Empowering Clients Using a Veritable Goldmine of Interactive Web Tools

Janet E. Wall

Abstract:
Even more helpful than the millions of career related websites are interactive Web tools that tailor the information or outcome to the person's need and wants. This article provides an introduction to many great interactive Web tools that can help career development professionals assist their students or clients in taking control of their own career destiny.

By "googling" the word careers, you can view information from an overwhelming 826 million links. For the most part, these sites tend to be information rich, but static. A review and critical analysis of the available websites, eliminating those that have poor quality, repetitive, or static information, will result the identification of some unique and potentially helpful tools. These tools are found on some high quality sites that offer information tailored to an individual's specific and unique needs. These dynamic or interactive tools are those that can actually offer quality information based on the specific input of students and clients. That is, the student or client enters information about themselves or their needs. The tool then analyzes that input and finds information that matches the various criteria or the specific request. From there, and depending on what was requested, further information can be found about an occupation, a training program, an educational institution, a job, etc. These are the sites that offer information that allows us to take control of our occupational selection, educational attainment, and job attainment and career progression. I call these interactive Web tools.

The remainder of this article will highlight just a few of these nifty tools, but there are many more that I have found. One of the best aspects of these tools is that they are free and accessible to all of us with a computer and access to the Internet.

Tool #1: Determine How Important Your Skills Are to Various Occupations. Go to http://www.iseek. org/sv/12399.jsp. Find the page on assessments. Find the grouping of skills that you want to consider from such groups as Basic Skills, Communication Skills, Management Skills, Judgment Skills, Technical Skills, and others. You will rate the importance of these skills to your preferred occupation. From those selections you will receive a listing of occupations that match your requirements.

Tool # 2: Find Occupations in High-Growth, High Demand Occupations. Go to http://www. careervoyages.com. Go to the student section and click on Which industries are growing? From the listing of occupational groupings, select the one that is of interest to you. From there you can access specific

information about an occupation including descriptive information, educational requirements, and career videos.

Tool #3: Build Skills at a Community College. Go to http://www.aacc.nche.edu. If you click on About Community Colleges and then the Community College Finder, you find the listing of community colleges in your state. Clicking on the name of the college will provide you information about the various programs offered and how to contact the institution.

Tool #4: Determine Whether Your Job Aspirations Are Realistic. Go to http://www.acinet.org and find the Career Tools box. Click on Employability Checkup and enter such information as your current educational level, desired salary and the state in which you would like to work. From that vantage point, find the area of the state you want to work, and then enter the occupation or job title. Following additional directions will give you an idea whether your job aspirations for the locale you selected are realistic or not.

Tool #5: Match a Major to Job Listings. Go to http://6steps.monster.com/step1/careerconverter/ and identify the major that is of interest to you. Following further directions, you can obtain a display of occupations that are compatible with your selection and also find related jobs for which you can investigate and apply.

More than 70 interactive tools from a wide variety of sources, along with step-by-step directions on how to use these tools, are described in Job Seekers Online Goldmine: A Step-by Step Guidebook for Government and No Cost Web Tools published by JIST Works.

Dr. Janet E. Wall is President of Sage Solutions, a small company that offers consulting services in the areas of career development, career and educational assessment, program evaluation, and technology. She is a certified Career Development Facilitator and author of "What Do I Like to Do?: 101 Activities to Identify Interests and Plan for Careers" and is co-editor of "Measuring Up: Assessment Issues for Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators" both published by Pro-Ed, Inc. She has been instrumental in developing the ASVAB Career Exploration Program and DISCOVER. She is the author of Jobseekers Online Goldmine, the definitive source for interactive Web tools. Contact her at sagesolutions@earthlink.net.