The Urban Dictionary (www.urbandictionary.com) defines geeks as “the people you picked on in high school and wind up working for as an adult.” Of course, there are plenty of software and hardware developers who don’t fit the typical geek profile. Most are quite comfortable talking about a wide range of topics from pop culture to hard science. However, you can’t deny that some folks are quite geekier than others.

The Big Bang Theory television sitcom is one of the best examples of how cool it is to be a geek. Sheldon Cooper and his mates live in Pasadena, California, near the California Institute of Technology, which is painted as a funky place to live and a hotbed of brainy types. But what if Sheldon or another geek was interested in moving to a different city that would suit his or her needs both in the present and during the next decade? Say Sheldon’s girlfriend, Amy Farrah Fowler, wants to learn how to tango and convinces Sheldon to explore Latin America. Let’s take a look at some options we’ve found for these love-struck geeks.

For years, much has been said about which Latin American cities could be considered a branch, or version, of Silicon Valley (the Californian cradle of Apple, Facebook, and other outstanding companies, which many consider to be the greatest technological pole of the West), “The Global Startup Ecosystem Index,” a report assembled by the Startup Genome in partnership with Telefónica Digital and researchers from Stanford University and the University of California, ranked cities with the best and most prepared ecosystems for technological development around the world. The research took into account the possibilities of development, the quality of university careers associated with the technological area, the number of entrepreneurs linked to the subject, and the speed of adoption of new technologies. Tel Aviv, Israel; Los Angeles, California; Seattle, Washington; New York City; and Boston, Massachusetts, were, in addition to Silicon Valley, the top-ranked cities in the world.

São Paulo, Brazil, was the top-ranked Latin American city, followed by Santiago, Chile. Both were listed in the top-20 worldwide rankings. Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Mexico City, Mexico; and Buenos Aires, Argentina rounded out the top five cities in Latin America. Here is an overview of each of these geek-magnet cities.

1) **São Paulo, Brazil**: One of the biggest cities in the world, São Paulo is considered the financial capital of Brazil as it is the location of the headquarters of major corporations and of banks and financial institutions. It is also home to research and development facilities and attracts companies due to the presence of regionally renowned universities, such as the University of São Paulo, considered by many to be the best university in Latin America. Science, technology, and innovation are leveraged by the allocation of funds from the state government, which is mainly carried out by the São Paulo Research Foundation.

2) **Santiago, Chile**: Santiago is the industrial and financial center of Chile, and it generates approximately 45% of the country’s gross domestic product (GDP). Some international institutions, such as the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, have their offices in Santiago. The strong economy and low government debt is attracting migrants from Europe and the United States. The city is home to numerous universities, colleges, research institutions, and libraries. The largest university, and one of the oldest in the Americas, is Universidad de Chile.

3) **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**: Rio de Janeiro has the second-largest GDP of any city in Brazil, surpassed only by São Paulo. The city has several universities and research institutes. The Ministry of Education has certified approximately 99 upper-learning institutions in Rio. The most prestigious university is the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, the fifth best in Latin America, and the second best in Brazil, second only to the University of São Paulo.

4) **Mexico City, Mexico**: Mexico City is one of the most important economic hubs in Latin America. The city
proper (the Federal District) produces 15.8% of the country’s GDP. According to a study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers, Mexico City recently reported a GDP of US$390 billion, ranking it as the eighth-richest city in the world. The National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), located in Mexico City, is the largest university on the continent, with more than 300,000 students from all backgrounds. Three Nobel laureates, several Mexican entrepreneurs, and most of Mexico’s modern-day presidents are among its former students. UNAM conducts 50% of Mexico’s scientific research and possesses a presence across the country with satellite campuses, observatories, and research centers. UNAM ranked second in the Top Latin America University Rankings published by Times Higher Education (then called Times Higher Education Supplement), making it the highest-ranked Spanish-speaking university in the world. The sprawling main campus of the university, known as Ciudad Universitaria, was named a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 2007.

5) **Buenos Aires, Argentina**: Buenos Aires is the financial, industrial, and commercial hub of Argentina. The economy in the city proper alone, measured by gross geographic product (GGP) (adjusted for purchasing power), totaled US$84.7 billion (US$34,200 per capita) in 2011 and amounts to nearly a quarter of Argentina’s GGP as a whole. Buenos Aires constitutes one of the largest economies among the world’s cities. There are many public universities in Argentina as well as a number of private universities. The University of Buenos Aires, one of the top learning institutions in South America, has produced five Nobel Prize winners and provides taxpayer-funded education for students from across the globe.

So, as you can see, there are are plenty of options available for geeks of all persuasions (including those who are fictional), with huge opportunities to work or develop a startup company. Which city would you choose if you were to move from your current home?

**About the author**

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