

Utilizing the World Wide Web for Disability Resources and Vocational Information for Vocational Evaluators*

Randall S. McDaniel, Robert J. Beadles, Jr., and Nancy B. McDaniel

The Internet and more particularly the World Wide Web provides an entirely new method of data storage and information sharing in which anyone with a computer or computer access and a connection can have free access to information on virtually any topic. The open nature of the Internet

make it a great equalizer in terms of information power. Much of the focus in it's expansion has been placed on the exponential growth in the number of users. Thus, a recent Nielson media survey report (1997) found that Internet usage in the United States and Canada has doubled in the last 18 months with women rapidly catching up with men going on-line. The survey found that approximately one in four people (23%) over the age of 16 in the U.S. and Canada use the Internet as compared with 10% in 1995. It is also of equal importance that the amount of information being placed on the Internet for free utilization is growing at the same accelerated pace. At the present time, information on the Internet is often characterized as being wide but not particularly deep, however, that is also changing quickly as more professions find it an excellent technology over which to distribute information.

The Internet was started as a U.S. Department of Defense research experiment to determine if various factions of the government and research communities could be linked together in such a way that the communication could not be destroyed easily during a war. It has grown from this limited base to a point where government agencies, most Universities, many schools and people have joined this information revolution. More recently, the World Wide Web was developed which places information on the Internet in a specially coded form called Hypertext Markup Language or HTML. This is a graphical based approach which adds a powerful feature called hypertext. Hypertext in a document allows the user to click on a highlighted concept buried in the text which then links the user to another Internet site. Therefore, in reading this document, a phrase or concept such as "U.S. Department of Defense" could be highlighted and by clicking on it with a mouse curser, the reader jumps to another site which provides information on that concept. Thus, multiple concepts can be expressed and explained in detail through jump sites all around the world. Major advantages to this approach include learning which is free of the constraints of time and place and which is free and universally accessible.

To access the information, users go to one of numerous free Internet search engines such as Yahoo or Alta Vista which allow searches of the information on the World Wide Web based on the keyword

concept. It is also possible to search by linking keywords. These searches turn up matches of the concept and provide the Uniform Resource Locator or URL which is the address the user jumps to in order to use the information. In addition to being able to browse the web, search engines such as Yahoo have lists of interesting sites and broad categories of information such as travel information or information on disabilities already categorized for the users.

To actually get to the Internet and specifically the World Wide Web, interested users have to have

a computer, Internet software, and an appropriate connection. Most desirable at present are connections through large institutions or businesses which have direct connections to the Internet equipment so that the information transfer rates are fast. Therefore, public schools, businesses, government sites such as city libraries, and Universities often have public use computers set up to allow Internet connection. The physical connection to the Internet is done through a network interface card which is installed in the computer and attaches it to a network which has an entry point onto the Internet. Many people however prefer the convenience of using their own computer at home or work to access the Internet. This can be done from a single personal computer via a modem which is a device that installs in the computer and converts the computer digital signal to one which can be

recognized by the phone system. These users typically either join an Internet provider service which has a local phone number or 800 phone number or sign up for a national service such as America Online or CompuServe which offer multiple services such as games, an encyclopedia, travel planning,

shopping, etc. as well as a gateway to the Internet. A third method of entry is through a direct satellite

connection which offers a fast data transfer from a single site.

Use of the WWW for Vocational Evaluators

Vocational evaluation has long been a technologically oriented and sophisticated field whose major differentiation from other more traditional methods of career assessment has been its focus on technological testing methods and the use of computer programs for job matching and placement. In

many respects, vocational evaluators have the same needs for use of the Internet as other fields but via the World Wide Web, the Internet offers some particular sites of information which can potentially

allow these professionals significant benefits in performing their job function. The following sections

will detail some sites of interest including those containing vocational evaluation specific information,

disability information, and occupational information.

I. Information on Vocational Evaluation

University of Cal-Berkley (<http://vocserve.berkeley.edu/Briefs/Brief62.html>)

VEWAA (<http://www.impactonline.org/vewaa/>)

II. Occupational Information

A. Government Information and Statistics

Vocational information is available from national and regional databases. This data can be accessed and can provide rehabilitation professionals with current vocational information.

Government Statistics (<http://stats.bls.gov:80/oreother.htm>)

Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://stats.bls.gov/blshome.html>)

1990 Census (<http://venus.census.gov/cdrom/lookup>)

Federal Jobs (<http://www.fedworld.gov/jobs.htm>)

OSHA (<http://www.osha-slc.gov/>)

CDC (<http://www.cdc.gov/>)

Social Security Administration (<http://open.igc.org/NADDC/>)

Department of Justice/ADA (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/adahoml.htm>)

B. Salary and Job Market Value

Salary and job market availability can be found on the WWW. Accessing resources can help vocational evaluators determine current salaries for specific job classifications. Salary and wage resources can be found for national and regional job classifications.

Alabama Wages (<http://129.66.172.4/dir/wage.htm>)

Salary Calculator (<http://www.homefair.com/home/>)

Social Security Information (<http://www.ssa.gov/statistics/eedata.html>)

C. Finding Jobs

Maynard (1997) in a recent issue of Nation's Business indicated that job finding on the Internet is currently the second biggest source of Internet commercial revenue following pornography. Typically,

job seekers do not pay to use the services but businesses are often charged a fee ranging from \$25 to \$150 per listing with the duration of the listing averaging four weeks. Approximately 1/3rd of the services do not charge any fees as they are trying to expand their base. Often the ad is set up so that a respondent can fill out an on-line form and return it directly to the company to apply or they can send a pre made electronic resume to the company of interest. Maynard notes that the Internet classifieds are predominantly high-tech jobs, it is becoming more diverse. For example, one large service, the Monster Board, reports 45 % of the current 50,000 jobs listed are for technicians while 20% are product management and development, and 35% are completely non-technical. These services and sites are becoming increasingly specialized and even the larger job advertising sites are breaking into categories of jobs. There is even a site which specializes in finding jobs for people with disabilities.

In addition to the job advertising services, other methods exist for finding jobs on the Internet

including newspaper classified ads, direct business postings, and speciality job category publication listings such as the postings by the Chronicle of Higher Education which lists jobs weekly in academia. Maynard (1997) stated that as of November 1996, 150 U.S. newspapers ran their classified ads on the Internet, up from 10 in 1995. The sites for large businesses are increasingly used to post listings of job opening in their businesses and the specific trade journal listings are expected to increase at the same rapid pace. Listed below are a few of the job advertising resources with some of those reviewed and critiqued:

Classified Ads

Employment Service (<http://www.surf.com/%7Ecfpub/employ1.htm>)

Career Magazine (<http://www.careermag.com>)

Online Career Center (<http://www.occ.com>)

Help-Wanted Page (<http://www.helpwantedpage.com/>)

The goal of this site is to provide an easy to use guide to on-line employment. There is no specific geographical range. The target group includes both job seekers and corporate recruiters. There are multiple features to this site including the following:

Help wanted index - a listing of thousands of potential job listings

"What's New" section - new additions to the help wanted index

Recruitment resources - links to Internet employment information

Event calender - media, convention, and job fair information

GTR Advertising - This explains the purpose and history of the host

Sample artwork - a gallery of recruitment advertising artwork

Company directory - corporate profile of selected employers

Submit info. - allows for applicants to submit their info. over the web

E-mail - allow you to get in touch with the GTR

This site allows a potential job seeker to find specific job openings. This site also allows for job recruiters to find potential job seekers. After the job seeker submits their information, the recruiters then search the database of submitted resumes. If the recruiter is interested in the job seeker, he/she can then contact the potential employee. This web page is sponsored by GTR advertising which is a national recruitment advertising agency based in Cleveland, Ohio. GTR writes, designs and produces classified employment advertising. GTR indicates that their clients are those actively engaged in employee hiring, which are mostly corporate Human Resources professionals. There is no cost to use this sites services. This site is put together very well in that it is simplistic to use for

the novice. The links and icons necessary to operate this site are clearly labeled.

Espan (<http://www.espan.com/>)

The Monster Board (<http://www.monster.com/>)

This is a page to locate and apply for jobs and interns on line in which a user can create a profile using

location, disciplines, and keyword(s). Jobba- The- Hunt searches off-line. A "Job Profile" is made, and once jobs are found they are placed in the "In Box". The "In Box" is opened by entering the user's

name. The profile can be changed at anytime or deleted. On the left of the page are short cuts. In those, the area of employment desired is indicated and the job seeker is connected to the top employers nation wide. This site is sponsored by Blockbuster, AMCC, and Internet and is free of charge for job seekers.

Job Bank (<http://www.jobank.com>)

The purpose of this site is to help those that are searching for jobs, and to alert employers of qualified

individuals to fill open positions. The job postings are for jobs that are nationwide. The site features four different areas in which one can search. These areas are Job Search, Resume Bank, Job Listings by areas of interest, and V.I.C. The site works by clicking on one of the above options and that option will list a variety of jobs, qualifications, employer, and contact persons. There is also an area to just deposit a resume and let potential employers search for you. Another feature is the Very Important Company (V.I.C.), which allows companies to link their own personal pages to the JOBANK. The cost varies. Job Search, Resume Bank, and Post a Job is free, but V.I.C. cost is determined on per customer basis. This site contains a comprehensive listing of jobs which is couched in a colorful graphically filled background which is inviting to return to the site.

Job Guide (<http://www.jobtrak.com/jobguide/#help>)

Job Hunt (<http://www.job-hunt.org>)

The purpose of the site is to provide a listing of useful Internet accessible job-search resources and services. The geographical range is broad and no target groups are excluded. The features on the site allow you to search the job-listings they have compiled which exceeds 700, with 5-10 new sites added per week. You can learn about Job-Hunt, add a new job link, and search job interfaces. They have On-Line Job listings ie. classified adds, companies, and recruiting agencies that may be searched. Job Resources such as commercial services and resume banks can also be explored. The site works by clicking on the areas you want to explore (like the ones just previously listed) until a particular or specific job is reached. At that point you will either reach a company's name and address to get more information, or their home page. The site is maintained by Dane Spearing, dane@job-hunt.org who has won a number of awards for her work on this site. The cost is free to use and you may submit other site listings of jobs to be included here. Using Job Hunt is relatively simple and easy. It looks rather plain due to the lack of pictures and/or graphics, so there is not much entertainment value to the site, i.e. graphics which causes the site to load quickly on your computer. Job Hunt definitely has a lot of job listings and resources available and would benefit anyone seeking employment. Even with all the information, it doesn't take a long time to pinpoint a

particular job. It does not, however, give you information on job qualifications, availability, etc., that is done by you by either searching the companies home page, or contacting them by phone or mail.

Job Track (<http://www.jobtrak.com>)

The purpose of Job Track is to provide students and recent graduates with information about jobs, companies and graduates schools. To the Employers, Job Track gives a list of qualified applicant without having to go to each college. Employers decide which campus they wish the job to be listed. Job Track can locate full-time jobs, part-time jobs, temporary jobs and internships. Obviously, this site is target towards college students and alumni nationwide. Job Track gives the users information about Job Track including how often it is updated, who would use the site, and sponsor names. Another feature is the resume section. Job Track lets the user design a resume that goes online for employers to look over. Other special features include: Job listing, tips for search for jobs, top recruiters, guide to graduate school, index to U.S. Colleges and Universities, and other sites for college students and graduates. The site works by clicking onto one of several red icons. Each page has a icon which takes you back to the Job Track home page. The Job listing icon was the only section that is somewhat tricky. A password is needed from a career center on campus to enter the job list. Once a password is obtain the jobs can be searched for by company, geographic area, type of work, date, internship date base, and key words. In the resume section you simply type in the information asked for and at the end of the page you are allowed to put it online. Resumes can also be update under this icon. Job Track is free to college students. However, there is a nominal fee for employers who list jobs. The fee ranges from \$.75 to \$15.00 per a listing or campus. This site is sponsored by MSN, Magellan, Top 5% Web Site Points, and Ventana. Overall this site to be user friendly in that it has simple instructions and the easy to spot Job Track Home Icon. The Icon described the link well enough that users know what to expect on the next page. The most difficult part is located a person on campus with the password to get in.

Job-Web (<http://www.jobweb.com>)

The JOBBWEB site is sponsored by NACE, the National Association of Colleges and Employers. NACE bridges the gap "between higher education and the world of work" by involving over 1600 universities and colleges, more than 1300 employers, and over 1 million college students and alumni." Although their primary purpose is to provide information on career planing and employment for college educated workers, they also provide guidance for leadership and ethical issues through a committee of representative from seven regional associations. The ten categories listed on the on the left of the screen is an easy guide through the page. The Catalog is a listing with prices for publications available to the job seeker. Publication prices ranged from as low as \$7.95 to over \$50.00. Ordering can be done via phone, fax, or mail. Methods of payment included options for checks, money orders or credit cards. The How to Post Jobs is for employers wishing to advertise a position available. The Job Choices on line Magazine had articles of current interest. This "issue" featured three articles and included an article on how to get your resume noticed called Resume Report, however, when you get into the article you realize that there is more information available through links. The JobWeb FAQs (frequently asked questions) is a user friendly data base of questions ranging in explanations for such things as what is the Internet to why you should choose JobWeb over another vender. The News & Events cover a range of topics which include upcoming career fairs, events, and news for job seekers. The news for job seekers "is designed to keep you abreast of the latest happenings affecting the job market," and has a series of articles on a whole gambit of topics. The What's New on JobWeb" includes a special interest network, a Management

Leadership Institute, and a membership application. The JobWeb Map gives more specific information concerning jobs, career planning and other job sites. For instance, it provides an employer directory and a listing of federal jobs. The Search JobWeb Resources is a search engine for JobWeb.. Running across the page are the categories of Career Services Professional, Career Planning Resources, Jobs, Job-Search Information and HR/Staffing Professional which provide more in depth detail. Under Career Services Professional, the table of contents include places to visit such as employment centers

and relocation resources and resources for career practitioners include things such as career assessment tools and news for career service professionals. The third topic is a help guide and career library resource which includes career choices and books and articles. The hypertext format allows you to click through a series of topics. One checked was the Career Services Professional. Going from the employment center heading to the next layer, a list of career categories was offered. This should prove to be a useful tool for the graduating or graduated job seeker or counselor aiding a consumer because of its comprehensive coverage of the job market.

Careers On Line

Career Mosaic (<http://www.careermosaic.com/>)

CareerWeb (<http://www.cweb.com/>)

Businesses

Now, businesses post job information and are listed in the "WWW phonebook." Vocational evaluators and placement specialist are now able to find businesses and addresses for those businesses over the WWW. Several sites offer information that can be useful in identifying businesses from which vocational professionals refer clients seeking employment.

Yellow Pages (switchboard.com)

Academia

Chronicle of Higher Education (chronicle.com)

Higher Education (<http://volvo.gslis.utexas.edu/~acadres/jobs/index.html>)

D. Resume writer (<http://galaxy.einet.net/GJ/employment.html>)

Posting a resume

JobCenter (<http://www.jobcenter.com/>)

E. Maps

Yahoo Maps (<http://www.yahoo.maps>) Technology for geographical information has evolved into a new and exciting areas. Vocational professionals can sit at the computer and locate detailed maps and directions for both their clients and themselves.

III. Disability Resources

The WWW abounds with resources for both rehabilitation professionals and persons with disabilities.

These resources provide information and access to disability-specific and related topics from individuals and URLs worldwide. The resources available range from specialized disability types, disability support groups, and federal, state, and nonprofit organization which work with/for persons with disabilities.

A. Disability Types and Medical Information

For a person with a disability the resources available on the Internet are endless. Medical information

about specific illnesses and disabilities can be found. Certain URL's provide information about societal

and cultural beliefs toward persons with disabilities.

Yahoo (http://www.yahoo.com/Society_and_Culture/Disabilities)

Deafness (<http://www.dpa.org.sg/DF/>)

B. Disability Support Groups

Evan Kemp Disability Resources (<http://disability.com/index.html>)

1. State and Federal Agencies

Center on Information Technology Accommodations

(<http://www.gsa.gov/coca/>)

Developmental Disabilities (<http://open.igc.org/NADDC/>)

2. Non-profit Groups, Consumers, and Organizations

National Rehabilitation Information Center (<http://www.cais.net/naric/>)

Kathy's Site (<http://www.erie.net/%7Ekahluv/>)

C. Equipment and Technology Resources

The WWW provides one of the best resources for current information about adaptive technology. More and more sites now focus on providing resources and links to other sites that provide specialized equipment for certain disability types.

Better Life on Line (<http://www.hsv.tis.net/dymedias>)

disABILITY (<http://www.eskimo.com/~jlubin/disabled.html>)

DO-IT (<http://weber.u.washington.edu/~doit/Other/org.html>)

IV. Workers' Compensation Resources

Alabama DIR (<http://webserver.dsmd.state.al.us/dir/wc.htm>)

North Carolina (<http://www.comp.state.nc.us/ncicmain.htm>)

Colorado (www.state.co.us/gov_dir/labor_dir/workers_comp/workers_comp_le.html)

State Job Listings

Alabama (<http://129.66.172.4/dir/index.html>)

State Jobs-Alabama (<http://129.66.172.4/dir/es.htm>)

Colorado (<http://www.state.co.us/jobinfo.html>)

References

- Maynard, R. (1997). Casting the net for job seekers. Nation's Business, 85(3). p 28-29.
- Nielsen Media Research Survey. (1997). Net use doubles in 18 months. The Denver Post, Thursday, March 13, 1997, p.19A.

* Paper presented at the Eighth National Forum on Issues in Vocational Assessment. Colorado Springs, CO: March 1997.