

IU DIVISION OF LABOR STUDIES

BASIC INTERNET RESEARCH

1. GETTING STARTED WITH BASIC INFORMATION

Initial basic company information can be found at any number of internet search engine sites such as Infospace at <http://www.infospace.com/> or Yahoo at <http://www.yahoo.com/> under *White Pages*, *Yellow Pages*, or *People Search* types of headings. They are standard telephone book listings and they typically provide the following information:

Company Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Phone

Even if you think you have good basic company information before starting your internet research, it is best to confirm your information through the use of one of these sites. A slight error in the address or company name can cost you many hours in research time. It is extremely important to have the correct **listed** information with which to begin your internet researching. Many small privately owned companies do not use their formal names in day-to-day operations. An example – "John D. Doe and Sons Building Supplies, Inc." may just go by "Doe and Sons" in their day-to-day operations. This might take hours of trial and error searching if the correct name is not used to begin the search.

Another good place to start for general business information is the **Indiana Secretary of State** web site. You may search for general Indiana business information at <http://www.in.gov/sos/business/corps/searches.html>

KnowX is a common site for general information and has many free areas. Even many of the pay areas provide free searches prior to payment.

KnowX is at <http://www.knowx.com/>

Once you have the basic information, you must ascertain whether the company is privately/closely held or publicly held. Privately/closely held companies are not required to divulge financial information to the public. While it is possible to obtain this information it can be much more difficult and time consuming. Due to this fact, privately/closely held companies are typically much more challenging to research than publicly held companies. Publicly held companies are required by law to file various forms with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Two forms of special interest to your research needs are the company's year end 10K report and its quarterly 10Q report. There are numerous sites where these reports are available to the public.

EDGAR is the search engine for the SEC web site. **EDGAR** can be found at <http://www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml> **FIS** is another very good site. **FIS** is at http://www.fisonline.com/top_b1.htm

More in-depth or detailed information may be found at **Lexis-Nexis** and **Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe** <http://www.lexisnexis.com/>. These are pay-for-use sites and can be quite expensive. **Lexis-Nexis Academic Universe** is provided to most universities

through liberal user agreements and can be accessed for free at the IUPUI library. Both sites provide enormous amounts of data which includes legal, personal, financial, newspaper articles, trade journal articles, etc. These sites also provide excellent consolidated access to public records.

WestLaw is very similar to Lexis-Nexis and is a pay-for-use site as well. Full NLRB decisions may be searched at **WestLaw**. Of note is the fact that **WestLaw** includes in its database, NLRB Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) decisions. This site provides the best overall consolidated access to public records. West Law may be accessed at <http://web2.westlaw.com/signon/default.wl>

Newspaper articles, news wire services, or trade journals can be a vital and important source of information on public or private companies. Newspaper articles may contain information regarding new contracts obtained by the company, safety and health issues (particularly on-the-job deaths that have occurred), Environmental Protection Act (EPA) issues, mergers or acquisitions, layoffs, etc. To search newspapers on the web, you can use **News Library** at <http://www.newslibrary.com/nlsite/> or similar services. The Indianapolis Star may be found at <http://www.indystar.com/>

If the target company is headquartered or operates in a rural area, you may have to search local newspapers. Sometimes you can access these papers through newspaper chains such as **Knight Ridder** at <http://www.kri.com/>, or go to the local Chamber of Commerce site to get access to the local newspaper. The site for the **Indiana Chamber of Commerce** is <http://www.indianachamber.com/>

Additional general information is available to Indiana residents via the following consolidated database:

THE INSPIRE SYSTEM THROUGH THE IUPUI LIBRARY

Got to <http://www.iupui.edu/>

Click on "*Libraries*"

Click on "*University Library*"

Click on "*E*" at bottom of page

Click on "*EBSCO Host*"

Click on "*EBSCO Host Web*"

Check these databases:

- ✓ ***Business Source Premier***
- ✓ ***Business Wire News***
- ✓ ***Newspaper Source***

* **Searching in the INSPIRE system:** You may search in more than one database at a time by checking the boxes to the left of each listing.

* **Note:** If your internet provider is based outside of Indiana you may have to contact the INSPIRE system manager for a password.

2. NOT-FOR-PROFITS

For a comprehensive listing on not-for-profit organizations, see **Guidestar**, available on the web at <http://www.guidestar.org/>. This site also maintains recent copies of the IRS Form 990 for each organization.

3. LEGAL

Basic and advanced legal research may be done at **WestLaw** and **Lexis-Nexis**, but a few limited free sites do exist. **Findlaw** is free and can be very useful. Findlaw is at <http://www.findlaw.com/>

4. POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Knowledge of political contributions can be a valuable source of leverage. Contributions to national and local political campaigns may be searched at **Opensecrets** at <http://www.opensecrets.org/> Searches may be conducted by contributor name, donor name, state, etc.

5. SAFETY AND HEALTH – OSHA AND IOSHA

Safety and health inspections under the OSHA Act may be searched at the U.S. Department of Labor's web site.

Go to <http://www.osha.gov/>

Click on "*Inspection Data*" under the heading "*Statistics*" – Right hand side

Click on "*Establishment Search*"

You may now search for all OSHA inspections on a particular company

6. FULL WEB SEARCHES

There are many other web sites for specific searching. Virtually, every form of information and data is now available on the internet. In some cases it can be useful to do simple full web searches with a variety of web search engines and see what comes back in the results. Some very good full web search engines are:

Google <http://www.google.com/>

Yahoo <http://www.yahoo.com/>

Infospace <http://www.infospace.com/>

Metacrawler <http://www.metacrawler.com/>

Search.Com <http://www.search.com/>

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CLASSES AND SERVICES OFFERED BY THE
IU DIVISION OF LABOR STUDIES:**

1-800-822-4743

<mailto:iulabor@iupui.edu>

<http://www.labor.iu.edu/>