

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 letters.

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HOME

Get smart online - without an MBA.David Carpe, Principal, Clew - Boston, david@clew.us

Summary: Even if you've read all the great books about strategy and CI, you will find yourself in need of 'schooling' repeatedly throughout your career. David Carpe reviews a short collection of his four favorite Internet meta-sites of educational resources, along with one tool, designed to help you come up to speed quickly on critical business concepts.

Here's the situation: you're a consultant working with some high profile client, waxing poetic about SWOT analysis, product mapping when suddenly you're confronted by a question about Porter's 5 Forces. 5 Forces? Hmmm, don't remember these from the Star Wars trilogy, and 'jockeying for position' – that sounds dirty!

Do not panic. Remain calm. Even if you've read all of the great books about strategy and CI, you will find yourself in need of 'schooling' repeatedly throughout your career. If you're like me (meaning that you're not good at guitar and you're still single), you probably 'poo-poo' on business books anyway and summarily dismiss them as fast food literature.

Also, unlike the laity of the early 16th century, we no longer need to rely on oil paintings to explain important concepts as a work-around for our illiteracy. Fortunately, the Internet has created the most interesting educational model in the world: a great big inflatable rescue raft full of free tools and resources pumped up daily by millions of smart people.

This is a short collection of four of my favorite resources, along with one tool, designed to help you come up to speed quickly on critical business concepts. All offer definitions, examples, descriptions, and models/templates. There are so many sites on the Internet related to these areas, so I've focused on several meta-sites (web sites that in turn link to dozens of other sites). Their common element is that they are really 'hobby sites,' sites of passion. So, aside from some pop-up ads, you will find text-intensive, graphic-free presentation, which is refreshing.

No Tuition. No books to buy. No hidden fees.Free Education on the Internet. www.Free-ed.net

This is a perfect launching pad for a clear overview of approximately 120 different academic and vocational disciplines. At it's core, this is a collection of many web pages from multiple resources, including university faculty home pages and other obscure spots, all grouped within one Über site. The links all appear to be clean and valid.

At a glance, you will see coverage of all primary educational categories: business & economics,

technology, medicine, engineering, education, computer science, humanities, etc. Within each of these categories, are several sub-categories leading to highly specialized resources, replete with examples and definitions.

It is all very interesting, though my personal favorite is the macro and micro economics section, where I can refresh my knowledge of critical elasticity concepts – because those are neat! Seriously, this is a powerful free resource that demonstrates the promise of the Internet in a very important area of common concern: equal access to a good (or great) education.

Take it deeper by building your Marketing Savvy.

www.Marketteacher.com

Okay, so back to those 5 forces, and Ansoff's Matrix, and PEST (or STEP) Analysis. Here is a one stop resource for the CI consulting professional in need of hard-core, accurate academic definitions and examples. This site also reaches far beyond definition by adding graphs and visual diagrams to support key concepts. While there is ample discussion of research techniques and theories, the focus is on the following five categories:

- 1- Environmental audit: SWOT, PEST/STEP, Five Forces, etc.
- 2- Marketing mix: 4 P's, buyer behavior, etc.
- 3- Portfolio analysis: Ansoff's Matrix, Boston Matrix, etc.
- 4- Marketing plans: objectives, control, etc.
- 5- Segmentation and targeting: positioning, etc.

You will be thrilled by the presentation of the information: smart, but explained in plain English, like IRS Tax Forms ...sort of. If you're like most ambitious consultants, those who spend their entire lives turning brilliant concepts into one page matrix models – and then magically parlay them into thick books and pursuant speaking gigs – you will enjoy this site immensely.

Now "WOW" them with your financial models and analysis.

Homepage of Aswath Damodaran. <http://pages.stern.nyu.edu/~adamodar/>

Aswath is an associate professor of finance at New York University's Stern business school, teaching corporate finance and equity valuation. Like all proper academicians, he has a bunch of fancy degrees (MS, MBA, Ph.D.) and takes delight in connecting with his students. I know many friends who have taken his courses, along with many other friends at other schools who frequented this bright site. Why? It is filled to the brim with information and templates for difficult-to-build financial models. I remember building these monster financial models from start to finish when I was fund raising, and also while in school, and I will tell you that they can cause immense frustration, not to mention immense frustration (did I just say that?).

However, go to this clean page and, after looking over the information and sample sites, scroll down to 'spreadsheets' on the home page. You will be blown away. I can't even list all of the models here. The collection is huge, and all are available for download in Excel format. For example:

- models for the evaluation of 'troubled firms' includes an earnings 'normalizer' spreadsheet and a 'survival probability estimator'
- looking at private companies with models to adjust discount rates, estimate liquidity.

The list goes on and on.

There are also many models designed for data input, covering all areas of valuation and financial operations. And of course, since Aswath is a faculty guy, you'll find many interesting presentations and papers. Be sure to clear out some space on your hard drive to make way for the downloads from this site.

Bringing it all together for research, analysis, and presentation.

The Business Writer's Free Library http://www.mapnp.org/library/commskls/cmm_writ.htm

Assembled by Carter McNamara (MBA, Ph.D.), this site contains several areas of interest to the business writer. It covers basic writing and composition skills, along with many reference resources (e.g., thesaurus) and sample documents. The site also includes such critical topics as: correspondence format, etiquette, technical procedures, and business bibliography preparation. Visitors will also find a large selection of links related to interviewing, conducting primary research, and dealing with difficult personalities.

Of course, the site also has some very interesting oddball links connected to writing. My personal favorite is The Word Detective. This resource is entirely free and I do suspect that you might find yourself running out to buy a new ink cartridge for your printer when you see what is on there.

And a writing tool for the folks willing to part with money.

Communications Development, Inc. www.ClearWriter.com

This is an incredible set of tools, training, and resources designed for those in search of tight, crisp writing. Problems with superfluous nouns? You betcha! I'm all about run-on sentences too, and the abuse of multi-syllabic terms, ex-cessive-hyphe-nation and 'creative' business language.

The heart of this award-winning company's solutions is ClearEdits, a Microsoft Word add-in that automatically repairs poor writing through suggestions and alternatives. This is a very powerful tool. I'm currently in the process of begging them for a free copy of the new version of the software, but you might also take a very close look at what they offer through their online demo.

Note: This is the second in 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 on it. I'll be sure to take a look around for you!

Background:

David R. Carpe is principal of Clew in Boston. 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 several other associations and has spent the majority of his career involved, somehow, with research, analysis, consulting and planning. David can be reached at 781.674.CLEW (2539) www.clew.us

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