


 The logo for 'scip.online' features the word 'scip' in a dark blue serif font, followed by '.online' in a lighter blue serif font. Above the 'i' in 'scip' and the 'i' in 'online' are small blue circles with curved lines above them, resembling eyes or stylized 'i' characters.

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HOME

## Carpe Diem: dazzle them with your brilliance.

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**Summary:** There are countless Internet sites dedicated to specific markets and disciplines. However, you can use generalist resources and a generalist approach as launching pads for rapidly finding your way to your subject of interest. This is a short collection of David Carpe's favorite approaches to coming up to speed quickly on a new subject or industry. They will help you quickly brush up on a new area of research or analysis to support internal or external client projects.

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When I was just a young boy, maybe seven or eight, my dear aging grandfather lit up a cheap cigar, sat me down on his comfy green velour sofa (while I sucked down a Dr. Brown's cream soda) and imparted his sage advice, "David, listen to me – are you listening? – In life, if you can't dazzle them with your brilliance, then baffle them with your B.S."

I never understood exactly what he meant until I got much older and met a whole bunch of folks who referred to themselves as 'Management Consultants.' It was only then that I realized with a deep and heartfelt understanding that it is in fact possible to speak for up to one whole hour about almost nothing, write about it for a few more hours, then send a great big bill for meandering through the recesses of one's own mind. (I'm only kidding, I don't actually bill for the meandering.)

Now this is not to say that one must pepper his or her conversation with cryptic terms and obscure references – thought that is great fun. What is important here to the 'generalist' consultant (meaning that individual who must constantly dive into new foreign subject matter and rapidly generate credibility) is access to solid industry fodder for discussion and analysis. Try to imagine a shorter, steeper learning curve that one might comfortably climb in business casual attire, if you will.

This is a short collection of my three favorite approaches to coming up to speed quickly on a new subject or industry. This will help you quickly brush up on a new area of research or analysis to support internal or external client projects.

There are countless Internet sites dedicated to specific markets and disciplines. Here I have focused only on generalist resources and a generalist approach. It is very likely that from these launching pads you will rapidly find your way to your subject of interest.

[www.mba101.com](http://www.mba101.com) – access to the Knowledge Databases

One very popular way to learn about a subject quickly is to poke around in the 'knowledge bases' of the very large consulting firms. Large consulting firms charge a lot of money for their work. Each and every

industry practice is led by several billable consultants supported by some researchers who know a lot about the industry or subject. These folks write very detailed reports (think 'white papers') and publish them on their web sites so that prospective clients or other industry players can easily access and use their 'break through' research, neat ideas and well designed charts and graphs.

If you need to learn about the state of affairs in the utility industry, one great idea is to visit the home page of any enormous global consulting firm and search their document archives and publications for recent articles about said subject. There are obviously boutique consulting firms catering to every nook and cranny of business operations, but the mega-firms are a quick and safe bet for quick and easy information access (meaning that one need not email a request to review documents).

There's a lot going on at MBA101.com. Ignore most of it and look at how it links directly to all of the big consulting firm public knowledge-bases. Scroll down on the right side of the landing page, and you'll find links to firm publications such as Booz Allen's *Great Ideas* letter, the McKinsey *Quarterly*, CapGemini's *Focus eZine*, and many others.

This site itself is not the be-all-and-end-all resource, though it feels like a nice short path to these repositories. The alternative is to visit a site like [Vault.com](http://Vault.com), catering to job seekers and students, and quickly look at their 'consulting industry' overview to find a current ranking of the top 50 firms. The snapshots will provide practice overviews and links. Select those of interest and seek out their knowledge-bases individually.

#### [www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml](http://www.sec.gov/edgar.shtml) - The form S-1 & "The Plan"

Sometimes it can be very difficult to understand how a company plays within its industry, how a company defines its market opportunity in new areas of industry, how it plans to make money, and so on. Unfortunately, if one picks up the phone and requests a copy of a business plan from a firm, one will experience rapid denial and rejection. But wouldn't it be great if companies would send over copies of their business plans so that you could move beyond expertise to hardcore information on a subject of critical interest?

Look no further than your own government's required form filings. All companies planning to file for an offering of common stock, including those who pull the plug, are required to submit the basic registration form S-1. As the SEC defines it, "It can be used to register securities for which no other form is authorized or prescribed, except Securities of foreign governments or political sub-divisions thereof." Yeah, that means almost nothing to me too...

Within each form S-1 is a section which examines the business operations and plans. Look closely and what you will see is actually a partially edited business plan, replete with proprietary market research, financial detail, SWOT analysis, and all manner of pursuant detail designed to inform potential investors and legal parties. I have found that the 'plan' section is often buried about halfway into these immense documents...and they are immense. Prepare to relax your 'scrolling' hand.

This is absolutely one of my favorite ways to learn about a company and a market quickly. This is particularly valuable when one is looking at a private company and is in desperate need of a comparable to generate questions or information. Find a public company that does something very similar and look them over, you're likely to find a mention of your target, perhaps with revenue or market share estimates or other sensitive data.

#### [www.ProFusion.com](http://www.ProFusion.com) – Over 1,000 authoritative sources of information

Once you've identified your areas of specific interest or subject, take a look at this site's well organized interface. Similar to a meta-search tool like Copernic (though not as uniquely purposeful), the site is designed to search a broad number of industry specific news and information resources through an online interface. The idea here is that you need not enter a whole bunch of ridiculous search strings to limit your searches to the Aviation industry, you just launch from within that category.

Presumably, the whole thing is only there to demonstrate that the software works – the software that they're busy trying to sell to large corporations to actually make money while everybody else uses the

free site.

However, this is a wonderful starting point for categorical research. Enter your subject of interest in the 'Entertainment News' subcategory of Entertainment, and the site will search across sites like VH1, CNN, E! Online and others. It will always allow you to control and select the resources to be included in the query. You will find that this is a smooth track to current news and information for almost every major area of industry.

**Background:**

David R. Carpe is Principal of Clew, located in Boston, Mass. He received his BFA with a concentration in Stone Sculpture from the George Washington University and his MBA with a concentration in Finance and Entrepreneurship from Babson College, where he authored a case on Valuation for the Division Chair. David has worked in research with Fidelity, served as the founder and CEO of a venture backed software company, and most recently has been working with Clew serving some of the world's most formidable organizations. He has also served as a Volunteer Teacher with the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship. David, his two sons, and their dog reside in Lexington. He is a member of SCIP along with several other associations and has spent the majority of his career involved, somehow, with research, analysis, consulting and planning. [www.clew.us](http://www.clew.us)

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