

35 isn't too old to work in tech — but you may feel over the hill, say software engineers

Ageism is a big issue in Silicon Valley, with many over 40 saying it's hard to find a job in the industry.

Ageism is a growing issue in Silicon Valley. But are older millennials finding themselves too old for the tech jobs at the biggest companies?

An anonymous user recently asked on Quora: "I'm 35 years old. Am I too old to join Google, Facebook, Microsoft or Apple as a software engineer?" Quora is a website that allows people to post questions and have users answer them.

A recent article in USA Today reported those over age 40 found themselves over the hill when looking for a tech job. A Financial Times article noted the story of a 62-year-old man, who despite years of experience with Hewlett-Packard, Sun Microsystems and Cisco was losing jobs to people "earlier in their career." A woman who was hired at Google at 52 described on Wired the issues older tech employees face with career development, lack of mentoring programs and socializing — although she noted she survived "karaoke, rock climbing and a folkloric overnight ski trip."

Several people who claimed to work at tech companies including Google, Amazon and Microsoft answered the Quora inquiry. Though the overwhelming majority said there was no age limit to joining a tech company, they did point out some issues like company culture and ageism. However, having a strong resume and relevant experience generally outweighed everything, most commenters said.

"Google frequently hires people who are much older than that, in both junior and senior positions," said Google software engineer Rebecca Sealfon, who said she started at the company at 33. "The main reasons Google engineers skew slightly younger, on average, are that Google was much smaller 10 years ago; many of its hires are made at the entry level; and for more senior positions, many older engineers are too well-established in their companies to transfer."

Another Google employee Andrew Shebanow — who said he started at the company at 46 and has been working there for seven years — said it is possible to get hired while older, but there are obstacles, including the interview process aimed toward young college graduates.

"Although ageism is rare, you may feel out of place at times since most of your coworkers will be much younger than you are," he wrote. "This comes up more often in social situations than in technical ones."

Frederic Jean, whose LinkedIn account lists him as a senior staff software engineer for Amazon Web Services, said he joined Amazon at 42.

"Yes, there is a lot of ageism in this industry," Jean said. "There are a lot of bad -isms in this industry. But there are many companies of all size that recognize how potent the combination of talent and experience can be. The good news is that companies that recognize it are also companies where grown ups tend to come to, which is a good thing."

A software engineer at Microsoft named Arya Afrashteh jokingly said older people will be a "social outcast" if they don't live on "chips, ramen, chocolate and protein drinks" and play "binary ping pong."

"Coding skillz begins to drop around 35," he wrote sarcastically.

"No you are not too old to work at those places at 35," Afrashteh, who is in his early 30s, added seriously. "You'll be fine at 35. You'll probably be fine all the way to 60 working at those companies. You can work anywhere at anytime at any age (though you may have to deal with a bit of ageism). Just stay healthy, learn stuff and find someone to settle down with. That's pretty much life."

UNEMPLOYMENT

Region	August 2016	July 2017	August 2017	Percentage Point Change	
				1 month	12 months
San José MSA	4.0%	3.8%	3.9%	+ 0.1	- 0.1
San Francisco MD	3.3%	3.3%	3.3%	0.0	0.0
California	5.6%	5.4%	5.4%	0.0	- 0.2
United States	5.0%	4.6%	4.5%	- 0.1	- 0.5

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

Sector — August 2017	San Jose MSA	San Francisco MD	Combined Region	Percentage Change (Combined Region)	
				1 month	12 months
Total Nonfarm	1,087,900	1,120,600	2,208,500	+ 0.4%	- 1.4%
Construction	48,900	43,600	92,500	+ 1.5%	+ 2.4%
Manufacturing	167,700	38,400	206,100	+ 0.6%	+ 1.3%
Retail Trade	86,400	80,700	167,100	+ 0.3%	- 0.4%
Information	80,400	73,400	153,800	+ 0.3%	+ 3.1%
Professional & Business Services	229,800	271,100	500,900	- 0.2%	- 0.8%
Educational Services	43,000	26,600	69,600	+ 0.1%	+ 0.1%
Health Care & Social Services	122,500	107,100	229,600	0.0	+ 3.4%
Hospitality & Leisure	105,500	149,600	255,100	- 0.6%	+ 5.3%
Government	89,100	127,800	216,900	+ 2.5%	+ 1.0%

NOTE: San José MSA (San José-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara Metropolitan Statistical Area) = Santa Clara and San Benito Counties
 San Francisco MD (San Francisco-Redwood City-South San Francisco Metropolitan Division) = San Mateo and San Francisco Counties

Source: California Employment Development Department, LMID

LABOR FORCE & ANNUAL CHANGE

Labor Force by Metropolitan Statistical Area (U.S. High-Tech Regions)

	LABOR FORCE			UNEMPLOYMENT			UNEMPLOYMENT RATE		
	August 2016	August 2017	Change	August 2016	August 2017	Change	August 2016	August 2017	Change
United States	159,800,000	160,863,000	+ 0.7%	7,996,000	7,287,000	- 8.9%	5.0%	4.5%	- 0.5
California	19,178,300	19,293,500	+ 0.6%	1,069,100	1,041,500	- 2.6%	5.6%	5.4%	- 0.2
San Diego	1,577,600	1,577,600	+ 0.0%	77,800	74,200	- 4.6%	4.9%	4.7%	- 0.2
San Francisco	1,016,800	1,023,200	+ 0.6%	33,400	34,100	+ 2.1%	3.3%	3.3%	0.0
San José	1,064,000	1,062,100	- 0.2%	42,800	41,200	- 3.7%	4.0%	3.9%	- 0.1
Austin, TX	1,110,447	1,126,108	+ 1.4%	38,241	37,761	- 1.3%	3.4%	3.4%	0.0
Boston, MA	2,663,901	2,730,900	+ 2.5%	84,533	94,515	+ 11.8%	3.2%	3.5%	+ 0.3
New York City, NY	4,147,743	4,237,140	+ 2.2%	229,669	216,846	- 5.6%	5.5%	5.1%	- 0.4
Seattle, WA	1,629,635	1,655,979	+ 1.6%	64,757	65,780	+ 1.6%	4.0%	4.0%	0.0
NOVA Workforce Area	779,200	781,300	+ 0.3%	25,100	25,000	- 0.4%	3.2%	3.2%	0.0

NOTE: Totals may not add correctly due to rounding

Source: California Employment Development Department, LMID

REGIONAL LAYOFF ACTIVITY

August 2017 Events

Company	Location	# Affected
Crazy 8	Redwood City	8
Gymboree	Palo Alto	10
Intel	Santa Clara	93
Marvell Semiconductor	Santa Clara	4
Pharmaca	Los Altos	8
Yahoo Holdings	Sunnyvale	263
Total		386

WARN SUMMARY

Events YTD [†] :	12
Individuals Affected YTD :	547
Individuals Previous YTD [‡] :	628

* **WARN: Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification** (notice of mass layoff or closure)
[†] **YTD: Year to Date** (Program year: July 1–June 30)
[‡] **Previous YTD:** No data available for San Mateo County, FY2014/15

NOTE: Layoff data are preliminary and should be considered an estimate of monthly regional activity

Source: NOVA's internal Rapid Response database