

On the Right Career Path

By Cheryl LaGuardia -- Library Journal, 5/15/2007

Utopia of Science A group of major scientific societies has created scitopia.org, a portal that will provide federated vertical searching of the societies' combined archives plus their new material—that's over three million documents across the major science and technology disciplines, more than 150 years of research, with real-time updating.

Quote of the Week “This month is a particularly exciting one at EBSCO. Several years ago, we released our first DIY database: Auto Repair Reference Center. It has been very well received in public libraries and community colleges, but at the same time, its availability caused a large number of our customers to be very vocal about the need for additional DIY resources, specifically in the areas of small engine repair and home improvement. Now, after more than two years in development, EBSCO will release two new DIY assistance tools: Small Engine Repair Reference Center and Home Improvement Reference Center. This season also marks the release of Academic Search Complete, the newest and most comprehensive version of academia's most widely used multidisciplinary research database. The new version of Academic Search will provide colleges with access to a collection of more than 5300 full-text periodicals, including an unprecedented 4400 peer-reviewed journals in full text going as far back as 1887.”—**Sam Brooks, Senior VP, Sales & Marketing, EBSCO**

Vault Online Career Library
Vault, Inc., www.vault.com

Vault Online Career Library (VOCL) brings together an astonishing amount of career information in one place. Content includes over 90 downloadable PDF career guides ranging from interview/résumé guides to career overviews, guides to specific occupations (accounting, interior design, physical therapy, etc.), and employers; several thousand company, industry, and occupational overviews and profiles; career advice articles; and company, industry, career topic, and grad degree message boards with millions of postings. Company information (the company profile guides) are updated year-round.

How Does It Work? The main Vault screen opens with a toolbar leading to the sections of the file: Download Guides, Companies, Industry Research, Career Advice, and Message Boards. Below this bar, however, is a well-arranged de facto site map, consisting of access to the Vault guides (*Industry Career*, *Industry Employer*, and *Career Topics*); Career Profiles for 53 career “paths”; Industry Research overviews for 40 top

industries; Diversity Profiles (for internships, co-ops, and entry-level positions), as well as Investment Bank Diversity Programs; Company Research; an Internship Database; the Vault Electronic WaterCooler (career, industry, and employer message boards); 2100-plus Occupation Surveys; Career Advice Articles (with highlights on famous careers, such as Kurt Vonnegut's, Johnnie Cochran's, and Elizabeth Dole's); a section on Student Loan News; and More Resources (“Over 1100 articles on the most important career topics, in 45 categories”).

Can You and Your Patrons Use It? The most significant feature this resource lacks is a search box—you can't search the file, per se, you'll have to browse it. The information is organized well and lends itself to “discovery,” since it's unlikely most users will anticipate the wealth of resources lying under the surface, but I would like a search box for quick lookups. I made a beeline to the Guides section and browsed it for titles of interest, of which there were plenty. The Vault Guide to Schmoozing especially piqued my curiosity. The system told me I needed to upgrade my Adobe Acrobat version to accommodate this file and then connected me directly so I could get the new version, which went quickly. Within about two minutes I was reading the full text of the guide onscreen, and it was pleasant to “page” through.

I took a look at the Librarian occupational profile, which was spot on in many ways. The entry includes the key information searchers will be looking for: an overview, the career path and salary, with information on hours and skills to acquire, and the section “Our Survey Says,” with quotes from current practitioners. The anonymous message boards are fascinating to read and add an extra note of authenticity to the material presented.

How Good Is It? For its outstanding content, **VOCL** exceeds the scale. But the steep price may place it outside the reach of many libraries. That, combined with the lack of a search capability, brings the overall ranking to a still completely solid 9.8.

What's the Cost? The basic starting price range for **VOCL** is \$15,000-\$60,000-plus annually, depending on the library population. Considering the market value of this information, that price is not unreasonable, but it's still more than many libraries are able to pay.

The Bottom Line This is a well-organized powerhouse of a file. Enthusiastically recommended for libraries and institutions with the resources to afford it. Gads, how I wish I'd had access to this file early in my career!

Author Information

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