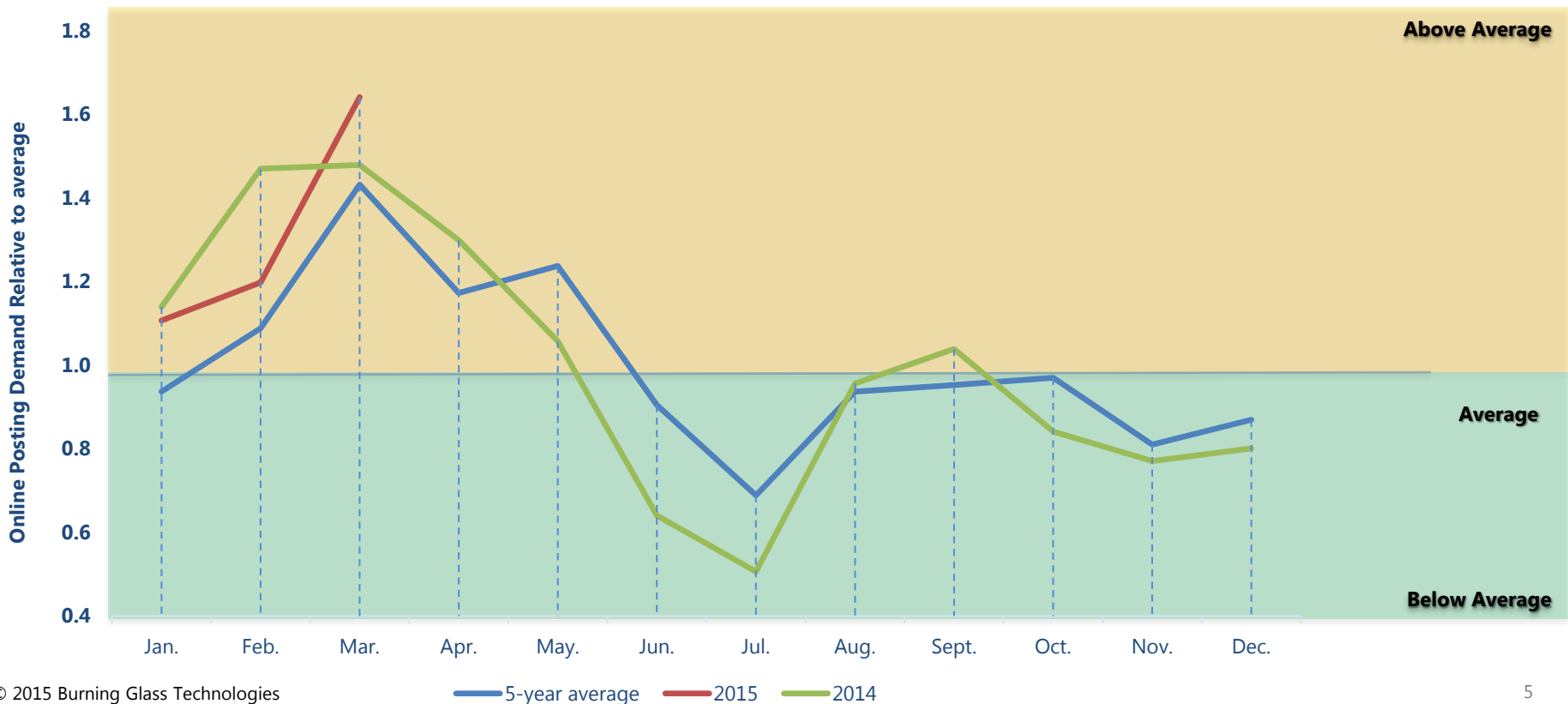
Demand for Internships by Industries

Internships are offered in a wide range of industries, but Manufacturing, Retail Trade, and Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services dominated the market in 2014. More than 40% of the online internship postings came from these three industries.

Industry	Top Demanded Intern Types		
	1	2	3
Manufacturing	Engineering	Business Operations & Management	IT Development
Retail Trade	Engineering	Administration	Sales
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Engineering	Finance	IT Development
Information	Communications, Marketing, Social Media	IT Development	Arts, Video, Graphic Design
Finance and Insurance	Finance	Business Operations & Management	Administration
Health Care and Social Assistance	Healthcare & Social Services	Administration	Communications, Marketing, Social Media
Public Administration	Administration	Engineering	Healthcare & Social Services
Educational Services	Communications, Marketing, Social Media	Administration	Arts, Video, Graphic Design
Wholesale Trade	Engineering	IT Development	Business Operations & Management
Other Industries	Communications, Marketing, Social Media	Engineering	Administration

Employers Depend on Interns to Fill Jobs

One way of assessing the extent to which employers depend on interns as an important source of talent is to look at internship postings in relationship to other entry level job openings. The higher the proportion of internships to entry level jobs, the more crucial internships are as a talent pipeline and the greater the portion of the workforce they comprise.

Based on postings, the areas where completing an internship is most critical to being a competitive candidate are Arts, Video & Graphic Design; Engineering; Communications, Marketing and Social Media; and IT Development. It's also important to note that other research, such as the survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, shows that significant numbers of employers hire their interns for full-time work, and up to half of those workers are still with the employer five years later.

Internship Type	Total Internship Postings	Total Postings	Internships' Share of Skill Area Postings
Arts, Video, Graphic Design	24,159	91,624	26%
Engineering	21,724	113,731	19%
Communications, Marketing, Social Media	31,326	168,817	19%
Information Technology Development	19,104	130,081	15%
Database Admin & Data Warehousing	9,444	76,754	12%
Business Operations & Management	17,759	184,455	10%
Computer Networking & Information Security	4,579	50,486	9%
Science	7,530	121,388	6%
Finance	19,968	328,601	6%
Administrative	18,689	508,927	4%
Sales	10,066	694,426	1%
Healthcare & Social Services	7,453	663,689	1%

Internship More Critical

Internship Less Critical
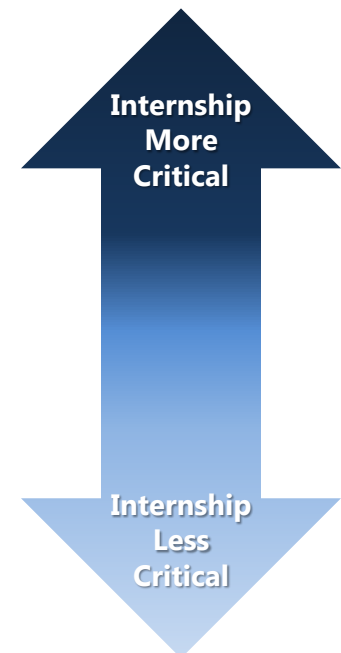
Note: Total Postings includes all job postings in 2014 requiring less than two years' experience.

Undergraduate or Graduate Internships?

Internships are how students prepare for full-time jobs after graduation—but *which* graduation depends on the field. Sales, administration, communications, and marketing internships are overwhelmingly open to undergraduates, but science and IT development employers are more likely to prefer graduate students. Some 44% of Science internships and 39% of IT Development internships prefer master's or higher degree-level students. In contrast, only 19% of Sales internships ask for candidates with graduate-level credentials.

Internship Type	Degree Requirement	
	Undergraduate	**Graduate**
Science	56%	44%
Information Technology Development	61%	39%
Database Admin & Data Warehousing	66%	34%
Healthcare & Social Services	67%	33%
Finance	67%	33%
Business Operations & Management	67%	33%
Computer Networking & Information Security	69%	31%
Arts, Video, Graphic Design	69%	31%
Engineering	70%	30%
Communications, Marketing, Social Media	72%	28%
Administration	75%	25%
Sales	81%	19%

Greater Demand for Graduate Students

Lower Demand for Graduate Students
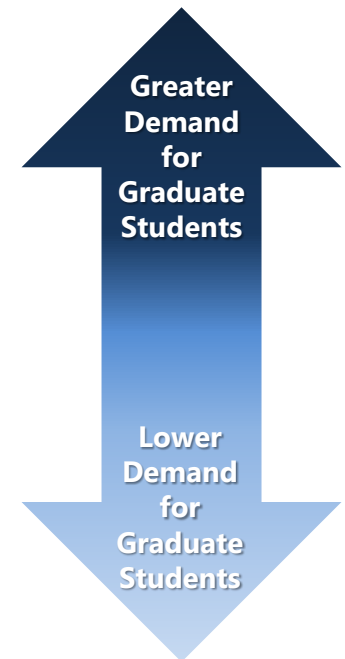
Degree Programs and Internship Demand

Students should think about internships strategically, and some students will have to start earlier and work harder to land internships than others. Our analysis shows that some fields enjoy an outsized share of internship opportunities relative to the percentage of students majoring in those areas. For example, 8% of all internships are in IT Development, while only 4% of students graduated with degrees in that field last year. Of course, students from other majors can apply for IT internships, but they will have to work harder to demonstrate that they have the technical skills required for these positions.

By contrast, last year 18% of all students graduated with degrees from Business Operations and Management programs, but only 8% of all internships were in this area. In this and other fields, students should not only start early but also make sure their skill levels are as high as possible to stay ahead of the competition

Internship Type	Undergraduate Degree		
	Graduating Student %	Internship Type %	% Gap
Engineering	5%	10%	4% ▲
IT Development	4%	8%	3% ▬
Arts, Video, Graphic Design	8%	11%	3% ▬
Communications, Marketing, Social Media	13%	15%	2% ▬
Computer Networking & Information Security	1%	2%	1% ▬
Database Admin & Data Warehousing	4%	4%	0% ▬
Administrative	11%	9%	-1% ▬
Science	5%	3%	-2% ▬
Finance	11%	9%	-3% ▬
Healthcare & Social Services	9%	3%	-6% ▼
Sales	12%	5%	-6% ▼
Business Operations & Management	18%	8%	-10% ▼

Internship Type	Graduate Degree		
	Graduating Student %	Internship Type %	% Gap
IT Development	3%	12%	9% ▲
Arts, Video, Graphic Design	3%	12%	9% ▲
Communications, Marketing, Social Media	9%	14%	6% ▲
Engineering	5%	11%	6% ▲
Finance	9%	11%	2% ▬
Science	4%	6%	2% ▬
Computer Networking & Information Security	1%	2%	1% ▬
Database Admin & Data Warehousing	4%	5%	1% ▬
Administrative	9%	8%	-1% ▬
Business Operations & Management	15%	10%	-5% ▼
Healthcare & Social Services	9%	4%	-5% ▼
Sales	9%	3%	-6% ▼

Note: Graduating Student % indicates the percentage of students of the function in the total undergraduate/graduate students in 2014. Data is from the IPEDS database of the National Center for Education Statistics. Internship Type % indicates the percentage of the internship types in total internships asking for undergraduate/graduate students in 2014.

Top Internship Clusters by State

Engineering internships dominate the Midwest and other rural parts of the country, while Marketing and Communications internships are the most demanded in states with large urban centers and strong technology sectors, such as California and Massachusetts.

Top Internship Clusters by State

- Administrative
- Arts, Video, Graphic Design
- Business Operations & Management
- Communications, Marketing, Social Media
- Engineering
- Finance
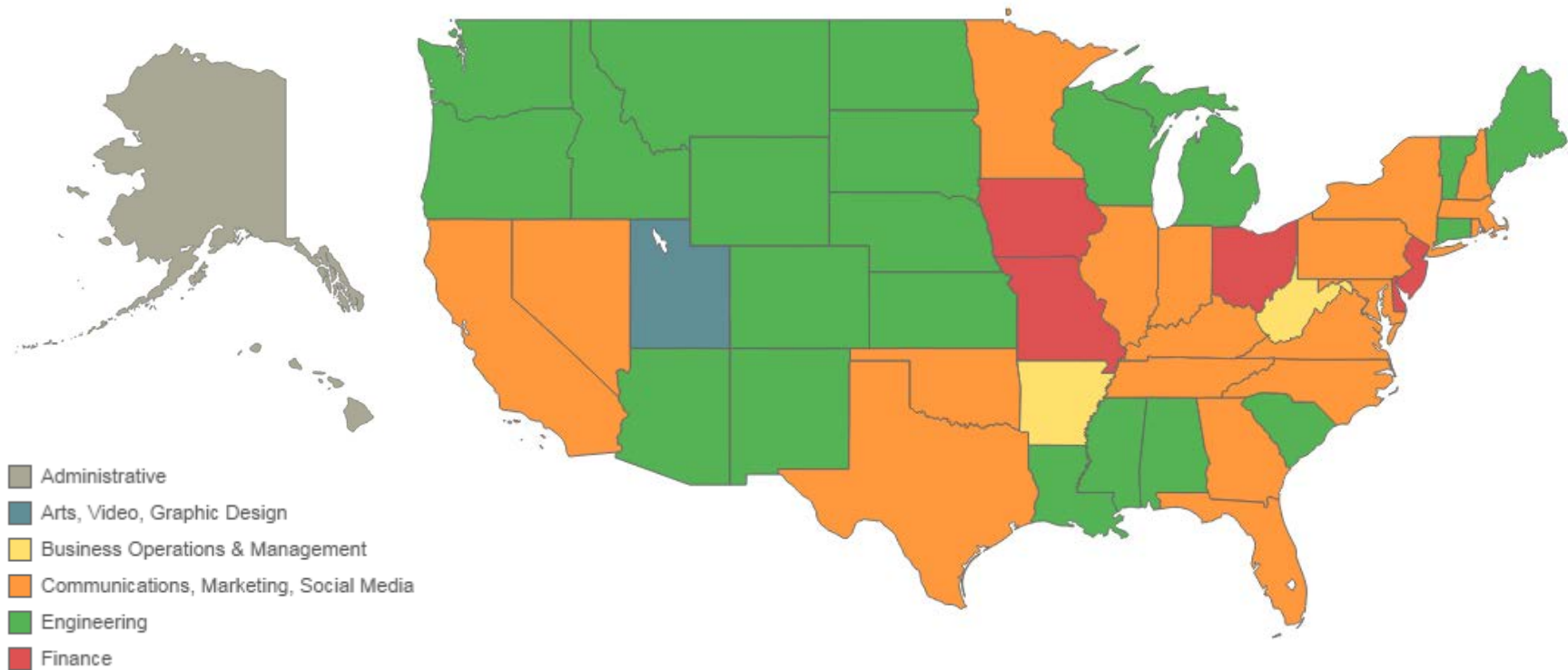
Methodology

All jobs data in this report are drawn from Burning Glass's database of online job postings, which includes nearly 100 million worldwide postings collected since 2007. Each day, Burning Glass visits close to 40,000 online jobs sites to collect postings. Using advanced text analytics, over 70 data fields are extracted from each posting including job title, occupation, employer, industry, required skills and credentials and salary. Postings are then deduplicated and placed in a database for further analysis.

About Burning Glass

Burning Glass's tools and data are playing a growing role in informing the global conversation on education and the workforce by providing researchers, policy makers, educators, and employers with detailed real-time awareness into skill gaps and labor market demand. Burning Glass's job seeker applications power several government workforce systems and have been shown to have substantive impact on reemployment outcomes and on labor market literacy.

Burning Glass is proud to serve a client base that spans six continents, including education institutions, government workforce agencies, academic research centers, global recruitment and staffing agencies, major employers, and leading job boards.

For More Information

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