



Pew & Internet American Life PROJECT

PEW INTERNET PROJECT DATA MEMO

FROM: Angie Boyce, Research Assistant, and Lee Rainie, Director (202-557-3463)
RE: Online job hunting
DATE: July 2002

Fifty-two million Americans have looked online for information about jobs, and more than 4 million do so on a typical day.

Overall, these figures represent a more than 60% jump in the number of online job hunters from March 2000 when we first asked about the subject. We found then that 32 million had used the Internet to check out jobs. Moreover, there has been about a 33% hike in the daily traffic related to job searching. On a typical day in March 2000, about 3 million Internet users were searching for job information.

These current figures come from a Pew Internet Project survey of 2,259 Internet users that was conducted from March 1 through May 19, 2002. The margin of error is plus or minus two percentage points.

Among those who are the most likely to do online searches for jobs:

- **Young Internet users between the ages of 18 and 29.** Some 61% of them have looked for jobs online, compared to 42% of those ages 30-49 and 27% of those ages 50-64.
- **Men.** Some 50% of online men had sought job information, compared to 44% of online women. On a typical day, twice as many online men are job hunting as women.
- **The unemployed.** About 51% of those who do not currently have jobs have Internet access. On a typical day, a tenth of the unemployed with Internet access are online scouring job sites, compared to 4% of the wired Americans who have fulltime jobs.
- **African-Americans and Hispanics.** While 44% of whites have done online job seeking, close to 60% of African-Americans with Internet access and online Hispanics have sought job information on the Internet.
- **Those in sales-related jobs.** Some 55% of those with Internet access who currently hold media sales jobs have looked for new job information online,

compared to 44% of the online executives and professionals, and 49% of the wired clerical and office workers. However, on a typical day online the most active job searchers are online office workers. Skilled laborers and service workers are the least likely to have done job hunting online.

- **Those in higher income brackets and with high education levels.** High socioeconomic status is correlated with online job searching. Those who live in households with incomes over \$75,000 are more likely than others with lesser incomes to have done job searches online and those with college or graduate degrees are more likely than those with high school diplomas to have explored the job classifieds online.

Our finding that online job searches have increased clearly reflects two broad trends: First, Internet use is growing, especially for important types of information searches. Second, there has been turmoil and tightening of the job market. As of May 2002, the U.S. Department of Labor reported the current unemployment rate at 5.8%, or 8.4 million people. Since October 2000, 2.8 million more people have become unemployed.

It is not surprising, then, to see that nearly half of all Internet users have looked for information about a job online. Some 47% of all the adult Internet users in the United States have gone online looking for job information.

Our figures suggest, though, that usage of online job resources applies to a much broader audience than just the unemployed. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average American changes jobs 10 times and switches careers 3 times over the course of a lifetime. With high job and career turnover, workers are more likely than a generation ago to keep abreast of new employment opportunities.

As a job-finding tool, the Internet offers a wealth of resources, including immediate access to employment listings and resume distribution. One jobs Web site, Monster.com, is the 16th most visited site on the entire Web, according to the Web traffic-measuring firm Jupiter Media Metrix (now called comScore Media Metrix). Monster.com had a database of over 17.5 million resumes and 25 million members in May 2002. The site was visited by 17.9 million job seekers that month, according to Jupiter Media Metrix.

We found in a survey in January 2002 that 8 million Americans who changed jobs in the past two years found the Internet a vital resource in helping them through that transition. One quarter of Internet users who changed jobs in the previous two years said that the Internet played a crucial role in their job search.

Moreover, of the 47 million Internet users who have sought additional career education or training in the past two years, 29% reported that their use of the Internet played an important role in their securing the training. Another 27% who had sought career training and education said that the Internet played a minor role in getting that training. The most likely to cite the importance of the Internet in their getting that training were women and Internet users with several years of online experience.

Other work-related statistics from Pew Internet Project surveys

- 52% of the 116 million American adults with Internet access go online from their workplaces. This compares to 87% of U.S. Internet users who have access at home. And 23% of Americans say they at least occasionally go online from some place other than work or home, such as school, a friend's home, the local library, hotels when they travel, or cyber cafes.¹
- About 28 million Americans log on at work on a typical day.
- 69% of those who have access at work say they go online at least once a day while at their workplace.
- 48% of Internet users (over 55 million Americans) have done work-related research online. On a typical day, nearly 20 million people are doing work-related research online.



A longitudinal survey by PIP last year (interviews with the same people conducted at different points in time) showed that Internet users were much more likely in 2001 than a year earlier to use the Web at their jobs and go online for work-related research. More of them logged on from work and they logged on more frequently than in the past. Fully 44% of those who have Internet access at work said their use of the Internet helps them do their jobs better.

That same research showed that Internet access fosters working at home. A notable number of users said their use of the Internet increases the amount of time they spend working at home – 14% said the time working at home has increased because of their Internet use and 5% said the time working at home has decreased. Internet veterans were more likely to say the Internet increases time working at home.



Our special survey in February 2002 of Internet users with broadband connections at home showed that one third of them telecommuted regularly. Significant numbers of home broadband users reported a drop in the amount of time they were spending in their offices and an even greater number said the “always on” connection at home prompted them to do more work at home. Many also reported spending less time in traffic.

¹ All the data cited in this section come from a PIP survey of 2,447 Internet users from April 4-May 19, 2002. The margin of error is plus or minus 2 percentage points.