

Use the web in job hunt

Net won't find you employment, but it's a great tool for supplying information

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Hear that? It's the click of a mouse, the one attached to your computer's keyboard. And it's helping you navigate the job market from the comfort of your ergonomic chair.

Welcome to the digital age, when access to the Internet can accelerate your job search.

We've done research and have found that the Web won't find you a job. But it will give you information that will help you find a job," said Francine Renaud, a "cybrarian" with Drake Beam Morin (DBM), a career transition firm in Montreal.

But it's a big cyberworld out there and it's easy to get lost on the virtual road to employment. So Renaud and Rose Ann Alfieri, DBM's vice president (business development), have some advice for anyone using the Web to find work.

"Companies post jobs on the Web, but they look at only 20 per cent of the resumes they receive because they get so many." Alfieri said.

Applying for work on the Web will bring low returns, she said. So the wise job seeker uses the Web as an informational resource and one element of the job search.

"If you've been out of the job market for awhile, using the Web is a good way to become informed about the economy and trends in the workplace," Renaud said. "You need information about the competencies being sought and the salaries being offered. Getting that kind of information on the Web can tell you if you want to be in working in a particular area."

So with Renaud leading the way on her laptop, let's start where every job search should begin: self-knowledge.

"Let's say you've a secretary and you want to make the jump into sales," she said. "You'd want to try a free online personality test at www.keirsey.com It's a tool that helps you get to know yourself better. If you have the knowledge, you can sell yourself better to an employer."

Another site that offers self-assessment questionnaires is www.queendom.com

Want to know your emotional intelligence quotient? Check out the Utne Reader's Web site for an EQ test www.utne.com/azEQ.tmp1

Once you've completed a self-assessment, the next step is to get the lay of the land of Canada's labor market. Begin your search with the excellent Web site created by Human

Resources Development Canada. Go to www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca and navigated from there for information about occupational profiles.

“This is very useful for someone changing careers and for students,” Renaud said. “For instance, someone thinking of becoming an accountant can learn about the nature of the work and education requirements. It can also help you to hone your search.

“We had a man in career transition here who was a seasoned economist. He’d been working in the same company for 10 years and wasn’t sure which industry would be interested in his services. He used the HRDC Web site, typed in the word ‘economists’ and got a list of industries he could target.”

The HRDC site can also help you prepare a resume, which includes necessary keywords, Renaud said.

For information that is categorized by sector, check out Industry Canada’s “Strategis” Web site at http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/sc_indps/engdoc/homepage.html .

“Strategis” has economic analysis, so if you want to launch a business, this is the one to research,” Renaud said. “it also has company directories.”

Said Alfieri: “This is a site that will tell you if a company is in growth mode. So you’ll know there’s potential there for new jobs.”

Moreover, Renaud said, the site offers information about whether particular companies “fit I with your ideal work preference. For instance, if you want to work for a large company and discover one that has 50 employees, there’s no sense sending your resume there.”

Want to know about shift work, job demands, pay and benefits, training and skills? Check out <http://jobquality.ca> for information about what constitutes a “quality job”.

If you want information about salaries, the multilingual US site called www.salaryexpert.com is a useful guide to salaries in North America and abroad. It also offers information about how to negotiate a salary.

“This is useful when you get a job offer from an employer,” Alfieri said. “If you don’t know if the offer is fair, you can do your homework on salaryexperit.com and your decision will be based on fact.”

Renaud and Alfieri also suggest you inform yourself about whatever company you target for employment. Check out the following:

❖ www.newswire.ca - for up-to-date news about the employer you target. “We strongly recommend the Canada NewsWire site so you can read company press releases. “If

you have a job interview with a company at 2 pm and they've just announced 10,000 job cuts, you'll want to ask about how it will affect you," Alfieri said.

- ❖ www.onlinenewspapers.com - For newspapers employment ads in many countries.
- ❖ www.careerlab.com/art_homeruns.htm - For help on how to write resumes
- ❖ www.eresumes.com - For guidance on how to prepare resumes for the Internet.
- ❖ www.icriq.com/en/index.html - For information about 27,000 Quebec companies.
- ❖ www.lesaffaires.com - For information about the top 500 large companies and 300 small and medium businesses in Quebec.

An important piece of advice: "Internet research should not replace cold calls and making networking contacts during your job search: Renaud said.. "Look at your calendar for the week and make sure you invest more time in networking than in posting your resumes on job boards. You don't want to spend 75% of your time on the Internet. The Web is means to an end."

Alfieri agreed. "DBM conducted a survey last year and we found out that 67% of 3200 Canadians surveyed found work through networking."

And yes, Alfieri said, Internet use by job seekers does tend to be higher among young workers.

"For people under 35, it's hard to get them away from the Internet," she said. "More mature workers tend to be strong at networking. Imagine the strength of balancing these two pursuits."

On your mouse, get set go.