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## YOUR BEST JOB SEARCH TOOL MAY BE YOUR COMPUTER

Have you ever been frustrated at the lack of job possibilities advertised in the classified section of your local newspaper? Large papers may offer more choices, but you will still be limited by the number of openings listed at any one time, not to mention geographical limitations. Even at its best, this approach just won't cut it anymore. Searching through the classifieds may have been good enough at one time, but today that's about as progressive as pounding out a resume on a manual typewriter. With an impressive array of Internet resources just a few mouse clicks away, your computer is the ticket to that next great job.

As any human resources officer can tell you, the use of the PC as a job search tool has become the norm in the last few years. This includes creative use of e-mail and the Internet, as well as the taking advantage of the capability of any computer for use in producing resumes, letters and other job-related materials.

### The Cyber Job Solution

For many employers and job hunters, the Internet has become the common denominator. It connects people from both ends of the hiring equation with ease. Employers can post job openings with the knowledge that they will be available to large numbers of job applicants. At the same time, job seekers can easily explore possibilities for all kinds of jobs offered by companies, government agencies, non-profits and other employers. They can also submit resumes and applications electronically.

A major advantage of this approach is that it breaks down geographical barriers. Instead of being restricted to job openings listed in your community or the region covered by local media, your search can include any number of cities or states, or the entire country, for that matter. You can also pursue career interests in other countries, if that sounds appealing.

Another plus is that the use of online communication is less intrusive than traditional methods. If you're already employed, you can spend time during nights and weekends perusing sites maintained by employers or job search companies, posting resumes and more, all without conflicting with your current job. If you don't have a position, you can work to maintain an electronic presence that far surpasses the scope of other job hunting techniques.

Even if you're tied to a specific location and are only interested in local employment, you'd find plenty of information available online. Many newspapers now include Web-based versions, as do state and local employment offices. You can also visit Websites of area employers for job-related information. In fact, regardless of location, one of the simplest approaches is simply to peruse websites of possible employers to look for postings and related information. In looking such a site, you will probably see a heading "jobs" or "position openings." Click here. you will see a list of current jobs openings along with the qualifications for each one, the application deadline and other relevant details.

For a first-class example, a look at the home page for State Farm Insurance ([www.statefarm.com](http://www.statefarm.com)). It shows a heading of "About State Farm." Clicking here will bring choices that include "careers," and then "careers home page." This section provides a wealth of information on current job openings, State Farm recruiting events across the United States and Canada, benefits, and more. In addition to searching current openings (which are listed at [HotJobs.com](http://HotJobs.com)), you can go to an "opportunities" page that describes the various jobs for which applicants might be sought, including position descriptions and a geographical breakdown of jobs available around North America as well as those located at the company's headquarters in Bloomington, Illinois. You can even find info on how to prepare the ideal resume for scanning and submitting to the company's database.

Not all companies offer such well-developed Websites, but most large organizations provide updated information about job openings. The practice has become so common, in fact, that many small businesses and non-profits also offer some type of job information.

In addition to finding information directly related to jobs, you can conduct Internet-based research about potential employers. Obviously the more you know about a prospective employer the better, from determining the kinds of job openings to boning up on the organization's background so you can individualize cover letters or resumes. The employer's Website can often be a great source of such information. If you browse the main page for any but the smallest business or non-profit organization you will find links to items such as news releases, annual reports, earnings reports, executive bios and contact info for company personnel.

You can also obtain corporate profiles from third party business information services such as Hoover's ([www.hoovers.com](http://www.hoovers.com)). And don't overlook sites that provide salary information such as nextSource's People Ticker ([www.peopleticker.com](http://www.peopleticker.com)), those maintained by professional associations and the Bureau of Labor Statistics site at [www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov).

### Career Site Solutions

Perhaps the ultimate in Web-based career information is available at a number of comprehensive sites designed specifically to serve job seekers, employers or both. For example, Monster.com ([www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)) connects users to hundreds of thousands of job openings. You can create a free account and then take advantages of a number of helpful options. Once you provide information about your particular job interests, e-mail messages about job openings matching your interests will be automatically mailed to you. You can also search online for jobs of interest, and also create resumes for use in applying online for job openings.

In addition to all this, the site offers extras such as the ability to research companies, network with others, and obtain free advice on writing resumes, preparing for interviews, negotiating salaries and more. You can also sign up for fee-based services in these and other areas of career development. Career Journal, offered by the Wall Street Journal at [www.careerjournal.com](http://www.careerjournal.com), provides daily updates as well as thousands of archived articles on news, trends and topics related to career advancement. It also features a searchable database of job postings from top companies in areas such as senior and general management, sales, marketing, finance and technology. Basic access is free, but users also have an opportunity to subscribe to WSJ.com, which offers additional resources including an extensive list of "briefing books" providing complete detailed background on a given company's business and recent news.

The Career Journal site also features a confidential resume" database. Here you may create a brief profile or use online instructions to create a full-fledged resume', choosing from a number of formats.

Employers Online ([www.employersonline.com](http://www.employersonline.com)) serves employers, recruiters and job seekers by posting both jobs and resumes. It focuses on sales/marketing, computer/IT, medical/professional, engineering/technical and management/executive positions. Those seeking jobs may submit resumes which are entered into a database for viewing by employers and recruiters across the country. Services include access to jobs posted on the site, tips on writing resumes and handling interview questions, and more you can search the database at no cost. Registration is required to post a resume, but that process is also free.

Other useful sites include HotJobs ([www.yahoo.hotjobs.com](http://www.yahoo.hotjobs.com)), CareerBuilder.com ([www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)), America's Job Bank ([www.jobsearch.org](http://www.jobsearch.org)) and Career.com ([www.career.com](http://www.career.com)). Some sites, such as that offered by Quintessential Careers ([www.quintessentialcareers.com](http://www.quintessentialcareers.com)), serve as portals to others, in this case offering links to "the top 10 job Websites for job-seekers." Another is AllJobSearch ([www.alljobsearch.com](http://www.alljobsearch.com)), which acts as a comprehensive, easily used job search engine. All you do is key in a word or phrase (such as administrative assistant or sales manager) and then indicate whether you want to search Websites, newspapers or newsgroups. Next you specify geographic preferences, job type (such as full time, contract, part time or internship), posting dates ranging from one day to thirty days, and job category. Here the choices range from "all categories" to specific areas such as accounting, architecture, biotech and real estate. Once you click on the search key, the engine takes you to a listing of all job openings matching that profile.

The services offered by job sites vary considerably. Some are free, while others are fee-based. Typically the more basic services will cost nothing, but you will have the option to purchase additional services such as job counseling, resume development and career interest profiles.

One strategy is to use services that broadcast your resume to multiple sources. At [www.blastmyresume.com](http://www.blastmyresume.com), you can instantly e-mail your resume to thousands of recruiters, headhunters and employers. While the jury is still out on just how effective this approach will prove to be, it does offer the advantage of putting your resume into play on a more diverse basis than would be possible by using regular mail. A fee is charged, but it's much less than comparable postage costs for mailing hard copies.

### The Resume Development Solution

Of course, your computer can do much more than simply help you find jobs. It's also a great tool for preparing resumes, cover letters, portfolios or other

documents.

Conventional wisdom makes clear that a resume, won't get you a job-just the chance to sell yourself through an interview. Fortunately, the resources available through your PC can help here, too. With Microsoft Word or any other word processing software, you can create professional looking resumes and cover letters that once would have required the skills of a highly skilled typist. Once a basic resume has been developed, you can revise it as often as needed, print any number of copies, or transmit it electronically to potential employers. You can also create individualized versions adapted to appeal to specific employers, or emphasize different qualifications for different types of positions in which you might be interested.

An alternative is to obtain software such as WinWay Resume Deluxe, offered by WinWay Corporation ([www.winway.com](http://www.winway.com)). This package includes a resume writing program, thousands of sample resumes, key phrases that can be added to the resume, a letter-writing program and sample cover letters.

You can also take advantage of the resume-building services offered at broad-based career sites or those specializing in online resume development. An example of the latter is TotalResume.com ([www.totalresume.com](http://www.totalresume.com)), a fee-based service that allows you to create a resume by using templates accessed online. In this process, you complete forms by filling in your own unique personal and professional information while taking advantage of useful action words and phrases, spellchecking, previews of your resume, and the chance to view sample resumes.

Once the resume is completed, you can download it as a Word document, email it to potential employers and add a cover letter. You can also maintain it on site, update it as needed, and make it available as a Web page.

So you can see that your computer can be a very powerful tool in aiding you in your job search. Use your computer effectively and you will find your job search efforts rewarded to your satisfaction.

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