

INTERNET YOUR WAY TO A NEW JOB

HOW TO *REALLY* FIND A JOB ONLINE

**SECOND
EDITION**



BY ALISON DOYLE



“Internet Your Way To a New Job (2nd Edition)” Book Excerpt

How to *Really* Find a Job Online

By Alison Doyle

Subset of the book brought
to you by Happy About



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WHITE PAPER Table of Contents (included here)

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- Getting the book and other books from Happy About

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Introduction

Just a few years ago, you could upload your resume to one of the top job sites and, with a few mouse clicks, consider your job search well under way. Today, that isn't enough. The job market is becoming increasingly competitive. Hiring managers are overwhelmed with applications and are looking at new and different ways to recruit online.

Hiring has changed and so has job searching. It's more complex than it used to be, when you could just send a resume and wait for a phone call to set up an interview. Now, job seekers need to be prepared to use all the online job search tools to their advantage.

This means that you need to do more than just posting your resume on Monster, CareerBuilder, or Yahoo! HotJobs, though they still can be an effective part of your job search. In addition to job searching the traditional way, you need to be actively networking online and taking advantage of the ways social media sites can enhance your job search.

It can be complicated and confusing. Career expert and author of *The Job Search Solution*, Tony Beshara says, "Most job seekers don't realize how difficult this market is. They need massive numbers of contacts, cold calls, interviews, and follow up interviews to get a job. It is going to take a while and they can't get discouraged. They have to work a "system" of getting a

job, i.e., a tremendous number of activities that lead to interviews, performing well on those interviews and negotiating a job offer. Getting a new job is a job in itself!"

Anyone, and that's almost everyone at some point in their career, seeking a job or career change should be aware of what tools and techniques are available, and how you can utilize them to expedite your job search—and get that new job. That includes building a professional brand to promote yourself, using job sites, social and career networking sites, blogs, instant messaging, as well as the tools that can help you manage and expedite your job search and build your career.

Job searching has changed from a once or twice in a lifetime endeavor into what is, for some people, a career-long process of networking with contacts, changing jobs or careers, and moving up (or even choosing to move down) the career ladder.

This book will provide what you need to know and step you through the process of online job searching, professional branding, social and professional networking, and career building with uncomplicated advice, tips, and techniques on how to effectively find a new job.

Online job searching often seems like it can be a complicated endeavor. It doesn't have to be. There are numerous tips you can use to make the process smooth and simple. In fact, there are lots of people who have found a new job without even leaving their house, including applying, interviewing, and getting hired.

You can be successful with your online job search as well. I'll provide you with everything you need to know on how to build your career and find a new job.

1 Building Your Professional Brand

You might think that I'm giving you backwards advice, but I'm not. Before you start writing or updating your resume or applying for a job, you need to start building your online presence. The only exception would be if you're looking for a retail, seasonal, temporary, or similar job, where the hiring considerations are different and it's easier to apply and to get hired. In that case, it certainly doesn't hurt to have a professional presence online, but it's not a necessity.

It's important to build your brand in order to:

1. **Create** a professional presence on the Internet.
2. **Market** yourself as a strong candidate for employers.
3. **Connect** with contacts who will help you with your job search.
4. **Help** prospective employers find you.

What's Your Brand?

In a nutshell, your brand is your online presence. You can, and should, have your own brand; just like Tiffany's has for fine jewelry or Subway has for submarine sandwiches.

Your professional brand needs to reflect your skills, your interests, and your expertise. So, when someone finds information about you online, it connects them to who you are and what you can do.

Like it or not, if an employer is considering you for a job, they are going to Google you to see what they can find. You don't want prospective employers looking at pictures of your summer vacation or a party where you might have over-indulged a little. The rule of thumb I always use is the "grandma" standard. If there is something that you wouldn't want your grandmother (or your mom) seeing on the web, you don't want a prospective employer viewing it either.

I still cringe at the photos I've seen on some Facebook pages and in blogs. Some of the descriptions of the good times had by all are cringe-worthy, too, when you look at them from a "what they can do to your job search" perspective.

Remember, once you put something online (or your friends do) it's there just about forever. Perhaps employers shouldn't consider your personal life as relevant to your qualifications for a job, but they do. That's why you need to make your brand one that's going to impress both potential employers and your networking contacts (the people who will help you find a job).

Here's an example of a good professional presence, if I do say so myself. Google "Alison Doyle" and take a look at the search results. You won't find anything regarding my summer vacation or my personal life. Instead, you'll find:

- my About.com Job Searching site (<http://jobsearch.about.com>)
- my bio (<http://jobsearch.about.com/mbiopage.htm>)
- my LinkedIn Profile (<http://linkedin.com/in/alisondoyle>)
- my VisualCV (<http://www.visualcv.com/alisondoyle>)

- my blog (<http://alisondoyle.typepad.com>)
- my Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/people/Alison-Doyle/12203480>)
- my web site (<http://alisondoyle.com>)
- my book listings on Amazon

That's by design. It wasn't hard to do, and I'll show you how you can build a brand that you're comfortable sharing online.

Another good example of excellent brand building is what Jason Alba (<http://jasonalba.com>), CEO of JibberJobber.com and author of I'm on LinkedIn -- Now What??? has achieved. Google "Jason Alba" and you'll see that all the results are related to his career: JibberJobber, his blog, his web site, and his LinkedIn profile.

When you look at the search results for both Jason and me, you'll see that we're experts on job searching, careers, and job search management. That's what we do and it's immediately apparent what our area of expertise is.

Try the same searches with Yahoo! and you'll get similar results. It's a little harder if you have a last name that lots of other people share, but even if you don't get into the top 10 rankings for your name, your goal is for the top results to include all "good" content and none of the things you don't want grandma to see.

How to Create Your Professional Brand

The first step in creating your professional brand is to consider what you want to highlight. For example, if you're a computer programmer, you'll want to highlight your technical skills. If you're a marketing professional, you'll want to promote your public relations/marketing experience. When you have multiple areas of expertise, it's best to choose one to focus on. A diluted brand isn't going to be as helpful as one that captures your experience clearly.

As I mentioned, when you search for me online you'll find me as soon as you Google my name, and you will know right away that I write about careers and job searching. That's the point you want to get to with your professional brand.

Once you have decided on a focus, create a profile on at least some of the top networking sites. That's the first step in building your own brand.

LinkedIn for Professional Networking

LinkedIn is the professional place to be. I don't know anyone who is in any type of professional position who doesn't have a LinkedIn profile. The first step is to join LinkedIn (<http://linkedin.com>), and then you can create your profile.

Make your profile as detailed as possible. The more information you provide, the more there will be for recruiters and networking contacts to read about you. Use the Professional Summary section of your profile to showcase your expertise. You can use the headline for a quick description (mine says Job Search Expert and Writer) and the summary to list your experience and goals. Select your industry of expertise as well.

Contact Settings are important. That's how employers, recruiters, and connections will identify what you want to be contacted about and what you are interested in. Contact Setting options include:

- Career opportunities
- Consulting offers
- New ventures
- Job inquiries
- Reference requests

Don't forget to include links to your web site, blog, etc., if you have them, in the Additional Information section of your profile. They will help you send contacts to sites that contain even more information about you.

Also, use your LinkedIn profile as a personal branding tool. Jason Alba suggests, "Put your LinkedIn URL in your email signature and when you comment on blogs and forums. This makes it easy for people to learn more about you. You never know who will see your profile, considering how easy it is to forward an email to friends and contacts."

VisualCV – Your Online Resume

A VisualCV (<http://visualcv.com>) is an online resume that includes all the facets of a traditional resume and then some. There are add-ons like video, images, and links to projects, web sites, and accomplishments to help you make a dynamic, professional presentation to your connections, to hiring managers, and to recruiters. A VisualCV is not only professional; it's quick and easy to create. You can copy and paste from your original resume or start from scratch with VisualCV's Resume Builder.

Users can print a PDF version of their VisualCV, share updates on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media sites, and use the LinkedIn Connector to quickly send their VisualCV URL to their LinkedIn profile.

In addition, there are hundreds of companies and recruiters signed up at VisualCV.com to find and attract professional candidates. So, creating a VisualCV is another way to get found by employers.

Phillip Merrick, VisualCV's cofounder explains how VisualCV can help your job search:

"VisualCV is an essential tool for today's job seeker. With a VisualCV you can build and manage a more engaging Internet-based resume (for free) that helps you show and tell your professional experience. You can combine work samples, references, audio, video and more—all on a single trackable Web page. Plus, VisualCV is easy to use and you're in control of your privacy. Your

VisualCV is designed to go viral if you choose; you can share your VisualCV via your unique URL, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and more.

Companies have joined VisualCV to find and attract professionals for their open positions. They are finding that they can evaluate a professional faster when they have a VisualCV instead of a traditional resume. The ultimate goal is to help connect companies and professionals in a faster, more efficient manner. We have hundreds of companies signed up to receive VisualCVs from professionals.

VisualCV is fast becoming the career cornerstone of an individual's personal brand online that is useful beyond active job search. Fully portable, a VisualCV can be used anywhere you have a digital presence in the same way as a business card or bio, to help enrich business networking opportunities."

Facebook for Personal and Professional Networking

There is a school of thought that says Facebook is for kids. It's not anymore. Facebook's fastest growing demographic is the 35-and-older age group, and more than 50% of Facebook's users are outside of college. To say that almost everyone is using it wouldn't be an exaggeration.

Sign up on Facebook (<http://facebook.com>), and then you will be able to create a profile. Facebook has more bells and whistles (photos, music, lots of gadgets and widgets) than LinkedIn, but you don't need to use them. If you're using Facebook for professional networking and building your brand, keep it as simple as possible.

Keep in mind that the lines between personal and professional networking have blurred, especially for Generation Y users. Facebook has evolved as its original users have grown up and entered the workplace. For many of those users, there aren't as many boundaries between work and play as there are for those of us who are a bit older. Your Facebook Friends can connect you with jobs and vice versa, as well as providing opportunities for socializing.

Twitter

It seems like everyone is talking about Twitter (<http://twitter.com>). Twitter is a social networking and microblogging service. Individuals use Twitter to stay in touch and to make new connections. Companies and job boards post job openings on Twitter, and job seekers network through Twitter to help facilitate their job search.

Users post updates (tweets) on Twitter that are displayed on their profile page and delivered to other users who have signed up to receive them. The catch is that your posts can't be any longer than 140 characters, so you need to be concise.

Each user has a name that you can use to send messages, and a dedicated URL. Mine is <http://twitter.com/AlisonDoyle> and you can connect with me on Twitter @AlisonDoyle.

There are jobs posted directly on Twitter. On sites like JobShouts (@jobshouts) employers can post jobs for free. Those jobs are then automatically "tweeted" to users on Twitter. Twitter Job Search Engine, another Twitter based job site, (@twitjobsearch) allows users to search Twitter for job postings by keyword and location.

Robin Eads, Co-Founder, JobShouts.com, shares the concept behind JobShouts: "So what if there was a way to reach millions of people with a job ad that cost nothing to the employer? We decided that this concept would offer value to recruiters everywhere, whether corporate or agency. By integrating a job board with Twitter (and eventually other social media platforms such as Facebook), we are helping employers and job seekers connect through a social media channel they may already be using. JobShouts was founded with the purpose of reaching a virtually untapped audience of job seekers and employers. Since JobShouts doesn't allow spam, MLM or work-at-home jobs, job seekers can be confident that the job leads they are receiving are legitimate."

For those in need of job search assistance, JobAngels (@jobangels) is a wonderful Twitter resource. JobAngels began as "just" an idea. It started with one tweet, with the objective of asking those who could to help one person find a job. It's grown tremendously since then. Job seekers are posting the types of positions they are looking for and

getting job leads and assistance with their job search. Offers of help keep pouring in—job postings, offers to help with resumes, job search advice, networking contacts, and more.

Kristen Fischer, author of *Ramen Noodles, Rent and Resumes: An After-College Guide to Life* (www.ramenrentresumes.com) has good advice for finding job sites and career experts to follow on Twitter:

"Use the Twitter search tool and search words like "career" or "jobs" to find career experts and existing job boards. You'll get original information from the career experts who frequently tweet with links to resources and articles that can help improve your job hunt strategies."

"Another technique you may want to try is using LinkedIn to search for career experts, job hunting professionals and other job search resources. Once you get the names of people you want to follow, use the Twitter search tool to search for his or her name, specifically. Twitter's search tool isn't all-encompassing, so I like to use LinkedIn to look at people I want to add and then find them on Twitter. I think you can get a lot more information on LinkedIn. And those on LinkedIn grasp technology; so they're likely on Twitter, too."

More Networking Sites

There are many more networking sites that you can use. You'll find a directory on my About.com Job Search site (<http://tinyurl.com/24ld2h>) [http://jobsearch.about.com/od/networkingsites/Career_and_Social_Networking_Sites.htm]. Some are niche sites focused on a specific audience. For example, 85 Broads is for women from partner colleges. You'll need an email address from your school to sign up. Check with your alumni office if you're a graduate; they may be able to provide you with an email address to use when you register.

Ning is a web site where users can create, customize, and share a social network. Networkers have used Ning to create online social networks about many topics, including job searching. Some of the em-

ployment-related social networks are based on industry or location while others, such as Secrets of the Job Hunt Network at secretsofthe-jobhunt.com, are broader.

Some of these sites have more features than others. For example, Jobster and MyWorkster both let you upload or link to a video resume. JobFox's profile page includes a map of your experience, work samples, and links. All these sites can be used to help build your professional brand.

Which Sites to Use

Do you need to create a profile on every networking site there is? I don't think so. First of all, there are more sites than you can easily keep track of. It's also better to have a few good profiles that you can keep updated without spending all day working on online networking, which you could easily do.

I recommend starting with LinkedIn, JobFox, VisualCV, and Facebook. Once you have created detailed profiles on those sites, you can consider adding profiles at other sites, but don't overdo it.

What to Include in Your Profile

Keep your profiles simple. Remember that we're discussing professional networking, so avoid adding Facebook applications that don't relate to your job search. Prospective employers won't want to get gifts or candy from you; see who you think is hot, or not; hug you; or do most of the 30,000+ other applications you can add to your profile.

Include the following in your profile:

- Education
- Work Experience (current and past)
- Summary of Your Background (LinkedIn)
- Industry (LinkedIn)

- Location
- Web Sites
- Email Address (you may not want to make it public)

In addition to bolstering your professional presence, fully completing your profile will allow contacts to search the networking sites and find you. That's especially helpful when you want to be found by recruiters or hiring managers looking for someone with your skills and experience.

Add Your Photo

All the top networking sites allow you to add a photo. If you use the same photo on all the sites, it will help build your brand—viewers will immediately recognize you wherever they come across you on the web.

The photo you are going to upload doesn't need to be professionally taken, but you need to look professional. It should be a head/shoulders shot and you should wear appropriate business attire. I've had good luck taking photos at home with a digital camera.

You can easily upload a photo by following the directions on the site. Basically, you'll click and find the photo on the hard drive of your computer, and the system will upload it. There may be image uploading size and quality restrictions, so check the guidelines before you upload the picture.

Expand Your Profile

Now that you have created a basic profile or two, you'll want to expand it. My profile (<http://linkedin.com/in/alisondoyle>) includes recommendations from clients and colleagues. I would also include recommendations from co-workers and customers. Positive recommendations will impress those who read your profile.

A good way to get recommendations is to give them. Write a few recommendations for contacts you know and then ask them if they would mind reciprocating. You've helped someone else, so they may be more likely to help you in return.

Keep Track

Create a list of the sites (and add them to your Favorites in your browser) where you have created profiles, so you can get to them easily. Or, set up a Google or Yahoo home page and add links or bookmarks to your page, so you can easily get to your profiles.

Keep track of your login information and your passwords. I have a Passwords folder in my Outlook Email and I email myself a message that includes the link to my login, my login email address or name, and my password. That way I don't have to remember multiple logins. I use the same email address and passwords for most of my job search and networking logins, which makes it easy to remember.

Another option is to keep a spreadsheet with the same information. That way you can readily locate it if you need it. You can set up an Excel table with a list of URLs, passwords, and login information.

There are also sites like RoboForm and Password Safe that will keep track of your passwords for you. That's another option for keeping track of your login information.

Professional and Personal Networking

I'll go into more detail on how to network in Chapter 2, but you will want to get started building your network now, before you actually start your job search. That way, you'll have some of the stepping stones in place to get your job search moving along at a quick pace.

Visit the sites where you have created profiles. Look for people you know. You can find colleagues, classmates, even contacts from your webmail accounts (GMail, Yahoo!, AOL) and from your Outlook contacts on LinkedIn. Facebook allows you to invite your friends from your Yahoo!, Hotmail, AOL, Gmail or MSN address book. On both

sites, you can search for people you know. Invite your contacts to connect with you and you'll have the beginning of an online career network you can use to enhance your job search.

Keep in mind, as well, that most people change jobs 10 to 15 times during their career. So, even though this may sound like a lot of work, it's not a one-shot deal. You will be able to use your network right now and in the future, when you are ready to job search again.

Another benefit to having online networks is that you don't have to keep track of your contacts' changing email addresses. You'll be able to message them directly from the networking site you are using. It's an excellent way to stay in touch.

Connect Your Networks

It's easy to connect all your networks. Link to your VisualCV from your LinkedIn Profile and vice versa. If you're using Facebook for professional networking, include links to your other networking site profiles. Some sites have automated widgets that add links (you simply click to add your profile from a certain site). With others you can copy and paste the links into your profile.

Why does it matter? When a recruiter, for example, looks at your LinkedIn Profile and sees your VisualCV in the Additional Information section, he or she will then be able to click on the link to your VisualCV and view even more information that will enhance your value as a prospective candidate.

You don't know how or where a company or connection will find you, so cross-promoting your various profiles enables them to readily find all the information that's available online that showcases your skills, abilities, professional experience, and educational background.

Writing a Blog

A blog (web log) is another good way to build your brand and share your credentials with the world. You don't have to spend a lot of time or money on it. There are free blog platforms available, a blog is easy to set up, and you can use a template (no need to know web design) to create your blog.

Writing a blog can be fun, as well as career enhancing. If you pick a topic you're informed on, you can share your advice and experiences, and you'll have a resume-building asset to share with employers and contacts.

For example, if you're in the insurance business, consider writing a blog about insurance trends or tips for selecting and buying insurance. Or, if you're a riding instructor, blog about horse shows or give advice to riders or instructors. Choose a topic that matches your interests (so it's not boring to write) and your career goals.

Blog Platforms

- Blog.com
- Blogger.com
- Googlepages.com
- Wordpress.com
- Typepad.com

TIPS FOR CREATING YOUR BLOG

- Use your name as the Blog Title, if it's available.
- Choose a simple, easy-to-read template.
- Focus your blog. Even though the temptation can be to ramble on about everything and anything, your blog should be focused on your area of expertise.
- Include links to your online profiles.

- Update your blog regularly, even if it's only once a week. There's nothing worse than an ancient blog floating around in cyberspace.
-

Marketing Your Blog

From your blog, link to LinkedIn, Facebook, VisualCV, Twitter, and any other profiles you have. That way, if someone reads your blog, they can find out more about you on the other sites and vice versa.

List your blog on your resume. It will provide additional credentials of your expertise. When your blog adds value to your candidacy, mention it in your cover letters.

Personal Web Sites

It took me quite a bit of work to acquire the <http://alisondoyle.com> domain because someone had purchased it years ago, before I had a clue I might need a domain to market myself and my work. It might be easier for you, especially if you don't have a name that's similar to someone famous, like Stephen King or Oprah Winfrey.

If you can get your domain (<http://www.yourname.com>), go for it. It will be another way for you to build the brand that is you. Sites like Go Daddy make it quick and easy to get and set up domains, if the name is available. You can then create a personal web site or forward your domain to your blog. The latter can be easier if you don't want to think about designing, maintaining, and editing a web site.

Optimize Yourself

Now that you've spent some time building an online presence, there are just a few more steps to ensure all the time you spent was put to good use. It's very likely that employers are going to Google you (search Google to find out what they can about you) if they are considering you for employment.

Why Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is Important

Search engine optimization is what web sites do to get a high ranking in Google, Yahoo!, MSN, and the other search engines. A high ranking means that your site shows up in the first results for that search term. For example, if you sell gift baskets, you want to do your best to get your site high up in the search results when someone looks for the term *gift baskets*; that's because users are more likely to click on the highest results.

Your goal in optimizing yourself is to ensure that your profiles, your blog, and the rest of your online professional presence shows up high in the search results when a prospective employer searches for your name. Because you've taken the time to create impressive web content, you are better positioned to be an attractive candidate to these employers.

All that linking back and forth we just did (from your profiles to your blog and vice versa) is also part of optimizing. It wasn't just to get people from one site to the other, though that is important as well. The cross-linking shows the search engines that your name (the name of your profiles and your blog) has weight, and that helps it achieve a higher ranking.

TIPS FOR OPTIMIZING YOUR WEB SITE, PROFILES, AND BLOGS

- Set up a Personal URL for your LinkedIn Profile (<http://linkedin.com/yourname>). You can customize the URL of your public profile on the "Edit My Public Profile" page.
- Promote your LinkedIn profile with a personalized "View my LinkedIn Profile" button linking to your profile.
- You can find the button under Edit my Profile on LinkedIn.
- Add the button to your blog and to your web site, if you have one.
- Use your name as often as possible: in titles, content, and links.

- Include your area of expertise as often as possible in your blog posts.
 - If you have a personal web site, make sure that you include links to your profiles and your blogs.
-

More on Professional Branding

Dan Schawbel's Personal Branding Blog (<http://tinyurl.com/26plsl>) [<http://www.personalbrandingblog.com>] is full of advice on how you can build your brand. Dan's an expert. In fact, if you Google "Dan Schawbel" you will get thousands of results that include his name. You may not get that many results for yourself, but you should be able to get a decent amount.

Dan explains why branding is valuable. "Personal branding is about distinguishing yourself from other applicants applying for the same job. By developing a memorable brand both online and offline, you can extend your reach and visibility and have the opportunity to be recruited based on your skills, personality, appearance, and total value. As a brand, you are empowered to be your own manager, spokesperson, and most importantly yourself. Start a blog, join social networks and associations that represent the types of individuals you want to surround yourself with and, in the end, you will be compensated based on what you enjoy."

Do keep in mind that building your professional brand and rising in the search engine ranks can take time. Don't expect it to happen overnight. Keep working on it, even as your job search progresses. Continue after you have found your next job. Building your brand works in conjunction with building your career and should be a career-long endeavor. In fact, it can be a way to launch a career change in midlife or even later.

The stronger your brand, the more positive the impression you will make on those who find you online; connections who can help build your career, including colleagues, clients, and future employers. They will readily be able to identify you as an expert in your field, and can see your employment history, your backgrounds, your skills, and your experience at a glance.

RELATED RESOURCES

- 85 Broads (<http://85broads.com>)
- Facebook (<http://facebook.com>)
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- Personal Branding Blog
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About the Author



Alison Doyle

Alison Doyle is a job search and career expert with many years of experience in human resources, career development, and job searching. Alison focuses on writing, in print and online, about integration between technology and job searching, providing expertise, commentary, and advice to both job seekers and those interested in news about the field, especially online job searching. She has covered job searching for About.com (a New York Times Company) since 1998. She is the author of "Internet Your Way to a New Job" and "The About.com Guide to Job Searching." Alison also writes the Alison Doyle Blog (<http://alisondoyle.typepad.com/>)

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