

## **Doing Research on the Internet**

by: Steve Snelling

Often it is necessary to do a technical search using the Internet, as part of your job duties. This could be a quick investigation of suppliers or companies that make products you are researching for your company; or it could be to research subject-matter-experts outside your company that may be utilized as consultants.

Unlike quick Internet searches that you may have performed while in school, a work-oriented search may require a lot more persistence and even take several hours to be completed successfully. There will probably be additional follow-up with the content you discover, and you may need to summarize it to share with others on your Team at work.

It helps to understand how most company websites are organized; it also helps to understand how Internet searches work. Many companies have much of their website content organized under major top headings. Then usually under each top heading is a pull-down menu with several sub-headings. Often it takes a few tries to “drill down” to the category of information you are seeking.

One tip is to utilize the company websites’ own internal key-word search capability (often at the top right-side of their home page); or open up the “menu”, if one is provided, that will show a detailed outline of the site’s content.

Another tip is to periodically save your search path temporarily to your computer laptop or notebook desktop so you can easily retrace where you’ve already been on a complex website. If doing several related searches on different company websites, it may help to make a temporary folder on your laptop or notebook desktop, so you can store website searches on related topics.

Another tip is to use the “voice” feature of a Google-type search, to save yourself some initial typing, when doing a complex Internet search. It may take a couple of tries to get the key words that are needed to start a useful Internet search, using the “voice” feature.

While reading some of the content, you may learn enough of the company’s terminology or some useful information about their current product line that may help you continue a more detailed search. Don’t ignore things like News articles or Sales/Marketing write-ups – since these may offer useful information to help with your search.

Sometimes using Scan Reading techniques can help get through lots of content during your Internet Searches.