



# Conducting an Electronic Job Search

ACS DEPARTMENT OF CAREER SERVICES

Living in Boston but want to work in San Francisco? The Internet can make your job search easier, no matter where you are, what you want to do or how much experience you have. Open any major newspaper, watch television or simply glance at the side of a passing bus, and you likely will find advertisements for Web-based employment sites. And with the increasingly widespread access to the Internet, the World Wide Web has become an invaluable job-searching tool for chemical professionals.

## Using the Internet To Job Search

The appeal of the Web primarily lies in its low cost, access to a wide variety of resources and relatively high visibility. Moreover, the Internet is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. By incorporating the Internet into your job search, you can search locally or cast a much wider net from the comfort of your computer.

It is essential, however, that you use Internet resources judiciously as part of an overall job search strategy. Internet resources should not supplant, but rather supplement, the traditional tools used to mount a job search—such as networking, writing effective résumés and preparing thoroughly for interviews.

Periodically, the ACS Department of Career Services (DCS) publishes an updated list of “Resources for Career Management” (which includes updated Internet references) that can be found at [www.acs.org/careers/empres/pubs01.html](http://www.acs.org/careers/empres/pubs01.html) or requested through DCS.

This article serves as an introduction to how resources available on the Internet can fit into your job-seeking strategy. To best serve ACS members, it will concentrate on sites that provide information on



areas related to chemical technology. While the following selection of career-related sites listed is not meant to be comprehensive, it contains examples of material that can be found on the Internet and includes hyperlinks to related sites of interest. (Remember that the Internet is continuously and rapidly changing—new sites appear and older ones disappear almost overnight.)

Where possible, an attempt has been made to focus on job-searching functions that are assisted by electronic resources, rather than on specific sites. The format follows that of the DCS publication on *Targeting the Job Market*, which serves as a companion piece to this report.

### **Step One—Getting To Know Yourself: Self-Assessment**

Getting familiar with your interests, skills and values is a necessary first step in the job search process. An introduction to the process of self-assessment is contained in the DCS publications *The Interview Handbook* (also available at [www.acs.org/careers/empres/interview99.pdf](http://www.acs.org/careers/empres/interview99.pdf)) and *Targeting the Job Market*.

Among the more useful Web sites dealing with self-assessment is one sponsored by Korn/Ferry International at [www.futurestep.com](http://www.futurestep.com). This site allows you to fill out an extensive questionnaire that

assesses your personal values and tendencies. It then provides the results in an easy-to-interpret graphical format.

Another self-evaluation questionnaire, the “Campbell Interest and Skill Survey,” is available at [www.usnews.com/usnews/nycu/work/wocciss.htm](http://www.usnews.com/usnews/nycu/work/wocciss.htm). If you fill out the on-line form and return it in the mail, you can, for a nominal charge, receive a 12-page personalized report and an action planning guide.

Other examples of self-assessment questionnaires are the Keirsey Temperament Sorter ([www.keirsey.com](http://www.keirsey.com)) and the Princeton Review Career Quiz ([www.review.com](http://www.review.com)). Many sites have self-assessment sections or contain links to self-assessment Web pages; two examples are [www.careercity.com](http://www.careercity.com) and [www.careerkarma.com](http://www.careerkarma.com).

### **Step Two—Chemistry Jobs in the 21st Century: The Changed World of Employment**

Before attempting to locate a job, you should become familiar with economic trends and their implications for the chemical professional. The annual *Chemical & Engineering News* Employment Outlook issue (for the year 2000) can be accessed on the Web at [www.pubs.acs.org:80/hotartcl/cenear/991115/7746eres.html](http://www.pubs.acs.org:80/hotartcl/cenear/991115/7746eres.html). *Current Trends in Chemical Technology, Business and Employment* is another useful publication available from ACS on-line at [www.acs.org/careers/ct.pdf](http://www.acs.org/careers/ct.pdf). Other workforce analysis information can be found at [www.acs.org/careers/empres/broch3.html](http://www.acs.org/careers/empres/broch3.html). Information on general scientific workforce developments can also sometimes be found at Science’s Next Wave ([www.nextwave.org](http://www.nextwave.org)), to which ACS members get free access.

You can also access Science Next Wave ([nextwave.sciencemag.org](http://nextwave.sciencemag.org))

through ChemCenter. ACS members can log in to this site using their last name and ACS membership number when asked for username/password. Developed by the American Association for the Advancement of Science



(AAAS), Next Wave offers a monthly column of science career advice, an open forum for discussion of key science career topics, a series on alternative science careers and links to other Web sites of interest to all scientists.

Another resource offering general information and career guidance in the sciences is the Career Planning Center ([www.4nas.edu/osep/cpc.nsf](http://www.4nas.edu/osep/cpc.nsf)) maintained by the National Science Foundation. Other science Web sites chemical professionals might wish to consider include [www.scijobs.org](http://www.scijobs.org), [www.dice.com](http://www.dice.com) and [www.pharma.jobs](http://www.pharma.jobs).

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' home page ([stats.bls.gov/blshome.htm](http://stats.bls.gov/blshome.htm)) provides a directory of publications and survey results for the nation. In particular, the current issues (2000–2001) of the *Occupational Outlook Handbook* and *Economic and Employment Projections, 1998–2008*, are available on-line. Another site ([www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)) provides employment and trends in the federal government, including current federal civilian workforce statistics.

### **Step Three—Doing Your Homework: Locating the Job You Want**

This is the area where electronic resources can begin to make a big difference in your job search. Literally thousands of positions of all types are posted on the Web every day. The ACS Web page, ChemJobs ([www.acs.org/](http://www.acs.org/)

chemjobs), has job postings in the ACS Job Bank. It lists jobs in chemical areas, organized according to categories listed in *Chemical & Engineering News*, the predominant source of jobs for chemical professionals.

Newspapers and magazines have always been a valuable source of help-wanted advertisements. Due to the rapid expansion of the Internet, essentially all print media maintain Web sites through which material may be accessed. Regional classified advertisements are accessible through most major metropolitan newspapers, such as *The New York Times* ([www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)), *The Washington Post*

([www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)) or the *San Francisco Chronicle and Examiner* ([www.sfgate.com](http://www.sfgate.com)). National advertisements can also be accessed through newspapers with national circulation, such as *The Wall Street Journal* ([www.careers.wsj.com](http://www.careers.wsj.com)). Invariably, smaller local papers have on-line editions that may contain classified advertisements, or they may be hyperlinked to other sites.

Larger newspapers often contain hyperlinks to other career-oriented Web sites. For example, logging on to *The New York Times* and clicking on CareerPath leads to a Web page containing *The New York Times* classifieds. CareerPath may be accessed directly at [www.careerpath.com](http://www.careerpath.com) and allows searches of newspaper employment advertisements from cities throughout the country. Job openings are culled from these advertisements and from corporate Web sites in areas across the country.

## Locating Industrial Positions

The Web is ideally suited to help locate industrial positions. Many corporations use their Web sites to advertise openings. These sites may be located with search engines or through career-oriented sites such as CareerMosaic or monster.com. Many job candidates favor [www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com) because it can search 10 career sites at the same time.

The nationwide listings in America's Job Bank ([www.ajb.dni.us](http://www.ajb.dni.us)) contain information on well over 1 million positions from federal and state employment services, providing job seekers a large pool of active job opportunities. Most of the positions listed are full time, and the majority are in the private sector, covering the entire country and all types of work; services are provided at no charge.

A number of other commercial sites (many accessible through portals such as Yahoo! or Netscape) provide job listings. Perhaps the largest is the Monster Board ([www.monster.com](http://www.monster.com)), incorporating the Online Career Center, which features job opportunities in all fields with over 700 corporations worldwide. Applicants can conduct a search by location, industry, company, discipline or keyword, accessing thousands of career opportunities in all fields. Another large site is Careerbuilder ([www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)), which allows an applicant to simultaneously search 10 career sites.

Career Magazine ([www.careermag.com](http://www.careermag.com)) offers a job openings database containing postings from major Internet newsgroups. These postings can be searched by location, job title and/or skills required.

In partnership with college and university career centers across the nation, Jobtrak ([www.jobtrak.com](http://www.jobtrak.com)) provides job postings for students and recent graduates. While the service is free to universities, users (students and alumni) will need a university connection to gain access to Jobtrak. The search interface asks users to select their alma mater and to provide a password that they obtain from the university career center.

## Locating Positions in the Public Sector

Agencies of the federal government also routinely advertise on the Web. The Office of Personnel Management maintains a Web site ([www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)) that provides access to job openings listed by agency or profession. Application can be made on-line.

The Department of Commerce's National Technical Information Service maintains a Web site called FedWorld, a search engine for all federal job openings ([www.fedworld.gov](http://www.fedworld.gov)). Searches can be

conducted by geographical area, state, overseas (Atlantic or Pacific), summer jobs and keywords.

Among several useful commercial sites accessing federal jobs is Federal Jobs Digest ([www.jobsfed.com](http://www.jobsfed.com)). This site also has sections describing federal benefits, federal job descriptions and advice on filing federal résumés.

## Locating Academic Positions

The Academe This Week section in the weekly newspaper *The Chronicle of Higher Education* has long been the best source for posting academic openings. Subscribers to the print edition can access job listings (posted on-line every Tuesday afternoon) from the current issue of *The Chronicle* at [www.chronicle.com/jobs](http://www.chronicle.com/jobs). Non-subscribers can obtain access, but only to immediate past issues. Job seekers can search the database using *The Chronicle*'s list of job titles or by using any keyword(s) of their choosing.

The Academic Employment Network ([www.academploy.com](http://www.academploy.com)) offers free searching of position listings. Available positions are at all levels in primary and secondary institutions as well as colleges and include faculty, staff and administrative openings.

The Academic Position Network, APN ([www.apnjobs.com](http://www.apnjobs.com)), is a free service providing announcements of academic positions, including faculty, staff, postdoctoral and administrative positions. APN announcements are unlimited in size and are kept on-line until removal is requested or until the closing date has been reached. APN may be searched by country, state and institution and may also be searched using a word or combination of words.

### **Step Four—At Your Fingertips: Using the Internet to Your Advantage**

Now that you've identified job opportunities, you can submit an application. Many of the above Web sites allow you to send in your résumé electronically. It is always a good idea to tailor your résumé to a specific job opening and address it, where possible, to a specific hiring manager. For more information, see *Tips on Résumé Preparation*, available from the ACS Department of Career Services or on-line at [www.acs.org/careers/empres/](http://www.acs.org/careers/empres/)

[resumetips99.pdf](#).

Many multipurpose career sites on the Internet allow you to post your résumé at no cost. Think twice before using one of these services. In addition to being an ineffective means for identifying specific jobs, there is a privacy concern inherent in these sites. Once you post your résumé on the Web, you lose control over where it goes and who will see it—your



résumé becomes a public document.

If you do wish to make your résumé available to employers on-line, DCS has established a service that can help to allay the above concerns and better target your sales pitch. The Online Professional Data Bank (PDB) is an Internet recruiting tool developed by ACS to provide a fast, efficient and cost-effective way for employers to reach job seekers. You create a personal profile outlining your skills, experience and areas of interest and containing your résumé.

You may choose to be active (your profile is posted to a searchable database) or inactive (your profile is saved until you are interested in making contact with prospective employers). Employers, screened by ACS, can search the full text of résumés. The search retrieves a set of profiles matching the employer's keyword descriptions. On reviewing the retrieved profiles, employers have the option to send e-mail messages to the candidate. The PDB provides the option of labeling

your profile as confidential. If you choose the confidential option, employers will not be able to see your name and contact information without your approval.

## Researching Companies

Before submitting an application, it is imperative that you learn as much about the company as possible. The Internet is a very effective way of locating and researching potential employers. Many companies have home pages that not only provide extensive background materials and recent corporate press releases, but also are used to post open positions. They are an invaluable source of information to prepare for job interviews and include product information, quarterly and annual reports (for publicly owned companies) and copies of recent press releases. Since the most effective way to make a positive impression during an interview is to be knowledgeable about the company, it is essential that you use all means to research potential employers. In many cases, corporate home pages are a good place to start.

Most major corporations have Web sites that not only provide access to corporate and financial information, but also include background about the firm's corporate strategy and research goals.

Many print sources traditionally used to locate information about companies are now available on-line. One outstanding print source of information is the *Thomas Register of American Manufacturers*, which is also available on the Web at [www.thomasregister.com](http://www.thomasregister.com). Using the *Thomas Register*, which is cross-indexed by industry and geographic area, you can locate suitable potential employers and develop profiles of companies of interest. Hoover's Online, at [www.hoovers.com](http://www.hoovers.com), is a site directed mainly toward financial and other business information that provides company profiles that are especially valuable in understanding the details on specific companies.

As an example of a "full-service" Web site, CareerMosaic ([www.career-mosaic.com](http://www.career-mosaic.com)) provides an on-line guide to companies. Using CareerMosaic, you can research companies in a variety of businesses, find out what they do, where

they do it, and what their work environments are like. CorpTech ([www.corptech.com](http://www.corptech.com)) is another site dedicated to providing data on private and public technology manufacturers and developers. It provides in-depth business profiles of companies in 17 different high-technology industries, including chemicals, advanced materials and pharmaceuticals.

Finally, many job-posting sites also offer information on companies. Jobtrak provides company profiles and job search tips. On [monster.com](http://monster.com), employer profiles, containing facts about each company's technology, products, benefits and work environment, are available. Polson Enterprises is an example of a Web site ([www.virtualpet.com](http://www.virtualpet.com)) that allows searching for information about an industry or a particular company.

**Step Five—The Inside Scoop:  
Uncovering the Hidden Job Market**

Networking is the name of the game when it comes to finding hidden (that is to say, unposted) jobs. The message boards in [vault.com](http://vault.com) are moderated discussion areas where job seekers can network with others, generate leads, share experiences and seek advice. Other opportunities for networking include the ACS discussion forum Chem Careers Connection ([www.acs.org/careers/guidance](http://www.acs.org/careers/guidance)). The forum is populated by ACS members and moderated by ACS career consultants who offer their expert opinions as part of the discussion.



**Step Six—Staying Marketable: The  
Only Way To Ensure Job Security**

In an era of frequent job and career changes, the only true job security resides in an individual's skills and abilities. Among chemical professionals, it is often the so-called soft skills that set one potential hire apart from another. These include skills such as communication, management and teamwork. Many sites around the Web can help you to develop these skills. For example, Communications Briefings, at [www.briefings.com/cb/](http://www.briefings.com/cb/), provides nuggets of advice that can help you to communicate better and get ahead.

The monthly ACS publication *Today's Chemist at Work* often contains articles related to building skills and career development. The table of contents may be located at [pubs.acs.org/journals/tcwoe7/index.html](http://pubs.acs.org/journals/tcwoe7/index.html).

## General Resources

Margaret Riley-Dikel, along with Frances Roehm and Steve Oserman, have published *The Guide to Internet Job Searching* (VGM Career Horizons, 1998–1999), an effective introduction to job seeking on the Internet. In addition, Ms. Riley-Dikel maintains The Riley Guide, a Web site ([www.dbm.com/jobguide](http://www.dbm.com/jobguide)) containing links to employment opportunities and job resources on the net.

Other references include the Gonyea Guide to Online Career and Employment Sites at [www.onlinecareerguide.com](http://www.onlinecareerguide.com). Getting Past Go: A Survival Guide for New Graduates ([www.aegonsmg.com/getgo](http://www.aegonsmg.com/getgo)) provides general information for new graduates on writing résumés, looking for work and deciding where to locate.

## Additional Information

Print material pertaining to these and other job-searching techniques is available from the ACS in three Department of Career Services publications: *Tips on Résumé Preparation*, *The Interview Handbook* and *Targeting the Job Market*. Copies of these publications are available free of charge from the ACS Department of Career Services, (800) 227-5558.

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