

## TRACKING 'NET GAINS

### FROM ONLINE NETWORKING TO CUSTOMIZED SEARCHES, THE WEB NOW OFFERS JOB SEEKERS MORE USEFUL TOOLS THAN EVER

By VIRGINIA BACKAITIS October 30, 2006

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**NET CATCH:** Jarid Lukin credits Indeed.com for helping him land a job as e-commerce director for a Wall Street firm -- and says job hunting online has gotten easier.

CHARLIE waltzed in from a long weekend of mountain biking certain he'd find his e-mail box jammed with interview invites and his voice mail filled with calls from recruiters asking for face time.

Who could blame him? The Thursday before, he'd paid an Internet job-search service to blast his professionally written résumé and cover letter to 9,000 employers and recruiters in the New York metropolitan area.

"If I get even a 1 percent response," he told his fiancée before he left for his trip, "I'll have more interview offers than my old man got in his entire life. The Internet's a wonderful thing!"

And Charlie's right, the Internet is a wonderful thing - just not the way he was using it. The résumés he sent out were probably never even opened; yesterday's cool tool feeds today's SPAM folder.

The Internet has gotten smarter, but that's not bad news, especially not for the job seeker. The second generation of Internet-based services ("Web 2.0") has given birth to a wider-reaching, more inclusive and more personalized set of job-search tools than has ever before been available - and they're free and easy to use.

Don't believe it? Ask Jarid Lukin, who has been using the Web to find jobs since 1994. In the past, he spent hours bouncing between job boards like Monster.com and HotJobs.com to see what new jobs had been posted each day. This time he was able to do all his shopping on a single site, Indeed.com, one of the new, free job search engines, which scours thousands of job boards, newspaper sites and Web sites several times per day. It delivers highly customized, up-to-date results in the form of job alerts, and will even e-mail them to you if you if you want.

How customized are those results? "If your cousin is looking for a part-time job working the evening shift at a pickle factory 300 miles west of Texas, we'll help you locate that one-in-a-million job waiting for her in Albuquerque," says Phil Carpenter of SimplyHired.com, another job search engine. "Our tools will turn everyone into an expert at finding the needle in their own personal haystack."

A needle in a haystack is more or less what Lukin found. With a new Stern School of Business MBA in hand, Lukin wanted to step up to a job that would not only leverage his previous six years of e-commerce experience but would catapult him into the Web 2.0 world, as well. After a successful search, he's now the director of e-commerce at Alacra Inc., a Manhattan-based provider of business and financial information.

"I can say with 100 percent confidence that I would not have found this job without Indeed.com, because the vacancy was never listed on a job board," says Lukin. "I think Indeed.com picked news of it up from venture capitalist Fred Wilson's blog."

### The Big Picture

That's the beauty of a job search engine: "You get to see all the jobs on the Web as opposed to only 30 percent of them," explains Bill Warren, the past president of Monster.com, who now serves as the executive director of JobCentral.com, another job search engine.

"In the past, 70 percent of all job openings were invisible - not because employers wanted to hide them, but because of the expense of posting them on major job boards. Job seekers who use job search engines like ours get a much fuller picture."

But job search engines aren't the only places on the Web that provide an improved experience for the job seeker. There are also specialty job boards serving niche markets, like JobsInTheMoney.com (for bankers and accountants), RetirementJobs.com (for retirees), JobsInTrucks.com (for drivers), VetJobs.com (for veterans of foreign wars) and so on.

"Both job seekers and employers save time and energy by utilizing a specialized board," says Jim Varriale, president of Quantster.com, a niche job board for quantitative finance professionals. "It's the difference between shopping for something at a boutique or searching for the same thing at a department store."

If job search engines and job boards provide too two-dimensional a job search experience for your liking, consider taking a page from Terrance Maddox's playbook. Maddox, who grew up in a single-parent household and whose mother was a bus driver, felt he lacked the ever-important connections that graduates of exclusive

colleges and graduate schools had. To even the score, he tried turning to the Web to make business contacts.

He ended up on LinkedIn.com, a business-oriented networking site that has grown to more than 7 million users. A kind of MySpace for professional types, the site allows you to create a profile and link it to people you know; you can then access your contacts' personal networks, and request that they introduce you to people working in fields that interest you. To facilitate cyber-schmoozing, the site lets you search for contacts according to where they went to school, where they work(ed), and whom you know in common.

Determined to land a gig in New York, Maddox left his Price Waterhouse Coopers job in Washington, D.C., and arrived with a deliberate strategy in hand.

"For two months, I worked the network seeking counsel from people who had relevant backgrounds," he says. "I asked each of them, 'How can I position myself to get where you are?'" People were happy to give Maddox advice and assistance, he says, "as long as I did most of the research and footwork."

Through his newfound contacts, Maddox eventually secured interviews with each of the Big Four accounting firms, several Wall Street firms and the major media companies at which he most wanted to work. Today, he's a digital media research analyst at one of the world's largest media conglomerates.

"People don't mind helping people who try," he says, "and LinkedIn gave me access to the right people."

#### Advertisements for Myself

Jeff Clark, who graduated from college in Oklahoma last June, took an equally deliberate but far bolder approach to landing his dream job; he built a Web site called IHiredJeff-Clark.com.

"What the Heck Is This?" screamed the colorful, information-filled home page of his site. "This is my not-so-subtle attempt to get the best advertising gig out there," read the next line. Clark's site went on to address potential employers head-on. "You probably get thousands of boring résumés and cover letters every year - but it takes passion + know-how (and a free weekend) to do a Web site."

Clark now calls the gambit a "hare-brained idea" - but success can't be argued with. He had hoped to find a design position with a medium-sized high-tech firm in Boston, and that's exactly what he found. Today, he's a graphic artist at ZoomInfo.

"I was impressed with Jeff's effort," says ZoomInfo's Russell Glass. "His site was creative, witty and fun, so I picked up the phone and I called him."

Clark isn't the only person ZoomInfo has hired through a Web site or blog; they hired one of their product managers that way as well. "And we've interviewed two or three others," Glass says. "It's a good way to separate yourself from the crowd."

Even if you're not on the job market now, you might consider putting a self-created profile on the Web. Why? Because chances are there's information about you floating around in cyberspace anyway (Google yourself to find out), and by creating an Internet calling card you get to tell the world who you are instead of letting the Internet do that through the little bits and scraps that it finds.

If you don't have the time, talent or cyber-passion of a Jeff Clark, relax; a Web profile is simple to create and can take fewer than 10 minutes. Sites like ZoomInfo.com allow business people (if you work, that's you) to create their own Web summaries.

"It's a good way to ensure that what the Web says about you is accurate," says Brian Burdick, ZoomInfo's COO. And while it's difficult (if not impossible) to remove the Google hits on you you'd prefer no one see, ZoomInfo uses technology that puts the summary you've created near the top of most search engines' hit lists.

While all this new technology is powerful, fun and free to the job seeker, think carefully about what you post on the Web. Assume that it's going to live there for a very long time and that there may be little you can do to remove it or change it.

Finally, remind yourself that even a new and improved Web is just one of many tools to use on your job search. If you're lucky enough to have a relationship with a recruiter or mentor who can make a phone call and get you an interview, that's still the fastest way through your future employer's doors. Even in the Internet era, it's hard to get hired without face time.

Virginia Backaitis is a recruiter based in the New York metro area, with 22 years experience serving global clients.

LOOKING for work in a Web 2.0 World? Here's how to go about it :

Be efficient: Use job search engines such as Indeed.com, JobCentral.com, Jobster.com and SimplyHired.com rather than surfing between job boards when looking for your next position. (And don't forget the job listings at [nypost.com/atwork!](http://nypost.com/atwork!))

Be smart: Use niche job boards if you have a highly specialized profession. If you don't know where to find the one that's most appropriate for you, try looking on aggregator sites such as [NicheBoards.com](http://NicheBoards.com) or [NicheJobs.com](http://NicheJobs.com). If you're looking for a job within an association, an index is listed at [weddles.com/associations/index.cfm](http://weddles.com/associations/index.cfm)

Be connected: [LinkedIn.com](http://LinkedIn.com) and [ryze.com](http://ryze.com) are the leading business networking sites.

Be a blogger: Blogs are a perfect vehicle for showcasing your expertise. Unlike résumés, they invite you to reveal your opinions and personality, and they're most often free and easy to create. [Blogster.com](http://Blogster.com), [Blogstream.com](http://Blogstream.com), [Wordpress.org](http://Wordpress.org), [Livejournal.com](http://Livejournal.com) are among the most popular sites.

Be visible: Create and control your online profile on sites like [ZoomInfo.com](http://ZoomInfo.com).

Be careful: The Web is a canvas that's easy to draw on and difficult to erase. Anything you post is "a dinosaur footprint," says Phil Carpenter of [simplyhired.com](http://simplyhired.com): "It's going to be out there for all to see for a very long time."

- V.B.