

# CAREER JOURNAL.

## Surfing Web for the Right Job-Hunt Wave

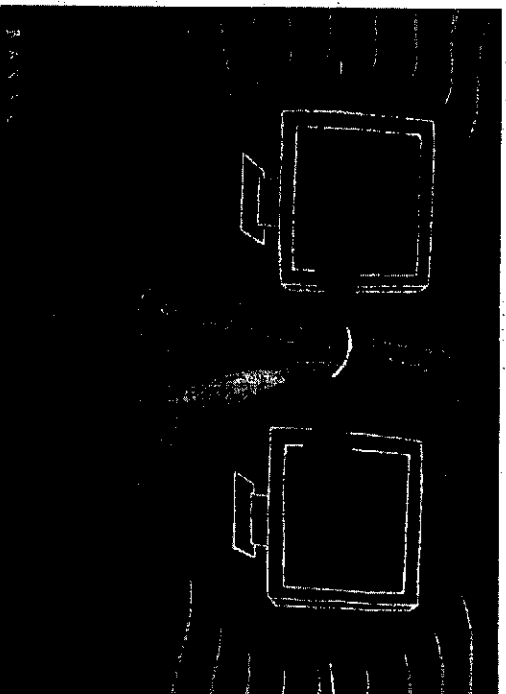
*Knowing How to Use Advanced Search Tools Can Help Candidates Find the Best Match*

By SARAH E. NEEDLEMAN

**J**OB HUNTING has made a dramatic transition in the past decade as both companies and candidates have moved online. While surfing the Web may not get you a job, better Internet job-search skills can improve your odds of securing an interview. According to a 2005 survey from the Society for Human Resource Management in Alexandria, Va., about 86% of human-resources professionals polled use Internet job postings to recruit candidates.

The first step when conducting an online job hunt is to specify clearly what you're looking for. Fewer than 5% of visitors to SimplyHired.com take advantage of the site's "advanced job search" tool, says Kay Luo, director of marketing at the Mountain View, Calif., company. The option, found on most job boards, lets users combine and exclude terms to get more targeted results, she says. For instance, if you're looking for a nursing job, you can retrieve ads showing the words "nurse" or "RN." At the same time, you can eliminate words such as "nonprofit" or "night shift" to avoid ads with those terms.

Job hunters may be unaware of such advanced search tools or assume they're complicated, Ms. Luo says. But they can be helpful, especially on "aggregator" sites like SimplyHired, that post job ads



Scott Baker

show up on career-related Web sites, such as networking sites, blogs and discussion boards. Typically the leads come from participants who learn about openings at their employer or from people they know.

Since launching a job search in April, 55-year-old David Gransee of Connecticut says he's learned about more than a dozen jobs that interest him through TheFENG.org, the online home of the Financial Executives Networking Group. "There are jobs there that you won't see anywhere else," he says. It's free to join, but members must be sponsored by an existing member, according to the Weston, Conn., organization's Web site. Mr. Gransee, who was laid off in February from a controller post at a manufacturer that was acquired by another firm, says he's secured three job interviews through the networking site and three more through others like it.

When you find a lead you plan to pursue, research it to make sure it's valid, says Mark Mehler, co-founder of CareerXroads, a recruiting-technology consulting firm in Kendall Park, N.J. For example, if you find one on a blog, he suggests emailing the writer to ask how he or she learned about it.

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culled from all over the Web, she says. Some site visitors abandon searches early in the process, overwhelmed by too much information. By narrowing the types of ads you want, you should get fewer but better results, she explains.

"Job boards," which post classified ads, aren't the only sites job hunters should look for. Employment leads often

Some ads are "blind"—the employer's name isn't given. To find out what company is behind a blind ad, copy and paste the firm's description from the ad into a search engine, such as Google, suggests Randy Cyr, a vice president in the Wellesley, Mass., office of Gilbert Tweed Associates Inc., a New York-based recruiter. (At most search engines, you can put quotation marks around a phrase to get results with the exact words in between.) The company's Web site will likely be among the top results, because many recruiters copy a firm's description from there when writing job ads, Mr. Cyr says.

If the initial page of results doesn't lead you to the right place, "you're probably not going to find it," he adds. Apply only if you're 100% sure the ad wasn't from your current employer or one where you're already a candidate. "You want to err on the side of caution," he says.

Before responding to an ad, find out if you know someone who works at the company, says Kathy Simmons, chief executive officer of Netshare.com, a career site for executives. (Netshare is a business partner of CareerJournal.com, which is

owned by Dow Jones & Co., publisher of The Wall Street Journal.) He may be willing to provide a referral or ensure that your application gets priority, she says.

Networking sites may help simplify the task. Florian Brody, 53, says he's found two jobs in the past year this way, using LinkedIn. Most recently, in August, he joined an online start-up company in Mountain View, Calif., as senior director of marketing communications. He contacted the company's president through the networking site's messaging system about his interest in a job, without knowing if a suitable one existed. "He said to come in and I did," Mr. Brody says, and a job offer soon followed.

If you're seeking a referral from someone you don't know well, give her a sense of your background, Ms. Simmons says. You want that person to feel comfortable since her reputation will be on the line.

Finally, if you can, apply to a person. Many job postings instruct applicants to send their resumes to a general email address and don't list an individual's contact information. "Companies don't want the hassle of having to answer tons of phone calls and emails," says J. Craig Honaman, principal at H&H Consulting Partners LLC, a career-coaching firm in Atlanta. "You have to beat that system and find a name."

Developing a personal connection can boost your chances of getting an interview by allowing you to demonstrate your interest, he says. Search the company's Web site to find the contact information for the head of the department you want to work in, Mr. Honaman says. If you're pursuing a finance post, look up the firm's finance chief. If the person isn't listed, call the company and ask for the information.

He suggests also sending an application to the address listed in the ad, so you aren't bypassing the human-resources department. "This way you've covered all bases," he says.

**Online Today:** Looking to expand your online job hunt beyond the big boards? Find a roundup of niche sites dedicated to postings in specific fields, at [CareerJournal.com](http://CareerJournal.com).