

# Surfing the Web for Career Success

**Terri Goldstein**  
**Jennifer Olson**

Western Region Outreach Center and Consortia  
National Center on Deafness  
California State University, Northridge  
Northridge, California

---

## *Abstract*

Most service providers are familiar with traditional job search methods. However, many are not up to date on the value and uses of the Internet in the employment process. The World Wide Web provides a wealth of accessible information on developing job-seeking skills, finding job listings, as well as posting and submitting electronic resumes. This article will provide tools for working with students on career issues utilizing current technologies, including where the "hot sites" are located, how to develop an electronic resume, and other vital resources.



## **Overview of the Internet**

### **What is Internet?**

The Internet was developed by the U.S. government in the early 1960s in case of a nuclear war. However, as the Cold War ended, other institutions began to utilize the Internet, beginning with education, then private companies, and commercial servers. It is now a vast international network of networks that enables computers of all kinds to share services and communicate directly with each other, as if they were part of one giant, seamless, global computing machine.

### **Who Pays for It?**

There is the myth that the Internet is free. It's not. While there is no Internet, Inc. which collects fees from all Internet networks or users, everyone pays for their part in different ways. Often, these fees are not directly assessed from the actual users, which feeds the illusion of "free access." For example, when students pay their tuition and fees, a portion of it is used to pay for connection to a regional network, which in turn pays a national provider for its access. This gives the illusion to students that it is a free service.

## **Accessing the Waves (Internet)**

### **Obtaining an Account**

If you work on a campus or for a company with Internet access, contact your local computer center to receive an account. Commercial on-line services are also available, including American On-line (AOL), CompuServe, PacBell Net, Earthlink, or any other local server.

### **Required Equipment and Software**

Internet users need access to computers, either at home, school or work. The computer should be hooked up to ethernet or a modem (14.4 KBPS or higher). The larger the number, the faster the data is transferred from the Internet to your

computer. The fastest modem available today is 56 KBPS. An installed web browser or electronic mail software, such as Netscape, Internet Explorer, or AOL Browser, is also necessary.

### Key Surf Lingo

While there are numerous sites that provide information regarding Internet use, <http://www.webteacher.org> is an excellent resource for more in-depth information (National Cable Television Association (NCTA) and TECH CORP, 1998). This site offers a self-paced, on-line tutorial that provides an interactive approach to learning more about using the Internet.

One of the most important uses of the Internet is that it allows *electronic messages* (or *e-mail*) to be sent between computers that are connected to it. These messages have come to be known as electronic mail, or e-mail.

For a number of years, a staple for rapid and broad distribution of information on the Internet has been the use of *listservs* (sometimes called Automatic Mail Lists). Although some of the functions of these lists are being supplanted by web sites and newsgroups, listservs play a large role in distributing information because they require only e-mail capability. Listservs are basically e-mail, but they have the potential for a large impact because they are distributed to a large group (thus, they are closely related to newsgroups). All subscribers to a particular listserv receive all messages and responses sent to the listserv. Participants have the option to either respond or simply view the conversations of others.

An information *distribution list* is similar to a listserv in that you must subscribe to participate, but the information flow is only one way—from a source to the subscribers on the list.

*Attachments* are files that are linked to a specific e-mail message, just as you might paperclip a clipping to a snail mail letter (a letter sent through the US Postal Service).

In the context of a file, an *ASCII file* (or American Standard Code for Information Interchange) is one that contains only text characters—numbers, letters and standard punctuation. Files pasted into web sites or embedded in e-mail are usually required to be in ASCII. Files, such as resumes, sent as e-mail attachments are often sent in ASCII to enable the recipient to be able to view the document when you do not know what type of word processing or page layout software they use.

The *World Wide Web* is a graphics-based network of inter-linked hypertext and hyperlinks documents, which permit you to move from one link to another link to expand upon information found in each link. Remember that the Internet is the worldwide network of computer networks and the Web is only one network of many on the Internet. The World Wide Web is frequently referred to as “the Web” or “WWW.”

A *browser* is a software program that enables one to search, often somewhat randomly, through the information provided by a specific type of server. It is generally used in relation to the World Wide Web, but also often used to view newsgroups, gophers and e-mail.

A *web site* or a *homepage* refers to the site for a specific company, organization, institution or person, accessed by linking to a specific URL. The colored and/or underlined text corresponds to *hypertext links* to other documents (or other locations within the present document). Clicking once on these links will take you to the corresponding document, and if you use the mouse to place the cursor over the link, the cursor changes its appearance to the shape of a pointing hand.

A *Uniform Resource Locator* or *URL address* is a wedding of the information in the address for a specific computer and the information in its local file structure. Thus a URL address gives the location of a file, not with respect to a single computer, but with respect to the entire Internet. An example of a URL is <http://www.dbm.com/jobguide/>.

The type of computer language used to mark up text files with styles and links for use with the World Wide Web browsers is *HyperText Markup Language* (or *html*). A *search engine* is a program that looks through databases of information that have been compiled about web pages and reports back any items it finds that match the keywords you specified.

## Miscellaneous Terminology

Cyberspace or Information Super Highway	Euphemisms referring to the Internet.
Server	A machine that makes services available on a network to client programs. For example, a file server makes files available.
Modem	A modem allows your computer to talk to another via the phone lines.
Ethernet	A type of local area network which is a direct wire connection to a server and much faster than using a modem or LocalTalk.
On-line	Actions performed when you are connected to another computer.
Upload	To send a file to another machine.
Download	To retrieve a file from another (host) machine to your machine.
Post	To send a message to a discussion group or list. Also used to indicate putting information into a web site.

## Why Surf the Web for Jobs?

1. *Networking!* This can be the key to finding a job. The Internet is the world's largest network.
2. *The growth of on-line listings and other information.* As the Internet grows and expands, so do the participants listing jobs.
3. *The Internet is available at all hours of the day/night/weekend.* Who cares if you are logged in at 2 a.m.?
4. *Free access to information.* After you receive your account or pay for your access, there are hundreds of listings and resources available to you at no additional cost.
5. *The geographical reach of the Internet.* From wherever you live, you can begin searching for work in Seattle or even France from your computer.
6. *Demonstrating to an employer your skills and familiarity with the Internet.* This additional skill may set you apart from other candidates for the same position.
7. *Find jobs more easily using keywords.* Keyword searching in the various databases and networks can let you pull up the list of skills in a listing and target it more readily.
8. *On-line job listings can tip you off when a company is increasing staffing.*
9. *Post your resume at little or no cost.* There are several databases and newsgroups where you can post your resume at no additional charge.

## Exploring Various Surfing Networks and Resources

### The Web

The World Wide Web has had a tremendous amount of growth recently, partially due to increased academic listings and the addition of companies that are opening their own web servers. In fact, it is expected that by the year 2000, more than one million companies will be disseminating information and services on the Internet. Many professional societies, academic institutions, and U.S. federal government agencies have registered web services and include job listings. Several recruiters are also on-line and their numbers are growing.

### Advantages of using the web:

- A good source for networking contacts, information resources, and job listings.
- Regularly updated information. While some sites may be updated daily, check the date of last update to be certain the information is current.
- A great network for job hunters in almost all areas, especially in the technical fields.

- Graphics based and user friendly.

#### Tips for using the Web:

- Graphics are big and they take time. If you have a modem that runs at 14.4 or slower, set your browser for text only, or be prepared to sit for a while.
- Web sites have a tendency to move. They become popular and the local administrator or owner is forced to move the pages or the whole site to a new server to accommodate the traffic. Watch for warnings of sites moving.
- Web sites come up and down faster than we can keep track. Be prepared that a site you are connecting to may no longer exist. Keep searching because new sites are “born” every day!
- Popular web sites get overloaded just like everything else. Try again or try an odd time, like after 8p.m.

#### **Newsgroups**

Newsgroups provide a mechanism whereby mail messages are systematically made available to large groups of people. In this case the mail message is said to be “posted” to the newsgroup. It is expected that other readers of the newsgroup will reply to posted messages. Therefore, subscribers to the newsgroup can follow and participate in discussions that may go on for very long periods and range over many topics related to the subject matter of the newsgroup.

#### Usenet newsgroups

- The *\*.jobs* groups are good for job listings, posting resumes and discussions on job hunting.
- Groups dedicated to various subjects or topics can be used for networking contacts, watching industry trends, current information and more specific job listings.
- Newsgroups can be international, regional, local or organizational in coverage.
- Job hunters who plan to relocate can monitor newsgroups specific to the area desired.
- Information is added daily and requires constant monitoring for new information and listings.

#### Newsreaders

To read new from newsgroups, users need access to an Internet server and a newsreader. A newsreader is a computer interface that allows one to read and post newsgroups items, and to manage these items in some systematic way. There are various newsreader programs available, but web browsers generally come equipped with their own integrated newsreaders.

#### Usenet newsgroups sites:

biz.jobs.offered	Usenet newsgroup with commercial postings of jobs available.
misc.jobs.misc	Discussions about jobs/job hunting. Do not post resumes or jobs here.
misc.jobs.offered	General positions available.
misc.jobs.offered.entry	Entry-level positions available.
misc.jobs.resumes	Post your resume here (ASCII text format only).

#### **Telnet**

Telnet is one of the basic services which defines the Internet. If you do not have direct access to services like gopher and the Web, you can use telnet to connect to public servers for these networks. Telnet lets users create a connection

with a remote machine and interact with it. These remote machines can be difficult to locate and their coverage varies. Telnet is mainly good for job listings but some services might have good information resources or contact information. Job listings may change daily or weekly or a site may have a specific day each month when new listings appear. Information on site updates may be available.

## **Gopher**

Gopher used to be one of the most popular Internet search systems, and despite the Web, it continues to link new servers. Though gopher pages lack graphics and rich formatting, menu listings allow users to display content pages or additional menu sublistings. Gopher can take you to the place you want to be, let you look at the files and then let you save or mail it all home. This is the best network for job hunters looking for work in academia, research, or the federal government. In addition, many professional societies maintain gopher servers that include job listings. Use gopher sites for networking and support from professional societies, information resources, and job listings. Be aware that with the increasing popularity of the World Wide Web, gophers are not being utilized as frequently as they once were. Be sure to check the date of the information being viewed.

### Tips for using Gopher:

If you have access to web browser, it is recommended that you use it to connect to gopher because it offers a better connection. Some files, such as short digital movies, require the use of the browser's helper applications. If available, some browsers automatically launch the helper application required by a gopher link. A gopher URL would look like this:  
<gopher://una.lib.umich.edu/inetdirsstacks/jobs%3ariley>.

The various resources and networks may cover different types of information and handle it differently. Some things to consider are:

- What type of information is usually found here?
  - Formal vs. informal discussion.
  - Commercial interests vs. academic or research.
  - Is it merely job listings or is there other useful information to be found?
- How volatile is the information found here?
  - Is it updated or altered daily, weekly, or monthly?

## **Surfing Strategies**

When interested in obtaining information from the Web, users need to determine where the desired information might be found by searching the various lists and using the various indexing and searching tools. Selecting the appropriate software tools and techniques needed will help the user decide the best way to retrieve the information.

## **Search Engines**

A search engine is a program that looks through databases of information that have been compiled about web pages and reports back any items it finds that match the specified keywords. Some of the more popular search engines are listed below.

Yahoo!	<a href="http://www.yahoo.com">http://www.yahoo.com</a>		Infohiway	<a href="http://www.infohiway.com">http://www.infohiway.com</a>
Alta Vista	<a href="http://www.altavista.com">http://www.altavista.com</a>		WebCrawler	<a href="http://webcrawler.com">http://webcrawler.com</a>
Excite NetSearch	<a href="http://www.excite.com">http://www.excite.com</a>		HotBot	<a href="http://www.hotbot.com">http://www.hotbot.com</a>
Infoseek	<a href="http://www.infoseek.com">http://www.infoseek.com</a>		Lycos	<a href="http://www.lycos.com">http://www.lycos.com</a>

### Example: AltaVista Search Engine

An example of a search engine is the AltaVista Search Service provided by Digital Equipment Corporation. This is a web page that includes a small window in which the user can type a word or set of words that could be found in web documents that deal with a particular topic.

For instance, suppose you wanted to locate information about accounting on the WWW. Go to the AltaVista site and type “accounting.” Press *return* or *enter*, or use the mouse to select the *submit* button. The search engine will respond by providing a list of all the documents in its database that contain the word “accounting.” The browser will display a page with the keyword(s) and a list of documents in which the engine found the word(s).

Note that each match (or “hit”) returned by AltaVista for the keyword(s) has a link to a document that contains the keyword(s). The link appears in two places: 1) the link at the beginning of the hit indicates the title that the document’s author gave it and 2) the link at the end of the hit shows the URL for the document. You can go to the document by simply clicking on either of these links.

### **Sharpening the Focus**

If the keyword specified for the search is a rather common term, there may be an enormous number of Web documents that contain the term. In this case, many of the hits may only accidentally contain the term. Rather than wasting a lot of time looking through the long list and visiting links that may turn out to have little or nothing to do with the topic, let the search engine do the sifting by repeating the search with additional, more specific keywords.

For example, maybe you are really only interested in information on the accounting vacancies. In that case, rather than telling the search engine to look for “accounting” and then doing all the work to narrow this to a list of only those sites about vacancies, simply have the search engine perform a new search. Erase the previous contents of the entry area and type “accounting vacancies.”

Use quotation marks to group words. Be sure to include quotation marks when you want two words to be considered a single term. Omitting the quotation marks will cause the search engine to report any documents containing either “accounting” or “vacancies”. For instance, the engine may show a list that contains links to all sorts of documents about accounting that have nothing to do with vacancies, or plenty of documents that contain the word “vacancies” but have nothing to do with accounting.

Case sensitivity in searches. By using only lowercase letters for keywords, the AltaVista engine will list all documents that contain the words, regardless of the case in which the words appear in the documents (i.e., the engine performs a “case insensitive” search). On the other hand, by using any uppercase letters in a keyword, the engine will only report hits for the documents that contain an exact match for the word in that exact set of upper and lower case letters. For instance, using “acCouNtING” as a keyword will only produce those documents (if any exist) that contain the word written exactly that way. There would not be any listed that contained “accounting” or “Accounting.”

And maybe sharpen some more. Specifying “accounting vacancies” for a search will still return a lot of hits, probably far more than you wish to search through by yourself to find the information you’re really seeking. You would probably want to be even more specific. For example, try the search engine with the keyword string *computer* “accounting vacancies” + *Los Angeles*. This will search for web documents in which the phrase “accounting vacancies” plus Los Angeles

occurs and the word “computer” occurs (with no case sensitivity). You should find that the first few hits now correspond with much more specific information.

Use the *help* files to perfect your search techniques. Search engines usually have *help* pages to show how to target a search so that its returns are more likely to be relevant to the information sought. The AltaVista search engine has a set of *help* pages to help improve your search skills.

### How to Save the Information You Find!

Usenet	The newsreader will have a “save to file” command. Make a note of the date of the posting and in which group the listing was found.
Telnet	Be prepared to print out anything you find and note the site address.
Gopher	Save to file “Mail to,” download, or print screens. Use the “bookmark” command to save a site to your own list for easy access again. Use the “technical info” command (=) to see where you are and the path to the file.
World Wide Web	Web browsers will let you save information to a file and print screens. Use the “hotlist” or “bookmark” command to save a site to your list for easy connection in the future.

### Researching Careers

When conducting career research on-line, it is important to know where you are in the job search process to be able to focus on which resources will provide the best information to meet your needs. One site, which contains links to information no matter where you are in the career exploration process, is the homepage of the Career Center at California State University, Northridge. The Career Center employs an on-site webmaster to maintain the page and ensure the links are kept as up to date as possible. Access the Career Center through <<http://www.csun.edu/career/otherweb.htm>>.

### Career Assessment and Occupational Research

One crucial piece of the career planning process that has yet to proliferate on-line is the area of career assessment. There are a few sites which provide basic questionnaires to help the individuals explore their own personal values, interests, aptitudes, abilities, personal traits and desired lifestyle. Unfortunately, the most sites only provide the questions, but do not assist in synthesizing the responses to lead to possible career areas. The sites listed below include some popular ones related to career assessment and occupational research.

Career Assessment	
The Keirsey Temperament Sorter	<a href="http://keirsey.com/">http://keirsey.com/</a>
Employment Readiness Search Inventory	<a href="http://www.cweb.com/inventory/">http://www.cweb.com/inventory/</a>
What Color is Your Parachute: The Net Guide	<a href="http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-adv/classifieds/careerpost/parachute/parafram2.htm">http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-adv/classifieds/careerpost/parachute/parafram2.htm</a>
Career Planning Process	<a href="http://bgsu.edu/careers/process/process.html">http://bgsu.edu/careers/process/process.html</a>
Online Career Center – Know Yourself	<a href="http://www.aboutwork.com/knowyourself/index.html">http://www.aboutwork.com/knowyourself/index.html</a>

<b>Occupational Research</b>	
The Riley Guide—Research for Career and Work Options	<a href="http://www.dbm.com/jobguide/research.html">http://www.dbm.com/jobguide/research.html</a>
Online Career Center—Career Database	<a href="http://www.aboutwork.com/career/">http://www.aboutwork.com/career/</a>
Career Information by College Major	<a href="http://info.rutgers.edu/Services/Career/carmaj/">http://info.rutgers.edu/Services/Career/carmaj/</a>
Occupation Outlook Handbook	<a href="http://stats.bls.gov/ocohome.htm">http://stats.bls.gov/ocohome.htm</a>
JobSmart Guides for Specific Careers	<a href="http://jobsmart.org/tools/career/spec-car.htm">http://jobsmart.org/tools/career/spec-car.htm</a>
Hoover's Online	<a href="http://www.hoovers.com/">http://www.hoovers.com/</a>

### **Job Seeking Skills and Disability-Specific Information**

The web also has many resources related to job seeking skills and information specifically related to job placement for individuals with disabilities. A few sites are listed below.

<b>Job Seeking Skills</b>	
Occupational Outlook Handbook—Job Search Methods	<a href="http://stats.bls.gov/oco/oco20042.htm">http://stats.bls.gov/oco/oco20042.htm</a>
The Cal State Northridge Career Center's Disability Resources	<a href="http://www.csun.edu/~sp20558/">http://www.csun.edu/~sp20558/</a>
Online Career Center—Virtual Interview	<a href="http://www.aboutwork.com/ace/virtual.html">http://www.aboutwork.com/ace/virtual.html</a>
<b>Disability Specific Information</b>	
The Job Accommodation Network Solutions@disability.com	<a href="http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/english/homeus.htm">http://janweb.icdi.wvu.edu/english/homeus.htm</a> <a href="http://disability.com/">http://disability.com/</a>
The President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities	<a href="http://www.pcepd.gov/">http://www.pcepd.gov/</a>
Equal Opportunity Publications Inc.	<a href="http://www.eop.com">http://www.eop.com</a>
NAOTD - Disability Information on the Internet	<a href="http://www.naotd.org/links.htm">http://www.naotd.org/links.htm</a>
Independence Bank	<a href="http://www.ind-bank.org/">http://www.ind-bank.org/</a>
Careers On-Line	<a href="http://disserv3.stu.umn.edu/COL/">http://disserv3.stu.umn.edu/COL/</a>

### **Other Important Resources**

Newsgroups. Newsgroups are an excellent resource to find general job seeking support and occupation specific information (i.e. groups for computer programmers). Use the Alta Vista newsgroup search engine to locate specific newsgroups. Take advantage of the experts "at your fingertips" to ask questions about the field, the work environment, training needed to get into the field, and on-going training or certification to advance in the field, and to learn about companies and job openings.

Listservs. Generally these are field specific. Contact national organizations for information about listservs for persons working in the field. For example, contact the Association on Higher Education and Disability for information about a listserv for service providers who work with students with disabilities in higher education. Much like newsgroups, these are places to pose inquiries about the field, access issues, specific companies and organizations, contacts to get additional information and even job openings.

## **Surfing for Job Openings**

### **Surfing Basics**

While Web searches are *one* way of finding a job, they're not for everyone – yet. Of the 12,000+ fields listed on the net, most of the job listings focus on computer and technical fields. Large (5000+ employees) and medium (500-5000 employees) size companies are the primary users of the Internet. Some experts predict 80 percent of them will be using electronic resume screening in two years.

When looking for a job, cultivate all your networks. Don't neglect the hidden job market; 80 percent of all jobs are never advertised. Consider the quality of the job listings. Does the system have the kind of job you want? Are the listings current?

### Don't Overdo It

Invest your time wisely. There are 11,000+ sites on the Web; you can't search them all. Find what web sites work for you and stick with them, experimenting occasionally. It takes approximately half an hour to fill out a resume form and you can spend hours surfing without catching a wave (or a job lead). Dedicate roughly 15 percent of your job search time to surfing the Net to find job openings unless you are in a computer or technical field where job announcements are abundant.

### Surfing Safety

One wag likened posting an electronic resume on the Internet to nailing your hardcopy resume to a tree – anyone and everyone can see it, including your present employer. Be conscious of security. While it's essential to post your telephone number and e-mail address, you may want to carefully consider posting your home or work street address and the names of your references and employers.

### Finding the Right Wave

- *URLs:* Type the address (i.e., <http://www.careermosaic.com>), and press *return* or *enter* to reach the home page. Click on interesting topics. Use the *back* key at top to go back to the previous screen. Icons can also help you navigate within and among sites. You can use URLs to find directories, search engines, resume banks, specific employers and career information.
- *Directories/search engines:* Type the address (i.e., <http://www.yahoo.com>), and press *return* or *enter*. Use keywords (employment) or phrases (employment + human resources) to navigate.
- *Log your search:* Create a bookmark or keep a log of your URLs.

### Scouting the Big Waves

There are thousands of sites located throughout the Internet. These are some of those we consider to be the most worthwhile. All addresses are case sensitive.

<b>Job Banks</b>	
Riley Guide	<a href="http://www.dbm.com/jobguide">http://www.dbm.com/jobguide</a>
America's Job Bank	<a href="http://www.ajb.dni.us/">http://www.ajb.dni.us/</a>
Monster Board	<a href="http://www.monster.com/">http://www.monster.com/</a>
Yahoo	<a href="http://www.yahoo.com/Business/Employment">http://www.yahoo.com/Business/Employment</a>
CareerMosaic	<a href="http://www.careermosaic.com/">http://www.careermosaic.com/</a>
CareerPath	<a href="http://www.careerpath.com">http://www.careerpath.com</a>
E.span	<a href="http://www.espan.com">http://www.espan.com</a>
On-line Career Center	<a href="http://www.occ.com">http://www.occ.com</a>
<b>College Students &amp; Alumni</b>	
JobTrak	<a href="http://www.jobtrak.com/jobs/">http://www.jobtrak.com/jobs/</a>
Job Web	<a href="http://www.jobweb.org/">http://www.jobweb.org/</a>
College Grad Job Hunter	<a href="http://www.collegegrad.com/">http://www.collegegrad.com/</a>
CSUN's Career Center's Homepage	<a href="http://www.csun.edu/~hfcar009">http://www.csun.edu/~hfcar009</a>

<b>Specific Fields</b>	
Federal Jobs	<a href="http://www.fedworld.gov">http://www.fedworld.gov</a>
Education	<a href="http://hostserver.merit.edu/ads/.links.html">http://hostserver.merit.edu/ads/.links.html</a>
MacTemps	<a href="http://www.mactemps.com">http://www.mactemps.com</a>
Health Care	<a href="http://worldmall.com/mpo/">http://worldmall.com/mpo/</a>
Economists	<a href="http://www.eco.utexas.edu/joe/">http://www.eco.utexas.edu/joe/</a>
Library Science	<a href="telnet://alexia.lis.uiuc.edu">telnet://alexia.lis.uiuc.edu</a>
Firefighting	<a href="http://firefighter.com/dfire/ffjphp.html">http://firefighter.com/dfire/ffjphp.html</a>
<b>Other Specialty Sites</b>	
The Help Wanted Page	<a href="http://www.helpwantedpage.com">http://www.helpwantedpage.com</a>
The Occupational Information Network	<a href="http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet">http://www.doleta.gov/programs/onet</a>
Career Magazine	<a href="http://www.careermag.com/careermag/">http://www.careermag.com/careermag/</a>

## **Getting Your Feet Wet**

### **Navigating a Simple Search**

Some hours are better than others for surfing the Web. If the internet isn't moving along as quickly as you'd like, try shopping for jobs during "off hours" – early morning or late at night. Graphic-laden sites slow things down, too. Most websites offer "text only" versions that provide speedy access.

Note the date of posting: newer postings are more apt to be unfilled. You can usually limit the number of listings you get by typing in "from" and "to" search dates.

You can target your region of search in most cases. Many services provide a "pop-up menu" for individual states; others allow more local searches. These options usually appear before you indicate what type of job you are looking for.

Note links to an employer's website; researching a company before you send your resume and cover letter can make the difference between success and failure

### **Keep a Diary or Log of Your Search**

Include the date of your search, the service used, the URL of the particular site, and the jobs that you found, including the listing number, in your log. For each listing, note the company name, address, contact information (including phone and fax numbers, and e-mail addresses), and the date the job was posted. Also include the job title and job description, qualifications needed, whether or not there is a web link, whether or not a resume bank is used, and if on-line applications can be sent. Be sure to print any interesting job listings.

## **Resumes**

Two resumes are better than one! Hardcopy (or paper) resumes are useful for face-to-face contacts. They can look very appealing to the reader. Hardcopy resumes are subjective, and are good for emphasizing personal qualities and experience. Job seekers can bring them to interviews, or mail or fax them to prospective employers.

Electronic resumes are used to transmit information via the computer. One feature that is different from the traditional resume is the inclusion of a keyword paragraph. Electronic resumes use plain text in ASCII or Rich Text Format. They are objective, emphasizing facts. Job seekers can quickly send them electronically to prospective employers. It is recommended that electronic resumes include a statement at the bottom indicating that a fully formatted copy of the resume is available upon request.

## **Electronic Resumes Types**

There are several different ways to submit resumes – from old-fashioned paper resumes to fancy individual web sites:

- Hardcopy resumes: Good for scanning, mailing and distribution at interviews.
- Your own web page: You can create your own “resume” web page, complete with pictures and animation. HTML editing can be done with any word processor, if the user knows html language. You can also purchase software for this purpose (Adobe PageMill, Claris Home Page, Microsoft FrontPage, Net Objects are popular choices).
- Questionnaires and on-line forms provided by employers: Many employers have their own forms for applicants to complete. Some are simple “fill in the blanks” formats, others allow an applicant to cut and paste portions of their resumes and cover letters.
- E-mail: Embed your resume (and cover letter) in the message; avoid attachments as they are frequently difficult for other systems to open.

## **Resume Banks**

Finding a match for your employment needs is a lot like dating: you can do it yourself or hire a service to find good prospects. This is true for both employers and job hunters.

Some employers conduct in-house searches by scanning resumes (this is called OCR or optical character recognition). They search for applicants using keywords that describe desirable qualifications for the job opening. Other employers hire outside services to do their surfing (and scanning) for them. The employer provides information about the job opening and the service finds and ranks suitable applicants.

## **Resume Formatting**

When preparing hardcopy resumes for scanning or electronic transmission, keep the following points in mind:

- Use simple text (ASCII or Rich Text) only.
- Use 11-14 point font; this makes it easier for the computer to “read” it
- Use easy to read sans serif fonts such as Courier, Futura, Helvetica, Times New Roman, Universe, ITC Bookman, New Century Schoolbook, Palatino or Optima.
- Don’t use bold, italic, underline, shadows, or condensed spacing.
- Minimize the use of bullets, hyphens and dashes.
- Use CAPITALS for emphasis.
- Don’t use vertical or horizontal lines, two-column formats, symbols, pictures, or boxes.
- Use white space between sections.
- Justify the left side.
- Use the spacebar, not tabs, to indent lines of text.
- Use hard returns, not word wrap, at the end of each line.
- Use white or beige standard size (8.5 x 11-inch) paper printed on one side only.
- Do not use staples or folds.
- Use a laser printer, if possible. Avoid dot matrix printers or photocopies.

When preparing an electronic resume, remember these formatting tips:

1. Prepare and store your resume in ASCII (text) file for sending via electronic mail or when applying on-line. Check and make sure it looks good! Don't use word-processed or PostScript files.
2. Prepare a cover letter and be sure to note where you found the ad.
3. If you register your name with a recruiter, you can usually send a message to apply for an advertised position within the recruiter's database of listings.
4. WARNING: Some positions that are advertised on-line do not accept resumes via e-mail. Be sure to follow the directions for application and include any cited listing numbers for reference.

**KISS me – A rule for resumes: *Keep it short and simple!***

- Resumes should be limited to one page for college students and grads; 2-3 pages at most for professionals
- The applicant's name stands alone on first line and on top of each page
- Phone, fax, e-mail — each on its own line
- Key word paragraph follows the contact information (see below).
- Use traditional headings: Objective, Employment History, Education, Accomplishments

**KEY WORDS**

Key words are nouns taken from each section of the resume (employment, education, etc.) that describe critical skills. Separate each key word with periods. For example: Thermo-fluid systems analysis. Load Distribution. Heat transfer. Statistical analysis. Hydraulic systems. Pneumatic systems. Packaging design. PC literate. Dean's List. Tau Beta Pi. Pi Tau Sigma. ASME. Analytical ability. Strong communication skills. Team player.

Nouns

- Use common language for multiple "hits." The applicant with the most key words wins!
- Use trade jargon if it is commonly recognized.
- Check trade publications, recruitment ads, job descriptions and web sites for common key words. Examples: PC. BASIC. FORTRAN. CADAM.
- Avoid abbreviations unless they're universally accepted: i.e., BA, MBA.
- Include keywords for different sections of your resume:  
For Job Title: (nurse) ICU. CCU. Infusion therapy. Acute care. Dialysis. Suture removal. Community health care.  
For Field: (chemical) Electrochemistry. American Chemical Society. Pesticides. Corrosion prevention.  
For Personal Qualities: Dependable. Leadership. Responsible. Will travel. Creative. Problem-solver.

Verbs

- Don't use in keyword paragraph
- Use concrete, direct verbs in body of resume.  
OK: "managed a program..."  
NOT: "responsible for managing a program..."

## Cutting Loose

When sending your resume, always include a cover letter that refers to the job opening. Mail original, unfolded resumes only, and protect with cardboard, if possible. Since faxing tends to distort the readability of documents, avoid faxing a scannable resume. Make a follow-up call to ask if your resume has been entered into the company's database. Find out if the scanner was able to read your resume and if the staff have had the chance to input it into their database.



## Resources and Readings for More Information

Gonyea, J. C. (1995). The on-line job search companion: A complete guide to hundreds of career planning job resources available via your computer. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc.

Kennedy, J. L., & Morrow, T. J. (1994). Electronic job search revolution: How to win with the new technology that's reshaping today's job market. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Kennedy, J. L., & Morrow, T. J. (1994). Electronic resume revolution: Creating a winning resume for the new world of job seeking. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Krol, E., & Loukides, M. (1994). The whole internet user's guide and catalog. Cambridge, MA: O'Reilly & Associates.

National Cable Television Association & TECH CORP. (1998). Web teacher: Your source for web knowledge [On-line]. Available: <http://www.webteacher.org>

Ryer, J. C., LaQuery, T., & Gore, A. (1993). The internet companion: A beginner's guide to global networking. Reading, PA: Addison-Wesley-Longman, Inc.



### Editor's note:

The links included in this article were "live" when this volume was sent to the publisher. However, due to the nature of the Web, URLs may change without notice. For clarification of any sites, please contact the authors at <[wrocc@csun.edu](mailto:wrocc@csun.edu)>.