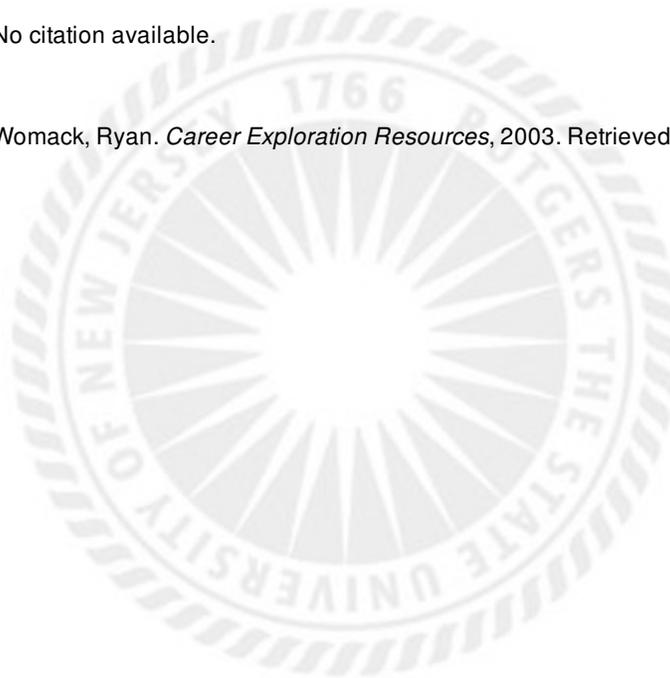


Career Exploration Resources

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Career Exploration Resources

by Ryan Womack

How do you determine what career is right for you? A few of us are born with an innate desire to become a mathematician, or a mime. For the rest of us, career exploration resources can help us select a career path, or make a mid-life transition to a new one.

Career exploration begins in high school, or sometimes earlier, as young people begin to investigate their potential job choices. The choice of a college major often determines a future career path. There are numerous guides that describe which courses of study prepare individuals for certain careers, such as Phifer's *College Majors and Careers*, and guides on how to recover from poor choices, like Frothingham's *How to Make Use of a Useless College Degree*.

Often working conditions and prospects for salary and job growth determine career choices. Detailed studies of the labor market, such as the *Occupational Outlook Handbook*, accurately measure and project salaries in hundreds of job categories. But statistics alone do not provide a complete picture of a career. Different jobs have different nonpecuniary benefits. Qualitative, personal information on what different jobs are like is provided by guides such as VGM's *On the Job* series, or websites such as *WetFeet.Com*. Another question that job seekers ask is whether they are right for a chosen career. Established personality tests such as the Myers-Briggs instrument can assess your personality type and suggest careers that may be compatible with your lifestyle. Several such tests are available online in convenient formats. Other software, such as the ACT's *Discover* CD-ROM, provide in-depth testing and questions for exploration and self-assessment.

A career does not stop once it is chosen. Many guides are available to assist workers in assessing and developing their strengths. Titles such as Harkness' *Career Chase*, Hauter's *Smart Woman's Guide to Career Success*, or Stevenson's *The Colorblind Career* can help with on-the-job advancement. Workers can keep up with current career trends and get tips at website like the Wall Street Journal's *Career Journal*.

When considering career change, classic titles like Bolles' *What Color is Your Parachute?* can help the reassessment of life goals. With all of these resources available, the job seeker may want to follow Witcher's advice and *Create the Job You Love*.

The selected resources listed below give a sampling of some of the best books and electronic materials on career exploration.

Thanks to Pam Craychee and Ander Murane for their work in developing the original version of this bibliography.

Career Exploration Resources:

Advancing Women (<http://www.advancingwomen.com>)

Site focuses on women's resources in the work world. A good source for news, networking, and finding jobs in specific industries as well as for information on general issues concerning women.

American College Testing Program. Discover (CD-ROM).

Intensive career guidance software program that seeks to match an individual's personal interests and strengths with occupational choices. This is an excellent way to explore career options but its running time of up to four hours is daunting to some people.

America's Career InfoNet (<http://www.acinet.org>)

Based on Bureau of Labor Statistics and state data, this site gives detailed job growth and wage information for many occupations, broken down by state and local area as well as descriptions of knowledge, skills, and abilities needed for various jobs. Searching is powerful and intuitive.

Bernstein, Alan B. , Nicholas R. Schaffzin and the Princeton Review Staff. *The Princeton Review Guide to Your Career*. 4th edition. New York: Princeton Review Publishing, 2000. Web version available at <http://www.review.com/career>.

Uses the Birkman Method career style grid to analyze interests and suggest possible careers. Profiles more than 180 career opportunities with firsthand insight from professionals in each field. Typical career track included to project 2, 5, and 10 years into a new career. Selected online content and Birkman quiz available at <http://www.review.com/career/careerquizhome.cfm>.

Bolles, Richard Nelson. *What Color Is Your Parachute? 2001 : A Practical Manual for Job-Hunters & Career-Changers*. Berkeley, CA: Ten Speed Press, 2000.

The latest edition of the classic manual of career exploration and change.

Career Development Manual - University of Waterloo

(<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocecs/CRC/manual-home.html>)

A detailed online manual leads the reader through thought exercises to gain a picture of potential career interests. Offers concrete advice on how to research these careers, find a job, and continue developing in one's chosen career - or switch careers again.

Career Interests Game (<http://career.missouri.edu/holland>)

Short and sweet web version of John Holland influential self-directed search guide to six temperaments and their associated careers.

Career Journal (<http://www.careerjournal.com/>)

In addition to being one of the better web directories for career information, this site, produced by the Wall Street Journal, discusses hiring trends and growth potential for various careers, along with salary information and many articles about the job-seeking process.

The Career Key, by Lawrence K. Jones (<http://www.ncsu.edu/careerkey>)
An interactive online self-assessment tool based on Holland personality types, with links to Occupational Outlook Handbook entries for the careers that match your personality.

The Catapult on JobWeb (<http://www.jobweb.org/catapult/>)
Excellent directory of links to career exploration information from the National Association of Colleges and Employers.

Chronicle Guidance (<http://www.ChronicleGuidance.com>)
Brief and to-the-point, this 120-pamphlet set covers many unique and less-covered occupations. Unlike Vocational Biographies, this looseleaf (optional bound version) does not profile people, but takes a more data-centric approach similar to the one found in the Occupational Outlook Handbook.

Educational Testing Service. Sigi Plus (CD-ROM).
Interactive software program helps users match occupations with their key motivators (e.g. money, personal fulfillment, improving society). Information on each occupation profiled is available. Although not as thorough as the Discover program (see above), Sigi Plus is a good place to start for people who are not sure which occupations would be suited for their personal or professional needs.

Encyclopedia of Careers and Vocational Guidance. 4 vol. Chicago, IL: J.G. Ferguson Publishing, 1999. 11th edition.
Multi-volume set with industry and occupational profiles, similar in scope and format to the Occupational Outlook Handbook, provides a second opinion to the OOH projections. Friendly, easy-to-read profiles rely on industry and professional association sources.

Exploring Health Care Careers and Exploring Tech Careers. Chicago: J.G. Ferguson, 1998.
These are excellent guides for inside information provided by professionals working in the health, medical and technical fields. First person accounts discuss necessary preparation, daily routine, salary, employers and how to get started.

Farr, J. Michael. *America's Fastest Growing Jobs*. 6th edition. Indianapolis, IN: JIST Works, 2000.
Descriptions of 101 jobs with the highest potential for growth, earnings according to levels of education, and the greatest number of projected openings.

1st Impressions Resumes and Career Strategies (<http://www.1st-imp.com/careercenter.htm>)
"Career Center" offers a wide variety of services and information. This site is notable for resources regarding disability and immigration opportunities.

Frothingham, Andrew. *How to Make Use of a Useless College Degree*. New York: Berkley Books, 1996.

Practical guide to making the most of an impractical degree. Humorous anecdotes and real-life tales from people in the working world make this an engaging read.

Gary Johnson's Brave New Work World and New Work News
(<http://www.newwork.com>)

General browsing site with information about national and international employment news, trends and the economies that affect them. This is a current news site that culls information from a diverse group of sources.

Guidance Information System (GIS). Riverside Publishing (CD-ROM).

An abbreviated Career Decision Making program that serves as an alternative for those who do not have the time to invest in one of the more intensive career software programs. This program also offers extensive scholarship and grant information for funding higher education.

Haim, Alex and Susan Angle. *Adventure Careers*. Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press, 1995.

Interesting read that focuses on off-beat and "adventure" oriented careers for those who are seeking alternatives to 9 - 5 jobs. A good resource but it is really about non-traditional rather than adrenaline-producing occupations.

Harkness, Helen. *The Career Chase: Taking Creative Control in a Chaotic Age*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing, 1997.

Thoughtful approach to mid-life career change emphasizes ways to choose change and adapt to the rapidly changing work environment.

Hauter, Janet. *The Smart Woman's Guide to Career Success*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 1997.

This resource, targeted towards women entering into or currently working in male-dominated corporate cultures, seems an honest appraisal of the hurdles many women could face in the corporate world.

JobProfiles.com (<http://www.jobprofiles.com>)

This site presents a survey of experienced workers' impressions of their jobs. Very diverse selection of job types, although only one voice is represented from each career.

JobStar California Job Search Guide (<http://jobstar.org/tools/career>)

Developed by librarians, JobStar is one of the web's best guides to job information. It links to many useful career exploration resources, including a comprehensive page of links to career guides for a variety of occupations.

Keirsey Temperament and Character Web Site (<http://keirsey.com/>)

David Mark Keirsey's Myers-Briggs-style temperament sorter, with online quizzes and links to associated career interests.

Kennedy, Joyce Lain and Darryl Laramore. *Joyce Lain Kennedy's Career Book*. 3rd edition. Lincolnwood, Illinois: VGM Career Horizons, 1997.
Looks at all aspects of the career planning process, including inventories, analyses, skills, self-help tips, employment trends, and résumés, although it doesn't give in-depth treatment to any particular method. This may be useful for those who would like a general overview of career options before consulting other sources or choosing a college major.

Krannich, Ronald and Caryl. *The Best Jobs for the 21st Century*. Manassas Park, VA: Impact Publications, 1998.

This is a well-researched guide with interesting overviews of the American workforce and economy. It discusses 33 employment trends and profiles jobs seen as having high growth potential.

Krannich, Ronald and Caryl. *Discover The Best Jobs For You!* 4th edition. Manassas Park, VA: Impact Publications, 2001

Assists in assessment of interests, abilities, and skills as well as helps in setting career goals and job objectives.

Krantz, Les. *Jobs Rated Almanac 2001: The Best and Worst Jobs - 250 in All - Ranked by More than a Dozen Vital Factors Including Salary, Stress, Benefits and More*. 5th edition. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2000.

The title says it all. Notoriously, librarians are ranked among the least stressed.

Maurer, Christine. and Kathleen M. Savage, eds. *Professional Careers Sourcebook: Where to Find Help Planning Careers That Require College or Technical Degrees*. 6th edition. New York: Gale Research, 1999.

Lists sources of information on many professional fields. Integrates career guides with occupation-specific publications and associations.

National Skills Standards Board (NSSB) (<http://www.nssb.org>)

Resource for researching performance benchmarks and skills needed to excel in certain occupations. A very bureaucratic site that is not easy to use.

Oakes, Elizabeth H., ed. *Career Exploration on the Internet: A Student's Guide to More than 300 Web Sites*. 2nd edition. Chicago: Ferguson Publishing, 2000.

This well-arranged guide gives detailed descriptive information on each web site, allowing the user to make informed decisions and extract the best information from each location.

Occupational Outlook Handbook. U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. N T C/Contemporary Publishing, 2000. (Also available on the Web at: <http://stats.bls.gov/ocohome.htm>)

This classic source offers comprehensive descriptions of working conditions, educational requirements, employment outlook, salary ranges and further sources of information for 250 occupational categories.

On the Job Series. VGM Career Horizons. Chicago, IL.

Each title in the series begins with *Real People Working in* Offers a refreshing interview/profile based approach to the topic. Coverage is broader than the VGM Opportunities Series, but makes for more lively reading. There are currently more than 15 titles in this series.

Phifer, Paul. *College Majors and Careers: A Resource Guide for Effective Life Planning*. 4th edition. Chicago: Ferguson Publishing, 1999.

Describes careers that college majors prepare graduates for and what additional education and training will also be needed.

The Riley Guide (<http://www.dbm.com/jobguide/>)

General browsing site useful for researching potential careers. It is thoughtfully organized (use the index) and covers most areas of importance.

State Occupational Projections (<http://www.dws.state.ut.us/bls/>)

Searchable employment projections for occupations by state.

Stevenson, Ollie. *The Colorblind Career*. Princeton, NJ: Peterson's, 1997.

Frank, practical advice for minorities in today's job market. Gives guidance in choosing a career, job hunting strategies, acclimating to corporate culture and career advancement.

The Ten Step Career Planning Guide (<http://10steps.careerpathsonline.com>)

Detailed, well designed exercises to uncover your interests and talents (Registration required).

Tye, Joe and The National Business Employment Weekly. *Personal Best: 1001 Great Ideas for Achieving Success in Your Career*. New York: MJF Books, 2001.

Easy-to-read source breaks career success into fourteen categories and expands on each theme using quotes, anecdotes, advice and readily available resources. The eclectic format, coupled with sound advice, makes for a fascinating and addictive read.

Vault Reports (<http://www.vaultreports.com>)

Presents profiles of careers in high tech and business/professional fields, with links to major employers and articles of interest in each area, online discussions, and hints about the corporate culture of each employer. For those who prefer an up-to-the-minute, wired buzz.

VGM Opportunities Series. VGM Career Horizons. Chicago, IL.

Covers more than an hundred different occupations. Each 200+ page book is written by a practitioner in the occupation covered. They are an excellent "next place" to look after consulting the Occupational Outlook Handbook.

Vocational Biographies. P.O. Box 31, Sauk Centre, MN 56378. (800) 255-0752.

These brief (4 page) pamphlets put a human face on an occupational profile by interviewing a person in the position and interweaving their experience with some of the Outlook Occupational Handbook data. The more than 800 profiles include many specialized and offbeat occupations that are typically overlooked in other publications. May be purchased as a looseleaf service or as spiral bound resource.

WetFeet.Com The Inside Scoop on the Job You Want (<http://www.wetfeet.com>)
Company and industry profiles with a contemporary edge, including profiles of a day in the life of a typical worker in the field.

Witcher, Barbara Johnson. *Create The Job You Love (And Make Plenty of Money): More Than 550 Ways to Escape the 9 to 5 Grind*. Rocklin, CA: Prima, 1997.
Describes career options that lend themselves to flexible work schedules. Positions range from waiting tables and housecleaning to professions such as medicine and law.

Yate, Martin. *Careersmarts: Jobs With A Future*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1997.
General career guide explores career options in four fast-growing industries - health care, business, technology and public service.