



Online Job Searching for Beginners



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Online Job Searching

Class Objectives

- Introduction to online job searching
- Advanced search techniques
- Websites to find job openings
- Finding job openings and postings
- How to read job postings
- Best practices for applying
- Where does your application go?
- Tips for avoiding fraud and scams

Introduction to Online Job Searching

Job searching has changed dramatically over the last 20 years. Looking for employment used to be as simple as asking friends and family for leads on open positions, looking for “help wanted” signs in windows, or calling a company to ask if they are hiring.

With increased access to the internet, employers have moved to posting their open positions online. Websites now exist that pull all those job postings together in one convenient, searchable location.

If you’re new to online job searching, it can be frustrating to get started. In this class we will try and equip you with the tools to make it a little easier.

Important Note about This Class:

This a lot of advice out there about the “best” way to optimize your job search or increase your chances of getting an interview. This class is specifically focused on locating jobs online.

If you’d like to read more about other ways to approach a job search, please check the additional resources at the end of this document.

Before You Go Online

Before you go online, get prepared by pulling together all your documents and checking your social media privacy settings.

Resume: Your resume is the most powerful job search communication tool you have. It’s important to take time to write an effective one.

If you already have a resume, make sure it is up to date and checked over for any errors. If you do not have a resume, take the time to write one, or at least a draft of one that can be easily editable.

Your resume should include your

- Name,
- Contact information, such as email and phone number,
- Work history (if applicable),
- Skills (such a technical or soft skills), and
- Educational history (if applicable).

You will want to choose the resume format that works best for you. This class doesn't go in depth into resumes, but we have several books that can help guide you. Please see the additional resources section at the end of this document for a full list.

Cover Letter: Cover letters can be daunting, but they are necessary. Just like having a draft resume, it makes sense to have a draft cover letter that you can edit for each job application.

Social Media (Optional): Companies have started to research their applicants by looking at their social media presence. If you have social media sites, go in and update your privacy settings to make it so that only your friends or family can see your posts.

There are many people who have found jobs by having a charming or knowledgeable social media presence, but those are often done intentionally and as part of a job search strategy. This works best for people who are craftspeople or who have technical backgrounds or skills.

Inc.com had an article last year that said that 54% of employers have eliminated a job candidate because of their social media profiles (<https://www.inc.com/melanie-curtin/54-percent-of-employers-have-eliminated-a-candidate-based-on-social-media-time-to-clean-up-your-feed-and-tags.html>).

The choice to leave your social media public or private is entirely your own. Just be aware that any publicly available information could hurt your chances.

Boolean Searching

Boolean Searching is a method of symbolic logic that was created by George Boole in the 19th century.

It allows you to combine search words and phrases with Boolean operators, which are AND, OR, and NOT. These words help limit or broaden your search based on which Boolean operator you use.

For example, if you're a nurse looking for a job and you just search for "registered nurse," you will get a broad search result.

However, if you search for "registered nurse AND jobs AND Nashua," you get much more specific results.



You can implement these search operators anywhere they will be useful. You can combine them as needed, but try not to get too specific in your search as it may not return what you think it will.

Here are some examples of searches using Boolean operators:

- Librarian OR library assistant,
- Software engineer AND entry level,
- Engineer NOT software.

Boolean search operators aren't always useful for job searching with Google, but are very useful on websites specific to job searching.

Job Searching Websites

Online job searching dates back to the 1990s with websites we know by name, such as Career Builder or the first iteration of Monster.com, the Monster Board.

Now there are so many different websites for job searching that it can be hard to know which ones to use. These websites often cater to specific kinds of jobs, or have search options to help narrow your results.

Note: Some job searching advice recommends that you make a list of companies you want to work for and then check those company's websites regularly for openings that fit your qualifications. This works well if you are passively looking for employment or have time to commit to this practice. Alternatively, you can use job boards like the ones below.

Indeed.com is one of the most popular job searching boards on the internet. Indeed is simple to use, requiring only the job search keywords and location. You can also create a profile with your resume and it will be entered into a database that employers search to find prospective employees.

LinkedIn.com is like social media for work. A lot of office work professionals will use LinkedIn to network with new people or stay connected to former co-workers or bosses. You can take skill assessments, check for job openings, and network. LinkedIn's specific job listings can be narrowed by location, seniority level, and more. The downside is that you must make a LinkedIn profile and maintain it to get the most benefit. You do not need to use LinkedIn in your job search, but it does have a large selection of job postings.

Glassdoor.com is more than a job searching site. You can also use it to check on salary ranges, read anonymous employee reviews of a workplace, and more. Your job search can be narrowed by job type, salary range, distance, and other filters.

Monster.com is a proven job board, having existed since the 1990s. You can search using the usual information like job keywords and location. There's also a great selection area where you can look at jobs based on category. One of the biggest benefits of Monster is the advice section.

CareerBuilder.com, another job searching board that has existed since the 1990s, is another general job searching board.

Joblist.com offers a wide selection of job listings, including hourly, part time, and physical labor. Joblist provides more than just professional “desk job” opportunities, if you prefer to find jobs where you work with your hands or can choose shift work.

FlexJobs.com is a job board for finding remote jobs. FlexJobs has been pairing job seekers with remote job opportunities since 2007. You can find remote, hybrid, and flexible jobs by keyword, title, or category.

USAjobs.com, the official website for US government jobs, is where you would look for government jobs **only**. If you’re unfamiliar, USA Jobs can be difficult. I recommend reading about government job searching before jumping into USA Jobs.

Snagajob.com, another website that offers a wide variety of employment opportunities, helps you locate jobs with flexible shifts, as well as adding new jobs on an hourly basis. You can also create a profile to be better matched with jobs.

That’s only 9 of the 100s of job searching websites available. The ones listed above are listed on many “best of” lists for job searching in 2021.

Finding Online Job Postings and Alerts

There are two main ways to find job openings online:

- Search for them directly on different websites, or
- Set up job alert notifications to go to your email.

If you want to search a job site, you can choose one of the many available and search by job title or keyword. These websites allow you to specify location when you search, so you can look within a certain radius of your current location or maybe a city or state where you would like to move.

For example, using Indeed.com, if I wanted to find a job as a Dog Walker in Boulder Colorado, I would type the job title into the **What** box and the location into the **Where** box. When I click on “Find jobs,” Indeed will then search their job listings and return anything that matches my search.

If the search results you get when using broad keywords or titles aren’t yielding the types of jobs you’re looking for, you can try using the Boolean search techniques we discussed in class, or you can use the “advanced search” feature to narrow it down. Almost all job searching websites will offer an advanced search.

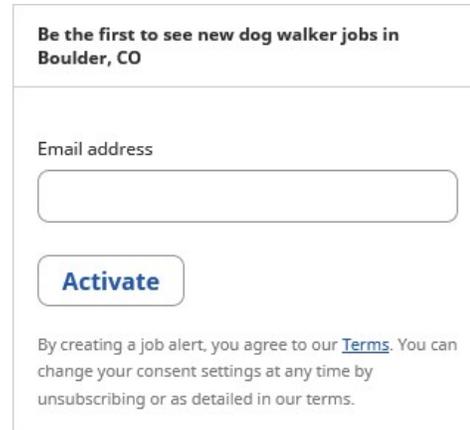
Indeed.com also gives you optional search limiters when you get your search results. For example, if I was looking for a specific shift, I could use the **Shifts & Schedules** limiter to narrow my results.

This can become a lot of work to do every day, and will often return results you’ve seen before or may have already applied to. To save time, job searching websites will offer the ability to sign up for “job alert” emails. These can be called different things on different websites, but the concept remains the same.

In the example of Indeed.com, if I wanted to save the search for a dog walker job in Boulder, CO, I would use the box to the right of the search results to sign up for job alerts.

All you need to do here is enter your email address and click the **Activate** button. This will enroll you in emails that will alert you of new jobs that match your search.

Many websites will have the option to change your alert frequency. LinkedIn offers daily or weekly digests of new job postings that match your profile.



The image shows a sign-up form for job alerts. At the top, it says "Be the first to see new dog walker jobs in Boulder, CO". Below this is a text input field labeled "Email address". Underneath the input field is a blue button with the word "Activate" in white. At the bottom of the form, there is a small line of text: "By creating a job alert, you agree to our [Terms](#). You can change your consent settings at any time by unsubscribing or as detailed in our terms."

How to Read A Job Posting

While it would be nice if all job postings on all job search websites looked the same and had the same exact information, they often vary. While they may be in a different order, you can usually find similar information in each posting.

Online job postings have become very long, especially on websites like LinkedIn. Though the information may move around, or parts may be omitted, each job posting for a major company or organization will have these items:

Job title – The job title will be at the top of the posting.

Company and location – On almost all job posting websites, you will be able to locate the company or organization hiring near the job title.

When the job was posted – There will be a place to see when the job was posted to that website. This will either be a date, or will say something like "Posted 2 days ago." You will want to confirm that a job is still open and accepting applications if the posting is older than a week or two. Many jobs get posted, but organizations may not remember to close the posting when they hire someone.

Employment type – This will indicate if the position is full time, part time, temporary, contract, or contract to hire.

Company details – Larger companies or organizations will frequently add a paragraph or two about the company, including any awards they have won. This will be the place that they highlight company culture or benefits.

Job description – Finally! Here is where you find the description of the job. Sometimes there will be a job description summary, a longer job description, and a responsibilities list, or any combination of those. This section details the work you will be expected to do in the job.

Requirements – Here you will find a list of any requirements you must meet to be eligible for the position. This includes any educational requirements, previous work experience, skills, abilities, physical requirements, or culture questions. If you don't meet the 100% of the requirements, don't let that deter you from applying.

Application Best Practices

You're ready to apply!

Option 1 – You can hit the “apply” button from the job website you're on, which will often let you apply through that website.

Option 2 – Best practice is to go to the company's website and apply through their career page. This is easy with large companies or organizations since they will have a large online presence. It can be more difficult for government jobs, small organizations, and some non-profits. An example of what to do for a large company is below.

You've identified a job at Lowe's that you're qualified for and excited to submit your application.

1. Go to Lowes.com. Since Lowes has an online store front, you want to locate the “About” section.
2. You can usually find useful links at the bottom of a website, so be sure to check there.
3. Here there is an “About Lowe's” section with links. One of them is “Careers.”
4. Clicking on the Careers link takes you to a new page where you can search for open jobs at Lowe's by keyword and location.
5. Find the job and apply through the Lowes career page!

Hooray! You applied for the job!

Option 1 – You can try and remember which jobs you applied for at which company, or hastily scribble it on a piece of paper.

Option 2 – Best practice, especially if you are applying to a lot of jobs regularly, is to track which jobs you have applied for with a spreadsheet or other organizational system.

Things you want to keep track of are:

- Company,
- Job title,
- Date applied,
- Link to job posting,
- If you received a response from the company (a rejection, interview request, etc.).

If you have any questions about how to set up one of these spreadsheets, go here:

<https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/job-search-spreadsheet>.

Where does your application go?

People who are new to online job hunting may be surprised to find out that their application is not always seen by a person immediately, or sometimes even at all.

This is usually when job searchers get discouraged. It's important to know that modern job applications, especially at large companies, are analyzed by software called Applicant Tracking Systems. If your resume or job application does not match the job posting, it can be automatically filtered out.

You will want to update your resume in small ways for every job application, to make sure you are updating keywords and action verbs to match the posting.

Never lie on your resume. Update your resume for the job posting, but don't lie about your previous experience.

There are websites available that can explain ATS better than we can. Some of them will even check your resume against a job posting to see how well it would do.

For more information about ATS and how it impacts your job search, read this article:

<https://www.jobscan.co/applicant-tracking-systems>.

Tips for Avoiding Fraud and Scams

Unfortunately, there have been an increase in fraudulent job postings that are intended to scam job seekers out of money or their identity.

Fraudulent job posting red flags:

- Job postings or applications that ask for your credit card, bank account, or other personal financial information. **NEVER** give out any financial information at any point during your job search or hiring.
- Asking for your full social security number or driver's license information. Personal information like this is not asked during the initial application. Some applications *may* ask for your driver's license information if, and **ONLY** if, the job requires you to have a valid driver's license for the job.
- The employer says that they need you to help them get an office space up and running in your area. These scams often request your banking info under the false impression that you will be helping process real estate transactions.
- You are offered a large payment or reward if you provide your banking information for deposits or money transfers. Remember, you must **NEVER** provide financial information during the application process.
- In summary, **NEVER** give out your banking, financial, or other private identifying information like your full social security number during the application process. Early in the application process is not when legitimate businesses need to verify your identity.

Some other common fraudulent job postings will include:

- Unusual salary for the position,
- A wide salary range,
- Asking you to buy or ship gift cards,
- An offer is given almost immediately after your application,
- Job postings that include spelling or grammatical errors,
- The posting doesn't list job responsibilities and focuses on how much money you can make.

One way to avoid fraudulent job postings is to visit the company's website directly to apply for the job. This helps because you can verify the company exists, the job opening is current and valid, and that your application will be received by the company.

Another thing you can do is a quick Google search for the company name and "scam," which will return scam reports concerning the organization.

For more information on job scams, check this article from the Federal Trade Commission:
<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/job-scams>.

Additional Resources

In the Nashua Public Library:

- Adult non-fiction section 650.1.
 - This section of the adult non-fiction section contains books about resumes, networking, job interviews, job searching, and cover letters.
- "The 2-hour job search : using technology to get the right job faster," Steve Dalton (650.14 DAL)
- "Knock 'em dead : the ultimate job search guide," Martin John Yate (650.14 YAT)
- "Same-day resume : write an effective resume in an hour," Louise Kursmark (650.142 KUR)
- "15-minute cover letter : write an effective cover letter right now," Michael J. Farr (650.142 FAR)
- "Rip the resume : job search & interview power prep," Torin Ellis (650.142 ELL)

Online:

- Universal Class:
 - Interview Skills,
 - Resume Writing 101,
 - Business Etiquette,
 - And many other business specific classes!
- "Don't fall for online employment and job scams" - <https://us.norton.com/internetsecurity-online-scams-avoid-job-scams.html>
- "Looking for work? Avoid job scams" - <https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2021/06/looking-work-avoid-job-scams>
- "Job Search and Networking - Find a Job Online" - <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/jobsearchandnetworking/find-a-job-online/1/>
- "11 Best Practices for Your Online Job Search" - <https://www.flexjobs.com/blog/post/job-searching-online-8-best-practices-you-need-to-know/>