

The logo for 'scip.online' features the word 'scip' in a dark blue serif font and '.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 letters.

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HOME

Direct pathways to human sources via the Internet.

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Summary: The Internet provides an overwhelming opportunity to identify very specific individuals within organizations and learn about them. David Carpe, in this first installment in a series on information sites, reviews five of his favorite Internet resources for finding varying degrees of detailed information about key contacts.

Note: This is the first of a series of installments looking at sites that can prove information valuable to the CI professional. If there is a theme or specific area of interest, please send me an email and let me know. I'll be sure to take a look around for you!

Top quality consultants live and die by 'the source' when it comes to primary research. While the best source is always the known quantity (as in: "it's me again, Dave, please call back"), CI consultants will forever be harvesting fresh new contacts for the regular onslaught of projects.

The Internet provides an overwhelming opportunity to identify very specific individuals within organizations. Unfortunately, we might all agree that sinking too much time into an Internet search for some specific employee is perhaps as bad as taking a long drive around Illinois looking for a great beach. What matters, really, is the ability to understand a bit more about what these strangers are actually doing for a living and what they know - without wasting time. Specifically, I mean finding a name used in context, like a trade publication article that describes an individual's responsibilities.

This is a short collection of five of my favorite resources for finding varying degrees of detailed information about key contacts. There are so many more, but just not enough space here. These resources generate information including biographical sketches, resumes, transcripts as well as other tidbits of information. Please keep in mind that not all five of these are free, though most offer free samples or trials for evaluation. ...Or tell them that Dave sent you, and I guarantee that they'll say, "Dave who?"

Eliyon www.eliyon.com

Eliyon has built an enormous, continuously updated database that scours the Internet using natural language queries to identify only real people. As of September 2002, the database contains about 10 million names, representing over 600,000 companies. You can do some serious searching on:

- job titles and companies, coupled with geography;
- past employees of any corporation; and
- gender, degree, institution attended, etc.

Searches return profiles replete with corporate contact information, corporate snapshots, personal summary and/or detailed biographical data as well as links to all Internet sources (articles, press releases) citing the individual.

This is quite a resource for the CI professional. However, there are some concerns to keep in mind. For starters, the information can be old, leading to some data integrity issues - a big deal if you're under serious time constraints. There are also incomplete entries (missing titles) as well as duplicates: David Carpe, D. Carpe, David R. Carpe, Davey Carpe - all will be counted and presented individually. All in all, this is some seriously innovative technology, and the company does not appear to be going anywhere soon. Certainly worth a visit."

Skillbot www.skillbot.com

This is an interesting resource. Originally designed for recruiters, the site has grown in popularity due to its interesting usage policy. You need only request permission to use it. I don't know if they've ever charged money for usage, and I don't know any folks who have had to pay for the site.

Skillbot scours the Internet for resumes and allows the user to specify several criteria including technical skills, degrees, and geographies. It also has the ability (supposedly) to filter out contractors, students, faculty, or junior level employees where desired. There's also an interesting guide to Internet community sites organized by skill on the same site, an interesting aside for the industry focused professional.

The developer is Fence-Post Technology, Inc. If you've never heard of them, that's okay, I never have either. They primarily develop HR software solutions; Skillbot.com comes across as their hobby site.

However, a resume is a great way to understand exactly what an individual is responsible for within an organization, and this makes for great conversation. All in all, this is a nifty tool, and certainly worth a look.

BoardReader www.boardreader.com

Boardreader was developed by some University of Michigan students several years ago to focus exclusively on conducting searches within the Internet's countless forums and message boards. This is a very interesting concept, as the 'message boards' are considered by search engines, like Google, to be part of the 'invisible web' (they can't be searched by traditional search engines).

Why are message boards such a great resource for the CI professional? Well, I like to think of it this way: if some employee has the time to sit and partake in the message board banter, then that same employee certainly has time to speak with me. You can see how these people communicate, and what they might be interested in discussing. You might even find some answers to your questions before you pick up the phone!

Boardreader uses special indexing algorithms and indexing rules to run queries. You can run long queries, throw in job titles, companies, area or zip codes and so on. Often when a user posts a message, his or her 'email' signature is stamped along with a corporate email address, so a search for such data will yield results. And this site is free. Enjoy.

Leadership Directories www.leadershipdirectories.com

Leadership Directories publishes 14 specialty personnel directories, collectively called 'The Leadership Library,' available online, in print or on cd-rom. These span government, nonprofits, all areas of business and industry (law, media, etc.), and offer extensive corporate employee directories across all senior layers of management, replete with biographical data on many key employees.

The directories are pricey, but they are updated constantly (daily) and provide a wealth of information. However, keep in mind that there is not biographical data available for the majority of entries. And did I mention that they can get expensive?

TV Eyes www.tveyes.com

This is a very clever tool. Per their site, they are "the first company to introduce language-independent, fully automated, real-time audio and video monitoring, together with instant content alerts and media access."

What this means to you is that you can search radio and television transcripts. In terms of identifying your 'source,' one might, for example, enter a large company or specific industry term. The user will be emailed a snapshot summary of a relevant transcript with a link to the full transcript when the term(s) has been mentioned on television. Pretty neat stuff.

The consumer application that I've just described is free. They actually make money by selling some intense permutations of this technology, applied to such areas as call center recordings (for example, large credit card issuers could search call center archives for key phrases like, "I hate you. Stop calling my home."). If you have never been to TV Eyes, you will be impressed.

Background:

David Carpe 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. He 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 (www.clew.us) 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 several other associations and has spent the majority of his career involved, somehow, with research, analysis, consulting and planning.

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