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Dust Off Your Math Skills: Actuary Is Best Job of 2013

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By Lauren Weber

Pete Rossi can count on one hand the number of weeks out of the year that he works more than 50 hours. But the rest of the year, his job as an actuary with the Department of Defense, provides a good living with a minimum of stress.

That partly explains why actuaries have the best job in the United States, according to [a new survey by](#)

[CareerCast.com](#) that will be released Tuesday. Biomedical engineer was No. 2 and software engineer, the top job of 2012, came in at No.3. Careers that ranked the lowest included enlisted military personnel, lumberjack and newspaper reporter. (Click [here](#) to see the full ranking of all 200 jobs.)

CareerCast.com, a career website owned by Adicio Inc., ranked 200 jobs from best to worst based on five criteria: physical demands, work environment, income, stress, and hiring outlook. The firm used data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and other government agencies to determine the rankings. As in prior years, the 200 jobs were selected for their relevance in the current labor market as well as the availability of reliable data.

Actuaries put a financial value on risk – for instance, the chances of a hurricane destroying a beachfront home or the long-term liabilities of a pension system. In a world awash with risks of the natural and manmade variety, the profession is booming, says Tony Lee, publisher of CareerCast.com. In addition, he says, “there’s a severe shortage of actuaries,” so wages are rising. (The median salary

Job Ranking	Job Title
1	Actuary
2	Biomedical Engineer
3	Software Engineer
4	Audiologist
5	Financial Planner
6	Dental Hygienist
7	Occupational Therapist
8	Optometrist
9	Physical Therapist
10	Computer Systems Analyst

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for actuaries in 2010 was \$87,650, according to the Labor Department.)

Rossi, 31, spends his days calculating the future costs of the Pentagon's pension, health and education benefits, but says his job involves more than just crunching numbers for spreadsheets. He communicates with other government agencies and brainstorms with colleagues about financial models.

This year, several professions geared toward serving the financial and health needs of an aging population made the top ten, says Lee, including audiologist, financial planner, and physical therapist.

As for the worst job of 2013? Newspaper reporter bumped last year's loser, lumberjack, for the ignominious distinction.

"It's been low for a while," says Lee (last year it was ranked 196 out of 200). "What probably pushed it to the bottom is that several things got worse – job prospects decreased, the average salary continued to fall, and work hours continued to rise. Those factors also make the job more stressful."

But not every reporter (including this one) would agree with the final assessment.

Rocco LaDuca, covers crime and courts at the Observer-Dispatch in Utica, New York. He says he became a reporter in part because of fond memories of reading newspapers with his grandmother.

Pay is an issue, he says (the median salary for reporters in 2010 was \$36,000); he's not sure he can raise a family and send kids to college on a reporter's salary. And yes, the stress and the hours can be taxing. But he says, "I'm not sure I'd be happy in another setting. I can't think of any job that would be as exciting or as fulfilling as this."

"People in the community are affected by what I write," he says.

Related: [**The Best and Worst Jobs of 2012**](#)

Best and Worst Jobs of 2013

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Best and Worst Jobs of 2013

CareerCast.com, a career website, ranked 200 jobs from best to worst based on five criteria: physical demands, work environment, income, stress, and hiring outlook. To compile its list, the firm primarily used data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and other government agencies. From actuary to newspaper reporter, see the complete list, and search for your job. (Related article)

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